



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond

V24 N26

June 26, 2022

TEN WORDS

"1/The One and Only "

Exodus 20:3; 34:13

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Worship

I worship God for who he is and what he has done for me.

"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; 7 for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care."

Psalms 95:6-7



Why is
worship a
human need?

We live in a world that increasingly believes it is too mature for worship. Scientific discoveries, technological advancements and educational expansion are buying up much of the public square, leaving little room for the supernatural. Science seems to be cornering the marketplace of ideas and people of faith are finding it increasingly difficult to find places where they can convincingly share their ideals. Many people are disillusioned by faith with many walking away from church. "Nones" or people who have chosen to have no faith are on the rise. Popular culture seems to be flushing all things religious. Atheism, the belief there is no god, is presented in our day as the most rational way to approach life. "An atheist in this sense of philosophical naturalist is somebody who believes there is nothing beyond the natural, physical world, no supernatural creative intelligence lurking behind the observable universe, no soul that outlasts the body and no miracles—except in the sense of natural phenomena that we don't yet understand" (Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*, 35). Given enough time, the "philosophical naturalist" will figure all things out and no longer need a god to explain the world.

In much of our modern world, God appears dead and all is pronounced secular. That is until you go to world of cinema. Gods are "alive and well" in the realm of 21st century entertainment. Marvel, DC, Disney Plus, Apple TV, Netflix and Amazon Prime are all awash with new creations of the theological. Hundreds of millions of dollars are flowing into entertainment media coffers from hordes of people consuming the supernatural. Wonder Woman's origin story is from Greek mythology. Thor and Loki are from the Norse pantheon. Dr. Strange uses spells to help Spider-Man. Peter Quill is the child of a celestial being and an earthly mother. He becomes known as Starlord and resurrects from an ill-timed death and serves as a Guardian of the Galaxy. Avengers are now Eternals. If secular humanism is our tick-

et to the future, Hollywood is not buying. In 2019 alone, the Marvel Cinematic Universe amassed over five billion dollars through its film endeavors. Worship is alive and well on our planet. Movie theaters and home cinemas are our new cathedrals. Atheists have not stamped out the "God Delusion." Instead, they have created a "god vacuum" that ticket buyers and media subscribers have willingly filled.

Humans, whether ivy tower elites or cave dwelling primitives, will always worship. Because we are created in the image of God, we will never erase our need to connect with our Creator. Even when atheism becomes the official position of a government, people will often fall into the cultish practice of emperor or empire worship. Instead of fighting our need to worship or worshipping anything and everything, a wise person would do well to figure out how to worship well.

Worship begins with an object. As humans we are compelled to worship something. Some will think that worshipping all things is the best move. But that logic quickly devolves to self-worship. If we are worshipping many things, then we are picking and choosing the "winners and losers" and we become our own god or the ultimate power over our own choices. We would do well to find the best thing or the best person to worship. Embracing many gods leads to self-exaltation. Acceptance of one God is an act of humility. Seeking the One True God may cost me much and may challenge all of my vices and fears. And yet this is the true path of true worship. Finding the truth and following the truth is not science. In reality it is worship.

The God of the Bible warns us against the danger of "no gods" (Psalms 14:1) and of many gods (Exodus 20:3). The One True God will not tolerate other gods "before" him. What are you doing to fill this "worship vacuum" in your soul? Are you trying to fill it with science? Are you trying to flood it with superheroes? What would happen if you actually worshiped the One True God?



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read Exodus 20:3 and 34:14

20:3 *You shall have no other gods before me.*

34:14 *Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*

Read a Complementary Passage Deuteronomy 6:13-15

13 *Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.* 14 *Do not follow other gods, the gods of the peoples around you;* 15 *for the LORD your God, who is among you, is a jealous God and his anger will burn against you, and he will destroy you from the face of the land.*

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Circle the recipient of the commandment in v. 3.
- Underline the words that are used for worship in v. 3.
- Double underline the words that show the allowed number of gods beyond the LORD in v. 3.
- Draw a box around the word that shows that God is a person and not impersonal power in v. 3.
- Circle the name for God found in 34:14.
- Underline the phrase that provides the reason for the commandment given in v. 14.
- Place brackets around each phrase in Dt 6:13 that provides a positive way to interact with the One True God.
- Double underline the prohibitive expression in v. 14.
- Draw an arrow connecting the two prepositions of placement found in vv. 14-15.
- Draw a line from the phrases that are the same in Ex 34:14 and Dt 6:15.
- Circle each use of "you" and "your" in Dt 6:13-15. .

