

## Idolatry Isn't Innocent

Deuteronomy 4:15-40

### I. God Tolerates No Rivals

**A. God did not reveal Himself to His people in forms which can be illustrated materially.** 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: (DEUTERONOMY 4:15)

**B. Any material representation of God will corrupt.** ***Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure***, the likeness of male or female, ***The likeness of any*** beast that *is* on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that *is* in the waters beneath the earth: (DEUTERONOMY 4:16-18)

**D. Do not take risk idolatry by implication; clever explanations are admissions of guilt.** 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. (DEUTERONOMY 4:19)

**E. God redeemed His people that they might be holy.** 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. (DEUTERONOMY 4:20) ***along with*** For I *am* the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I *am* holy: neither shall ye defile yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For ***I am the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.*** (LEVITICUS 11:44-45)

**F. God holds those in authority responsible when things go wrong.** 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: But ***I must die in this land***, I must not go over Jordan: but ye shall go over, and possess that good land. (DEUTERONOMY 4:21-22)

### II. God Will Do What It Takes to Eliminate Idolatry

**A. God consumes impurity.** ***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. For ***the LORD thy God is a consuming fire***, even a jealous God. (DEUTERONOMY 4:23-24)

**B. Time and custom can never excuse what God abominates.** ***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: 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.*** (DEUTERONOMY 4:25-26)

**C. However, when the evil comes restoration will still be possible for the repentant.** 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. And ***there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's***

**hands**, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell. **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.** (DEUTERONOMY 4:27-29) Here is the context for the Babylonian captivity and the restoration under Ezra and Zerubbabel.

**D. God's mercy to the repentant is greater than sin.** **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; (For the LORD thy God is a merciful God;) he will not forsake thee**, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which he swore unto them. (DEUTERONOMY 4:30-31)

### III. Remember the Context of Biblical Life

**A. Nothing in human experience compares to redemptive history.** For **ask now of the days that are past**, which were before thee, **since the day that God created man upon the earth**, and ask from the one side of heaven unto the other, **whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is**, or hath been heard like it? **Did ever people hear the voice of God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as thou hast heard, and live? Or hath God assayed to go and take him a nation from the midst of another nation, by temptations, by signs, and by wonders, and by war, and by a mighty hand, and by a stretched out arm, and by great terrors, according to all that the LORD your God did for you in Egypt before your eyes?** (DEUTERONOMY 4:32-34)

**B. Redemptive history teaches the love of God.** **Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God; there is none else beside him.** Out of heaven he made thee to hear his voice, that he might instruct thee: and upon earth he shewed thee his great fire; and **thou heardest his words out of the midst of the fire.** And because **he loved thy fathers**, therefore **he chose their seed after them**, and brought thee out in his sight with his mighty power out of Egypt; **To drive out nations from before thee greater and mightier than thou art, to bring thee in**, to give thee their land *for* an inheritance, as *it is* this day. (DEUTERONOMY 4:35-38)

**C. Focus on God and what He wants; everything else will fall into place.** Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; **I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.** (ISAIAH 44:6) **along with Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee** from that time, and have declared *it*? **ye are even my witnesses. Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.** (ISAIAH 44:8)

**D. Remember, obey, and prosper.** Know therefore this day, and consider *it* in thine heart, that **the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: there is none else.** Thou shalt **keep therefore his statutes**, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, **that it may go well with thee**, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong *thy* days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever. (DEUTERONOMY 4:39-40)