THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

**Lesson 2 – The First Commandment: No Other Gods**

**Exodus 20:1-3**

**Introduction**: It is significant that, in verse one, “God spake all these words, saying …” Not only does God give the Ten Commandments in His speaking, but He also reveals about Himself fundamental truth upon which the Commandments are based: “*I am the Lord thy God”* (V2). We explained in the introductory lesson that this is JEHOVAH, the Self-Existent and Self-Sufficient God who is.

Let us think together. The Ten Commandments are called the *moral law*, and they are given by the only One who could give them: Jehovah. Can you imagine one other than Jehovah God presuming upon the practice of establishing morality? He says, “Thou shalt not.” He also says, “Thou shalt.” Whoever establishes what is moral and what is not moral, must himself be perfectly holy. My point is that as God reveals Himself to His creation as the Holy, Self-Sufficient, and Self-Existent One who is, we would naturally expect then, that He also say “Thou shalt” and “Thou shalt not” and so establish morality based upon His own holiness.

Now let’s look into this first Commandment. As we consider it, we understand that there is no need for any other Commandment before this first one is established and understood.

**I.** **EXODUS 20:2-3 WHO GOD IS ELIMINATES THE POSSIBILITY OF THERE BEING ANY OTHER**  **(GOD)**

## V2a The Lord (Jehovah).

(**Note:** A look at the breakdown of “Jehovah” is helpful. It is a combination of three Hebrew words, which may be translated into an English form that leads us to the word *Jehovah*.)

### YEHI = *“He will be”*

### HOVE = *“Being”*

1. HAHYAH = *“He was”*

#### Now take the first syllable of the first word: YEH; middle syllable of the second word: OV; and last syllable of the third word: AH, and you have the name YEHOVAH, meaning *“He that will be; He that is; He that was.”*

## Think about the significance of the name *Jehovah*.

### He is the God Who *will be*; so there can never be another.

1. He is the God Who *is*; there cannot now be another.
2. He is the God Who *was*; there has never been another.

## This is precisely what God has revealed of Himself throughout Scripture.

### Deuteronomy 6:4-5 Jehovah God is ONE. (Note: if there is one, there cannot be two.)

1. Isaiah 44:6 First, last, and “beside Me there is no God.”

### 3. Now there it is! This is either truth or not truth. If it is true, the issue is settled. If it is not true, then throw your Bible away and believe anything you please or nothing at all.

## D. Isaiah 12:5-6 His name is QADOWSH-IYSH; it means “HOLY ONE”!

This is related, of course, to the first Commandment in this sense.

It is not given because there actually exist gods who are in competition. *No!*

It is given because Jehovah alone is God.

**II. “OTHER GODS” ARE THE CREATION OF MAN**

## Exodus 18:10-11 Jethro expresses the heathen concept of gods.

### Moses recounts to Jethro the deliverance from Egypt.

### Jethro was impressed and for now came to the conclusion that this Jehovah is the greatest.

### The idea was that each nation or people may have their own god and the greatest god could be determined by the most dominant nation.

1. Throughout the Old Testament you can find different nations trusting their god for victory over another nation and their god.

## Psalm 96:4-5 The gods of the heathen are idols (created by man).

### See also Isaiah 40-12-28; God is the creator.

### So we see that “*gods*” are created by man.

## C. I Kings 18:21-24 & 38-39 Elijah and the prophets of Baal.

### See V21-24. This is a “contest” between God and the gods.

### In the following verses the prophets of Baal cry, pray, cut themselves, leap on the altar, etc. -but with all their commotion, there was no answer.

### And why was there no answer? Because there was no Baal god to answer. Baal god was the creation of man’s imagination.

### On the other hand, Jehovah answered Elijah (V38). Of course! He was! He is! He shall be!

1. Therefore, back to Exodus 20:2-3, Jehovah declares Himself to be who He is and follows with the most reasonable and logical commandment imaginable: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

# WHAT IS IT TO HAVE OTHER GODS BEFORE GOD?

(**Note:** The following thoughts are borrowed from Thomas Watson, who also said, “I fear upon search, we have more idolaters among us than we are aware of.”)

## “To trust in any thing more than God, is to make it a god.”

### “To trust in the *arm of flesh*, we make it a god.”

### “If we trust in our *wisdom*, we make it a god.”

### “If we trust our *civility*, we make it a god.” (It means if we trust in the fact that we have not done many mean and vile and wicked deeds.)

### “If we trust to our *duties* to save us, we make them a god.”

## B. “To love any thing more than God, is to make it a god.”