

# THE SABBATH SCOOP

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## To Whom Did God Give the 10 Commandments?

*Were the 10 commandments given only to the Jews? Were they given to the whole world? Do they apply to us?*

By Gregory Dullum  
Part 3

Many people think the 10 commandments are old fashioned, Jewish, or simply are not meant to be used as a guide for Christian living in the 21st century. If God were speaking the 10 commandments from Mount Sinai, they would ask, “Are you talking to ME?”

To whom did God give the 10 commandments? To Moses? To the Jews? To the nation of Israel? To all people everywhere? Let’s go back and see to whom God gave the 10 commandments, and who needs to obey them.

The first 19 chapters of Exodus tell us how God delivered the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and brought them before Mount Sinai. Then, amid fire, smoke and thunder, God spoke the 10 commandments. To whom were they addressed?

### To Whom Did God Speak?

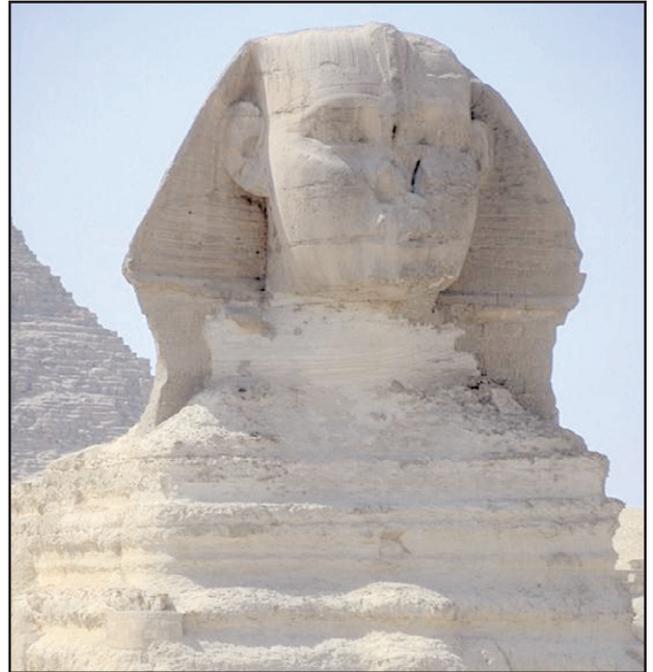
“And God spoke all these words, saying: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex. 20:1-3).

That lets you and me off the hook, right? We *never* have been EGYPTIAN SLAVES. So this passage isn’t speaking to us today, is it? Isn’t it addressed *only* to the ISRAELITES back then? And not even to *all of them*, for we can’t expect *children* to understand and obey, can we? *Kids will be kids*, and they don’t have the maturity to understand spiritual matters—right?

Couldn’t we conclude that the 10

None of us have been slaves in Egypt, home to the Sphynx. So that means the 10 commandments are not for us—right?

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commandments were given to a group of ADULT Israelites *whom God rescued from Egyptian slavery*? That would let us off the hook, wouldn’t it? We wouldn’t have to keep the 10 commandments, because they weren’t meant for us; they were meant for those ancient adult Israelites who lived a long time ago. And they are all DEAD.

Yes, we *could* draw that conclusion. But we would be DEAD WRONG.

### Children Were Included

In Deuteronomy 5, Moses repeated the 10 commandments. This was 40 years after God spoke them from Mount Sinai. Israel had been wandering in the wilderness during those years and almost all the adults who heard God speak the 10 commandments were dead. Moses, of course, was still alive. He is speaking to the children who had grown up. What did he tell them?

“And Moses called all Israel, and he said to them: ‘Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. The LORD your God made a covenant with us in Horeb’ ” (vv. 1-2). Moses told them, “God made the covenant with us”—it was NOT made with *their parents*. He

clarified his statement in the next verse. “The LORD did not make this covenant with your fathers, but with us, those who are here today, all of us who are alive” (v. 3).

