

of the mount. His very name suggests being that is eternal and as all supposed deities come and go, He alone remains. There is a fascinating commentary on this in Psalm 115. The God of Israel lives...the deities of the nations about have no life. The Psalmist concludes that these man-made gods neither have life nor do those who create them possess real life. But the God of Israel lives, hears, sees, knows, responds, and delivers. How could anyone take a place of honor instead of Him?

The second point enforcing the command is the remainder of the deliverance. "I brought thee out of the house of bondage." True, many of the people of Israel soon forgot their bondage in Egypt and the aggravation of their lives in that land. Their loss of memory allowed them to complain against Moses and the dealing of God. But the truth was that He had delivered them from a hopeless situation. They were caught in the iron furnace and had nothing but sorrow and distress in their lot. They must honor the Lord both for whom He is and for what He had done!

These two points make it obvious that the force of the commands is more positive than negative. The purpose for not erecting any other God is simply that the true God must be seen. By clearing the ground before Him the Person of the Lord emerges in glory. And that is His due and our command.

#### The Concept of Rival Gods

Most of the "gods" made as rivals to the living God were not pagan deities in the simple idol or image form. In the days of the Judges, Israel worshiped self-will...every man doing what was right in his own eyes. At the coronation of King Rehoboam, Solomon's divisive son, stubborn greed became the "god." Later, in the days of Jehoiachim, national pride held the role of "deity" and for a period of time during the life of Ezra the lustful desires of the people were more important than the Lord. These were not