

# WARNINGS AGAINST IDOLATRY

[BIBLE TEXT](#) : Deuteronomy 4:14-31; Romans 1:18-25

LESSON 119 Senior Course

**MEMORY VERSE:** "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: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them" (Exodus 20:4, 5).

## [BIBLE TEXT in King James Version](#)

### **Deuteronomy 4:14-31 (KJV)**

<sup>14</sup> And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it.

<sup>15</sup> Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day *that* the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire:

<sup>16</sup> Lest ye corrupt *yourselves*, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female,

<sup>17</sup> The likeness of any beast that *is* on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air,

<sup>18</sup> The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that *is* in the waters beneath the earth:

<sup>19</sup> And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, *even* all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.

<sup>20</sup> But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, *even* out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as *ye are* this day.

<sup>21</sup> Furthermore the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, and sware that I should not go over Jordan, and that I should not go in unto that good land, which the LORD thy God giveth thee *for* an inheritance:

## [BIBLE REFERENCES:](#)

### **I Warnings Given**

1 Moses was commanded by the Lord to teach the Children of Israel statutes and judgments, Deuteronomy 4:14;

#### **Exodus 21:1 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Now these *are* the judgments which thou shalt set before them.

#### **Exodus 24:3 (KJV)**

<sup>3</sup> And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.

2 Moses exhorted them to beware of idolatry and not to make any likeness of anything in heaven or earth as an object of adoration, Deuteronomy 4:15-19;

#### **Isaiah 40:18 (KJV)**

<sup>18</sup> To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?

#### **Exodus 20:4-5 (KJV)**

<sup>4</sup> 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:

<sup>5</sup> Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

3 The Lord had brought them out of Egypt to be an inheritance unto Him, Deuteronomy 4:20;

#### **Exodus 19:5 (KJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine:

4 Moses informed them that he must die in this land, the Lord being angry with him on their account, Deuteronomy 4:21, 22;

#### **Deuteronomy 3:26 (KJV)**

<sup>26</sup> But the LORD was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the LORD said unto me, Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto me of this matter.

#### **Numbers 20:12 (KJV)**

<sup>12</sup> And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.

5 Another warning was given against idolatry, Deuteronomy 4:23, 24

### **II Judgment and Mercy**

1 Moses predicted God's judgment and that they would be scattered among the heathen should they turn to idolatry,

<sup>22</sup> But I must die in this land, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land.

<sup>23</sup> Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee.

<sup>24</sup> For the LORD thy God *is* a consuming fire, *even* a jealous God.

<sup>25</sup> When thou shalt beget children, and children's children, and ye shall have remained long in the land, and shall corrupt *yourselves*, and make a graven image, *or* the likeness of any *thing*, and shall do evil in the sight of the LORD thy God, to provoke him to anger:

<sup>26</sup> I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong *your* days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.

<sup>27</sup> And the LORD shall scatter you among the nations, and ye shall be left few in number among the heathen, whither the LORD shall lead you.

<sup>28</sup> And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.

<sup>29</sup> But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find *him*, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

<sup>30</sup> When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, *even* in the latter days, if thou turn to the LORD thy God, and shalt be obedient unto his voice;

<sup>31</sup> (For the LORD thy God *is* a merciful God;) he will not forsake

Deuteronomy 4:25-28;

**Deuteronomy 30:18-19 (KJV)**

<sup>18</sup> I denounce unto you this day, that ye shall surely perish, *and that* ye shall not prolong *your* days upon the land, whither thou passest over Jordan to go to possess it.

<sup>19</sup> I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live:

**Leviticus 26:33 (KJV)**

<sup>33</sup> And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you: and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste.

**Nehemiah 1:8 (KJV)**

<sup>8</sup> Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, *If* ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:

2 Even then, God's mercy would be extended if they would seek Him with all their heart, Deuteronomy 4:29-31;

**Deuteronomy 30:1-3 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call *them* to mind among all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath driven thee,

<sup>2</sup> And shalt return unto the LORD thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul;

<sup>3</sup> That then the LORD thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee.