The 10 commandments are not for the DEAD but for the LIVING!

If we are ALIVE, then we need to *pay attention to these words*. Let’s go back to Exodus 20 and look a little closer at those words which God spoke.

### Who Spoke?

“I am the LORD your God...” is how God introduced Himself. This was not Zeus. This was not Mars. It was not Ra or Baal. This was the LORD. In Part 1 we discussed how the name “LORD” comes from the Hebrew YHWH and means “I AM” or “I AM WHO I AM.”

While *no other god exists*—they are all figments of mankind’s imagination—the TRUE God TRULY exists, has *always* existed, and *causes* everything else to exist. His introduction tells us, “I am eternal. I am self-existent. I am speaking.” What does He say to us?

**TO WHOM GIVEN?**

Continued on Page 2

## To Whom Given?

Continued from Page 1

God says, “I am the LORD *your* God.” He is OUR God!

OUR God is *different* from ALL other gods! People around us may have no god, many different gods, or may have ideas about a god that they have made in their own image. None of their ideas about their gods are REAL. The *only* God who *really exists* says He is OUR God.

### What God Did for Us

God has addressed us *personally*, so let’s ask Him a personal question. “If You are MY God, and You *really* exist, what have YOU DONE *for me*?”

Here is his reply: “who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.”

We may *think* we have never been to Egypt; that we have never been in bondage. But we have—we just didn’t realize it!

The Apostle Paul wrote, “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether sin to death, or of obedience to righteousness?... And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness” (Rom. 6:16, 18). Paul compared our Christian baptism to being crucified and buried—and we now live a new life *freed from slavery to sin*: “knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin. For he who has died has been freed from sin” (vv. 6-7).

Egypt, in the Bible, is at times used as a *symbol* for SIN. We ALL have been *slaves to sin*! God has *set us free* from OUR SINS! We may not have been to *physical* Egypt, but we have all been in *spiritual* Egypt. And then God did something for us—for each one of us individually. He called us (John 6:44, Mat. 22:14, 1 Pet. 2:9). He opened our eyes to the truth (2 Cor. 4:4, Luke 4:18, 1 Cor. 2:7-11). We saw a need to change our lifestyles (Acts 2:37-39, Mat. 19:17). We stopped eating pork (Lev. 11:2-3, 7). We started keeping the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8). God brought us into contact with his church and placed us where He wants us to be (1 Cor. 12:18). We were chosen by God to be part of a spiritual temple, fitly joined together (Eph. 2:19-22, 4:16). GOD DID THAT. We didn’t open our own eyes. We didn’t find God’s church on our own. Just as God physically brought the ancient Israelites out of Egyptian slavery, God brought us out of spiritual slavery. These 10 commandments apply to every one of us, because every one of us has been brought out of a sinful past by the real, liv-

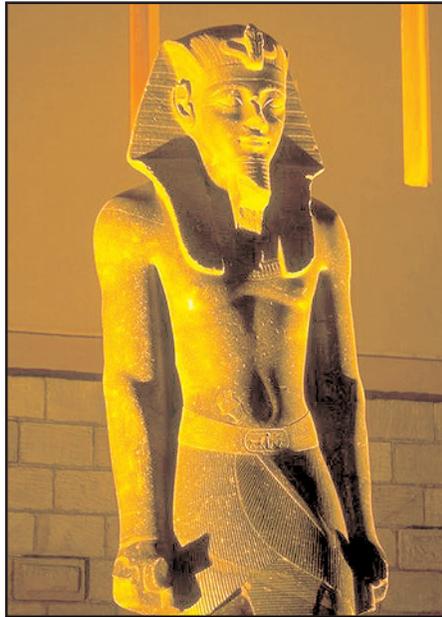


photo © COSMI

None of us have served as slaves under an Egyptian taskmaster. So are the 10 commandments binding on us—or only upon those who were slaves long ago in that faraway land? We can know the answer!

ing God.

