

# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. PART 1

(Scripture - Exodus 20:1-6)

**Introduction:** Exodus chapter 20 is one of the most quoted passages of the Bible. It just tells us in 10 Commandments, how we ought to live. The first 4 Commandments deal with our relationship with God. But the other six commandments teach us how we ought to interact with others. The most important commandment out of all is the first commandment: *“You shall have no other gods before Me!”*

Most of us are from India, and we have heard our Hindu friends telling us over and over again: all gods are the same? Are they? Exodus 20:3 gives us a definitive answer concerning this false, simplistic conclusion. As a matter of fact, the whole Old Testament brings out who the real God is and it strives to expose the powerless, dumb, and deaf idols that cannot move. Let us understand this passage, and promote this passage as our signature in our email, our Face book, Twitter etc. Today I will just start this subject, and complete it next time.

*Exodus 20:1-3.*

*1Then God spoke all these words, saying,*

*2“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

*3“You shall have no other gods before Me.*

God Himself came down from heaven to speak the following words. The word God in Hebrew is Elohim. It is a noun masculine plural form. It is a majestic plural or royal plural. The singular is Eloah. But Elohim Word can be sometimes referred to “gods” also pointing to the plurality of false gods. But when the Bible says one true God, The singular word Eloah is used. So here, the pluralistic God Word is used to emphasize His majesty, sovereignty, power, and glory with reverence, and utmost respect!

God had to identify Himself constantly. He had to identify in a personal way. I am that same God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Here He reminds them that He is the same God who brought them out of Egypt and from their slavery. We need to be reminded of where we were and who we were. The communion table constantly reminds us that we were sinners, and we were redeemed from the slavery of sin because of Jesus Christ, and now we are the servants of Most High God!

And now God lays down His first commandment!

“You shall have no other gods before me!”

Here the “gods” are referred to as Elohim also!

Please note the word “before me” or before my face!” Everything is before Him only, and there is nothing that He cannot see! First of all, God brought the topic of Egypt first and reminded them that that they were slaves, and He was the one who brought the people out of Egypt. It did not happen accidentally. Second, God warns sternly, you shall have no gods before me! Egypt was filled with idolatrous worship. Before the Israelites start thinking about making those Egyptian idols, God puts a stop to such thinking. You shall have no other god before me! Period. There is room for just one Ultimate God, and no other god. “I will be the only God for you, and you take it or leave it. I will not share my honor and glory with any other gods.” Just like a wife is married to one husband, Israel must be married to God alone. There is no loophole for adultery! But what happened later on in the history of Israel can be a real warning for the whole humanity! Just by trampling over this one Law, Israel paid a very heavy price!

The human beings are attracted to other gods from the beginning of Adam and Eve. Eve listened to the evil god - Satan and fell into sin. People are still listening to this snake's voice, and go after various forms of idolatry:

1. They went after heavenly bodies: sun god, moon god, various stars.
2. They went after the nature: rain, lightning, thunder, air, fire etc. and made gods out of them.
3. They went after demonic powers and angels and made them their gods.
4. They went after all kinds of animals and made them their gods.

*Romans 1:22, 23. **22**Professing to be wise, they became fools, **23**and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.*

Fear was the number one driving force that motivated them to make these forces and objects as idols. They wanted to pacify these gods, and tried to bribe and bargain and make them come to their side so that they may reap favor from them. They refused to look at the creator behind all these things, and started worshipping the much created things itself!

But our God will not put up with these foolishness. He will bring swift punishment, and He will make them stumble in their own darkness of ignorance.

5. We not only make these created things as our gods, we make our own body pleasures as our god also! Sexual desires become our god. Drugs that stimulate our body becomes our god. Alcoholism becomes not only our disease but our god also. Fashion, style can become our god. Our craving for beauty can become our god. For Christians who do not indulge in any of these, their belly can become their own god. We crave to eat all our favorite food all the time, and that can become our god also. Our favorite sports or music can become our god. But our God says, you shall have no other gods before me!