**2 Chronicles 15:4 (KJV)**

<sup>4</sup> But when they in their trouble did turn unto the LORD God of Israel, and sought him, he was found of them.

**Nehemiah 1:9 (KJV)**

<sup>9</sup> But *if* ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, *yet* will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.

**Isaiah 55:6-7 (KJV)**

<sup>6</sup> Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:

<sup>7</sup> Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

**Jeremiah 29:12-13 (KJV)**

<sup>12</sup> Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.

<sup>13</sup> And ye shall seek me, and find *me*, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.

3 God's wrath is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness, Romans 1:18;

**Acts 17:30 (KJV)**

<sup>30</sup> And the times of this ignorance God winked at;

thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he sware unto them.

### **Romans 1:18-25 (KJV)**

<sup>18</sup> For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

<sup>19</sup> Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed *it* unto them.

<sup>20</sup> For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

<sup>21</sup> Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

<sup>22</sup> Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,

<sup>23</sup> And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

<sup>24</sup> Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

<sup>25</sup> Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

### **Colossians 3:5-6 (KJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:

<sup>6</sup> For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:

### **III Wisdom and Folly**

1 The invisible things were clearly seen from the creation of the earth, Romans 1:19, 20;

#### **Psalm 19:1 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.

#### **John 1:9 (KJV)**

<sup>9</sup> *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

#### **Acts 14:17 (KJV)**

<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness.

2 When they knew God they glorified Him not as God, and their foolish hearts became darkened, Romans 1:21;

#### **Jeremiah 2:5 (KJV)**

<sup>5</sup> Thus saith the LORD, What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain?

#### **2 Kings 17:15 (KJV)**

<sup>15</sup> And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them.

#### **Ephesians 4:17-18 (KJV)**

<sup>17</sup> This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

<sup>18</sup> Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:

3 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools and served the creature more than the Creator, Romans 1:22-25;

#### **1 John 5:20 (KJV)**

<sup>20</sup> And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

#### **Jeremiah 10:14 (KJV)**

<sup>14</sup> Every man is brutish in *his* knowledge: every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image *is* falsehood, and *there is* no breath in them.

### **NOTES:**

The Lord commanded Moses to teach His statutes and judgments to the Children of Israel that they might do them in the land they were going to possess.

"Hearken" and "do," that you may "live" and "possess"! This is the universal and abiding principle. It was true for Israel, and it is true

for us. The true secret of possession is simple obedience to the holy commandments of God. We see this all through the inspired Volume, from cover to cover. God has given us His Word that we may obey it. As we, through Grace, yield a hearty and happy obedience to His statutes and judgments, we tread the bright pathway of life, and enter into the reality of all that God has treasured up for us in Christ (**John 14:21** <sup>21</sup> He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him).

### **Idolatry**

The first commandment the Lord gave them on Mount Sinai was, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). The nations around were idolatrous. Possibly the greatest and most common temptation they would have to meet was idolatry. It was an abomination unto God and "changed the truth of God into a lie." It was an unprofitable practice, for Isaiah says, "Yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble" (Isaiah 46:7).

The prophets of Baal cried mightily unto their god on Mount Carmel when Elijah put the challenge to them, "The God that answereth by fire, let him be God" (I Kings 18:24). They were sincere, and even jumped upon their sacrifice and cut themselves with lancets trying to get an answer from their god. Baal was a god that could neither see, hear, eat, nor smell.

The Lord made it very explicit that no graven image of any living creature on land, sea, air, or under the waters should be made and worshiped. And lest they lift their eyes to heaven and worship the sun, moon, and stars, He makes it plain to them that He alone is God.

Through the Prophet Isaiah God declares, "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any" (Isaiah 44:8).

