

DOCTRINE OF IDOLATRY

1. DEFINITION:

A. In a general sense, idolatry is the paying of divine honors to any created thing; that is, ascribing divine powers to natural or supernatural phenomena.

(Rom. 1:21-25)

B. Idolatry may be classified as follows:

(1) Worshipping 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)

(2) Worshipping animals. (Deut. 4:17,18; Rom. 1:23)

(3) Worshipping people such as ancestors, great leaders, heroes, etc. (Deut. 4:16)

(4) Worshipping the powers of the natural realm: earth, air (wind), fire, water, etc. (Deut. 12:31)

(5) Worshipping the planets and stars: the sun, the moon, and other heavenly bodies. (Deut 4:19; Job 31:26-28)

(6) Worshipping abstract mental qualities such as righteousness, justice, love, hate, good, etc. (Psa. 14:1c; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:10)

(7) Worshipping activities such as musical endeavors, scholastic endeavors, dancing, sexual activities, sports, entertainment, occupations, etc. (Ex. 32:1-8, 18, 19; Eccl. 1:13-2:25; Rom. 1:24)

(8) Worshipping relative things such as power, wealth, fame, beauty, age, health, etc. (Job 31:24, 25; Psa. 49:6; 52:7; Prov. 6:25; 11:28; Mk. 10:23, 24; Heb. 13:5)

(9) Even worshipping God through inappropriate symbols and images. (Isa. 40:18-20; 46:5-7)

(10) Worshipping the symbol or image itself. (Rom. 1:23)

(11) Worshipping gods other than Jehovah Elohim with or without images or symbols. (Ex. 20:3-5; Deut. 5:7-9)

(12) Worshipping Satan and/or any member of the angelic kingdom. (Matt. 4:8-10; Lk. 4:7; Rev. 19: 10; 22:8, 9)

2. VOCABULARY - Old Testament:

A. אָוֶן - 'AVEN - emptiness, futility, vanity (Zech. 10:2); idols (Hosea 4:15); falsehood, iniquity (Isa. 1:13)

B. אִמִּים - 'EMIM - terrors, idols: so called because of the terror which they cause to the worshippers (Jer. 50:38b)

C. אֱלֹהִים - 'ELOHIM - gods or deities, as false gods (Deut. 29:18; 31:16; Deut. 32:17; Isa. 21:9; Jer. 11:13; 2 Chron. 7:22; cf. Isa. 44:6; Isa. 45:5; Amos 5:26)

- D. **בִּשְׁתָּ** - BOSHETH - an idol which deceives the hope of the worshippers and puts them to shame (Jer. 3:24; 11:13; Hos. 9:10)
- E. **גִּלּוּלִים** - GILLULIM - trunks, logs, blocks, idols: [a term used in derision for idols, in speeches where idols are rebuked] (Ezek. 6:4-6, 9, 13; 8:10)
- F. **זָנָה** - ZANAH - (verb) - to commit fornication, as with strange gods (Levit. 17:7; 20:5, 6; Deut. 31:16; Judges. 2:17; Ezek. 16:15-17, 26, 28, 31, 33, 35, 41; Hos. 1:2)
- G. **מִשְׁכֵּית** - MAsEKKITH - image, figure, the chamber of images, walls adorned with painted or carved figures of idols (Ezek. 8:12)
- H. **נִסָּךְ** - NASAK - a molten image (Isa. 48:5c; Jer. 51: 17)
- I. **סֶמֶל** - SEMEL - a statue or carved idol (Ezek. 8:3, 5)
- J. **עֲצָב** - 'OTZEV - the image of an idol (Isa. 48:5a; Psa. 139:24; Hosea 4:17))
- K. **פֶּסֶל** - PESEL - a graven image, a molten idol (Isa. 21:9; Jer. 50:38c; 51:17)
- L. **צִיר** - TZIR - an idol (Isa. 45:16)
- M. **שִׁקּוּץ** - SHIQQUTZ - an abomination, something abominable or impure; the plural form is used for “idols” (Jer. 7:30; Ezek. 7:20)
- N. **צֶלֶם** - TZELEM - an image, idol, likeness, a shadow (2 Kgs. 11:18; Amos 5:26; **צֶלֶם** - TZeLEM, (Aramaic) - (Dan. 3:1)
- O. **תְּרָפִים** - TeRAPHIM - domestic (household) gods, small figurines, personal or family gods (Gen. 31:19, 34, 35; Ezek. 21:21; Zech. 10:2)
- P. **תּוֹעֵבָה** - TO'EVAH - abominations belonging to worship of idols (Ezek. 7:20; 8:13, 14, 15, 17)

3. VOCABULARY - New Testament:

- A. **εἰδωλόθυτος** - eidolothutos - an adjective, used only as a noun in the New Testament, signifying things (meat) offered to idols. (Acts 15:29; 1 Cor. 8:1, 4, 7, 10)
- B. **εἰδολολάτρης** - idololatrias - an idolater (1 Cor. 5:10, 11; 6:9; 10, 7; Eph. 5:5)
- C. **εἰδωλολατρία** - idololatria - idolatry (1 Cor. 10:14, 19; Gal. 5:20; Col. 3:5; 1 Pet. 4:3)
- D. **εἰδωλον** - eidolon - a likeness, an idol representing a false god (Acts 7:41; 1 Cor. 12:2), or the false god itself (Rom. 2:22; 1 Cor. 8:4, 7; 1 John 5:21)

- E. εