

The Folly of Idolatry

Having come to know these high and Holy truths about God, how could we refuse to acknowledge His Lordship? What mischief would fill our hearts that would cause us to rebel or disobey God and His Holy Word? Let us be assured that there is none like Him! He is exalted, lifted up high above the heavens, He is Lord and His commands are to be fully obeyed.

Isaiah 44:6-8 - 6 "This is what the LORD says — Israel's King and Redeemer, **the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God. 7 Who then is like me?** Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come — yes, let him foretell what will come. 8 Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? **You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.**"

In the Ten Commandments, God lays out His Law in a summary. The first four deal with man's relationship to God, the last six deal with man's relationship to man. Thus the great commandment and the second, love the Lord your God and love your neighbor. Notice though the sequence and priority given. The first commandment states,

Exodus 20:2-3 - 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. 3 **You shall have no other gods before me.** NIV

Here God speaks of the great priority of mankind, that He is to have the first and rightful place. *Does this Great King of the Universe, Creator, Omnipotent, All-Knowing God, deserve any less?* Should what has been formed say to Him who formed him, you are not important to me? Why should God give us another breath? Why should we not be consumed in the fiery wrath of judgment for our great transgressions against Him? Oh blessed Mercy! Oh sweet sound of pardon! Yet He would even make us kings and priests to reign with Him! What wondrous love is this?

Nevertheless, mankind rebels, curses, even profanes the glorious name of God with such audacity to form a detestable idol and bow down to it. God therefore addresses this matter of second and third importance saying,

Exodus 20:4-7 - 4 "You **shall not make for yourself an idol** in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You **shall not bow down to them or worship them**; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments. 7 "You **shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God**, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. NIV

Consider what ignorance is in man that he would value and honor a worthless thing above the Great and Glorious Creator who made it all! With what blindness has man been stricken as to do such a deplorable thing? You become like what you worship. *What profit would be gained to a man for bowing down to a block of wood? Indeed those who worship a dead lifeless thing will become like them, a dead lifeless thing!* They will be cut off from the Author and Source of life!

Psalm 135:15-18 - 15 The idols of the nations are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. 16 They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but they cannot see; 17 they have ears, but cannot hear, nor is there breath in their mouths. **18 Those who make them will be like them**, and so will all who trust in them. NIV

Justice demands that such a person be shut out from the good presence of God with fierce wrath and utter finality! Is there greater mutiny? Is there a greater sin of arrogance? What a poor pitiful creature man is, taken in his idolatry, to exchange the Glory of the Immortal God for a worthless, dead inanimate object! God's judgment will be sure and final!

Isaiah 44:9-11 - 9 All who make idols are nothing, and **the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame.** 10 Who shapes a god and casts an idol, **which can profit him nothing?** 11 He and his kind will be put to shame; craftsmen are nothing but men. Let them all come together and take their stand; **they will be brought down to terror and infamy.**

Consider the absolute folly of such a thing! Man takes wood from the forest to cook his meals and warm himself. He then makes it into a creation with his own hands and then bows down to worship it, even placing his trust in the same. All the while the God "who gives life and breath and everything else" (Acts 17:25) looks on with great patience, overlooking this great blasphemy and granting them the good things of life.

Isaiah 44:12-17 12 The blacksmith takes a tool and works with it in the coals; **he shapes an idol with hammers, he forges it with the might of his arm.** He gets hungry and loses his strength; he drinks no water and grows faint. 13 The carpenter measures with a line and makes an outline with a marker; he roughs it out with chisels and marks it with compasses. He shapes it in the form of man, of man in all his glory, that it may dwell in a shrine. 14 He cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak. He let it grow among the trees of the forest, or planted a pine, and **the rain made it grow.** 15 It is man's fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it. 16 Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire." 17 From the rest he makes a god, his idol; **he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, "Save me; you are my god."**

What blindness has darkened man's eyes? What great lie has deluded his pitiful heart? Where is his understanding? Consider how many people today just move through life without even stopping to give thanks to God? How many curse and blaspheme His name, never stopping to consider His great command to repent? ***Indeed mankind and his world are perishing, even wasting away and all the while he thinks he will live forever or somehow save himself.*** Stricken with blindness, he gropes about in futility refusing to simply bow His knee to the One who gives him breath! Oh what pity! Here is described the natural state of man! Here his ignorance is made crystal clear, his utter inability to help himself stated plainly!

Isaiah 44:18-20 - 18 They know nothing, they understand nothing; **their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand.** 19 No one stops to think, no one has the knowledge or understanding to say, "Half of it I used for fuel; I even baked bread over its coals, I roasted meat and I ate. Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left? **Shall I bow down to a block of wood?"** **20 He feeds on ashes, a deluded heart misleads him; he cannot save himself**, or say, "Is not this thing in my right hand a lie?"

Let us consider what it might be in our lives, which, may be taking first place? Is it God and His commandments? Or God forbid, something else. Could we be guilty of such treason? What is it that we truly value? What do we worship or ascribe worth to?

When we begin to value God above all other things in our lives, then we will begin to become like Him! When we see the great value of life that God has given us, we will then begin to live with great purpose and meaning. When we put God in the first and rightful place, then we will begin to glorify Him in proper measure.

Matthew 22:36-40 - 36 "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" 37 Jesus replied: **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."** 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."