

## You are gods

### Abram and the idols

In the fiftieth year of the life of Abram, son of Terah, Abram came forth from the house of Noah, and went to his father's house. And Abram knew the Lord, and he followed in his ways and instructions, and the Lord his God was with him. Terah his father was in those days still captain of the host of king Nimrod, and he still followed strange gods.

And Abram came to his father's house and saw twelve gods standing there in their temples, and the anger of Abram was set ablaze when he saw these images in his father's house. And Abram said, "As the Lord lives these images shall not remain in my father's house; so shall the Lord who created me do to me if in three days' time I do not break them all." Abram went from them, and his anger burned within him.

And Abram hurried and went from the chamber to his father's outer court, and he found his father sitting in the court, and all his servants with him, and Abram came and sat before him. Abram asked his father, saying, "Father, tell me where is God who created heaven and earth, and all the sons of men on earth, and who created you and me." And Terah answered his son Abram and said, "Behold those who created us are all with us in the house." And Abram said to his father, "My lord, show them to me I pray you." And Terah brought Abram into the chamber of the inner court, and Abram saw, and behold the whole room was full of gods of wood and stone, twelve great images and others less than they without number. And Terah said to his son, "Behold, these are they which made all you see on earth, and which created me and you, and all mankind." Terah bowed down to his gods, and he then went away from them, and Abram, his son, went away with him.

When Abram had gone from them he went to his mother and sat before her, and he said to his mother, "Behold, my father has shown me those who made heaven and earth, and all the sons of men. Now, therefore, hurry and fetch a kid from the flock, and make of it savory meat, that I may bring it to my father's gods as an offering for them to eat; perhaps I may thereby become acceptable to them." And his mother did so; she fetched a kid, and made savory meat thereof, and brought it to Abram, and Abram took the savory meat from his mother and brought it before his father's gods, and he drew nigh to them that they might eat; and Terah his father, did not know of it.

Abram saw on the day when he was sitting among them, that they had no voice, no hearing, no motion, and not one of them could stretch forth his hand to eat. And Abram mocked them, and said, "Certainly the savory meat that I prepared has not pleased them, or perhaps it was too little for them, and for that reason they would not eat; therefore tomorrow I will prepare fresh savory meat, better and more plentiful than this, in order that I may see the result."

It was on the next day that Abram directed his mother concerning the savory meat, and his mother rose and fetched three fine kids from the flock; she made of them some excellent savory meat, such as her son was fond of, and she gave it to her son Abram, and Terah his father did not know of it.

Abram took the savory meat from his mother and brought it before his father's gods into the chamber; he came nigh to them that they might eat, and he placed it before them, and Abram sat before them all day thinking perhaps they might eat. Abram viewed them, and behold they had neither voice nor hearing, nor did one of them stretch forth his hand to the meat to eat. And in the evening of that day in that house Abram was clothed with the spirit of God. He called out and said, "Woe to my father and this wicked generation, whose hearts are all inclined to vanity, who serve these idols of wood and stone which can neither eat, smell, hear nor speak, who have mouths without speech, eyes without sight, ears without hearing, hands without feeling, and legs which cannot move; like them are those that made them and that trust in them."

When Abram saw all these things his anger was set ablaze against his father, and he hurried and took a hatchet in his hand, and came to the chamber of the gods; he broke all his father's gods. And when he was done breaking the images, he placed the hatchet in the hand of the great god which was there before them, and he went out; and Terah his father came home, for he had heard at the door the sound of the striking of the hatchet; so Terah came into the house to know what this was about.

Terah, having heard the noise of the hatchet in the room of images, ran to the room to the images, and he met Abram going out. And Terah entered the room and found all the idols fallen down and broken, and the hatchet in the hand of the largest, which was not broken, and the savory meat which Abram his son had made was still before them. When Terah saw this his anger was greatly set ablaze, and he hurried and went from the room to Abram.

And he found Abram his son sitting in the house; and he said to him, "What is this work you have done to my gods?" Abram answered his father and he said, "Not so my lord, for I brought savory meat before them, and when I came near to them with the meat that they might eat, they all at once stretched forth their hands to eat before the great one had put forth his hand to eat. And the large one saw their works that they did before him, and his anger was violently set ablaze against them, and he went and took the hatchet that was in the house and came to them and broke them all, and behold the hatchet is yet in his hand as you see."

And Terah's anger was set ablaze against his son Abram, when he spoke this; and Terah said to Abram his son in his anger, "What is this tale that you have told? You speak lies to me. Is there in these gods spirit, soul or power to do all you have told me? Are they not wood and stone, and have I not myself made them, and can you speak such lies, saying that the large god that was with them struck them? It is you that did place the hatchet in his hands, and then said he struck them all."

