

## Session 1

September 6, 2020

### PLACE GOD FIRST

**Exodus 20:1-6; Psalm 16:1-4a, 9-11**

God is first by His *pre-existence*. The Bible never argues for the existence of God, but assumes it in the words of Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning, God...” But God is also first because of His *preeminence* (see 1 Tim. 6:13-16). Unfortunately, *knowing* that God comes first, and *placing* God first are two different things! For this reason, the first of God’s Ten Commandments mandates that God be securely enthroned in His rightful position as the one and only true God; worthy of worship and unwilling to share His glory with any person or any thing. In this week’s lesson, three reasons are given to place God first.

**Supremacy (Ex. 20:1-6).** So as not to be confused about the source of these commandments, Moses (under God’s inspiration) affirmed the divine *authorship*. There was no added commentary here; God spoke *all* these words (v. 1). In verse 2, God established His divine *authority*. He states three reasons that support His claim. First, He is the *LORD* their God. The word is *Yahweh*, the self-existent, covenant-keeping God of the burning bush (see Ex. 3). Second, He is *their* God, the God who chose them...and the God they chose to follow. Third, He miraculously *delivered* them from the land of their oppressors as well as from the slavery that came with it. As such, God was in the unquestionable position to set forth the commandments that would follow, the first of which is “Do not have other gods besides Me” (v. 3). The prohibition is then reinforced in detail: do not make idols (v. 4); and do not bow down to or worship created things instead of the one who created them (see Rom. 1:22-25). The passage ends with divine *accountability*. This same God who chose them and delivered them would not share the honor due Him with another. The penalty here is fierce: the results of His jealousy is a divine judgment that punishes the guilty and purges their offspring (v. 5). But this is also used to contrast with His grace. The judgement for idolatry may last for a few generations, but the reward for their fidelity extends *to a thousand* (v. 6).

**Dependency (Ps. 16:1-4).** Besides the command of God to worship Him alone, there are the benefits that come along with that. While God is supreme, sovereign, infinite, and independent, we are none of those things! For this reason, we are utterly dependent upon God. This is the theme of Psalm 16. In the first verse, David points out his dependence upon God to *protect* him. The word *refuge* here is “trust,” but the context is David trusting God for his protection. In verse 2, he is dependent upon God for his *portion*. “Because you are my Lord,” he says, “I have nothing good that extends beyond You.” In verse 3, he indicates his dependence on fellowship with God’s *people*. He delights in them, recognizing them as *holy ones* and “princes” (*noble ones*), in contrast to those who chase after other gods (v. 4). In them is no delight...but only *sorrow*.

**Eternity (Ps. 16:9-11).** The third reason to place God first is demonstrated in light of eternity. Such confidence in God assures that the body as well as the heart and soul (*glory*) can rest in Him securely. The reference is certainly to death (here described as a “lying down”) as reinforced by the verses that follow. His promise of eternal life is contingent upon keeping the body safe in the normally dreadful place of the dead (*Sheol*). The promise that follows (v. 10b) is

both prophetic and personal. The *Holy One* is Christ who arose from the dead (see Acts 2:27ff). While the believer's body will indeed decay, the promise of our bodily resurrection was secured by Christ's victory over death and the grave (see 1 Cor. 55ff). David concludes his psalm by celebrating God's gracious *path* (of life), His *presence* (abounding in joy) and His *pleasures* (which are eternal).