

First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Cambridge, Massachusetts
The Lord's Day, May 14 Anno Domini 2006

1 John 5:21 Keep yourselves from idols.

- I. Idols are fake gods.
 - A. Representations—images, models of what we imagine God to be.
Isaiah 44:16-17; Jeremiah 10:14-16;
 - B. Isaiah's tests for fake gods.
Isaiah 41:22-23; Isaiah 41:24.
 - C. John's tests for fake gods.
Fake gods are promoted by false teachers. Four tests:
 1. False teachers do not promote true, authentic Christian faith, but instead promote faith in something or someone else. 1John 2:21-22; 1:8.
 2. False teachers do not promote true, authentic Christian obedience. 1John 2:4.
 3. False teachers undermine true, authentic Christian community. 1John 2:9.
 4. False teachers promote a love for this world instead of a love for God. 1John 2:15-17.

- II. The authentic God calls people into a living relationship with him.
 - A. Fellowship. 1John 4:13.
 - B. John's letter begins with a declaration of the authentic God and how we can have fellowship with him, and ends with a warning to stay away from fake gods.
 - C. Fellowship with God is a covenantal relationship.
John does not use the term "covenantal" but it underlies all his teaching. The covenant is secured by the blood of Christ.

- III. Idols are produced in the heart and, though lifeless, they take over a life.
 - A. Personal power: desire to exert control over people.
 - B. Riches: what do you desire?
 - C. Love of comfort, cares of this world.
 - D. Pride: the heart of self-deification.
 - E. Man pleasing.

- IV. Little children, keep yourselves from idols.
 - A. Keep yourselves... you have an important responsibility in this.
Fake pastors & teachers are "antichrists." Fake gods are demons.
Little children, keep yourselves from idols.

 - B. Jesus sets you free from all these snares.
See 1John 4:4.
Cultivate sincere faith in Christ. 1John 5:1 & 5.
Be obedient to God's commandments: 1John 5:2-3.
Love the brethren and pray for them, 1John 5:16.