When God spoke the 10 commandments, to whom was he talking? Was He addressing the whole nation of Israel? When we read Exodus 20 in modern English, we can only speculate. But in Hebrew and in other languages, we can know for certain!

### Different Meanings of ‘You’

In English, we use the same word “you” whether we are whispering sweet nothings to our spouse in private, or addressing a large assembly of people we have never met. This is not so in other languages. Take French, for instance. In French, there are two forms of “you.” They are “tu” and “vous.” You may be familiar with the French phrases, “Je t’aime” (I love you), which uses “tu” (abbreviated as t’) and “Parlez-vous français?” (Do you speak French?), which uses “vous.” What is the difference between “tu” and “vous”?

“Tu is informal. It is used to address ONE PERSON with whom you have a *close relationship*. Vous is the singular form used in other cases. To address more than one person, one always uses vous” (*Entre Amis* by Michael D. Oates and Larbi Oukada, 2002, p. 14, emphasis added).

Let’s be sure we understand this IMPORTANT point. The ONLY time we would use *tu* is when speaking to one person with

whom we have a close, personal relationship. If we are speaking to someone we don’t know well, or to more than one person, including a large group, we would use the word *vous*.

This principle is true in Hebrew as well. “Hebrew, unlike English, distinguishes between singular and plural forms of address. The ‘you’ is not the collective, Southern *y’all* [you all] but rather the singular personal *You*. Although delivered to the people who stood at Mount Sinai, it is addressed to each individual of all subsequent generations. These words were not spoken just to the generation of Moses but are addressed to you and me today, because God continues to offer his covenant for those who hear the call and are *willing* to respond” (*The Ten Commandments: The Significance of God’s Laws in Everyday Life* by Dr. Laura Schlessinger and Rabbi Stewart Vogel, 1998, p. 15).

Can we confirm which Hebrew word for “you” God used when He said, “You shall...” and “You shall not...” in the 10 commandments—the *personal, intimate*, “you” or the *formal and plural* “you”?

I don’t read Hebrew, but I can read French. If God used the personal, intimate form of “you” when He spoke in Hebrew, it would be translated as “tu” (instead of “vous”) in French. How is it translated in a French Bible?

Exodus 20:2 reads, “Je suis l’Eternal [I am the Eternal], ton Dieu, [your God]...” By using *ton*, which is based upon *tu* instead of *votre* which is a form of *vous*, God describes Himself, not as the God of a nation or the God of a large group, but the PERSONAL God of each one of us *individually*. He seeks a close, personal relationship with every one of us on an individual basis.

### TO WHOM GIVEN?

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## The SABBATH SCOOP

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# Do We Have Any Other Gods Before God?

*Idolatry was a problem in ancient Israel and is a problem in the world today. Is it a problem with us?*

By Gregory Dullum  
Part 4

It can be difficult to distinguish between the first and second commandments. In fact, the Roman Catholic Church combines them, and divides the 10th, so it still has 10 commandments but they are numbered differently.

## 1st & 2nd Commands Different

After introducing Himself to us, God gives his first commandment: “You shall have no other gods before Me.” The second commandment is similar: “You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them...” (Ex. 20:1-5).

What is the difference between these two commandments?

The first is a commandment against having ANY OTHER god. It doesn't matter what that god is—it could be a pagan god represented by statues such as the Egyptian sun-god Ra. It could be a god not represented by statues, such as the Native American's “Great Spirit.” It could be the worship of nature, which is the cornerstone of paganism, and involves no statues. Or, it could be immaterial concepts such as fame and fortune. We're all aware of the TV show, “American Idol” (what a name!) which promises fame, and we all have heard the expression, “Money is his god.”

The second commandment is not a prohibition against having other gods—it is a command NOT to make *physical representations* of any god—including the TRUE God—and bowing before them. The second commandment bars us from carving a statue of Ra and bowing before it to worship a god banned by the first commandment. It also commands us not to make a statue representing the real God and pray before it. The second commandment prohibits having and praying to statues of Jesus, Mary, or any “saint.”

