

INTRODUCTION

There are many in this world who would have us to believe that our **GOD** is no better than another person's *god* who happens to be different from our **GOD**.

There are those who would say to us, "*If you worship the **GOD** of the **BIBLE**, that's fine, but don't think that your worship is anymore sacred than someone who worships the *god* of the Koran or some other *god* or *gods*."*

Also, in the minds of this politically correct world we live in, our attempts to evangelize those who worship a different *god* or who don't approach the **GOD** of the **BIBLE** the same way that we do is looked at as being *religious bigotry* on our part. That is because these folks see all *gods* and *religions* as being on an even plain and equally acceptable.

(Remember the flack some years ago that the Southern Baptist Convention had to endure over their effort to evangelize **JEWISH** people. Also, after the **9-11 tragedy**, there were those who said that **CHRISTIANS** should try to understand the **MUSLIM** faith, not try to convert them.)

Well, let's ask this question. **IS ALL WORSHIP ACCEPTABLE TO THE ONE TRUE GOD OF THE UNIVERSE?** Of course, the answer to that question is a resounding "**No!**"

Well, isn't the important thing just to be *sincere in one's worship*? Again, the answer is "**No!**"

In our text, we find that the ten northern tribes of **ISRAEL** have been conquered by **ASSYRIA**. After the conquest, most of the people of **ISRAEL** were carried away into captivity to **ASSYRIA and other of its provinces**.

In their place, **ASSYRIA** imported captives from other conquered provinces to live in **SAMARIA**, which was where the northern ten tribes of **ISRAEL** had been displaced from at that time.

Read: 2 Kings 17:24-41

Here we see that the *religion* of those who were imported into **SAMARIA** is described at length. What can be seen is **the worship of a mishmash of gods the people brought in from these various other provinces that was combined with the worship of the northern kingdom of ISRAEL that had been displaced in order to placate to the LORD God of ISRAEL!**

The problem is that such a worship is **UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP** to the **LORD God!** Let's look at this matter of **UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP...** I've got 3 points I want to make about this...but in the time we have left to look at this, I may only be able to complete the first point tonight.

I. UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP IS BASED ON THE WRONG KIND OF FEAR!

A. Notice Various Statements That Are Made Here In The SCRIPTURES:

1. Look at *Vs 32*—Doesn't that seem strange?
2. Look at *Vs 33*—"*They feared the LORD, and served their own gods...*" **What?**
3. Look at *Vs 41*—"*So these nations feared the LORD, and served their graven images...*" What is going on here?
4. They had a **FEAR** of the **LORD**, but it was the wrong kind of **FEAR?** (*Vs 34*)
5. Is this a contradiction? It is a contradiction in their lives, but not at all with the **SCRIPTURE!**

B. There Is An Improper Kind Of FEAR Of The LORD!

1. Would the **SAMARITANS** have ever thought about the **LORD**, had it not been for the lions. Most probably not! (*Vs 25-26*)
2. When they finally did think of the **LORD**, it was only to tremble before **HIM**.

BOOK OF 2 KINGS
UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP-PART 1
2 KINGS 17:24-41

3. This is like so many people that I see today!

Did you ever know someone who only thinks of **GOD** when they or someone they love is sick, or injured, or on a death bed, but then they conveniently forget **HIM** when they are well and everything is going fine.

4. When the good times are rolling you can't find them in **CHURCH** because they are out serving their other *gods*, but when their world comes crashing down around them, then they begin to think about the **LORD**.

5. Many times after things get turned around for them, then you can't find them again.

They pray fervently to **GOD** for deliverance while a storm rages in their lives, making vows and promises to **GOD**.

But as soon as the storm is over, it is as if they forgot what brought the storm in the first place!

6. Listen, if we turn to **GOD** only when things go wrong, our *religion* is no different than these **SAMARITANS** in our text!

There Is An Improper Kind Of Fear Of The LORD!

C. **There Is A Proper Kind Of Fear Of The LORD!**

1. **Solomon Taught About The Fear Of The LORD!**
Ecclesiastes 8:12-13—“*Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him: But it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow; because he feareth not before God.*”

BOOK OF 2 KINGS
UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP-PART 1
2 KINGS 17:24-41

Proverbs 1:7— *The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.*”

2. **Jesus Taught About The Fear Of The LORD!**
Matthew 10:28—“*And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*”
3. **Peter Taught About The Fear Of The LORD!**
Acts 10:34-35—“*Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.*”
4. **What Is This Proper "Fear Of The LORD?"**
- Is it the kind of fear that never thinks of **GOD** when things are going well, and then trembles at the prospect of facing **GOD**? **NO!**
 - It is the kind of **AWESOME REVERENCE towards GOD that motivates us to turn away from evil and serve GOD faithfully at all times.**
 - With the proper kind of **FEAR (AWESOME REVERENCE)**, we will draw close to **GOD** through **OBEDIENCE**; and when we do so, we will find **HIM** to be so **GRACIOUS** and **LOVING** that we will serve **HIM** out of **LOVE** and not just a **FEAR OF JUDGMENT!** (Look at *1 John 4:16-18*)

UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP IS BASED ON THE WRONG KIND OF FEAR! What kind of FEAR of the LORD do you have?

BOOK OF 2 KINGS
UNACCEPTABLE WORSHIP-PART 1
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