

TEACHING GOAL

To show that God claims the place of uniqueness and pre-eminence, and to study the consequences of this.

DOCTRINAL STANDARDS

- Q. Which is the first commandment?
- A. The first commandment is, You shall have no other gods before me.
- Q. What is required in the first commandment?
- A. The first commandment requires us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify Him accordingly.

S.C. 45-46, L.C. 103-104, W.C. of F. XIX, Savoy 19, Young 80-81

SCRIPTURAL BASIS

Study Passage: Luke 14:25-35

Support Passages: Deuteronomy 4:35,39; I Samuel 2:2; II Samuel 7:22; I Kings 3:12, 8:60; Acts 4:12

BIBLE STORY

Judges 6:25-32: Gideon tears down the altar of Baal and erects an altar to YAHWEH instead.

MEMORY ASSIGNMENT

I Corinthians 8:5-6

{5} For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as there are many gods and many lords), {6} yet for us *there is* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom *are* all things, and through whom we *live*.

APPLICATION

It is essential that we worship the true and living God and no other. The consequences of contrary worship are dire indeed but on the other hand, Christian discipleship has a cost which we must carefully consider.

SUMMARY

It should be clear to all that idol worship is absurd, bizarre and exceedingly foolish. For anyone to construct a stone or wooden image of something and worship this thing which was manufactured, is sheer stupidity. Gideon's father had done just that. The god Baal was often depicted as a stone image and the Ashera were wooden images, perhaps just a special tree selected for worship, similar to the later Celtic Druidism. The Ashera represented a foul female deity worshipped by many in Gideon's day, which the old English versions refer to as a grove. Gideon destroyed these idols of his father (Judges 6:25ff) and erected an altar to YAHWEH which he named YAHWEH SHALOM or YAHWEH is peace. He did what we must do; He worshipped the True and Living God alone.

It is common in our day to practice idolatry. Many do this by worshipping common things such as money because these may become or are in fact a major part of their lives. People might even worship or venerate saints thus supplanting the worship of YAHWEH. Even covetousness is termed idolatry in scripture.¹

The worship of YAHWEH alone requires; (a) Love for Him stronger than all other affections; (b) Trusting Him, as our highest portion and source of happiness; (c) Obeying and serving Him supremely and; (d) Worshipping Him as He requires.² It is not, therefore, possible to venerate saints without practicing idolatry. Inspired saints and creature-angels are never to be venerated.³

Many in our day look to the government for their help and source of happiness. This, of course, is also idolatry. To substitute human ideals for the precepts of YAHWEH, as public education seeks to do, is fundamental idolatry. Our primary allegiance must always be to YAHWEH alone, the Christ to whom Abraham bowed⁴ by the oaks of Mamre.

Now scripture is very clear that there is no other God but YAHWEH⁵ and that our allegiance to YAHWEH comes before all else, even our family ties. Obviously, love for our family can actually amount to idolatry and so can love for another human being. Isn't this the force of many of our popular love ballads?

Consider the contrary teaching of the LORD in Luke 14:25-35. So essential is our allegiance to YAHWEH Christ that by comparison we are to hate our family. The Lord here teaches us to love Him very much more than anyone or anything else and this may well be at great cost. It is not easy to love God more than ones family or country. Our slogan, you see, cannot be "God and Country"

but rather "God very much more than Country". The proper love for YAHWEH will issue in the proper and godly love for our family and country.

"Know therefore today, and take it to your heart, that the LORD,
He is God in heaven above and on the earth below;
There is no other."⁶

¹ Ephesians 5:5, Colossians 3:5, Job 31:24-28

² Dabney, Lectures in Systematic Theology, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1972, p359.

³ Matthew 4:10; Acts 14:13-15; Revelation 19:10,22:9

⁴ Genesis 18

⁵ Deuteronomy 4:35,39; I Samuel 2:2; II Samuel 7:22; I Kings 8:60 etc.

⁶ Deuteronomy 4:39