No true Christian bows before carved images and prays to false deities. So should we concern ourselves with a prohibition against idolatry—or can we skip this one?

If we went into your neighbors' homes, would we find idols? In our American cities (as well as most cities in modern Western civilization), we don't see columned temples in city squares dedicated to Zeus or Diana. Does that mean the U.S. is NOT an idolatrous nation? Or is idolatry



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None of us will put down this magazine to go into another room and bow before a statue representing a false god. In modern Western society, we don't see people worshiping in temples built to pagan gods. And yet, our society is idolatrous! And if we are not careful, we, too, can be guilty of breaking the first commandment!

as big a problem today as ever—in our nation—and maybe even in our Christian lives—if we know where to look?

## Idolatry in Ancient Israel

Ancient Israel was given the 10 commandments by God at Mount Sinai—but as time went on, idolatry became a MAJOR problem in ancient Israel.

God said through the prophet Jeremiah, “‘Has a nation changed its gods, which are not gods? But My people have changed their Glory for what does not profit. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be very desolate,’ says the LORD. ‘For My people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns—broken cisterns that can hold no water’” (Jer. 2:11-13).

The Israelites committed two transgressions; they: 1) forgot the true God; and 2) loved false gods that were not real and could not save.

The Israelites were not fearful of hav-

ing forgotten the true God! He told them, “‘Your own wickedness will correct you, and your backsliding will reprove you. Know therefore and see that it is an evil and bitter thing that you have forsaken the LORD your God, and the fear of Me is not in you,’ says the LORD God of hosts” (v. 19).

Idolatry was *everywhere* in ancient Israel. God had “married” Israel (Ezek. 16:1-14), and He compared her worship of pagan gods to harlotry: “When on every high hill and under every green tree you lay down, playing the harlot” (Jer. 2:20).

What was the attitude of these Israelites as they broke the first commandment? God continued, “O generation, see the word of the LORD! Have I been a wilderness to Israel, or a land of darkness? Why do My people say, ‘We are lords; we will come no more to You?’” (v. 31). They didn't have a humble, teachable attitude! They said, in other words, “We are our own gods! We will decide for ourselves what is right and wrong. We will determine for ourselves our own rules of conduct.”

God concluded by commenting, “Can a virgin forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet My people have forgotten Me days without number” (v. 32).

## Is Our Nation Idolatrous Today?

Can we see how these scriptures apply to our nation around us today? How many Americans (or whatever your nationality is) are truly seeking God and loving Him with all their hearts, souls and might? Or are they their own lords, living their lives as they see fit, not really wanting God (or anyone else) to tell them what to do?

Idolatry is NOT just bowing before idols.

### OTHER GODS

Continued on Page 4

## Know Your Bible

By Charles Nenner

1. What did the dove bring back so Noah knew the flood had receded?
2. What was Aaron's occupation?
3. What was Abraham's occupation?
4. What was Boaz's occupation?
5. What was Paul's occupation?

(Answers on page 5)

## Other Gods

Continued from Page 3

We may not see idolatry in our nation because we don't see carved idols in our neighbor's homes. We don't have great temples with huge statues of Zeus and Diana. If we limit our view of idolatry to bowing before idols (which is actually addressed by the *second* commandment), we miss the point of the *first* commandment!

### Idolatry Is Misplaced Love

To have no other gods before the true God means TO PUT GOD FIRST. It means to LOVE God *more than anything else*. God told the Israelites, "You shall love the LORD with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deut. 6:5). What does it mean to love the LORD? Does it mean to be giddy and ecstatic, and have warm, fuzzy feelings toward God?