It is said that the oldest species of idolatry is the worship of the heavenly bodies. Those who had not a knowledge of the true God considered the planets were self-existent and the source of blessings to mankind.

Many of Israel's kings were idolaters. It is a singular fact that none of their idolatrous kings ever were good kings And it is also true that none of their good kings were idolaters.

### **Soon Perish**

Moses calls Heaven and earth to witness that unless they were obedient to the instructions the Lord gave them they would soon perish from off the good land they were going over Jordan to possess. They also would be scattered among the nations.

In looking over the history of Israel we find they were prone to idolatry and were finally scattered among the nations. And it is said that not until they were taken captives to Babylon were they cured of idolatry.

### **The Loss of Faith**

Idolatry robs the people's faith. At the time the Lord called Abram from the land of Ur of the Chaldees, the world was given over unto idolatry. But the Lord looked down into Abram's heart and saw there the precious seed of faith and He called him and his seed to be an inheritance unto Himself We wonder what would have happened if Israel had remained true to the faith of their father, Abraham. We see how God did protect those who remained true to the faith of their fathers. We think of the three Hebrew children who refused to bow down and worship Nebuchadnezzar's golden image. In the king's rage they were thrown into the burning fiery furnace, but the Lord went in with them and the fire had no power to hurt them (Daniel 3).

## Results of Idolatry

In the New Testament, the Apostle Paul has given us a plain account of the results of idolatry. When people turn from worshiping a holy, righteous, and just God, and serve the creature more than the Creator, their minds become darkened, and sin of every form enters in.

A holy God commands the worship of a holy people. An image made after the similitude of a sinful creature has nothing in it to inspire its worshipers to a godly life. We find the basest of sins raging in idolatrous nations.

When Israel remained true to God, the Lord made them a wise and understanding nation. There was no nation able to withstand them.

We look at our own nation, the United States of America; it was founded by men seeking religious freedom. Its laws were based on the Word of God. Our forefathers honored God and inscribed on their money, "IN GOD WE TRUST." The Lord honors those who honor Him. Quickly this country became a great nation. No weapon formed against it prospered. But from across the waters, the same waters that bore the Mayflower with its crew of pilgrims safely across, came men with doctrines of higher criticism, evolution, atheism, marxism, bolshevism, and communism. We opened our doors; they entered our schools, our workshops, and even our pulpits. Today what have we? An idolatrous nation: one that serves the creature more than the Creator. We have a nation which honors the inventive mind more than the God who created that mind. It is no longer "What hath God wrought!" but "What hath man devised!" As a result, sin of every description is in our nation. Fornication, adultery, divorce and remarriage, idolatry, murder, theft, juvenile delinquency — are all on the increase.

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:28-32).

What a woeful description! As God deals with nations, so does He deal with individuals. No one can turn from serving the true and living God but what he may expect the severest of judgments.

## Mercy or Judgment

Although our God is a consuming fire, mercy is never wanting for a soul or a nation that will humble itself and plead for mercy. "But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find him, if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul . . . even in the latter days" (Deuteronomy 4:29, 30). What a promise to this world of ours today, if they would only seek Him!

## Exclusion from Heaven

Idolatry in any form will exclude us from Heaven. "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Ephesians 5:5). Heaven is a holy place, made by a holy God, for a holy people. How could anyone be admitted into God's holy Heaven who did not honor God as the Creator of all things and worship Him as the only true and living

## QUESTIONS

- 1 Against what sin did Moses warn the Children of Israel?
- 2 Should the Children of Israel turn to idol worship, what would be their fate?
- 3 On what condition would God extend mercy to them?
- 4 In regard to worship, what was the condition of the nations around Israel?
- 5 Why was Moses not permitted to go into the Land of Canaan?
- 6 When people know God, what happens when they glorify Him not as God?
- 7 When people become vain in their imaginations, whom do they serve?
- 8 What does God say about the wisdom of this world?

God. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," is just as imperative today as when it was spoken from Mount Sinai.