

Invisible God | Pastor Steve Wells | 08.01.2021
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Exodus 20:1-6 New Living Translation

“1 Then God gave the people all these instructions:

2 “I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. 3 “You must not have any other god but me. 4 “You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. 5 You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. 6 But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.”

An idol is an inferior substitute for an infinite God.

Characteristics of Idolatry:

- Anything in our lives that we put before God.
- Anything we turn to it for HELP, COMFORT, RESCUE, PEACE, PROVISION, more... rather than to God.
- Anything that we make SACRIFICES FOR or SURRENDER OURSELVES TO.

Read Isaiah 44:6-20 aloud and answer the following questions:

- Why do we think the idols that we created will help us?
- What does this passage say about idols and the people who make them?
- Why do you think the Israelites felt the need to make idols when they had seen the mighty works of God and had experienced His provision for them - first hand? (hint: **Exodus 32:1**)
- In **Isaiah 44:14-17** What two things does the man do with the idol he created?
- Can you think of any ways in which YOU have worshipped something in this way - where you have turned to it for HELP, RESCUE, DELIVERANCE or to EASE YOUR MENTAL STATE, TAKE AWAY STRESS, MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER?
- In Isaiah 44 - God gave the man the tree for good & useful purposes - He never intended it to be a source of RESCUE, WORSHIP or OBJECT OF PRAYER. What are some things that God has created that are purposeful, that have been distorted and abused for other purposes?

Reread verses 18-20

- Discuss with your group the futility and foolishness of idolatry. Try to uncover the reason why so many fall into the trap of such foolishness. Why is this SO MUCH easier to see in others than in yourself?

Isaiah 44:6-20

The Foolishness of Idols

6 This is what the Lord says—Israel’s King and Redeemer, the Lord of Heaven’s Armies:

“I am the First and the Last;
there is no other God.

7 Who is like me?

Let him step forward and prove to you his power.

Let him do as I have done since ancient times
when I established a people and explained its future.

8 Do not tremble; do not be afraid.

Did I not proclaim my purposes for you long ago?

You are my witnesses—is there any other God?

No! There is no other Rock—not one!”

9 How foolish are those who manufacture idols.

These prized objects are really worthless.

The people who worship idols don’t know this,
so they are all put to shame.

10 Who but a fool would make his own god—
an idol that cannot help him one bit?

11 All who worship idols will be disgraced
along with all these craftsmen—mere humans—who claim they can make a god.

They may all stand together,
but they will stand in terror and shame.

12 The blacksmith stands at his forge to make a sharp tool,

pounding and shaping it with all his might.

His work makes him hungry and weak.

It makes him thirsty and faint.

13 Then the wood-carver measures a block of wood and draws a pattern on it.

He works with chisel and plane
and carves it into a human figure.

He gives it human beauty
and puts it in a little shrine.

14 He cuts down cedars;
he selects the cypress and the oak;

he plants the pine in the forest
to be nourished by the rain.

15 Then he uses part of the wood to make a fire.

With it he warms himself and bakes his bread.
Then—yes, it’s true—he takes the rest of it
and makes himself a god to worship!

He makes an idol
and bows down in front of it!

16 He burns part of the tree to roast his meat
and to keep himself warm.

He says, “Ah, that fire feels good.”

17 Then he takes what’s left
and makes his god: a carved idol!

He falls down in front of it,
worshiping and praying to it.

“Rescue me!” he says.

“You are my god!”

18 Such stupidity and ignorance!

Their eyes are closed, and they cannot see.

Their minds are shut, and they cannot think.

19 The person who made the idol never stops to reflect,

“Why, it’s just a block of wood!

I burned half of it for heat
and used it to bake my bread and roast my meat.

How can the rest of it be a god?

Should I bow down to worship a piece of wood?”

20 The poor, deluded fool feeds on ashes.

He trusts something that can’t help him at all.

Yet he cannot bring himself to ask,

“Is this idol that I’m holding in my hand a lie?”