To understand the word "love" in the Hebrew language, we must realize that "the emphasis is placed upon the will and its actions.... To love was ... primarily... to point one's will in a given direction, to act in a certain fashion.... No man is free to choose whether or not to love; he is free only to choose what he shall love. And that choice is decisive in determining what he shall become. That is why the whole Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi, was preoccupied with the problem of idolatry, which was not essentially a bowing before images of wood or stone, but the investment of one's love in the wrong place. To love means to obey, to serve, to be grasped by concern for the welfare of another. It does not mean to feel giddy or ecstatic" (*Sex and Love in the Bible* by William Graham Cole, 1959, pp. 55- 56).

Idolatry is more than bowing before an idol. It is loving the *WRONG* thing. It is investing one's LOVE *in the wrong place*.

Where should our love and our whole lives be invested? The first commandment answers this question: "You shall have no other gods before Me."

When asked what was the greatest commandment, Jesus Christ expanded on this, quoting from Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18: " 'You shall love the LORD Your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" (Mark 12:30). Matthew's account adds this statement from Jesus, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Mat. 22:40).

Are the people in our nation around us investing all their love—all of their time

and all of their energy—in obeying God and treating their neighbors properly? Or are they investing their love in the wrong places—seeking *fame, fortune, power, escapism, pleasure, etc.*?

Most Americans don't bow down before carved images of a pagan deity. But they do invest their love in the wrong places—in cars, in electronic gadgets, in seeking money, fame, power and pleasure. Our nation is not seeking God! It is INDEED AN IDOLATROUS NATION!

It is easier to see the sins of others than to spot our own sins (Mat. 7:3). Can there be idolatry *within* the Church of God? Can true Christians be guilty of idolatry?

We don't bow down before idols of wood and stone. But can we be guilty of investing our love in wrong places?

### What Do We Love Most?

How do we know *WHAT* we love? How do we know if we love God *FIRST* in our lives or if *something else* is *NUMBER ONE*? In Mat. 6:21, Jesus tells us, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." We spend our money on what we love.

Does that mean we should sell all we have and give everything to God? No. But if we look at the things upon which we spend our *disposable* income, we have an indication of what objects or activities we *truly* love.

What else can we spend *besides money*? We spend our *TIME*. What do we spend *most of our waking time* doing? That gives us an indication of what we love.

God does not expect us to quit our jobs, leave our families and live like hermits on a mountaintop dedicating every second of our lives to Him in prayer and Bible study and meditation. He does, however, expect us to dedicate at least 1/7 of our time (the weekly Sabbath plus seven annual feasts) and up to 3/10 of our income (first, second and third tithes plus holy day offerings) to Him. Is there something that prevents us from doing that? That something may have become our god!

### Living in the World

God doesn't want *ALL* of our time and *ALL* of our money. He expects us to work six out of seven days to provide for our loved ones. If we don't provide for our families, we are worse than an unbeliever (1 Tim. 5:8). We are not to become hermits. Jesus, on his last Passover, prayed to God that He would not take us *out of the world*. He said, "Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world.... I do not pray that You should take them out of the world but that You should keep them from the evil one" (John 17:11, 15).

We are to *live our daily lives* in our



NAPS photo

The medical profession has a proper role to play in our health. But we must be careful not to practically worship the "men in white."

neighborhoods, on our jobs, in our schools, *GUIDED BY GOD'S LAWS*. The laws of God show us how to love God and how to love our fellow man.

*Everything we do* should be a reflection of how Christ would do it if He were in our place. He should be in our thoughts *continually* as we drive down the road, as we buy and sell, as we interact with others, even when we're alone. Our conduct should be as right and pure as it can be. Are we shining lights in a dark world?

### What Comes Before Obedience?

We must *NOT* allow *anything* to come between us and obedience to God. If we do, we are investing our love in the wrong place and we are as guilty of idolatry as the ancient Israelites.

We must not cling to physical things in this world. We must *be willing* to give up *EVERYTHING*, including our own lives. Notice these words from Jesus: "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.... So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple" (Luke 14:26, 33).

