

Doctrine of Idolatry Revisited

1. Idolatry is forbidden by God.

- *Exodus 20:3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*
- *Exodus 20:23 Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.*
- *Exodus 23:24 Thou shalt not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do after their works: but thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their images.*
- *Deuteronomy 4:28 And there ye shall serve gods, the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.*
- *Deuteronomy 5:7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me.*
- *Deuteronomy 6:14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you;*
- *Deuteronomy 7:16 And thou shalt consume all the people which the Lord thy God shall deliver thee; thine eye shall have no pity upon them: neither shalt thou serve their gods; for that will be a snare unto thee.*

2. Idolatry was prohibited before idolatry existed in order to warn what the consequences would be.

- *Deuteronomy 8:19 And it shall be, if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish.*

3. Idolatry is compared to adultery because of the principle of mental unfaithfulness involved, and the practice of physical engagement with another.

- *Jeremiah 3:8 And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also. 9 And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks. 10 And yet for all this her treacherous sister Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord.*

4. God is a jealous God and will act in harsh jealousy against His unfaithful wife.

- *Ezekiel 23:24 And they shall come against thee with chariots, wagons, and wheels, and with an assembly of people, which shall set against thee buckler and shield and helmet round about: and I will set judgment before them, and they shall judge thee according to their judgments. 25 And I will set my jealousy against thee, and they shall deal furiously with thee: they shall take away thy nose and thine ears; and thy remnant shall fall by the sword: they shall take thy sons and thy daughters; and thy residue shall be devoured by the fire. 26 They shall also strip thee out of thy clothes, and take away thy fair jewels. 27 Thus will I make thy lewdness to cease from thee, and thy whoredom brought from the land of Egypt: so that thou shalt not lift up thine eyes unto them, nor remember Egypt any more. 28 For thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will deliver thee into the hand of them whom thou hatest, into the hand of them from whom thy mind is alienated:*
 - *Revelation 17:1 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.*
5. Mental idolatry precedes overt idolatry just as mental unfaithfulness precedes physical unfaithfulness in a marriage. Idolatry is called evil.
- *Judges 2:10 And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. 11 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and served Baalim: 12 And they forsook the Lord God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the Lord to anger. 13 And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.*
 - *Ezekiel 14:7 For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumblingblock of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to inquire of him concerning me; I the Lord will answer him by myself:*
6. Idolatry turns the heart away from God and His word.
- *Romans 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; 19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. 20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are*

without excuse: 21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. 22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, 23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. 24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: 25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

7. Idolatry can be considered the communion table of the devil because it causes the mind to mediate on inappropriate things and so becomes a counterfeit to Christian communion where the heart is to remember the Lord.
 - *1 Corinthians 10:19 What say I then? That the idol is any thing, or that which is offered in sacrifice to idols is any thing? 20 But I say, that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils, and not to God: and I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils. 21 Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table, and of the table of devils.*
8. Idolatry causes national calamity and judgment.
 - *Ezekiel 6:4 And your altars shall be desolate, and your images shall be broken: and I will cast down your slain men before your idols. 5 And I will lay the dead carcasses of the children of Israel before their idols; and I will scatter your bones round about your altars. 6 In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate; that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished.*
9. Idolatry reflects mental stupidity as individuals worship the work of their own hands.
 - *Isaiah 2:8 Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made:*
10. God will utterly destroy all idols.
 - *Isaiah 2:18 And the idols he shall utterly abolish.*
11. Idolatry produces moral and physical cowards.
 - *Isaiah 2:19 And they shall go into the holes of the rocks, and into the caves of the earth, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty, when he ariseth to shake terribly the earth. 20 In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold, which they made each one for himself to worship, to the moles and to the bats;*

- *Isaiah 21:9 And, behold, here cometh a chariot of men, with a couple of horsemen. And he answered and said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.*

12. Idols cannot deliver a nation from national calamity.

- *Isaiah 36:18 Beware lest Hezekiah persuade you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? 19 Where are the gods of Hamath and Arphad? Where are the gods of Sepharvaim? And have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? 20 Who are they among all the gods of these lands, that have delivered their land out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?*
- *Isaiah 37:12 Have the gods of the nations delivered them which my fathers have destroyed, as Gozan, and Haran, and Rezeph, and the children of Eden which were in Telassar?*

13. The severity of the Lord's judgment leads individuals to abandon idols and destroy them.

- *Isaiah 37:19 And have cast their gods into the fire: for they were no gods, but the work of men's hands, wood and stone: therefore they have destroyed them.*

14. Demons are able to possess idols.

- *Zechariah 10:2 For the idols have spoken vanity, and the diviners have seen a lie, and have told false dreams; they comfort in vain: therefore they went their way as a flock, they were troubled, because there was no shepherd.*

15. Idolatry provides a rationale for promiscuity which may then keep a person from the kingdom of God.

- *Judges 3:7 And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord, and forgat the Lord their God, and served Baalim and the groves.*
- *1 Corinthians 6:9 Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,*

16. Idolatry can lead to mental illness.

- *Jeremiah 50:38 A drought is upon her waters; and they shall be dried up: for it is the land of graven images, and they are mad upon their idols.*