

# Man Made Gods

by Chuck Smith

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of recognizing and surrendering to the true God, rather than worshipping false gods and idols that can lead to hardened hearts and judgment.*

**Duration:** 31:31

**Scripture:** Romans 1:21, Revelation 9:20

**Topics:** "False Idols", "Repentance"

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## Description

This sermon delves into the book of Revelation, focusing on chapters 8 and 9 which detail the trumpet judgments. It highlights the hardened hearts of those who refuse to repent despite witnessing God's judgments, drawing parallels to the Pharaoh of Egypt. The message emphasizes the danger of worshipping false gods, including worshipping oneself, and the emptiness that comes from seeking fulfillment in anything other than a meaningful relationship with God through Jesus Christ.

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## Transcript

You may be seated. Well, we're moving through the book of Revelation as we're coming to the close of our journey through the whole Bible. And this week we'll be taking chapters 8 and 9 this evening because we want to take all of these trumpet judgments that we find in chapters 8 and 9. The judgments 1 through 6, we'll get the 7th later on, but we will be looking at Revelation 8 and 9 tonight, these trumpet judgments.

This morning we'd like to draw your attention to verse 20 of chapter 9 as he is talking about this 6th trumpet judgment and how that one-third of the earth's population will be destroyed in this particular judgment. By these three, verse 18, a third part of men were killed by the fire, by the smoke, and the brimstone which out issued out of the mouths of these creatures that are released out of the river Euphrates. We read that after this the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet they did not repent of the works of their hands that they should not worship devils and idols of gold and silver and brass and stone and of wood which neither can see nor hear nor walk.

Neither did they repent of their murders or of their sorceries nor of their fornication nor of their thefts. I am amazed at how hard a man's heart can become against God. I think of the pharaoh of Egypt, how that God had demanded that he let his people go, but the pharaoh refused to do so.

He hardened his heart. Who is God that I should listen to him, he said. And so God began to demonstrate who he was.

He began to send these plagues against the Egyptians, making life miserable, destroying the nation, the crops, and their animals, and yet through all of this the pharaoh just continued to harden his heart. Rather than relenting, rather than obeying, he only hardened his heart the more against God. We see in our text a very similar situation.

Again God is judging the world and sending these various plagues and judgments upon the world, and yet we read, the rest of men which were not killed by these plagues did not repent of the work of their hands. They just continued to worship the devils, the idols of gold and silver. In chapter 16 of Revelation, after even further judgments, we read, they blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and they repented not of their deeds.

When I was pastoring in Tucson many years ago, a lady called and asked if I would come and visit her husband who was dying, and as I went to the house she was there with their daughter and they were crying, and they said that this lady's husband was very bitter against God, but he was dying, and he knew that he was dying, and that they wanted me to go in and talk to him. They said, but be very careful because, you know, he's so bitter against God, so I went in and they introduced me. They didn't introduce me as a minister, but just as a friend who had come to call, and he had been a football coach at one of the high schools in Tucson.

I had a Bible study with some of the students of the high school. I knew the record of the football team, and having played football, I went in and started off just talking football with him, talking about his team and the season that they had had that year and so forth, and we got along real well until I said, you know, I understand that you don't have much time left, and probably time that you start thinking about your relationship with God. At that, he exploded, began to curse me like I've never been cursed before, yelling at me, ordering me out of his house and never to come back again, and just was so upset.

You know, I've talked about the unpardonable sin. Up until that point, I had said, I don't know that I've ever seen a person that I have felt had committed the unpardonable sin, but after that, I believe that really I was dealing with a man who committed the unpardonable sin. Two days later, he was dead, but so bitter, his heart so hardened against God and the things of God.

The Bible warns, let us beware lest we harden our hearts. You see, the problem is, every man must worship something. Every one of you today have a God.

You may say, well, I'm an atheist. No, you're not. To say, I'm an atheist, usually is saying, I don't believe in the God of the Bible, but you see, every man has a God, for your God is what is the master passion of your life.

What it is that you are living for, that which is preeminent in your life, that which more or less controls you, that is your God. You can't help yourself. You must worship something.

That's just the way we've been made. In Romans chapter 8, Paul said, for the creature was created subject unto emptiness, not willingly, but by reason of him who has subjected the same in hope. You've got to worship.

It's innate. It's part of you. That's the way you were created.

In Deuteronomy, it is interesting, God said, and when you go out and you look at the stars and you are driven to worship, driven to worship, you can't help it. It's there. It's innate within you.

You're going to worship something. Can't help yourself. What you worship is important, but most people in effect are worshipping themselves.

Worshipping themselves to immensity, so that if you will bring down the lines of a man's worship, bring him on back down, you'll find the man himself. He is just worshipping himself. Interesting, as we were reading in the Psalms, it talks about men worshipping these idols.