Are we really supposed to *HATE* our closest family members? No, but we should not *love them more* than we love God. Our love for God must be *FIRST*—*greater* than our love of family—or we are essentially turning our family members into our gods!

Must we *truly* give up *EVERYTHING* we own? No, God may not require that of us, but we must *be willing to*. Otherwise, we make the object we cling to into our god. Our attitude—our mind set—must be that

we PUT GOD FIRST.

Paul gives us further instructions on how to put God first: “Therefore be followers of God as dear children. And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma” (Eph. 5:1-2).

How should we walk? We should walk with love for God and for fellow man. These two principles should govern *everything* we THINK, SAY and DO.

Paul continued, “but fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints” (v. 3).

Paul used the word “covetousness.” What is it? It is desiring something that doesn’t belong to us. It is one example of investing our love in the wrong place. Can “covetousness” be another word for “idolatry?” “For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God” (v. 5). Paul says a covetous man is an idolater. If we invest our love in the wrong place, we are indeed an idolater.

### Other Forms of Idolatry

There are other forms of idolatry. They involve giving what is God’s prerogative to someone or something else.

For example, God tells us emphatically, “I am the LORD who heals you” (Ex. 15:20). God is the One “who heals all your diseases” (Ps. 103:3). When a Christian is sick, he is instructed to “call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up” (James 5:14-15).

DOCTORS DON’T HEAL! All they can do is assist the BODY in its *God-given* ability to *heal itself*. We must not elevate the medical profession to the God-level of HEALER.

“It is God’s prerogative to *heal!* Very few professing Christians today really go to God for *healing* when they are sick. Instead, they have learned to look up to and practically *worship* the ‘men in white’ with their *knives and drugs and pills*” (*The Ten Commandments* by Roderick C. Meredith, 1968, p. 21).

Only God can *miraculously* HEAL us! We can help our bodies to heal themselves by turning to 1) self-care, 2) pharmaceuticals and 3) surgical procedures. We can use these *in addition* to turning to God. But if we use these three *INSTEAD* of turning to God, we are committing a form of idolatry.

God wants us to *care for our world* and NOT destroy the environment. He put Adam in the Garden of Eden “to tend and keep it”

(Gen. 2:15). We are told to be kind to animals (Deut. 22:6, 25:24), give the land rest (Lev. 25:4), and not pollute our environment with human excrement (Deut. 23:13).

However, we are to care for nature from a *SUPERIOR* position of *dominion over it* (Gen. 1:28, Ps. 115:16). If we consider ourselves to be *just another animal*, equal to other aspects of nature—or inferior to them—we fall into a category of *WORSHIPING* nature (Rom. 1:21-25.) Committing this form of idolatry are evolutionists, extreme environmentalists and religious pagans. We must *CARE* for our environment without *WORSHIPING* it.

There are many in society who look to the stars for guidance in their lives—they read horoscopes and live their lives according to their advice. This is a form of worshiping sun moon and stars (Deut. 4:19).

Taking part in celebrations that have origins in pagan customs (such as New Year’s Day, Groundhog’s Day, Valentine’s Day, Mardi Gras, Ash Wednesday, Lent, Easter, May Day, St. John’s Day, Halloween and Christmas) are a form of idolatry (Deut. 12:30-32).

And to whom do we pray? Jesus told us to Whom we *should* pray: “In this manner, therefore, pray: ‘Our Father in heaven...’ ” (Mat. 6:9). He told us to pray to the Father, not to Him, not to Mary or to any saint. Since Jesus is God, it is not idolatrous to occasionally address Him, but it is idolatrous to pray to *anyone* else!

There are undoubtedly other forms of idolatry. Perhaps you can think of more.

### Idolatry Has Serious Consequences

Idolatry carries serious consequences! “Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them” (Eph. 5:6-7).

