

Exodus 20:1-3 – First Commandment

Nobody who does not hate sin, loves Jesus. Nobody knows God, or is a true Christian, unless they are an enemy of sin, and mourn over it. Jesus is the Saviour from sin. But what is sin? Who is a sinner? 1 John 3:4 tells us that “sin is the breaking of the law”. God’s law shows us what God hates and what God loves. The law is not Jewish; it was also taught by Jesus (Matthew 5:17-21) and Paul (Romans 13:8-10). The law is important because by showing us that we are sinners, it shows us that we need Christ, and leads us to him. Today we study the first of the ten commandments, “You shall have no other Gods before me.”

1. There is only one true God

The first reason why we should only worship the God of the Bible is because: there is no other God! Ultimately, only one being can be supreme. We do not have three Presidents, and my country does not have three Queens! There is only one created universe, and one human race – and only one God has made it all. The true God is the God of the Bible. He has shown his power in history, as he remains whilst false gods die and are forgotten. He raised up Jesus from the dead; the empty tomb testifies that this is the true God. We are not free to choose; we must worship this God, or we have broken his first commandment.

2. He really is God

There is no other being like God. A chicken is a type of bird. I am a preacher. But there is nothing to compare God to. He alone is uncreated, everything else is created. We can see his power and beauty in creation. Each day the sun rises, and the rains fall. God upholds every living creature, plant, animal and galaxy, and never grows tired. He upholds us. His power keeps our hearts beating and through him we breathe. He numbers even the hairs of our head (Matthew 10:30). He decided our identities and the day of our birth, and has also decided the day of our death. Everything that happens is by his eternal will (Ephesians 1:11). This God is fully revealed in Jesus Christ. He is God. He raised the dead, walked on water, fed thousands from a few loaves; he is the eternal creator and judge (Colossians 1:15-16). Is this how you look at Jesus Christ? Not just a good man: but the Lord of all.

3. God demands that we honour him as God

If God is God at all, then he is God of all. He demands that we honour him as God, with no other rivals. “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5). What do you love most of all? What comes first in your life? What do you want most of all? That thing is your God! It may be a false God, or it may be the true one. It is not only Hindus who have idols that they set up and bow down to. If we opened your heart, we may find many idols – money, power, a relationship, a hero – who you give yourself more to than you give yourself to the Lord. This first commandment is the foundation for all true worship and true Christianity. We have all fallen far short. The good news is that Jesus Christ perfectly obeyed the Father always (John 8:29), and gave himself to the death of the cross. He gave himself up fully so that our idolatry can be forgiven and we can receive a new, God-centred, life from him.