

"Violating the Number One Commandment"

Exodus 20:3 states, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

There have always been arguments over what is the greatest sin. Though God hates all sin I believe that there is one that stands out above the rest...that is turning from the True and Living God for the false gods of the world.

In Matthew 22:36 a lawyer (an expert in the Law of Moses) asked Jesus, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" The answer of Jesus is found in verses 37 and 38, "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment."

In Exodus 20:3 God dictates to Moses, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." The second commandment that God gives in verses 4-6 is a continuation of this charge, and in the middle of verse 5 God says, "for I the Lord God am a jealous God." So anything that represents anything or anyone other than the True and living God He does not like. Remember God is a Spirit and we must worship Him in Spirit and Truth.

Eve wanted to worship a god she could see in the garden. The children of Israel wanted to worship a god they could see in the wilderness when they had Aaron build the golden calf. Ahab and Jezebel of course led Israel in worship of the false god Baal. And there are many more instances pertaining to false worship in the Word of God. I think that one place that we see the judgment of God pertaining to this terrible sin is that of Solomon during his reign over the nation of Israel. 1 Kings 11:1-2 states, "But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Zidonians, and Hittites; of the nations which the Lord said unto the children of Israel, Ye shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clave unto these in love."

If we recall Solomon was considered to have more wisdom than any other king before or after him. He had an abundance of everything because all that he asked of God at the beginning of his reign was for wisdom. Solomon never fought any wars and seemed to never have any enemies; the reason being because of his strange wives. To do business with these strange nations and not have any war with them meant marrying a daughter of the king of each nation. This way Solomon became related to that particular king. With these relationships came the false religions and their gods. The apostle Paul wrote in 2 Cor. 6:14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" Remember when Ezra went back to rebuild Jerusalem the thing that he was most concerned with was getting the Israelites to separate themselves from the strange wives they had married and the strange gods that they were worshipping. Because Solomon honored the gods of his wives it meant that he had to build temples for them to worship in and idols for these wives to worship. This made it grievous and hard for the people. It put a great burden on them in the way of heavy taxation. Today our nation has turned from the True and Living God to a god of humanism, and if we don't get back to putting the True and Living God first we are going to pay a great penalty in judgment.

You may say but what about David he committed the sins of adultery and murder? This is true and God dealt with him pertaining to these awful sins, but David would not allow any other type of worship to take place in Israel. David was a man after God's own heart. Remember the thing that got David "hot-

behind the collar" when as a young lad he confronted Goliath the gaint was the cursing and disrespect that Goliath showed toward the God of Israel. Certainly David was guilty of some serious and terrible sins, but he was not guilty of violating the great commandment. On the other hand Solomon was no doubt involved with the worship of these false gods because 1 Kings 11:4 says, "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." 1 Kings 11:6 states, "And Solomon did evil in the sight of the Lord, and went not fully after the Lord, as did David his father." This is just part of this chapter that pertains to this terrible sin that Solomon committed. If you will read the rest of the chapter you will see the full extent of what took place.

Now you may say preacher I don't see what that has to do with worshipping God today? Well, He is still the same God with the same commandments as he was in Solomon's day. I've heard people say this, "well were all trying to get to the same place; it's just that were taking a different way to get there." May I remind you that in John 14:6 the Lord Jesus Christ said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh to the Father, but by me."

God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. He never changes! He is still a jealous God. Men can come up with every scheme and type of worship they want to but it still doesn't change what God says. They can write all the new versions of the Bible that they want to and add or subtract from them all they want to, but it still doesn't change what God says.

If your worshipping a strange god then you'd better stop. If your worshipping an idol then you'd better stop. And this includes worshipping pictures or other trinkets in the local church. Remember what Exodus 20:4 says, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth." I once was in a church that had a so-called picture of Jesus at the alter for people to look at as they prayed. Personally I don't believe that there are any true pictures of the Lord Jesus Christ. What about these churches that have pictures and images of a dove descending? Is this not trying to make an idol of the Blessed Holy Ghost?

Please my dear friend remember what the great commandment is!