

## God “in a box”

I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me (Exodus 20:2-5).

God is everlasting (Psalm 41:13), eternal, the Creator of all things (Genesis 1) and without Him, nothing exists. It is somewhat understandable that man would want to see what he worships. However, because of the nature of God, the evidence He has given us should be enough to plant and strengthen man's faith. God is not in subjection to man. Man cannot move God or call upon Him like a genie in a bottle. It is for this reason that there were to be no images made. Man was never to think he could be God's master. Localized images were pieces of property that men had created to worship and could be moved at any time and to any place. They were able to be broken, hidden, and controlled by man. God's existence is far above that of man and man's comprehension and therefore should not and must not be thought of or worshiped as something that grants wishes. Men have always tried to control their gods and God Himself. After a defeat to the Philistines, Israel called for the ark and stated that “**it**” would save them out of the hands of their enemies (1 Samuel 4:3). The Israelites had made the mistake of thinking that they had God confined to a box. An “**it**” could save nothing. An “**it**” has no breath (Jeremiah 51:17). The Philistines took the ark of the covenant and placed it beside their god, Dagon. When Dagon fell to the floor, man had to pick it up and place it back where it belonged. Obviously, a god that can't even take care of itself is worthless. The Israelites built a golden calf and God told Moses that the people “worshiped **it**, and have sacrificed **thereunto**, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt” (Exodus 32:8). It is amazing that an intelligent being could possibly believe that a calf, that they themselves had built out of pieces of jewelry, had saved them from Egyptian bondage. It was, however, an attempt to put God where and when they wanted Him. There are many Bible examples of men trying to control God. Though there may not be many physical images or statues in the likeness of a god today, many continue to think of God as being a wish maker who is at man's beckoned call. Doing so can be traced to the physical lusts and desires of man. Men who do what is right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25) and teach for themselves doctrines of men (Colossians 2:20-23) do not care what God has commanded. They simply want “a god” by their side to comfort them and their evil decisions. They devise a doctrine to which they can adhere and then try to make God conform to their teachings. “But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9). God has given us the pattern by which we must live and worship in the New Testament. All else is “vain”.

