

DOCTRINE OF IDOLATRY

I. Definition:

- A. Idolatry is the exchange of honoring God for honoring any created thing; that is, ascribing divine glory to natural or supernatural phenomena. Rom.1:21-25
- B. It is a satanic attempt to substitute false gods and concepts for God's Person and plan. His purpose is to blind mankind with respect to God's plan. He does this by setting up a series of counterfeits. 2Cor.4:3,4 cp.11:14
- C. There is religious idolatry (the regimented and ritualistic worship of idols e.g., pagan worship) and practical idolatry (applied idolatry in principle). Cf.Deu.8:19 "...and go after other gods and serve them and worship them..."
- D. One can apply idolatry in principle apart from assembly. Cp.Col.3:5

II. Vocabulary:

A. Hebrew:

- 1. אִיִּמִּים – 'eymiym; terrors, idols: So called because of the terror that they cause to worshippers (Jer.50:38b).
- 2. אֱלֹהִים - 'elohim; gods, deities; as false gods (Deu.29:18;31:16; etc.)
- 3. בִּשְׁתַּת – bosheth; an idol that deceives the hope of worshippers and puts them to shame, shameful thing (Jer.3:24; 11:13; Hos.9:10)
- 4. מִשְׁכֵּית - mesekkiyth; image, figure, the chamber of images, walls adorned with painted or carved figures of idols (Eze.8:12).
- 5. נִסָּךְ – nasak; a molten image (Isa.48:5c; Jer.51:17)
- 6. סִמָּל - semel; a statue or carved idol (Eze.8:3,5).
- 7. פֶּסֶל - pesel; a graven image, a molten idol (Isa.21:9; Isa.48:5c; Jer.50:38c; 51:17).
- 8. תְּרָפִים – teraphiym; domestic (household) gods, small figurines, personal or family gods (Gen.31:19,34,35; Eze.21:21; Zec.10:2).
- 9. צִיר – tsiyr; an idol (Isa.45:16).

B. Greek:

- 1. εἰδωλόθυτος – eidolothutos; signifying things (meat) offered to idols (Act.15:29; 1Cor.8:1,4,7,10).
- 2. εἰδωλόλατρης; eidololatres; an idolater (1Cor.5:10,11; 6:9; 10:7; Eph.5:5).
- 3. εἰδωλολατρία – eidolalatria; idolatry (1Cor.10:14; Gal.5:20; Col.3:5; 1Pet.4:3).
- 4. εἰκων – eikon; image, likeness, form, appearance (Rom.1:23; Rev.13:14,15; 14:9,11).