He said they are of silver, gold, or stone, or whatever, but he said when they make their idols, they really make them like themselves. If I'm going to make a little idol of the God that I worship, I begin to carve out this piece of wood and I carve eyes into the piece of wood. Why? Because I have eyes.

I carve a nose. Why? Because I have a nose. I carve a mouth.

Why? Because I have a mouth. I leave it bald. Why? Shame on you for that.

But man makes a God like himself, but as you look at it carefully, you'll find that he makes it less than himself, because though you may carve eyes on your little idol, the eyes can't see. Though you carve ears on the little idol, the ears can't hear. Though you carve feet on your little idol, it can't walk.

And so you've actually made your God something less than yourself. But then the psalmist says, they that make them are likened to the gods that they have made. That is, your God is insensate, and so you are becoming insensate.

You're coming where you no longer can see the beauty of God in his creation. You can no longer hear the voice of God as he speaks to your inner heart. You're becoming insensate like your God.

Someone has said that God has made in each of us a God-shaped vacuum that only God can fill. It's interesting how that man tries to fill that vacuum with so many different things. Things that become his God.

Things that he worships, but yet there is always that emptiness that a person experiences because these things cannot fit in that God-shaped vacuum within you. There is only a meaningful relationship with God that can satisfy that clamid thirst within the heart of man. Jesus spoke about this on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles.

He said, if any man thirst, let him come to me and drink, and out of his innermost being there will flow rivers of living water. John tells us that he was talking about the Holy Spirit. But the thirst that he is talking about is that thirst that is in the heart of every man.

That thirst that keeps you searching. That thirst that keeps you going. That thirst that keeps you reaching out for something more, for something else.

Trying to satisfy that thirst for God with anything else is futility. It's like being extremely hungry and going down to the fair and going to the cotton candy concession and buying cotton candy and trying to fill your empty stomach with cotton candy. It just doesn't work.

These things just can't satisfy. They may give a sweet taste in your mouth, but they don't satisfy. They just cannot fill that emptiness within.

Because man experiences emptiness, many of them begin to worship Satan. You say, Chuck, you really don't believe that people consciously worship the devil, do you? Well, yes, I do. I think of Anton LaVey, how he started the Satanic Church, and how many adherents he has that go to that Satanic Church and the worship that they have of Satan.

There is the New Age movement and the Luciferian movement that has become extremely strong and attracts many of the world's leaders. I looked up on Google yesterday the word Luciferian. Of course, it stands for Lucifer, for Satan.

And there were 219,000 references. I, of course, didn't look at them all. But yes, it is very prevalent in our world today, the worship and the interest in Satanic things.

He goes on to say the idols of gold and brass and wood and stone. An idol is a representation of what man has chosen to worship. Modern man, because he no longer makes a little idol that you can see, is not as close in touch with himself as ancient man.

They at least recognize and acknowledge that they worshipped other things. And so they would make a little idol to represent that which they actually worshipped. There's a fly that's bugging me, and I'm going to get him in a minute.

And so if I slap, don't panic. So if a person, if his life is deeply involved in sex, in those days they would carve out of a piece of wood or of stone a little multi-breasted woman, the goddess Asteret. And they would set it up in their home.

And when you would enter, you would know, well, he worships Asteret. Sex is the master passion of his life. And it was an acknowledgement that that's me.

That's what I worship. Or they would take a piece of gold and they would mold it into a little image of Molech, the god Molech. And it was again a declaration that I worship pleasure.

I live for pleasure. And though today people don't make little multi-breasted images, or they don't make little molten idols of Molech, yet their lives are still mastered by their desire for pleasure. They usually have season tickets to the angels, and God forbid that anyone should ask them to go to church on Super Bowl Sunday night.

That's blasphemous, you know. That's, you know, they can't miss that game. So I'm just about ready to get this little rascal.

Hold on. I'm going to tell him where to go. A person's God is what is the controlling passion of their life.

That which they live for. God commanded the Israelites, you're not to have any other gods before me. Now God recognizes that we have many interests in life.

It's not wrong to have pleasure. It's not wrong to want to get ahead. But if this becomes the major thing of your life, if it becomes the controlling passion of your life, if this comes before God and the worship and the fellowship with God in your life, then it is wrong because it has become the God that you are serving and that you are worshiping.

Jesus said the greatest commandment is that you shall love the Lord your God with all of your heart, with all of your soul, and with all of your mind. Many people worship God on Sunday morning. They give God

that hour of the week, but they feel that the rest of the week is theirs to pursue other things.

And during the rest of week they burn their incense to other gods. They seem that God should be satisfied. After all, I gave him an hour out of the 168 hours of this week.

Surely he should be pleased. It's interesting that as we said, man worships really himself. So often I have people come to me and say, Chuck, why does God, or why doesn't God? And I usually stop them right there.

I say, don't go any further. I don't know. God said my ways are not your ways.

My ways are beyond your finding out. There are things that happen in our lives that we don't understand. It's because we only see a part of the picture.