6. From the worldly perspective, we tend to worship many gods also! The career becomes our god. We will put our career first over any activities that are pertaining to God's kingdom! Our education becomes our god. Our children, our pride of life becomes god. We boast about our children's performance, activities, and their accomplishment all the time and we worship their success. Our position and power becomes our god. Our wealth becomes our god also. As a matter of fact, our Lord Jesus Christ gives a stern warning concerning treasures on earth. How hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God! Greed for material things can become an idol also.

7. There are idols in our faith aspect also. Our denomination can become an idol. Their teaching becomes more important than the Word of God. For a fundamentalist in any religion, his own Scripture can become an idol. He will believe only his scripture, and not the fact. The Muslims believe that their Quran is 100 percent God's revelation. (A revelation means something new that was not heard about. But in Quran, most of the stories are copied from the Bible and apocrypha with slight variations). But their Quran denies that Jesus was indeed crucified on the cross, even though Jesus' crucifixion is a historical truth. Their Quran becomes an idol for them because they do not want the truth to be told which contradicts their Quran.

Likewise, Bible can become our idol also. We cling to just one translation, usually King James Version or NIV, and insist that that is the only true Bible. We tend to lean on one particular family of manuscripts rather than comparing with other manuscripts. We fail to recognize man's commandments and opinions versus God's commandments within the Bible. We tend to hold onto one word or one verse in the Bible

rather than comparing that thought with the whole counsel of God and coming to a truthful, valid conclusion.

8. Theologically also, we tend to bring in other gods! In our anxiety to prove that God the Father is not alone God, but Jesus is God also, and the Holy Spirit is also! We have developed a sophisticated theological treatise to prove that God in three persons, and those three persons in one God. We also try to prove that these three persons are coequal, same in substance, essence, and holiness. Even though all these sophisticated theological model may be true, what was the outcome of this fifth century theological ground work?

The church split and became Eastern Orthodox and western church. God raised a man called Mohammad and he came and tried to crush Christians because he thought that we worship more than one God. He slaughtered many of us by the edge of the sword, and now more than one billion Muslims are resisting Christianity and one of the reasons is our trinity doctrine! Did we really have to formulate this doctrine in the fifth century?

There is a beautiful scripture verse that could have resolved this tension!

*Ephesians 4:4, 5. 4There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.*

Here the Trinity is simplified. If we follow this passage we will not go wrong!

While the Muslims come after our Trinitarian belief, the Hindus disregard the first commandment “you shall have no other gods before me”, and they pile up millions of gods, and worship. If we try to correct them to follow just one God, they say, if you worship three gods, why can’t we worship three million gods? Before we can teach them about our complicated Trinitarian systematic theology, they are gone. We are losing another one billion Hindu people because of our own complicated position. Isn’t it time we present a simpler gospel of one Lord, one Spirit, and one God, our Father, and teach them to move away from their idols? Exodus 20:3 should be our signature verse in our google mail, face book, and twitters! Hindus are very vulnerable when it comes to their idol worship. They are standing on their clay feet. It is high time, we teach them about one God! But before teaching them, let us discipline ourselves to refrain from high level theological controversies. I wish someone will take a movie about Israel’s craving for idolatry and the consequences they went through because of it! I wish we could offer online Bible study on idolatry. We preach about Jesus and His sacrifice, we talk about all the heroes of the Bible, but we fail to talk about Israel’s experience with idolatry which is very similar to Hindus experience! Can we tell them about that part of history so that they may start thinking about their idol worship?

### **Conclusion:**

Thou shall have no other gods before me is an important commandment.

1. We all tend to go after all kinds of other gods. It is high time we surrender to one God.
2. There is only one God and our Father of all.
3. There is one Lord, Jesus Christ our Lord, the only Son of God!
4. And there is that one Spirit, the Holy Spirit.
5. Let us keep our faith simple and promote just one God principle!

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