- III.** Things that can comprise idolatry:
- A.** Inanimate objects such as wood, stone, metal, trees, rivers, mountains, etc. Psa.115:4-8; 135:15-18; Isa.44:9-20; Jer.10:3-11; Dan.5:4
 - B.** Animals. Deu.4:17,18; Rom.1:23
 - C.** People such as ancestors, great leaders, heroes, etc. Gen.4:17 (Cain, an unbeliever dedicating the city to Enoch); Deu.4:16
 - D.** Powers of the natural realm such as earth, air (wind), fire, water, etc. Deu.12:31
 - E.** Heavenly bodies. Deu.4:19; Job 31:26-28
 - F.** Abstract mental qualities such as righteousness, justice, love, hate, good, etc. Psa.14:1c; Isa.64:6; Rom.1:24
 - G.** Things such as power, wealth, fame, beauty, age, health, etc. Job 31:24,25; Psa.49:6; 52:7; Pro.6:25; 11:28; Mar.10:23,24; Heb.13:5
 - H.** Worshipping God through icons. Isa.40:18-20; 46:5-7
 - I.** Worshipping the symbol or image itself. Rom.1:23
 - J.** Other gods. Exo.20:3-5; Deu.5:7-9
 - K.** Satan or angels. Mat.4:8-10; Luk.4:7-8; Rev.19:10; 22:8,9
- IV.** Idolatry results in negative volition to the gospel. Rom.1:18-25
- A.** This produces false concepts introducing soul idolatry. Rom.1:18-21
 - B.** This leads to overt idolatry. Rom.1:22-23
- V.** The development of idolatry in postdiluvian civilization:
- A.** What forms of idolatry that pre-existed the Noachic flood was wiped out leaving only believers in Noah and his family.
 - B.** The first recorded postdiluvian example of idolatry is found in Gen.11:1-9
 - C.** The time: immediately after the flood.
 - D.** The place: historical Babylon. Gen.10:8-10; 11:9
 - E.** The human instigators: Cush, Nimrod and Samerimus and the Samaritans (Shinar). Gen.10:8-12; Gen.11:1-9
 - F.** The images of idolatry: the city and the tower. Gen.11:4
 - G.** The city = political idolatry; the tower = religious idolatry.
 - H.** The concept: One world order and a one-world religion.
 - I.** The one world political order is further depicted in Jer.51:7 and Rev.18 under the code name Babylon.
 - J.** The one world religion is further depicted in Rev.17 esp. vss.1,4,5 under the code name Babylon.
 - K.** The distinctive characteristics of the cult: mother son. She was known as the goddess of love (Ashtarti, Isis, Diana, Venus, Mary, the queen of heaven). Nimrod (Baal, Brahma, Osirus, Jupiter, Bacchus). Salvation by works, many holidays, prayers for the dead and purgatory, false priesthoods; this organization sponsored the phallic cult.
- VI.** Both the political and religious systems of idolatry are carried over into the Church Age. Rev.17-18 cp.2The.2:7
- A.** Christian titles and terminology were adopted.
 - B.** Responsible for the death of millions. Rev.17:6; 18:24
 - C.** Its concept and philosophy under religiosity dominates the world. Rev.17:1-2,18

- D. The separated political and religious system's entities/heads will be destroyed in the middle of the Great Tribulation (Rev.17:8-17; 18:8-21) to be united under the antichrist (Rev.17:13).
- VII.** Idolatry will continue to exist in the last half of the Tribulation. Rev.13
- A. It centers on the unholy trinity of Satan, the beast and false prophet.
 - B. It promotes a system of economic coercion.
 - C. Will include mass murder of many.
 - D. It is inclusive of miracles as deluding influences. Rev.13:13,14; 2The.2:9-12
 - E. It includes overt idolatry. 2The.2:4
- VIII.** "The lie" is the descriptive title for this system. Rom.1:25; 2The.:11
- IX.** The first and second commandments prohibit mental and overt idolatry. Exo.20:3,4; 23:24 cp. Deu.4:28; 5:7; 6:14; 7:16; 8:19
- X.** Idolatry was a crime and those involved in occults were to be punished by death. Exo.22:18 cp.18:9-14
- XI.** Idolatry begins in the mental attitude in rejection of truth always preceding overt idolatry. Ex. The Exodus generation Exo.32:1ff cp. vs.8
- XII.** Demons operate through idols. Zech.13:2; Rev.18:2 cp. 1Cor.10:19-20
- XIII.** Therefore, idolatry is the devil's communion table. 1Cor.10:21-22
- XIV.** Idolatry results in national disintegration and judgment. Jer.2:27-30; 3:6-11; 7:17-20; Eze.6:2-7
- XV.** Idolatry in the New Testament:
- A. It is degeneration from true worship. Rom.1:16-28
 - B. The phallic cult is a form of religion/idolatry. Eph.5:5
 - C. Monetary reversionism is also a form of idolatry. Eph.5:5
 - D. Believers are commanded to separate from idolatry and those that practice it. Gal.5:19-21 (idolatry that stems from lusts of the flesh); 1Joh.5:21 (Philosophical/intellectual/religious idolatry); Rev.18:4 (Political idolatry)
- XVI.** The local church is to be separate from the local religious idolatrous environment.