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What is one thing you do not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. What presuppositions are included in the first commandment (v. 3)?
2. How can a person “have a god(s)?
3. How can someone have a god “before” the One True God?
4. Why do you think the first commandment of the Ten Commandments relates to how many gods people worship?
5. Describe the contrast found between the placement of gods and the LORD your God in Deuteronomy 6:14-15.
6. What concept is introduced in Exodus 34:14 and Deuteronomy 6:15 as a reason for the first commandment?
How is this a good thing?
7. Describe some problems that arise from worshipping more than one god.
8. Deuteronomy 6:15 is severe. How could a loving God act this way?
9. How does Jesus condense and prioritize all of God’s commandments (Mark 12:28-34)?
10. Jesus affirmed the existence of one God (Mark 12:28-34). How can Christians obey the first of the Ten Commandments while also worshipping God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit?

Commentary On The Text

God's "Ten Words" or "Ten Commandments" begin with a law regarding himself. The foundation of the Law, given to Israel, is based upon a proper understanding and approach to the Giver of the Law. Following God's way requires that people follow only God and only his way. This first commandment assumes that the people of Israel have been exposed to many other gods who made many other claims upon them. Following a god or many gods is acknowledgment of supreme or ultimate power. Loyalty, faithfulness, obedience and love are all wrapped up in the choice of following of a deity or deities. To "have a god" is to worship, obey, adore and revere that god. The God of Exodus, who redeemed his people and brought them to himself, would not allow other gods to steal allegiance, affection or devotion. The first law of God presupposes that God himself is the greatest and worthy of ultimate devotion and praise.

"The first of the ten commandments is basic to the nine that follow it and to the relationship the Decalogue is designed to insure. It sets forth an expectation of absolute priority, a first and fundamental requirement of those who desire to enter into the covenant relationship with Yahweh. MT reads, literally, 'It (or There) is not to be to you (singular) other gods in my Presence.' The singular verb and the singular subject and indirect object, along with the plural direct object, "gods," make the application of the command unmistakably clear. There is not to be even one other god (Ex 34:14 even reduces 'other gods' to the singular ['any other god']), each single member of the covenant community is specifically involved, and there is no place where this expectation is invalid, since there is no place from which Yahweh's Presence is barred... This first of the commandments, in sum, is the essential foundation for the building of the covenant community. Yahweh had opened himself to a special relationship with Israel, but that relationship could develop only if Israel committed themselves to Yahweh alone. Yahweh had rescued them and freed them, delivered them and guided them, then come to them. The next step, if there was to be a next step, belonged to them. If they were to remain in his presence, they were not to have other gods" (John I. Durham, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 3, *Exodus*, 284-285).

This first law of God introduces the concept of monotheism. This is the doctrine that emphasizes that there is only one God and that all other claims to deity are false and fraudulent. "Israel owed its primary fealty to God, and 'distinguished Israel from all the other peoples of antiquity.' Because Israel existed in a polytheistic, pagan world which proliferated images, the covenant's first commandment begins, not with the philosophical-theological argument that Yahweh is the only true God, but the only one to which Israel owed its allegiance. This is due in the first place to the difficulty of wording 'a command of monotheism without referring to other deities,' and, in the second place, because this relationship established by the covenant would, through practice, teach Israel the fact that there is only one true God" (Randall C. Bailey, *Exodus*, The College Press NIV Com-

mentary, 219).

The command to "have no other gods" may acknowledge the phenomenon of other claims to "god-status" but does not establish the reality of other gods. The charge to not have other gods "before" Yahweh suggests henotheism, the belief that there are many gods, but only the chief or head god should be worshiped. The introduction of this first commandment addresses polytheistic world of the Israelites without establishing the truth claims of that religious system. God is the only god; God is alone One (Dt 6:4). Only he should be worshiped.

God is further described as being a "jealous God" (Ex 20:5; 34:14; Dt 6:15). This name of God introduces the concept of God's passion or love for his people. Like a spouse, God does not wish his love or his loved ones to trample or dishonor that love relationship with detractors or destroyers. Jealousy may be understood as petty or infantile among humans, especially when applied to possessions or reputations. But when applied to covenants of love, jealousy is warranted and expected. A lover who is not jealous to some degree when a committed partner violates a love covenant is deficient and defective. God as the ultimate deity is the ultimate lover and he will protect his loved ones from thieves and destroyers.

Jesus, in the New Testament, demonstrated allegiance to this first commandment (Mk 12:28-34). His reminder of God's Oneness ("the Lord is one") and his call to comprehensive love for God ("all your heart...") echoed this idea of one God and no other gods before this one God. Jesus made these statements in the Temple of God and after making such claims, no one asked him any further questions (Mark 12:34). His affirmation of monotheism silenced his temple objectors.

