

TO WHOM WILL YOU LIKEN GOD?

Isaiah 40: 18 – “To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?”

Isaiah has declared God to be the Omnipotent Creator and Sustainer of all things and therefore powerful enough to deliver any and all who are in the bondage of Sin, Satan, or Self.

He has declared God to be the Omniscient One who by Knowledge, Wisdom, and Understanding has brought all things into existence and, who by those same attributes sustain all things. He is therefore, Wise enough and intelligent enough to deliver His people from their bondage.

He has also declared God to be absolutely Independent of His creation. They are dependent upon Him but He is not dependent upon them. He is not moved to seek their assistance nor is He moved when He faces their resistance.

In His independence, God declares Himself to have purposely chosen to love and redeem His chosen people.

Since God is declared to be Omnipotent, Omniscient, and Independent, then, the great question arises – “To *whom* will you liken Him?” or “To *what* will you liken Him?”

Isaiah’s point is that if God is the true and eternal God then He cannot be compared to any created thing!

Man and creation are limited, finite, and temporal. God is Infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in all His attributes and perfections.

Since God is true, eternal, and living, then no inanimate thing can be used to properly represent Him!

Psalms 135:15-18 – “The idols of the heathen are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; eyes have they, but they see

not; They have ears, but they hear not; neither is there any breath in their mouths.”

Since God is true and living, then there can be no other god!

This truth is taught and insisted upon throughout the whole of Scriptures.

Deuteronomy 4:39 – “Know therefore this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the LORD he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath: **there is none else.**”

Isaiah 37:16 – “O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, **thou art the God, even thou alone**, of all the kingdoms of the earth: thou hast made heaven and earth.”

Isaiah 43:10-11 – “Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: **before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me.** I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour.”

Isaiah 44:6 & 8 – “Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; **I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God...** Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have not I told thee from that time, and have declared it? ye are even my witnesses. **Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any.**”

John 17:3 – “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee **the only true God**, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.”

What form can show God to be all that God is or represent God as fully as He is revealed in the Scriptures?

This is the first and most important question. It is also the foundational issue regarding all that is called idolatry.

What is idolatry?

Dictionaries agree in one point. They all teach that an idol is an image used as an object of worship or a material effigy that is worshipped as a god.

The Scriptures address this issue from beginning to end. The word idolatry originally meant the *worship of idols, or the worship of false gods by means of idols*. However, this definition does not go far enough. True idolatry is *any worship of false gods, whether by images or otherwise as well as the worship of the true and living God through any visible symbols*.

In the worship of the true God, the symbols make no difference. Whether it is a carving from wood or stone, a molten image made from some metal, or some picture or painting, all are considered idolatry.

Today among those who are professing Christians there is a great neglect in this area. If you are a professing Christian, you must remember that any worship of the true God by the means of any visible image is condemned as idolatry! In fact, **any making of any image that seeks to represent the true God, is sin.**

Exodus 20:4 – “**Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image**, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth”

Moses also reminded the nation of Israel of this when he commanded them not to make an image of the true God in the likeness of a man or a woman.

Deuteronomy 4:15-16 – “Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for **ye saw no manner of similitude** on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: **Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female**”

Any pictures of Jesus Christ, any video, any film, or anything with a picture or image seeking to represent the Lord Jesus Christ by the image of a man is idolatry. Even the very making of the thing is forbidden! Any who participate in them are participating in the sin of idolatry.

God's word says, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." (**I John 5: 21**)

What do the Scriptures teach about the true and living God?

The Scriptures teach God is Eternal.

Man and his idols are created things and are therefore temporary. They, therefore, cannot properly represent the eternal God.

This is Isaiah's argument in **Isaiah 40:19-25**. In this text God reveals, "The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved. Have ye not known? have ye not heard? hath it not been told you from the beginning? have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: That bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Yea, they shall not be planted; yea, they shall not be sown: yea, their stock shall not take root in the earth: and he shall also blow upon them, and they shall wither, and the whirlwind shall take them away as stubble. **To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal?** saith the Holy One."

The Scriptures teach God is Omniscient.

Man and therefore his idols, are subject to ignorance. They therefore cannot properly represent the omniscient God.

This is part of Job's argument in **Job 11:7** where he says, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?"

Man can never come to know the living God by the means of his own efforts – either mental efforts or physical efforts. Left to his own devices, man's best effort in knowing God is the creation of an idol that is deaf, dumb, blind, and impotent.

If any man knows the one true and living God it is because He has, by special and divine revelation, allowed him to come to know God and His ways.

The apostle Matthew records the words of Jesus Christ for us in **Matthew 11:25–27** the words of Jesus Christ on this subject. The Scripture says, “At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, **and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.**”

Man made idols know nothing

Isaiah argues, in **Isaiah 44:9-10** and teaches, “They that make a graven image are all of them vanity; and their delectable things shall not profit; and they are their own witnesses; **they see not, nor know; that they may be ashamed.** Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?”

