

Psalm 115

This chapter is about comparing the only real God, who we see in the bible, to all of the idols.

I am the Lord, and there is no other; There is no God besides Me. (Isaiah 45:5)

There are a number of ways that man idolizes things. It can be accommodated by a religion that licenses his desired selfish behavior (multiple wives, becoming a god himself, authorization to kill others, being considered a good person, being considered wise, getting high, etc...). Idolatry (to adore something) can also come by how we spend our time, talent and treasure. These are telltales that reveal our priorities. Kings and people in power have more ability to accumulate these tempting things:

...you shall surely set a king over you whom the Lord your God chooses; one from among your brethren you shall set as king over you; you may not set a foreigner over you, who is not your brother. But he shall not multiply horses for himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt to multiply horses, for the Lord has said to you, 'You shall not return that way again.' Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself. (Deuteronomy 17:15-17)

Ultimately, we all are born with things that we desire to obtain. We can trust God to provide; or we can chase these *mirages of happiness*:

Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. (1 John 4:15-16)

Read Psalm 115:1-2: God deserves the unshared glory. Who gets the glory in my life? Is my life really a platform for God, or for me? Do I long to tell others about what God did for me; or do I long to share how well that I am doing something? How many of my acquaintances know that I am a Christian? We may not see ourselves as *glory hounds*; but we naturally derive satisfaction from being considered *worthy*. God told Eve that men like Adam *crave respect*.

We are born with a desire to lead. An idol is ultimately a reflection of *what I can do*. Christianity is unique in that it tells us that *God must do it all for us*. I have been in situations where I felt like I had the opportunity, experience, skill and timing to successfully proceed. This high expectation unexpectedly led to a severe humbling.

Unless the Lord builds the house, They labor in vain who build it; Unless the Lord guards the city, The watchman stays awake in vain. (Psalm 127:1)

The scriptures are called *a sword*; because the truth hurts. Followers of Jesus have to yield these natural impulses to one who is greater. We can accept the truth and yield to God's plan; or we can pretend that everything is alright. I may be seldom in doubt; but I am often wrong.

There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death. (Proverbs 14:12)

That is one reason that we are told to only concern ourselves with today. God is driving the bus. We are not the navigator. I have a tendency to go from passenger to driver without even recognizing what is happening.

What happens to men who step into the spotlight to receive much control and glory? We can follow the lives of rock stars, Hollywood stars, pro athletes, successful business tycoons, and government leaders. Many times they begin to believe in the inflated version of themselves. Other people try to curry favor with them and be like them. In a sense, they become prisoners to their own imagination and success. They often experience manic depression, like King Solomon. He did not deny himself anything that his flesh desired. That experiment led to deep depression and he ultimately lost much of his father's kingdom.

"Vanity of vanities," says the Preacher; "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." What profit has a man from all his labor In which he toils under the sun? (Ecclesiastes 1"2-3)

The scriptures tell us that our abilities and opportunities are a gift to be used wisely. The only thing that we control are our decisions...not the results. We are to have a more sober view of our lives. What does it mean to say that Jesus is *my Lord and savior*? It means that he is providing all of the instruction, direction and deliverances for my life. It means that I yield my choices and my will. It means that I have figured out that I cannot save myself or deliver myself. God made me, and he is keeping me alive. My eternity is in

God's hands. All of today's activities, opportunities and results are in his hands. I place God's plan over my plans.

To say that "*I believe in God*" does not technically mean that a person is saved. Salvation is not just mentally agreeing that the bible is true. I have to trust it for my future, and obey it, and commit to it.

You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! (James 2:19)

We need to be *born again* to be saved. That means that we need to be born from heaven. Men do not like to be told to start all over again. There is a dormant spiritual component inside of our body and the soul is awakened... and the Holy Spirit takes up residence inside of us. The Holy Spirit is not supposed to just be a passenger. He is the pilot. It takes a lot of trust to let someone drive my life. That is why personal failures and health concerns often accompany salvation. We are just not otherwise ready to give up what we consider *a good thing*.

Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3)

We are a walking billboard of our faith decisions. Am I a walking tale of warning to those who have overridden God's promptings to the self will? Am I under God's control; or is my self-will leading me each day? The children of Israel wandered around and wasted their lives in the desert. They separated from the world; but they did not look to God for their hope and dreams. The most miserable believers are those who can no longer find satisfaction in this world; and yet they are afraid to let God take them someplace unknown.

Idolatry is ultimately just yielding to my own will. The satanic bible is just about doing what you feel like doing; without consulting God. An idol, by definition, is *the work of man's hands*. It is not a mystery that all of the world religions appeal to something inside of us. They are a license to do what we want with impunity. The idols and world religions have been about: strength in war or justified domination of others, agricultural fertility and crop yields, sexual freedom and the resulting justification in terminating unwanted infants, personal perfection, becoming a god ourselves, wealth, and personal greatness. Our flesh is our ultimate enemy. The demons just capitalize on our willingness

to make bad trades. A catalyst is a chemical that causes a likely eventual reaction to happen now. The demons study our lives and passions closely for years. They craft special traps baited with our personal goals.

But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death. (James 1:14-15)

The bible tells us that there is actually no such thing as an idol or other religion. Demons just hide behind these cartoon figures (like a puppeteer behind a puppet). Satan doesn't care if you are in Islam or if you are a Rastafarian, or into New Age and earth worship.

