

Know God

Yet I am the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for there is no saviour beside me.

Hosea 13:4

As Hosea continues in this chapter to deliver the message of condemnation to the northern kingdom, because of their continued self-exaltation and idol worship, the LORD reminds them that their pursuit of the false gods of the world about them will never provide satisfaction. Although they had turned to Baal worship, and sought help from Egypt against enemy attack, and even from the Assyrians who would eventually defeat them, their reminder from the LORD in this verse is that He is their only hope of salvation. He reaches as far back as their national deliverance from slavery by His powerful acts against Egypt, to remind them of His power to save them. And yet now they were looking to Egypt for help, instead of looking to the LORD. His clear message here is that He is the only savior, because He is the only true God. They may seek unto other gods, but the LORD is the one and only God that may be known. As the psalmist proclaimed, "For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens" (Psalm 96:5).

Although this is a specific message to the nation of Israel, which was also repeated to the southern kingdom through Isaiah (Isaiah 43:11), it remains a universal truth for all. The false gods of the nations (Gentiles) were represented in diverse ways, created and fashioned by human hands and notions (Isaiah 44:10-19). They cannot be known in a personal way, because they do not truly exist, but are made of earthly materials and/or are created in men's vain imaginations, so that there is no being to know. Therefore, the LORD says here that there is no god that may be known, except for Him, who is the living God. This is reinforced by Jesus' prayer for His followers, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Thus, even today, the world defines all manner of gods that may be worshipped, whether seen or unseen, from the impersonal notions of Eastern religion, to the materialism or celebrity-worship of the West, or even the self-worship of the humanist, who obviously does not know himself enough to understand his own frailty. These are all false and unfulfilling substitutes. Therefore, let us hear the admonition with which John closes his first epistle, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen." (1 John 5:20-21)