

BIBLE

PARALLEL

LINES

Parallel Lines Pt. 2: No Idols

Lev 19:4 *“Do not turn to idols or make metal gods for yourselves. I am the Lord your God.*

Where is the first idol in the Bible? I could make reference to rainbows, towers to the sky, or offerings. There are people who say that the Lord has made a pact to never again flood the earth; however, they will equally say that God won't kill, destroy, and judge because of this pact. In a way it gave these people a license to sin. God is all forgiving. I would suggest that groups today have made an idol out of a rainbow. Exodus 32:23-24 *“They said to me, ‘Make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.’ 24 So I told them, ‘Whoever has any gold jewelry, take it off.’ Then they gave me the gold, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf!”* There have always been things we put our eyes on to replace God.

God gave Moses a staff that had the head of a snake on it. It's an odd symbol for God to use, yet the people had to focus, not on the staff, but on God. Those who kept their eyes on the staff lived. Years later this staff was being worshiped by those people. Some things like staffs and rainbows are given by God. Yet, we tend to take these things and make them a God. It's the reverse: what God intended for good we use for evil. Why does God hate idols? Generally, the Bible does not describe the characters within the Bible story. It's because we can follow Jesus but people want to worship the image of Jesus.

There are parallel lines in the Bible that warn us against idols. Why? It's plainly because we love to put things before God. In our last study I quoted God saying to not have any other Gods "before" him. That word "before" is important. We will spend money before we give to the church. We will eat breakfast before we pray. I will even say that someone will put themselves before serving others. It appears to be so human to put something (anything) before God. It's by no mistake that God mentions idols. Look at the parallel line towards Exodus 20: 4-5 *““You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. 5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them.”*

Imagine religious rulers defending the worldly ruler against a man who claims to be of God. Mark 12:13-17 *“Then they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. 14 And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? 15 Should we pay them, or should we not?” But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it.” 16 And they brought one. Then he said to them, “Whose head is this, and whose title?” They answered, “The emperors.” 17 Jesus said to them, “Give to the emperor the things that are the emperors, and to God the things that are God’s.”*

What I find fascinating about these verses is the metal coin with a picture on it. Jesus recognizes that the emperor has made it his coin. We are to pay tax to him using his coin. Yet, the things of God are to be given in honor of God. Why? It's because we only worship the unseen God. Amazingly enough God is true to himself. He tells us not to worship graven images. God has no image of himself or Jesus. He never wanted us to worship an idol. God knew it

would always end badly. The parallel lines between the Old and New Testament are stunning in regards to idols.

Matthew 6:5-6 *““And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. 6 But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen.”*

Jesus is consistent with idolatry. So is the Bible over all. We get so little description of Moses, David, and even Mary. We worship Jesus because He is the Son of God. Yet, Jesus, Himself, never asked us to worship Him. However, Jesus did know His place in the Divine realm. John 4:24 Jesus says *“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”* Right after this Jesus tells the woman *“I am the Messiah.”* Paul in Acts 19 had to contend with an angry mob of Greek idol makers. Paul too, is consistent in how he viewed idols. Look at Acts 17:24 *“The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live-in temples build by human hands.”* The parallel lines are many when it comes to images of God or any worshiped image. God, our Father in heaven will have none of it.