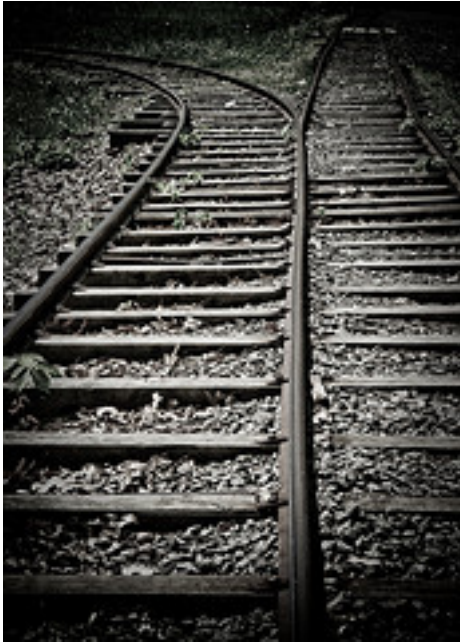


COMMANDMENT #1: NO OTHER GODS

Written by

Read 1 Kings 18:16-39

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



The first commandment isn't fashionable these days. Pantheists say everything is God; atheists say there is no God; followers of New Age and Eastern religions declare themselves to be God. Some people pray to trees and stars and Mother Earth; some pray to dead ancestors; some trust their subconscious or their own infinite potential; some follow pagan gods and goddesses; some count on crystals and occult rituals and spirit guides. Living among such a hodgepodge of religions can be oddly comforting. With so much variety, religion seems to be a matter of private opinion and personal taste. Whatever I happen to believe is right for me.

How disturbing, then, to hear a voice from Mount Sinai thunder, "You shall have no other gods before me." How upsetting to hear a carpenter from Nazareth announce, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Doesn't it sound narrow for the Lord to insist that he alone is God and that he is the only way of truth and life?

We'd rather think that all religions are equally true and that all roads eventually lead to God. We want to be openminded. Indeed, we become so openminded that our brains fall out. The fact is, we cannot replace the Lord with Baal, nor can we blend worship of the one true God with

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worship of Baal. We cannot "waver between two opinions (1 Kings 18:21); we must decide. We must love and serve the Lord alone.

PRAYER--Almighty God, give us an undivided heart. Turn us from false religion and superstition. Guard us, too, from worshiping money, technology, or any other idol. May we adore you alone. Amen.