

BESIDES ME THERE IS NO GOD  
(ISAIAH 44.6-8)

I REMEMBER ONCE HEARING AN ARGUMENT BETWEEN TWO MEN ABOUT THE BALL PLAYER, BABE RUTH. ONE MAN ARGUED THAT THE BABE WAS NOT AS GREAT AS HE SEEMED. BUT THE OTHER MAN SIMPLY SAID, "HEY GUY, THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER RUTH." THE REASON FOR HIS STATEMENT WAS THAT BABE RUTH HAD PROVED HIMSELF THE BEST ON THE BALL FIELD. NOW, LET'S TAKE A LOOK, NOT AT THE BALL PLAYERS, BUT AT THE GODS. THERE ARE MANY OF THEM, BUT WHICH ONE IS THE ONE TRUE GOD? THE PROPHET ISAIAH HAS THE ANSWER: **THUS SAYS THE LORD, THE KING OF ISRAEL AND HIS REDEEMER, THE LORD OF HOSTS: I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST; BESIDES ME THERE IS NO GOD.** THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER GOD, AND THAT STATEMENT IS PROVEN BY HIS DEEDS. DO YOU KNOW OF ANY OTHER GOD WHO ACTUALLY BECAME MAN AND DIED

TO SAVE THE HUMAN RACE? THAT IS OUR GOD, THE CHRISTIAN GOD, THE FATHER, THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT, AND THAT SON OF GOD JUST MENTIONED IS THE REDEEMER, THE ONE WHO PURCHASED ALL OF US FROM THE DEVIL BY SHEDDING HIS BLOOD ON THE CROSS. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT GOD REFERS TO HIMSELF AS **I AM** (EXODUS 3.14). "FOR," SAYS HE, 'I AM THE **BEING**; MANIFESTLY CONTRASTING HIMSELF, 'THE BEING,' WITH THOSE WHO ARE NOT, THAT THOSE WHO HAD UP TO NOW BEEN DECEIVED MIGHT SEE THAT THEY WERE ATTACHING THEMSELVES, NOT TO BEINGS, BUT TO THOSE WHO HAD NO BEING" (JUSTIN MARTYR).

FROM THE DIM CORRIDORS OF ANTIQUITY PEOPLE HAVE ALWAYS FELT THE NEED FOR A GOD. THIS IS EVIDENCED IN HISTORY BY THE THOUSANDS OF STONE AND BRASS STATUES THAT WE CALL IDOLS. THERE WERE IDOLS IN EVERY BUILDING, EVERY TEMPLE, EVERY HOME, AND PEOPLE

EVEN CARRIED THEM IN THEIR POCKETS. BUT THEY WERE USELESS AND FUTILE. TODAY NO SENSIBLE, MODERN PERSON WOULD BOW DOWN TO AN IDOL, BUT IDOLATRY IS STILL WITH US BECAUSE PEOPLE HAVE MADE FOR THEMSELVES THEIR OWN GODS BY THEIR UNBELIEF IN THE ONE TRUE GOD.

RECALL THE WORDS OF MOSES AFTER GOD HAD DESTROYED THE EGYPTIANS IN THE FLOOD: **WHO IS LIKE YOU, O LORD, AMONG THE GODS? WHO IS LIKE YOU, MAJESTIC IN HOLINESS, AWESOME IN GLORIOUS DEEDS, DOING WONDERS? YOU STRETCHED OUT YOUR RIGHT HAND; THE EARTH SWALLOWED THEM** (EXODUS 15.11-12).

“CERTAINLY THE LORD IS NOT ONE GOD AMONG MANY. **I AM THE FIRST AND THE LAST.** AS FIRST, HE HAS NO CREATOR; AS LAST, HE ALONE REMAINS STANDING” (LSB). **I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, SAYS THE LORD GOD WHO IS AND WHO WAS AND WHO IS TO COME, THE ALMIGHTY”** (REVELATION 1.8).

OUR FAITH AS CHRISTIANS IS IN THE ONE TRUE GOD WHO GAVE US HIS SON JESUS CHRIST TO SAVE US FROM OUR SINS. WE DARE NOT, FOR OUR SALVATION, COMMIT IDOLATRY. TRUE, GOD HAS GIVEN US ALL THE GIFT OF FREE WILL TO CHOOSE HIM OR ELSE SOME FALSE GOD OR GODS, BUT WE GO TO HIM WHO WANTS TO COME TO US. RECALL THE WORDS OF JOSHUA WHEN THE PEOPLE OF GOD WERE SETTLING INTO THE PROMISED LAND: **AND IF IT IS EVIL IN YOUR EYES TO SERVE THE LORD, CHOOSE THIS DAY WHOM YOU WILL SERVE, WHETHER THE GODS YOUR FATHERS SERVED IN THE REGION BEYOND THE RIVER, OR THE GODS OF THE AMMORITES IN WHOSE LAND YOU DWELL.. BUT AS FOR ME AND MY HOUSE, WE WILL SERVE THE LORD** (24.15).