Christians are often challenged because of their belief in the Trinity; that God exists as three in one. God the Father, God the Son and God the Spirit, to many, sounds like three gods, not one god. How can Christians claim to be monotheists, believers in one God, when they pray to three members of a Trinity? There are many answers to this alleged contradiction. Perhaps the best answer is the very nature of God himself. God is love (1Jn 4:16) and this essential characteristic of God puts him in a complex category that outstrips the binary designation of "God" or "not God." If God is eternal (Isa 40:28), then he has been a loving God eternally (Ps 100:5). But whom did God love before he created creatures to love? If God had no one to love before creation, how could he eternally be love? If he needed to create in order to love, then his love was dependent upon his creation and this would negate his self-sufficiency as God. Yet, if God were eternally multidimensional or multi-personal, then love between the persons of God (Father, Son and Spirit) would be eternally present and active even before his creation. God is one in essence. He is one as God. But as three in person, God is able to express love in these persons while remaining one in his essence. God (monotheism) is love (Trinity) as a profound expression of God's eternal character. This understanding about the unity and multidimensional nature of God enables Christians to be monotheists worshipping God in both his simplicity and complexity.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 3 *No* “The negative is emphatic, since it stands at the beginning of this verse” (Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus. Vol 2, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary*, 38). “This form is the apodictic negative in Hebrew, an emphatic form of prohibition. It is used especially in enforcing divine commands. There is, therefore, no uncertainty about the fact that God does not want the Hebrews to break this command... The negative command implies a positive response. In other words, the Hebrews were not merely to shun other gods. Not having other deities demands total surrender and consecration to the one true God. Yahweh requires that he alone be exalted by his people, and he claims exclusive possession of them” (John D. Currid, *A Study Commentary on Exodus: Exodus 19–40. Vol. 2, EP Study Commentary*, 36).

v. 3 *you* “This direct speech personally addresses the reader in the second person, ‘you.’ Israel recited and remembered the exodus event as the basis of their monotheism. While others worshiped minor gods or competed for the attention of God’s people, the Lord had no equal (Deut. 4:35, 37). The assumption was that the Lord would deliver each new generation from slavery to other gods and those who would control them. In the same way, this command also declared all human power to be relative. Neither was the individual to be his or her own god, a slave to the ‘self’ and its fulfillment. This command insisted instead that the true and sustained freedom of the created people of God was, and would be, established and maintained when you have no other gods ‘before me’ (lit., ‘before my face’)” (James K. Bruckner, *Exodus*, UBCS, 181–182).

v. 3 *other gods* “But one is asking the wrong question of the text if one asks whether Exod. 20:3 teaches henotheism or monotheism. The command is not a catechism, and it does not raise doctrinal or theoretical issues. That is, it simply does not address the question of monotheism. What it does is to demand absolute loyalty to YHWH. It does not matter whether or not the average Israelite could give a satisfactory apologetic for the proposition that YHWH exists but Baal is the work of human imagination. That Israelite is still commanded to serve YHWH alone and have nothing to do with any other deity. No deference to any other god, the sort of religious respect that a pagan would routinely give toward many gods other than his patron deity, was allowed to the Israelite. Any homage to any other god is done ‘in YHWH’s face,’ that is, it constitutes a direct insult to YHWH” (Duane A. Garrett, *A Commentary on Exodus*, Kregel Exegetical Library, 474).

v. 3 *gods* “The word ‘elōhīm carries the connotation of ‘supernatural beings,’ including angels. Accordingly, this first word/commandment implicitly acknowledges that there are many ‘gods’ (nonhuman, nonearthly beings) in the same sense that Ps 82 does (or that Jesus does in John 10:34–36) but at the same time demands that only Yahweh be worshiped as the sole divinity, or God. All other god’s (super-natural beings such as angels) are to be understood and appreciated for their roles in the

universe, but only Yahweh is divine” (Douglas K. Stuart, *Exodus*, vol. 2, NAC, 449).

Ex 20:3 *before me* “Suggests that the law is focused on worship. To be ‘before the face of God’ indicates divine presence. The divine beings, including the Satan, appear ‘before the face of God’ in the heavenly council in the opening scenes of the book of Job (Job 1:12; 2:7). Humans appear before the face of God in worship. God states in a context of worship: ‘When you come to appear before me [i.e., ‘before my face’]’ (Isa 1:12). Hannah (1 Sam 1:22) enters the sanctuary at Shiloh to appear before the face of Yahweh. Zechariah 8:21–22 describes a pilgrimage to the Jerusalem temple where worshipers will appear before the face of God. The law of cult centralization in Deuteronomy requires all males to journey to the temple (‘the place of the name’) to appear before the face of Yahweh (Deut 16:16)” (Thomas B. Dozeman, *Commentary on Exodus*, ECC, 481).