Abram answered his father and said to him, "And how can you then serve these idols in whom there is no power to do any thing? Can those idols in which you trust deliver you? Can they hear your prayers when you call on them? Can they deliver you from the hands of your enemies, or will they fight your battles for you against your enemies, that you should serve wood and stone which can neither speak nor hear? And now certainly it is not good for you nor for the sons of men that are connected with you, to do these things; are you so silly, so foolish or so short of understanding that you will serve wood and stone, and do after this manner?"

"And forget the Lord God who made heaven and earth, and who created you in the earth, and thereby bring a great evil on your souls in this matter by serving stone and wood? Did not our fathers in days of old sin in this manner, and the Lord God of the universe brought the waters of the flood on them and destroyed the whole earth? And how can you continue to do this and serve gods of wood and stone, who cannot hear, or speak, or deliver you from oppression, thereby bringing down the anger of the God of the universe on you? Now therefore my father refrain from this, and bring not evil on your soul and the souls of your household." And Abram hurried and sprang from before his father, and took the hatchet from his father's largest idol, with which Abram broke it and ran away.

Terah, seeing all that Abram had done, hurried to go from his house; he went to the king and he came before Nimrod and stood before him, and he bowed down to the king and the king said, "What do you want?" And he said, "I beseech you my lord, to hear me - Now fifty years back a child was born to me, and thus has he done to my gods and thus has he spoken; and now therefore, my lord and king, send for him that he may come before you, and judge him according to the law, that we may be delivered from his evil."

The king sent three men of his servants, and they went and brought Abram before the king. And Nimrod and all his princes and servants were that day sitting before him, and Terah also sat before them. And the king said to Abram, "What is this that you have done to your father and to his gods?" And Abram answered the king in the words that he spoke to his father, and he said, "The large god that was with them in the house did to them what you have heard."

And the king said to Abram, "Had they power to speak and eat and do as you have said?" And Abram answered the king, saying, "And if there is no power in them why do you serve them and cause the sons of men to err through your follies? Do you imagine that they can deliver you or do anything small or great, that you should serve them? And why will you not sense the God of the whole universe, who created you and in whose power it is to kill and keep alive? O foolish, simple, and ignorant king, woe to you forever."

"I thought you would teach your servants the upright way, but you have not done this; you have filled the whole earth with your sins and the sins of your people who have followed your ways. Do you not know, or have you not heard, that this evil which you do, our ancestors sinned therein in days of old, and the eternal God brought the waters of the flood on them and destroyed them all, and also destroyed the whole earth on their account? And will you and your people rise up now and do like this work, in order to bring down the anger of the Lord God of the universe, and to bring evil on you and the whole earth?"

"Now therefore put away this evil deed which you did, and serve the God of the universe, as your soul is in his hands, and then it will be well with you. And if your wicked heart will not listen to my words to cause you to turn away from your evil ways, and to serve the eternal God, then you will die in shame in the latter days, you, your people and all who are connected with you, hearing your words or walking in your evil ways." When Abram had ceased speaking before the king and princes, Abram lifted up his eyes to the heavens, and he said, "The Lord sees all the wicked, and he will judge them."

(Jasher 11:13-61)

### The first two commandments of God

And God spoke all these words, saying:

"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image - any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Exo 20:1-6)

### The Law of the Altar

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel:

'You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. You shall not make anything to be with Me - gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves. An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you. And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it. Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.' " (Exo 20:22-26)

### Gideon and the altar of Baal

Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.

And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!" Gideon said to Him, "O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us? And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, 'Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?' But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites."

Then the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?" So he said to Him, "O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." And the Lord said to him, "Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man." Then he said to Him, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me. Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You." And He said, "I will wait until you come back."

So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread from an ephah of flour. The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree and presented them. The Angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And he did so. Then the Angel of the Lord put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the Lord departed out of his sight. Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the Lord.

So Gideon said, "Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face." Then the Lord said to him, "Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die." So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it The-Lord-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Now it came to pass the same night that the Lord said to him, "Take your father's young bull, the second bull of seven years old, and tear down the altar of Baal that your father has, and cut down the wooden image that is beside it; and build an altar to the Lord your God on top of this rock in the proper arrangement, and take the second bull and offer a burnt sacrifice with the wood of the image which you shall cut down." So Gideon took ten men from among his servants and did as the Lord had said to him. But because he feared his father's household and the men of the city too much to do it by day, he did it by night. And when the men of the city arose early in the morning, there was the altar of Baal, torn down; and the wooden image that was beside it was cut down, and the second bull was being offered on the altar which had been built.

