

The Doctrine of God: “other gods”

The First Commandment: “You shall have no other gods besides Me.”

Catechism: “We should believe and trust in God above all things.”

Kolb, pp. 30-47

Kinnaman, pp. 26-30

“other gods”

In countries around the world, people pray to many different gods.

- They sometimes receive answers to their prayers.
- They sometimes experience miracles.
- They sometimes are visited by their gods in dreams and visions.
- They sometimes have seen punishments given by gods when the gods are angry.
- They sometimes have seen rituals to control these gods.

What do we say about these gods and these experiences?

I was at a missionary conference in Bangkok. One of our speakers was a convert from Buddhism. She asked us missionaries this question: “What do you say when a Buddhist tells you, ‘I prayed to my god, and he answered my prayer.’?” The group of missionaries was silent.

What is your answer to that question?

I tried a reply. I said, “We could say that sometimes God answers even when He is called by the wrong name.”

What do you think of that reply?

The speaker did not like my answer. She said, “No.” She said, “You should reply: ‘I’m very glad to hear that you have received this answer to your prayer. But now let me tell you about the God who is above all gods.’”

What do you think of her reply?

She went on to explain. She said that we cannot deny people’s experiences. These gods do have power. The Bible talks about them as spirits or devils or Satan. They can help or hurt you, depending on their feelings.

Have you seen the powers of these gods?

Very often there is a belief in these societies that a powerful high god had created the world. This high god became angry at the world for its bad ways and left it. He cannot be reached anymore. The only gods that can be reached are the lower gods. These are the ones you can pray to.

Have you seen that belief in your society?

The teaching of the Bible is about this “God above all gods.” He is the creator of all things. He has seen the bad ways on the earth, but He has not removed Himself. The Bible is the story of what the true God has done for people all through history:

- It is the story of how He loves His people, even when they do bad things.
- It is the story of how God works to bring people close to Him.
- It is the story of how He tries to help them change their bad ways.
- It is the story of how He forgives them and never leaves them.
- It is the story of how He even came to live among them in Jesus.
- It is the story of how He died on the cross to pay the price for their sins.
- It is the story of how He is still with them to hear their prayers and help them.
- It is the story of how He will return at the end of time to bring His children to Him in heaven.

Do you know that story of the true God from the Bible?

This is the story of the Bible about the “God above all gods.” He wants all people to believe and trust in Him alone. Why? :

- Because He alone can help them.
- Because He alone can control the lower gods.
- Because He alone does not ever hurt us.
- Because He alone wants only good for us.
- Because He alone can give us heaven after our death.

God knows we will be hurt if we go to these lower gods. He says, “Trust only in Me. I will not hurt you. I love you.” Only then will we have joy and peace.

Do you believe and trust in God above all things?

Do you want to tell others about this loving “God above all gods?”