

The First Commandment

This article is from the "Among Friends" section of the Church of God Big Sandy's Web site, churchofgodbig sandy.com. It was posted for the weekend of Oct. 26, 2019.

By Dave Havir

BIG SANDY, Texas—We as believers are thankful that we are saved by grace. In fact, we should reflect our appreciation by giving much thought and attention into recognizing God's expectations for us.

We can reflect back to the time in the Old Testament when the children of Israel were brought out of the land of Egypt—the house of bondage (Exodus 20:1-2). We remember that God gave them instructions about how to live (verses 3-17).

Let's spend some time considering the first commandment.

Exodus 20:3—"You shall have no other gods before Me."

The gods of Egypt

Back at that time, God had just recently given instructions about the 10 plagues and their deliverance from those plagues.

When God spoke to Moses and Aaron (in Exodus 12:1-20), He said a direct statement about a purpose of the 10th plague (in verse 12).

He said: "I will execute judgment against all the gods of Egypt. I am the Eternal."

The gods of the nations

The Eternal was not only concerned that the Israelites would follow the weak gods of Egypt. He was likewise concerned that they would follow the weak gods of all the nations surrounding them.

Moses wrote of a warning from God.

Deuteronomy 12:29-31—"When the LORD your God cuts off from before you the nations which you go to dispossess, and you displace them and dwell in their land, take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them, after they are destroyed from before you, and that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.' You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way; for every abomination to the LORD which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods."

God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob

There are many scriptures that mention the promises that God made to Abraham (including Genesis 12:1-3, Genesis 17:1-14 and Genesis 22:15-18).

God repeated those promises to Isaac (Genesis 26:2-5) and to Jacob (Genesis 28:10-15).

When God spoke to Moses at Horeb (Exodus 3:1-6), He identified Himself as "the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob" (verse 6).

Later in the New Testament, the Sadducees questioned Jesus Christ (Matthew 22:23-32). In Christ's answer (verse 32), He referred to the same wording as in Exodus 3:6.

Then, He added a powerful statement: "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (also verse 32).

Living God

There are many wonderful scriptures that remind us that we worship a living God. Here are only a few.

Acts 14:15—"Men, why are you doing these things? We also are men with the same nature as you, and preach to you that you should turn from these useless things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them."

2 Corinthians 6:16—"And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.' "

1 Thessalonians 1:9—"For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."

1 Timothy 6:17—"Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy."

Hebrews 9:14—"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?"