Because of idolatry, God punished ancient Israel and Judah with captivity. Because of idolatry, God will punish America, Britain and other English-speaking Commonwealth nations. Because of idolatry, the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Idolatry can keep us out of the kingdom of God.

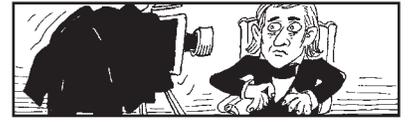
We must each examine *our own* lives. We can be idolaters without realizing it, if we invest our love, our money, our time, or our energy in the wrong place.

Let’s not be idolaters. Let’s love God with all our hearts, soul, mind and strength.

### Know Your Bible Answers

1) Olive leaf. 2) High priest. 3) Shepherd and herdsman. 4). Farmer. 5) Tentmaker.

## Fun Fact



Drawing and Fun Fact are courtesy of NAPS

The first photograph of a president while in office was taken of President James K. Polk in 1849 by Matthew Brady.

## Witerature

*Wit and wisdom to complement the truths of the Holy Bible can be found in secular writings.*

*Being George Washington* by Glenn Beck, Candlewick Press, 2011, pp. 106-107.

### A Good Wife

“[Benedict] Arnold found himself in difficult financial circumstances and Peggy’s high style of living demanded much more money than Arnold’s modest officer’s income could provide. ...she was aware of the entire plot from the get-go and she was the one who convinced her husband to switch sides....

“[I]t tells a lot about the man who picked a loyal and honorable woman to be his own wife. Not only was Martha Washington uninterested in social climbing and intrigue, but she was a selfless supporter of her husband and the American cause.

“[Peggy] Shippen might have been a socialite comfortable cavorting with both sides, but Martha was the type of woman who visited her husband every winter, even in the bitter cold of Valley Forge....

It may be a cliché to say that behind every great man is a great woman, but I’d like to see someone disprove the theory.... [I]magine for a moment if the roles had been reversed. What if George Washington had married Peggy Shippen and Benedict Arnold had married Martha Custis? Do you think both men would’ve turned out the same way?

**Prov. 12:4, 19:13, 21:9, 31:23**

## Memory Scripture

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men.” —**Mat. 5:13**

## To Whom Given?

Continued from Page 2

Continuing the verse in French, God says, “qui t’ai fait sortir du pays d’Égypte, de la maison de servitude [who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage].”

In verse 3, God gives his first commandment: “Tu n’auras pas d’autres dieux devant ma face [You shall not have other gods before my face].”

We won’t take up space to repeat any more French, but *every one* of the 10 commandments uses the word “tu” instead of “vous.” God did NOT give the 10 commandments to *the whole world*. If He had, He would have used the plural Hebrew word that would have been translated “vous” in French. He did NOT give them to a *large group of people*. He gave them to YOU and to ME as *individuals*. He gave them to every individual whom He has called out of a life of bondage to sin.

### Our Personal Obligation

If we hold up the commandments as a standard for OTHER people to keep, and we ignore our personal obligation to keep the letter of the law as given in Exodus 20 and the spirit of the law as Christ magnified it in the New Testament, we are doing an injustice to the words God spoke. We should, every one of us, take these words to heart as if God is speaking to us, alone, as an individual. Because that is how God spoke them.

Please clearly understand the point I am making. I’m not saying THE WORLD does not need to keep the commandments. The commandments are binding upon everyone who is *alive*. Even if God is not calling someone at this time, if that person obeys the commandments, it will be well with him or her (Rom. 2:13-14).

I want us to realize that if WE fail to *completely* observe a commandment properly, *it matters to God*. We can’t hide our sin. Just because we may be one person in a group (i.e., church, organization or congregation), we can’t slip our sins past God. These commandments were NOT given to be kept as a *group project* but as *individual assignments*, given to each one of us.

