

The Worship of the True God

Deut. 6:13-16

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Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart:

And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes.

And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.

And it shall be, when the LORD thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not,

And houses full of all good *things*, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full;

Then beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which *are* round about you;

(For the LORD thy God *is* a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God, as ye tempted *him* in Massah.

I would ask you to look at Question 92, 94, 95 of the Heidelberg Catechism, beginning on page 102. It is this commandment that we are considering today. The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus 20, and also are printed in the front of our hymnal.

In the first of the sermons, preached two weeks ago, on the Ten Commandments, we saw that God is One. Because He is One, it is required that our hearts be united in our devotion to Him. Therefore the sum of the law is that we love the Lord our God with all our hearts, soul, mind, and strength. Our hearts are not to be divided.

It is sinful for us to put our hands to the plow and look back. This is the reason that our Lord Jesus called us to Remember Lot's Wife. She went out of Sodom, but her heart was still there, and she looked back, and was turned into a pillar of salt. We cannot serve God and mammon.

A divided heart is an evil heart, but if our hearts are single, our whole body is full of light the Lord said.

FIRST COMMANDMENT

I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

H. C. Q94:

What does God require in the first Commandment?

That, on peril of my soul's salvation, I avoid and flee all idolatry, sorcery, enchantments, invocation of saints or of other creatures; and that I rightly acknowledge the only true God, trust in Him alone, with all humility and patience, expect all good from Him only, and love, fear and honor Him with my whole heart; so as rather to renounce all creatures than to do the least thing against His will.

Q95: What is idolatry?

Idolatry is to conceive or have something else in which to place our trust instead of, or besides, the one true God who has revealed Himself in His Word.

I would have us look at verses 13-16 of our text in Deuteronomy and close by looking at a text from Ephesians.

These verses give us some insight into what it means to worship the true God.

I. It means that we fear Him.

- A. We reverence Him. He is not to be taken lightly. His attributes inspire such reverence, for who can stand before His majesty? He is pure and holy and righteous. He cannot bear to look at sin.

- B. Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I *am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD. Jeremiah 9:23
1. **Lovingkindness:** God is good. He exercises goodness. He does it. Goodness is what He does.
 2. **Judgment:** God makes a difference between things. He expects us to do it also: to know the difference between the creature and Him. The creature is not to be worshipped.
 3. **Righteousness:** God does this. All His ways are righteous. He cannot deny Himself. It is God who will judge the world. Rev. 6:12ff

II. It Means that We Serve Him.

- A. This means work. We work for Him, we do not work for ourselves. We are not the servants of men, servants of idols, servants of the state, even servants of the church; we are servants of God.
- B. When He was tempted of the devil ...Matt. 4. Jesus said that man must worship the Lord and Him only. This means that we are worshippers of Christ, for if you do not worship Jesus Christ, then you are no worshipper of the true God: John 5:22,23: For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all *men* should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.

III. It Means that we trust Him.

- A. For our salvation
- B. For our daily bread
- C. For our reputation and honor
- D. For our advancement and success.

- IV. Swear by His Name. I need to spend a moment on this because this is almost a forgotten concept in the modern day. People do not keep their words and they do not keep their commitments. They make promises. Jesus interpreted this in Matthew 5: Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.
- A. Jesus is speaking of "forswearing" or taking God's name in vain by swearing a false oath. He is not commanding us not ever to take an oath, because He himself took an oath, Paul the apostle did, and Hebrews says that oaths are necessary to confirm our words.

- B. He is saying, however, that forswearing ourselves can take place without taking an oath. Our words should have force without an oath. Illustration: Oudi, the son of Saddam Hussein, “Bush is not like Clinton.... The game is up.”
- C. You can be certain that God means what He says, and we are to be like Him. Don’t say it if you don’t mean it; don’t promise if you do not mean to fulfill it.
- D. This text means at least two things:
 - 1. **First.** We live in the presence of the true God, and He is witness to all we say and will hold us accountable; we acknowledge that by not making a vow in the name of any other God. We live in the Name of Jesus.
 - 2. **Second.** We will be held accountable for the oaths we take: state, church, home, etc. How wonderful it is to find dependable people—people who know what covenants are and are not afraid to live by them.

V. You shall not go after other Gods.

- A. God is jealous: He cannot deny Himself. He is perfectly content with who He is. He knows that He made the heavens and the earth and that all others are false Gods, creatures claiming to be gods, people living in a dream world of idolatry
- B. Tempting God is to put Him to the test. Is He really God? That does not need to be tested, for it is self-evident.