

No Other Gods

By Steve Pruitt

Don't worship any other god, because I, the LORD, the Jealous One, am a jealous God.

Exodus 34:14 NCV

To the Israelites the ark of the covenant represented God's presence among them. The Israelites carried the ark with them into battle, and it preceded the Israelites into the Jordan river as they entered the promised land. In 1 Samuel we read of an instance when the children of Israel presumed on God when they brought the ark into battle. They felt sure that with the ark present victory was imminent. Yet, because of the wickedness of the high priest's two sons Israel lost the battle, and the ark was captured by the Philistines.

The Philistines took the ark and placed it in the temple beside their god Dagan. When they came to the temple early the next morning they found Dagan lying on its face before the ark of God. So they took it and set it up again. The next morning they arrived at the temple only to find Dagan lying on its face again before the ark of God. This time, however, the head of Dagan and the palms of its hands were broken off at the threshold of the temple; only the torso was left intact.

The Philistines had taken the God of the universe and attempted to add him to the worship of their idol Dagan, but it didn't work. The children of Israel made a similar mistake. They had not repented of their wickedness, but thought God would rescue them from the Philistines just because the ark was present. Their worship was directed toward the ark of God instead of toward the God of the ark. The ark had become an idol to Israel.

So many Christians today have turned their attention toward careers, sports, television and hobbies. Worship, prayer, bible study and Christian service have fallen to the bottom of the priority list. Like Dagan, whose head and hands were broken before God, their minds are filled with earthly things and their hands are busy doing for self. Some Christians have even allowed their traditional worship, prayer and bible study to take the place of an intimate relationship with the Father.

God commanded Israel to have no other gods before him. The same is true today for those who are called by his name. God is not something we add to our life, he is our life. All other objects of worship must bow to him. He will have all of our worship or none of our worship.

What have you allowed to take the Father's place in your affections? What gets most of your attention? Ask the Father to make you jealous for him.

NOTES: _____

Scriptures for meditation:

- Matthew 10:37
- Matthew 6:21
- Colossians 3:1-2
- Deuteronomy 5:9