

Theme: By His Sovereignty over history, Yahweh shows He is the only True God, and the only One worthy of our trust, worship, and life.

I. Intro – Traveling to Other Cultures

- A. I loved living in Japan for a year
- B. Different food, architecture, language
- C. But also a different worldview - different gods
- D. This happened to Israel as well
- E. What about the gods of Babylon & nations?

II. The Lord and the gods of This World

- A. Yahweh calls the gods to trial (v21) - parallelism
 - 1. Using legal terminology
 - 2. Yahweh has made His case prior to this
- B. Let the gods be brought in to testify (v22)
 - 1. Irony?? - Let them (NIV - idols) be brought in
 - 2. Test - give past fulfilled prophecies, tell future
 - 3. Nature of pagan 'prophecies' - vague
 - 4. Yahweh - foretold exile, Babylon, return, Cyrus
 - a. Cyrus - Isa 41:2; 44:28
 - b. That is specific prophecy! Can idols do this?
- C. Can the gods do this - or anything? (v23)
 - 1. Again - tell us the future so we can believe (v23)

- 2. Exasperation - do something!!!
- 3. Good or bad - predict & bring blessing or calamity
- 4. This will produce fear of you!!

D. You can't do this - you are nothing!! (v24)

- 1. NIV - less than nothing; might be 'of nothing'
- 2. I think NIV is right - utterly nothing
- 3. Isaiah's taunts to idols (44:12-19)
 - a. God created us - we create idols (vv12-13)
 - b. Same stuff used to burn - you are my god (vv14-17)
 - c. Idols know, see nothing - no help (vv18-19)

E. The foolishness and danger of idolatry (v24)

- a. Detestable, ignorant, nothing (24; 44:9)
- b. We become like what we worship (Ps 115:8; Jer 2:5)
- c. We were made to worship - and be image bearers!!

III. Idolatry in the NT - and Today

- A. Idolatry - more than physical gods (Eph 5:5)
- B. John Calvin - we are idol factories (quote)
- C. Idols of the heart - things that control us
 - 1. Sex - I do what I want - no rules
 - 2. Greed - living for things; loving things/using people

3. Cultural icons - viewing them as super human
4. Reputation - ruled by peoples opinions of us
5. Relationships - clinging to people rather than God (EB)
6. Power - desire to be god ourself, rule others
7. Entertainment - Brave New World

D. Idolatry - control, not enjoyment - Leon Lett story

IV. Applying the Word

A. What idols do we worship?

1. What do I give a value greater than God assigns it?
2. What do I see as giving me meaning more than God?
3. What do I look to for fulfillment more than God?
4. If we think we have none - watch out - deception!

B. Rejecting idolatry - embracing Christ

1. Our heart looks to and fro for fulfillment
2. Our heart runs hither and yon for meaning
3. Our heart searches high and low for true joy
4. All of this is found only in Christ!
5. In Christ God has given His image
6. In Christ we find fulfillment, meaning, joy
7. Reject idolatry - embrace Christ

The Lord and the gods of This World

Isaiah 41:21-24
Ephesians 5:1-7
November 8, 2009
Prayer
Numbers 6:24-26

"Who has stirred up one from the east, calling him in righteousness to his service? He hands nations over to him and subdues kings before him. He turns them to dust with his sword, to windblown chaff with his bow... I the Lord.... Isaiah 41:2, 4

I am the Lord ... who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, "Let it be rebuilt," and of the temple, "Let its foundations be laid."' Isaiah 44:28

The blacksmith takes a tool and works with it in the coals; he shapes an idol with hammers, he forges it with the might of his arm. He gets hungry and loses his strength; he drinks no water and grows faint. 13 The carpenter measures with a line and makes an outline with a marker; he roughs it out with chisels and marks it with compasses. He shapes it in the form of man, of man in all his glory, that it may dwell in a shrine..... 14 He cut down cedars, or perhaps took a cypress or oak. He let it grow among the trees of the forest, or planted a pine, and the rain made it grow. 15 It is man's fuel for burning; some of it he takes and warms himself, he kindles a fire and bakes bread. But he also fashions a god and worships it; he makes an idol and bows down to it..... 16 Half of the wood he burns in the fire; over it he prepares his meal, he roasts his meat and eats his fill. He also warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm; I see the fire." 17 From the rest he makes a god, his idol; he bows down to it and worships. He prays to it and says, "Save me; you are my god."..... 18 They know nothing, they understand nothing; their eyes are plastered over so they cannot see, and their minds closed so they cannot understand. 19 No one stops to think, no one has the knowledge or understanding to say, "Half of it I used for fuel; I even baked bread over its coals, I roasted meat and I ate. Shall I make a detestable thing from what is left? Shall I bow down to a block of wood?" Isaiah 44:12-19

All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame. Isaiah 44:9

Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them. Psalm 115:8

This is what the LORD says: "What fault did your fathers find in me, that they strayed so far from me? They followed worthless idols and became worthless themselves. Jeremiah 2:5

For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person--such a man is an idolater--has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Ephesians 5:5

“The human heart is a factory of idols...Everyone of us is, from his mother’s womb, expert in inventing idols.” John Calvin