What am I saying then? That an idol is anything, or what is offered to idols is anything? Rather, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God, and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. (1 Corinthians 10:19-20)

Read Psalm 115:3-8: The ancient idols (Dagon, Baal, Ashteroth, Zeus, Buddah and Hindu idols, etc...had hands and feet and mouths and ears, like their craftsmen. A god should be far greater than his creations; and much different. We tend to make artificial gods like ourselves. That makes man a god-maker. This is ridiculous. You can literally trace every world religion back to its origins. It is obviously man made. For example, Islam is the result of one man's attempt to use religion to dominate and steal and kill to obtain control. Muhammad's family worshipped approximately 200 gods. He chose the moon god. He killed and stole from whoever did not embrace his view.

There are more subtle ways that this can happen. That was what God had to show Job; when Job declared that God was being unfair. Job was putting himself in a place to assess and judge God.

When you ask a person if they are going to heaven they state their opinion based on their own logic. They say things like: "I am a good person", or "I have not hurt anyone", etc... They might reject the bible; but they have a clear idea on what they consider *worthy living* and what ground rules justifies *a good eternity*. That is an example of the law of salvation that they have manufactured for themselves (if such a thing were possible). They make provisions for their own tastes and preferred way of living. They approve things that they do that even infringe on others' rights. Whatever new age ideas they support become incorporated into their *moral code*. This pop culture has adopted new

features into its moral code such as: environmentalism, alternate lifestyles, alternate religions, and other things.

That very moral code that unbelievers promote becomes their own accountability. They call Christians hypocrites; but they cannot keep their own moral code with any intellectual honesty. Every person is a hypocrite to some degree. Those who promote free-choice advocate the abortion rights of a woman. Who advocates the rights of that child within her? Why is that non-voting child disposable? How is that any different from terminating an inconvenient 5 year old's life? In the end; they just want freedom to live with impunity and exercise their self will without restriction. The trap of ultimate godless freedom is that nobody will respect your life either. We think that we are getting away with something; but we are crafting our own trap. It will all come to roost in my life in the same way that we subject others to our rules. God uses *poetic justice*.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. (Galatians 6:7-8)

For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified); for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them (Romans 2:12-15)

To truly be God, he has to see all of our flaws. To be a loving God, he has to correct our mistakes and bad choices.

Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us, and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them, but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness. Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Hebrews 12:9-11)

I have been in the word since High School. I have made efforts to advance in my walk with God. Even so, I frequently find myself in uncomfortable predicaments. I say that I am trusting God to *drive the bus*; but I still lose sleep over upcoming responsibilities. You would think that after God has delivered me a thousand times that I would stop worrying about tomorrow. This dynamic forces me to go forward in my faith.

Read Psalm 115:9-18: God is in the process of killing our idols. The Ten Plagues in Egypt were all about demonstrating that the gods of Egypt could not deliver them. The Nile River was their source of livelihood and sustenance. They worshiped it as a god. God turned it to blood. They worshiped the sun. God darkened it. They worshiped the gods of weather. God wiped out their crops and cattle with hail. They worshiped frogs and flies and other things. God stomped on all of them in a very public way. Normally God will test us with personal desperation to show us that our gods are useless to deliver us.

The bible says that we devove in our thinking when we turn to idolatry.

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man—and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. (Romans 1:18-27)

When we say that the wolf is to be worshiped on a totem pole, we lose our ability to reason like a man. We become extremely short-term in our thinking. We vote for people

who will support our unbridled lifestyle. We are no longer circumspect of how our actions are ruining our lives and our nation...because we only care about ourselves.

This is what is happening in our country today. People ask how our people could vote for child-like leaders who are effectively performing treason and crippling us.

“But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: “Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country. “Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. “Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. “Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. “The Lord will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me. The Lord will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. The Lord will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever; with the sword, with scorching,[g] and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish. And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. The Lord will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. “The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth. Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away. The Lord will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. The Lord will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you. “You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes. Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and you shall have no one to rescue them. Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all day long; and there shall be no

*strength in your hand. A nation whom you have not known shall eat the fruit of your land and the produce of your labor, and you shall be only oppressed and crushed continually. So you shall be driven mad because of the sight which your eyes see. The Lord will strike you in the knees and on the legs with severe boils which cannot be healed, and from the sole of your foot to the top of your head. “The Lord will bring you and the king whom you set over you to a nation which neither you nor your fathers have known, and there you shall serve other gods—wood and stone. And you shall become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword among all nations where the Lord will drive you. “You shall carry much seed out to the field but gather little in, for the locust shall consume it. You shall plant vineyards and tend them, but you shall neither drink of the wine nor gather the grapes; for the worms shall eat them. You shall have olive trees throughout all your territory, but you shall not anoint yourself with the oil; for your olives shall drop off. You shall beget sons and daughters, but they shall not be yours; for they shall go into captivity. Locusts shall]consume all your trees and the produce of your land. “The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower. He shall lend to you, but you shall not lend to him; he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail. “Moreover all these curses shall come upon you and pursue and overtake you, until you are destroyed, because you [m]did not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to keep His commandments and His statutes which He commanded you. And they shall be upon you for a sign and a wonder, and on your descendants forever.
(Deuteronomy 28:15-45)*

God makes it obvious when we are going the wrong way. The problem is that we increase our resolve to keep going as things get tough.