The Scriptures teach that God is Omnipresent.

Man can only be in one place at a time and he can only see, perceive and gain a certain amount of knowledge from his surroundings. Man made idols can only be in one place at a time and that by the power of their makers or worshippers. They can neither see, nor hear, nor perceive anything. They know nothing and have no ability to gain any knowledge.

Isaiah reminds us of this truth in **Isaiah 46:5-7** when he quotes God saying, “To whom will ye liken me, and make me equal, and compare me, that we may be like? They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the balance, and hire a goldsmith; and he maketh it a god: they fall down, yea, they worship. **They bear him upon the shoulder, they carry him, and set him in his place, and he standeth; from his place shall he not remove:** yea, one shall cry unto him, yet can he not answer, nor save him out of his trouble.”

The Scriptures teach that God is Omnipotent.

In the physical realm as well as in the spiritual realm; we are sustained by God's power. We can do nothing without Him. This is especially true in the spiritual realm. Man is impotent and can do nothing in the spiritual realm. Without the Lord Jesus Christ to help and empower men, they are nothing.

Man made idols have no power to help their makers or their worshippers. They have even less strength to deliver man than the man who has made them.

In **Psalm 50:22** God said, "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and **there be none to deliver.**" Those who have forgotten God and turned to idols may seek help with all their hearts from their idols, but they will not be able to deliver them out of the hand of the living God. When He rises up to judge them, their idols will be cast into hell with them.

None can deliver out of His hand!

The Scriptures teach that God is Invisible.

He is an uncreated and eternal Spirit. The true and living God is not bound by time or space. He exists in the realm of eternity.

Jesus Christ taught in **John 4:24** that "**God is a Spirit:** and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The apostle Paul in **I Timothy 1:17** taught, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, **invisible**, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Man is material and a created being. He has his existence in the realm of time and space. He has fixed boundaries and he is limited to a time span.

Man made idols are even more limited than the man who made them. They too are material and are limited to time and space. Their limitations are built into them by their makers. They can never exceed the limitations of time or space placed upon them by their makers. Idols exist at the whim and will of their makers. Some are made and by some accident of their makers, are broken or marred in some manner.

They are then either quickly destroyed or made over. They exist solely at the will of their makers.

They have eyes but they cannot see. They have ears but they cannot hear. They have hands but they cannot do anything to help those who worship them or hurt those who despise them.

The Scriptures teach that God is Truth.

In **John 14:6** the bible reveals, “Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, **the truth**, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.”

Man is born with a propensity to lie. God reveals this truth in **Psalms 58:3**. The Scriptures declare, “The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, **speaking lies.**”

All idols are manmade attempts to turn the truth of God into a lie.

The apostle Paul wrote this to the churches in Rome. Concerning idolatry, he wrote in **Romans 1:23-25** and said, “And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: **Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator...**”

The Scriptures teach that God is full of Glory.

Man lost his glory when he fell into sin in the Garden of Eden. From that day until now he is covered in the shame of his sin. When men make idols, those idols are an expression of the shame of mankind’s sin. It is a lie in that it does not properly represent the one true and living God.

The prophet Jeremiah said, in **Jeremiah 13:25-26**, “This is thy lot, the portion of thy measures from me, saith the LORD; because **thou hast forgotten me, and trusted in falsehood.** Therefore will I discover thy skirts upon thy face, that thy

shame may appear.”

God, In **Jeremiah 13:25-26** calls the idol, **falsehood**. God calls it a lie!

All manmade idols are man’s effort to change the glory of true and living God into that of the creature. They are, in fact, an attempt to bring God down to the level of His creation.

Again, in **Romans 1:23**, the apostle Paul says, “And **changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man**, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.”

Far from properly representing the true God, the man made image has actually resulted in changing the true God into a lie.

The Scriptures teach that God is Sovereign over all.

He controls the affairs of heaven and of earth. His will and purposes are always accomplished. On the other hand, men are impotent. They very seldom accomplish all that they desire because they lack either the will or the power to do so.

In **Psalms 115:3**, David declares, “But our God is in the heavens: **he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.**”

Man is subject and bound by all that is around him and in a real and true sense not sovereign over anything. He rules neither his life nor his times.

Like those who make them, all idols have no control over the events of time or earth.

David, in **Psalms 115:4-8** teaches us this. He says, “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like

unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.”

What is the conclusion to this whole matter?

The true and living God is God alone. He alone deserves our undivided love and adoration.

In **Matthew 22:36-37** we read, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.”

The true and living God deserves to be trusted for the salvation of our souls. No idol can do anything to save a man from his sins. No false god can forgive a sinner or justify him. No image of the God can help a sinner. God alone is the only one who can save a sinner from the judgment due his sins.

The true and living God deserves to be glorified by our heartfelt dedication to Him in all things. Any devotion given to any idol or image is devotion wasted upon vanity. Our heart-felt worship belongs to one and only one God – the Lord Jesus Christ.