In the months ahead as we examine ourselves prior to Passover, let’s study how to better keep the 10 commandments, and all of God’s law, and every instruction in the Bible. God’s laws are not for the world. They are not for the nation. They are not for YOU ALL. They are not for VOUS. They are for TU: for every one of us on an individual basis as we develop a closer relationship with the only true God. He’s talking to US. Are we listening?



## Diseases Threaten to Spread Around World

Three stories were published recently emphasizing the fact that pestilences are an increasing problem in the world.

“Chronic diseases like cancer and heart disease are rising fast in low- and middle-income countries, striking far younger populations than in rich countries and causing much worse outcomes, according to a new report.

“Deaths from chronic diseases have risen by more than 50 percent in low- and middle-income countries over the past two decades, according to the report, by the Council on Foreign Relations....

“Chronic diseases that are treatable in developed countries are often death sentences in developing countries, the report notes. For example, 90 percent of children with leukemia in high-income countries can be cured, but 90 percent of those with that disease in the world’s 25 poorest countries die from it” (“Chronic Diseases Are Killing More in Poorer Countries” by Sabrina Tavernise, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Dec. 4, 2014, pp. 1-2).

“A deadly epidemic that could have global implications is quietly sweeping India, and among its many victims are tens of thousands of newborns dying because once-miraculous cures no longer work.

“These infants are born with bacterial infections that are resistant to most known antibiotics, and more than 58,000 died last year as a result, a recent study found....

“‘Five years ago, we almost never saw these kinds of infections,’ said Dr. Neelam Kler, chairwoman of the department of neonatology at New Delhi’s Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, one of India’s most prestigious private hospitals. ‘Now, close to 100 percent of the babies referred to us have multidrug resistant infections. It’s scary.’

“‘India’s dreadful sanitation, uncontrolled use of antibiotics and overcrowding coupled with a complete lack of monitoring the problem has created a tsunami of antibiotic resistance that is reaching just about every country in the world,’ said Dr. Timothy R. Walsh, a professor

of microbiology at Cardiff University.

“Indeed, researchers have already found ‘superbugs’ carrying a genetic code first identified in India—NDN1 (or New Delhi metallo-beta lactamase 1)—around the world, including in France, Japan, Oman and the United States” (“‘Superbugs’ Kill India’s Babies and Pose an Overseas Threat” by Gardiner Harris, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Dec. 3, 2014, pp. 1-2).

“Pakistan’s polio crisis has reached new depths this year, health officials say, intensified by a deadly mix of ruthless militant violence, large-scale refugee displacement and political chaos that has cemented the country’s role as the central global incubator of a disease that other conflict-torn countries have managed to hold in check.

“The number of new Pakistani polio cases this year hit 260 this week, four times as many as at the same point last year...” (“Polio Crisis Deepens in Pakistan, With New Cases and Killings” by Declan Walsh, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Nov. 26, 2014, p. 1).

“Pestilences” or disease outbreaks are a sign we are getting close to Christ’s return (Mat. 24:3, 7-8). One of the end-time four horsemen of the apocalypse symbolizes deadly diseases (Rev. 6:7-8).

## Euro Falls Lower

The European currency, the euro, fell to \$1.20 in value (against the U.S. dollar) on Jan. 2, a four-and-a-half-year low.

“Europe’s economy remains stagnant, and November’s inflation rate of 0.3 percent was a blunt reminder of how far Europe’s central bank is from meeting its inflation target of 2 percent” (“Euro Falls Lower as Central Bank Hints at Increase in Stimulus Plan” by Landon Thomas Jr. and Jack Ewing, *The New York Times*, www.nytimes.com, Jan. 2, 2015, p. 1).

A bad German economy was one of the things that propelled Adolph Hitler into power prior to World War II. A Hitler-like ‘beast’ power is prophesied to arise in Europe prior to Christ’s return. This will be the seventh rise of the Holy Roman Empire, and will be a union of 10 kings (Rev. 13:1-18, 17:7-14). Europe’s poor economy may be a contributing factor to the rise of the beast.