THE IDOLS OF THE WORLD SURROUND US WITH THE SPECIFIC INTENTION OF CLAIMING OUR PRAISE. THEY ARE SMOOTH TALKERS,

JUST AS SLICK AND SLIPPERY AS THE SERPENT IN EDEN FROM WHOM THEY COME. THEY CAN BE A THING, AN IDEA, A PERSON, OR THE SELF WHICH WE CALL THE EGO.

THE BIBLE PROVIDES US WITH EXAMPLES OF THIS KIND OF THING WHICH TEMPT US TO PUT THE THING IN PLACE OF GOD AS IF THE ONE TRUE GOD WERE NOT THE FIRST AND THE LAST. IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE WE READ OF THE RICH MAN WHO HAD MANY BARNES. HIS WEALTH WE CANNOT HOLD AGAINST HIM, FOR HIS RICHES ARE A GIFT FROM GOD. NEITHER CAN WE HOLD AGAINST HIM THAT HE OWNS ALL THESE BUILDINGS. POSSESSION IS NOT A SIN. THE SIN OCCURS WHEN THIS MAN MAKES THE BARNES HIS GOD. THIS MAN SAID, **I WILL TEAR DOWN MY BARNES AND BUILD LARGER ONES, AND THERE I WILL STORE ALL MY GRAIN AND MY GOODS. AND I WILL SAY TO MY SOUL, SOUL, YOU HAVE AMPLE GOODS LAID UP FOR MANY YEARS; RELAX, EAT,**

**DRINK, BE MERRY.** YOU SEE WHAT THE MATTER IS WITH THIS MAN. HE IS NOT DOING ALL THIS FOR HIS FAMILY OR COMMUNITY. HE IS DOING IT SOLELY FOR HIMSELF; HE LOVES HIS WEALTH IN LACE OF HIS LOVE FOR GOD. IN FACT, HE DOESN'T LOVE GOD AT ALL! NOW WHAT DOES GOD SAY TO THIS MAN, THIS MISER, THIS SCROOGE? **BUT GOD SAID TO HIM, FOOL! THIS NIGHT, YOUR SOUL IS REQUIRED OF YOU, AND THE THINGS YOU HAVE PREPARED, WHOSE WILL THEY BE? SO IS THE ONE WHO LAYS UP TREASURE FOR HIMSELF AND IS NOT RICH TOWARD GOD** (12.18-21). THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD, JUST AS ISAIAH TELLS US, AND HE IS THE FIRST AND THE LAST. HE IS JESUS, AND HE IS OUR REDEEMER AS ISAIAH PROPHETICALLY TELLS US.

WE LIVE IN A DANGEROUS WORLD. I AM NOT NOW REFERRING TO RIOTS, MURDERS, OR THE PANDEMIC WHICH ARE ONLY THRIFLES. NO, I AM REFERRING TO THE WORLD, THE

FLESH AND THE DEVIL WHO STRONGLY TEMPT US TO IGNORE THE ONE TRUE GOD AND WORSHIP FALSE ONES TO THE LOSS OF OUR IMMORTAL SOULS. BE CAREFUL. BE AWARE. SATAN IS SUBTLE AND SLICK. HE DOESN'T RUN AROUND WITH HORNS, HOOVES AND A TAIL WITH A STING AT THE END OF IT. A LADY ONCE TOLD ME OF AN EXPERIENCE SHE HAD ON AN EVANGELISM VISIT. SHE HAD WITNESSED TO ANOTHER WOMAN WHO SAID TO HER, "THIS IS THE ONLY THING THAT COUNTS." AND WITH THAT SHE HELD OUT HER FIST TO THE LADY AND SHOWED OFF HER DIAMOND RING. HER GOD WAS A STONE MADE OUT OF CARBON. DID IT SAVE HER FROM HER SINS? DID IT GIVE HER EVERLASTING LIFE? DID IT TAKE HER INTO HEAVEN TO LIVE WITH JESUS, THE ANGELS AND THE SAINTS? YOU KNOW THE ANSWER. KEEP THE FAITH IN THE ONE TRUE GOD; KEEP THE FAITH IN JESUS. AMEN.