So they said to one another, "Who has done this thing?" And when they had inquired and asked, they said, "Gideon the son of Joash has done this thing." Then the men of the city said to Joash, "Bring out your son, that he may die, because he has torn down the altar of Baal, and because he has cut down the wooden image that was beside it." But Joash said to all who stood against him, "Would you plead for Baal? Would you save him? Let the one who would plead for him be put to death by morning! If he is a god, let him plead for himself, because his altar has been torn down!" Therefore on that day he called him Jerubbaal (*! Let Baal Plead*), saying, "Let Baal plead against him, because he has torn down his altar." (Jud 6:11-32)

#### The futility of idols

"The poor and needy seek water, but there is none, their tongues fail for thirst.

I, the Lord, will hear them;

I, the God of Israel, will not forsake them.

I will open rivers in desolate heights, and fountains in the midst of the valleys;

I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the dry land springs of water.

I will plant in the wilderness the cedar and the acacia tree, the myrtle and the oil tree;

I will set in the desert the cypress tree and the pine and the box tree together, that they may see and know, and consider and understand together, that the hand of the Lord has done this, and the Holy One of Israel has created it."

"Present your case," says the Lord.

"Bring forth your strong reasons," says the King of Jacob.

"Let them bring forth and show us what will happen; let them show the former things, what they were, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them; or declare to us the things to come. Show the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that you are gods; yes, do good or do evil, that we may be dismayed and see it together. Indeed you are nothing, and your work is nothing; he who chooses you is an abomination. I have raised up one from the north, and He shall come; from the rising of the sun He shall call on My name; and He shall come against princes as though mortar, as the potter treads clay. Who has declared from the beginning, that we may know? And former times, that we may say, 'He is righteous'?"

"Surely there is no one who shows,  
Surely there is no one who declares,  
Surely there is no one who hears your words."

"The first time I said to Zion, 'Look, there they are!' and I will give to Jerusalem one who brings good tidings. For I looked, and there was no man; I looked among them, but there was no counselor, who, when I asked of them, could answer a word. Indeed they are all worthless; their works are nothing; their molded images are wind and confusion."  
(I sa 41:17-29)

Thus says the Lord, the King of Israel, and His Redeemer, the Lord of hosts:

"I am the First and I am the Last; besides Me there is no God. And who can proclaim as I do? Then let him declare it and set it in order for Me, since I appointed the ancient people. And the things that are coming and shall come, let them show these to them. Do not fear, nor be afraid; have I not told you from that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Indeed there is no other Rock; I know not one."

"Those who make an image, all of them are useless, and their precious things shall not profit; they are their own witnesses; they neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed. Who would form a god or mold an image that profits him nothing? Surely all his companions would be ashamed; and the workmen, they are mere men. Let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, they shall be ashamed together. The blacksmith with the tongs works one in the coals, fashions it with hammers, and works it with the strength of his arms. Even so, he is hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint."

"The craftsman stretches out his rule, he marks one out with chalk; he fashions it with a plane, he marks it out with the compass, and makes it like the figure as a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house. He cuts down cedars for himself, and takes the cypress and the oak; he secures it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes it."

"Then it shall be for a man to burn, for he will take some of it and warm himself; yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; indeed he makes a god and worships it; he makes it a carved image, and falls down to it. He burns half of it in the fire; with this half he eats meat; he roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He even warms himself and says, 'Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire.' And the rest of it he makes into a god, his carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, prays to it and says, 'Deliver me, for you are my god!' "

"They do not know nor understand; for He has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. And no one considers in his heart, nor is there knowledge nor understanding to say, 'I have burned half of it in the fire, yes, I have also baked bread on its coals; I have roasted meat and eaten it; and shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?'  
He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside; and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, 'Is there not a lie in my right hand?' "

"Remember these, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are My servant; I have formed you, you are My servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by Me!" (I sa 44:6-21)

God stands in the congregation of the mighty; He judges among the gods.  
How long will you judge unjustly, and show partiality to the wicked? Selah.  
Defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted and needy.  
Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked.  
They do not know, nor do they understand; they walk about in darkness;  
all the foundations of the earth are unstable.  
I said, "You are gods, and all of you are children of the Most High.  
But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes."  
Arise, O God, judge the earth; for You shall inherit all nations. (Psa 82)

#### The Shepherd knows His sheep

Now it was the Feast of Dedication in Jerusalem, and it was winter. And Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch. Then the Jews surrounded Him and said to Him, "How long do You keep us in doubt? If You are the Christ, tell us plainly." Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe. The works that I do in My Father's name, they bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are one."

Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, "Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?" The Jews answered Him, saying, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God."

Jesus answered them, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, "You are gods" '? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming', because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."

Therefore they sought again to seize Him but He escaped out of their hand. And He went away again beyond the Jordan to the place where John was baptizing at first, and there He stayed. Then many came to Him and said, "John performed no sign, but all the things that John spoke about this Man were true." And many believed in Him there. (Joh 10:22-42)

"Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance."  
(I sa 55:1-2)

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