

Church Office

20 E. Milwaukee St. #212
Janesville, WI 53545
608-758-0943

mail@riverhillscommunitychurch.org
www.riverhillscommunitychurch.org

Meeting location

Marshall Middle School
25 S. Pontiac, Janesville

Pastor:

John Swanson

*Declaring the greatness of God and serving
others for joy and His honor (II Cor. 4:5)*



June 29, 2000

Dear

I recently came across a troubling statement as I was reading through 2 Kings. The 17th chapter tells the story of God's destroying the northern kingdom of Israel through the Assyrians. It also describes why it is that God rejected these people. God rejected them because they worshipped other gods and did not worship the Lord alone. They trusted in other gods in spite of the fact that the Lord sent prophets to warn them to turn from their sins and trust in Yahweh alone. He sums up their behavior in the last two verses, vv. 40-41, "They would not listen, however, but persisted in their former practices. *Even while these people were worshipping the Lord, they were serving their idols.* To this day their children and grandchildren continue to do as their fathers did."

Do you see what is so troubling about these verses? They were worshipping Yahweh but at the very same time they were worshipping other gods as well. They passed on this divided loyalty to their children and grandchildren. They did not exclusively trust in the Lord but also trusted in the gods of the nations that they lived among. God is jealous for the love of his people. He will tolerate no competitors. This is not simply an Old Testament view of God. Jesus says the same thing. "You cannot serve both God and money". "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." "I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me."

There is only one God and there is only one way to know and love and worship that God (1 Tim. 2: 5). The only God who exists is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The only God who exists is the God who is a trinity, the God who has existed forever as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. All who worship, love and serve other gods are worshipping false gods, gods of their own imagination, who do not really exist.

God will reject all who profess faith in Him but at the same time trust in and love other things. The people of Israel stand as a warning for us that we must be careful that we are not trying to have it both ways. The prophets warned them that God was angry with them and that they must repent of their sins and trust in Yahweh exclusively. When the prophets warned them they protested that they did trust in Yahweh. They did not believe that God required an exclusive love for and trust in himself. They did not see that their trust in other gods was offensive to the Lord.

This passage forces me to ask myself some hard questions. Is the God I trust in the God who actually exists or a figment of my own imagination? Am I exclusively trusting in and loving the God who is Father, Son and Spirit? What must I have to be happy? Am I content because I know and am loved by this great and awesome God or must I have someone or something else to be content? Am I professing faith in Christ but actually trusting in my own abilities, my savings account, my job, my children, my wife, my home, my vacations, etc.?

Here is the chief mark of true Christianity: A growing and exclusive trust in and love for the God who has revealed him exclusively in the person and work of Jesus Christ as described on the pages of the New Testament. We must pray that God enable us to be such people and such a church.

Standing in grace,