Have you ever taken a jigsaw puzzle, one piece of it, and tried to understand the whole picture? Why are all of these little crazy curlicues in it? Where does this fit in the picture? What are these colors mingled together? How does that fit? And we look at life one day at a time, and we are studying life one day at a time, one piece at a time. And we have difficulty in understanding the whole picture. But it's interesting that if the puzzle is all together except for one little piece, you know exactly how this piece fits into the total picture.

So that in time, though we might have these interesting, mysterious pieces to the puzzle that we don't understand, in time we understand as we see how they fit in the total picture. All things are working together for good to those who love God and are called according to His purpose. Now many times as we are looking at a situation, we wonder what good can come out of this? What possibly can God do with this, and why did He allow this to happen? But as we go down the road a bit, and as the picture begins to come together, we say, oh I see how that fits into the puzzle that was a puzzle but no longer, because I see how it fits.

I see how that God was working in that situation in my own life to mold and to shape me, to draw me close to Him that He might reveal more of His love and His truth to me. As David in the psalm that we read this morning points out, when man makes a God, he makes it like himself, yet in reality less than himself. But then David said, they that have made them have become like unto them.

Worshiping a false God is always a degrading experience. You're becoming less than you were. It's a downhill run.

They that have made them have become like unto the gods. In contrast, when God makes a man, He makes him better, always better. Yielding your life to Jesus Christ is an elevating experience.

It raises you above the norm. Beloved, now are we the sons of God. It doesn't yet appear what we're going to be, but we know that when He appears, we're going to be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Makes Him better. If any man is in Christ Jesus, He is a new creation. The old things have passed away.

Everything becomes new. I had a fellow come up to me the other day and say, you know, I am a self-made man. And I thought you didn't need to tell me, it's quite obvious.

We read here in Revelation that as the judgments of God are coming, their hearts are so hard that they do not repent. Repent of what? Repent of their murders. It's interesting how that we can come to accept

things that were once very reprehensible.

That's what you call brainwashing. And we've all been brainwashed. Close to 50 million babies have been aborted in the United States since they legalized.

It says they do not repent of their murders. Murdering innocent little babies in the mother's womb, or partially now out of the mother's womb. They did not repent of their sorceries.

The Greek word is pharmakoon, from which, or the Greek word pharmacopoeia, the use of drugs for hallucinogenic purposes. They did not repent of their drug abuse. Nor did they repent of their fornication.

Now it is interesting, of course, the fornication is usually the reason why a person seeks an abortion. But because they want to continue to worship these other gods of pleasure, or of sex, or all, they face the consequences and try to erase the consequences. And God said that they won't repent of these things, nor of their thefts.

In Romans chapter 2, Paul said, because of the hardness of the impenitent heart. All you are doing is storing up for yourself wrath. In the day of wrath, when the revelation of the righteous judgment of God will be revealed.

Just know this, you're not getting by with whatever you are doing. Whatever false god you might be worshipping, you're not getting by with it. A day of reckoning is coming.

And the book of Hebrews, it says, and how shall we escape? Escape what? The judgment of God. How shall we escape if we neglect the great salvation which God has offered to us through Jesus Christ. The writer of the book of Hebrews said, it's a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

And that's exactly what we're reading about at the present time in the book of Revelation. Men who have fallen now into the hands of the living God, and are facing the judgment of God for their sin. Now the glorious thing is, of course, God has provided the remedy.

He sent his son Jesus Christ to take our sins, die in our place. That by our simple believing and trusting in him, we're forgiven. We escape the wrath of God and the judgment of God to come.

Because we've put our faith and trust in his work of salvation through Jesus Christ. And that's exactly what we're inviting you to receive today. The cleansing, the washing of the past, whatever it might hold, of wrong or evil.

The forgiveness of God that he has promised to those who would just simply put their trust in Jesus Christ, his son. Father, we thank you for this great salvation that you have offered to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. And Lord, we pray for those here today, worshiping other gods.

Lord, we pray that you'll help us to be honest with ourselves. To take an honest look at our lives. To honestly judge the priorities that we have.

And Lord, if you're not top, if we're not seeking you first, your kingdom and your righteousness, then Lord, we pray that this might be the day that we wake up to our folly, and that we surrender our lives to Jesus. We ask this, Father, in his name. Amen.

Shall we stand? The pastors are down here at the front to minister to you this morning. You who would like to receive Jesus as your savior, have your sins forgiven, blotted out, and to worship the true and the living God who wants to make you a better person, and will do it if you'll just surrender to him. If you have other needs for prayer, they're here to minister to you.

So as soon as we're dismissed, feel free to come on forward and just whatever the situation might be in your life, just say, fellows, would you pray for me? I need God's help. I want God. I want him to take over my life, and they'll be happy to pray with you.

And may the Lord be with you as you go. May he watch over you and keep you in his love, fill you with his spirit, and make you the person he wants you to be, conforming you into his image by the power of his Holy Spirit. His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.

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