v. 14 *Jealous* “God names himself with the metaphor Jealous, indicating that Israel’s faithfulness is a matter close to the divine heart. This is not simply a formal matter with God, it touches God’s very emotional life. It has to do not only with what God expects from Israel but, with an inescapable reference to the divine inwardness, what God feels for the people—jealousy by definition has both an inner and an outer reference. But the inner reference is the prior one. God cares deeply about Israel and, because of that, cares about what Israel does with its allegiances. This is a serious matter indeed. But Israel stands as the forgiven people of Yahweh, and God will go with this people into the future, come what may” (Terence E. Fretheim, *Exodus. Interpretation, a Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*, 309–310).

Dt 6:14 *not follow* “The second refers to the temptation to follow other gods, the gods of the people around you (v. 14). This recalls the first commandment at 5:6–7, and relates primarily to prospective idolatry within the land of Canaan which Israel is about to enter (13:6–7; 20:16–18; 31:16). The expression to follow other gods may well be derived from the ritual of processions after an idol. In the extra-biblical treaties, to go after has the idea of serving as a vassal. Therefore, if Israel forgot God, the temptation would be to show allegiance to Canaanite gods, and reap any benefits they could from them” (Edward J. Woods, *Deuteronomy: An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries, 138).

v. 15 *jealous* “Yahweh is an impassionate God (‘ēlqannā’; NIV, ‘jealous God’), zealous for his honor and jealous toward his covenant partner. Thus, Moses adds, should Israel betray him by going after other gods, he will destroy them off the face of the earth (Num. 11:1–3, 33; cf. also 25:3–4; Deut. 9:22). In short, if Yahweh’s people behave like Canaanites, they may expect the fate of the Canaanites. The God in their midst prefers to act for their good, but by the terms of the covenant he is not obligated to those whose devotion is compromised” (Daniel I. Block, *The NIV Application Commentary: Deuteronomy*, 193).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

As the foundation of your obedience, worship God alone, allowing nothing to compete with his priority in your heart and life.

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

I am a forgetful person. As much as I would like to blame it on “mom-brain” or simply having too many things to remember at once, I think that most of us could agree that forgetfulness is just a symptom of having a “human-brain.” As I read verse 3 of Exodus 20, I couldn’t help but notice God’s reminder to the Israelites in verses 1 and 2, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” Recently in our home group, we have been sharing our personal testimonies. It has been such a blessed reminder of God’s goodness through all of the difficult struggles, as well as the good times! When we remember what God has done in the past we can bring our focus back to who He is, and why He is the only one worthy of our allegiance. When we see the areas where we have given our allegiance to something (or someone) in addition to the one true God, He will show us why it wasn’t worth it. Parents, as you seek to impress upon the hearts of your children that God is the only one worthy of worship and affection and that they are His image-bearers, I pray that you will examine your life and model for them a heart that is conformed to His image on a daily basis. Allow the Lord to show you any areas where you may be dividing your allegiance and affections. May the gods of our sinful desires be put to death! We are praying for you!

**Scrolls guest written by Amanda Vaughan, Basix Coordinator*

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Exodus 20:3; 34:14.

1. What is the first commandment?
2. How does God describe Himself in these verses?
3. How does God describe Himself in Isaiah 42:8?
4. How is this the same or different from our Exodus passages?

What Do You Think?

Oftentimes we view jealousy as sinful. Why does God describe himself as jealous? Is there such a thing as righteous jealousy?

What Do You Do?

Spend some time memorizing the 10 Commandments as a family this week. Make it fun! Write out each one on a piece of construction paper and decorate them together. Hang them in a central focal point in your home as a reminder to work on your memorization.

CORE COMPETENCY: Worship

I celebrate God for who He is and what He has done for me.

MEMORY VERSE: Colossians 3:12

“Therefore as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.”

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- ☐ I completed my Bible Study
- ☐ I memorized this week’s verse
- ☐ I brought my Bible to church
- ☐ I brought a friend



CHILD’S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)

I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)

I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)

I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)

I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)

I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)

I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)

I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)

I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Eric Wright (B.A. Biblical Studies, Faithway College, Th.M. Pastoral Ministry, Dallas Theological Seminary) Eric served as pastor in churches in Michigan and Texas for 15 years. He currently serves as a business administrator for a local medical practice. Eric has ministered for over 10 years internationally in Southeast Asia teaching the Gospel of Mark to seminary students and volunteers locally with International Students Inc. at UT Arlington.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

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BIBLE CHURCH**

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