

## LOSING THE BIBLICAL AWE

### *Making God in Our Image*

Exodus 20:18-19; 32:1-4

## INTRODUCTION

- A. Burger King (1970), “Have it your way.”
  - 1. We live in a world where we can literally have it our way.
  - 2. We get to choose everything:
    - a. The way we want our food: Starbuck’s – 87,000 combinations; Sonic boasts 625,506 drink combinations.
    - b. The Clothes we wear: even choose the lining of your suit jacket.
    - c. Automobiles and trucks – consider the “add-ons”.
    - d. Increasingly – laws we [choose] to follow, candidates we support, etc.
  - 3. Our religious preferences. Don’t like one place, we will go until we find what we are looking for.
- B. Beginning a series of lessons focused on – GOD!
  - 1. The concept of God not necessarily who we worship.
  - 2. But who we hold within our hearts and live for each day.
  - 3. Idolaters in the day of Jesus, professed belief, but lived their lives in their own way, Matthew 15:7-9.
  - 4. It has been suggested that no person ever rises above his idea of God.
    - a. The greatest factor in religion is not so much what we *confess with our mouths*.
    - b. But rather what we *believe God to be*, Romans 6:17.
    - c. Our God is the product of our heart’s convictions, Romans 1:21-23.
- C. Have you given serious consideration as to the God of your beliefs?
  - a. How well do you know God?
  - b. Is it with angelic praise, Revelation 4:8b?
  - c. Or maybe idolatrous form, Psalm 50:21?
  - d. Pharaoh’s question, “*Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice...?*”, Ex. 5:2.
  - e. Have we become too comfortable with God, seen in our worship, Rev. 1:7; Heb. 12:28-29.

## I. ISRAEL – LOSING THE HOLY AWE.

- A. Israel just liberated from Egyptian slavery.
  - 1. They saw the visible power of God: plagues and Red Sea.
  - 2. God’s visible presence at Mt. Sinai, Exodus 20:18-19.
  - 3. The request for God to speak to Moses, not them.
  - 4. The golden calf [bull] – a god more to their liking.
- B. Israel’s loss in three steps, Exodus 32:1-4.
  - 1. Israel lost her awe of the Almighty, Ex. 32:4.
    - a. God was far different than they could imagine.
    - b. Yet, she made a god more useful to their immediate needs.
    - c. A god to conform to their concepts – symbolic of lordship, strength, vital energy and fertility.
  - 2. She was impatient with God’s silence, Ex. 32:1.
    - a. God seemed too distant; too slow; too unaccommodating.
    - b. Israel wanted something immediately and more satisfying.
  - 3. She allowed individualism to rule, Ex. 32:1.
    - a. “Make us” and “we do not know” terms that express feelings that they wanted complete control.
    - b. Forgetting they had yielded to God’s control, Ex. 19:8.

- c. Each had the **right** to make personal demands about the god they desired, Ex. 32:23.

## II. THE CHURCH – LOSING THE HOLY AWE.

- A. We struggle with a lost awe for God.
  - 1. Perhaps the awe for science technology and what it reveals about God.
  - 2. A reminder that the unknown answers belong to God, Deut. 29:29.
  - 3. No longer awed at the thought of approaching the Almighty:
    - a. Terror of Abram, Gen. 15:12.
    - b. Hide our face as did Moses, Ex. 3:6.
    - c. Fall on our knees as Saul, Acts 9:4.
    - d. Cry out as Isaiah, Isa. 6:5.
- B. We are impatient with God's silence.
  - 1. We may feel that His silence means He is distant from us and unconcerned.
  - 2. We want to feel God's nearness.
  - 3. We may cry out to God as David (Psalm 13:1-2), but we hear only silence.
  - 4. Many face problems in life and find release through affluence – God becomes a casualty. There is no real need for God.
- C. We are victims of rampant individualism.
  - 1. Freedom in our country is our most precious asset, but modern minds have made individualism a national religion.
  - 2. We believe *"each one must believe his/her way and it is wrong to force group beliefs upon others."*
  - 3. A young nurse (Sheila), *"I believe in God. I'm not a religious fanatic. I can't remember the last time I went to church. My faith has carried me a long way. It's Sheilaism. Just my own little voice."*
  - 4. The devotion to individualism has led to chaos:
    - a. Introduced a cafeteria style religion – pick and choose what is best for me.
    - b. Encourages to "invite Jesus into your heart", swapped for the Biblical call to surrender self to Jesus (Luke 9:23).
    - c. Created individual gods to fit individual moods – to be tolerant of everything, condemning of nothing, and demanding of only the pleasurable.

## CLOSING

- A. Have you ever considered that Exodus 20:4-5 was NOT addressed to pagans, but to believers?
  - 1. Modern minds look for a god most needed in their individual lives.
  - 2. The result is a belief system seeking to allow each to find an image of god that works for them.
- B. Are we guilty of forsaking the God of the Bible for other gods?
  - 1. Have we lost a sense of awe in appearing before the Almighty?
  - 2. Do we fail to deal with God's silence when information is exploding all around us?
  - 3. Have we been born and bred to reverence individualism more than we reverence God?
- C. Failure to honor the God of the Bible is essentially self-centeredness – SIN!
  - 1. It is a choice we make each day.
  - 2. Proverbs 9:10, *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."*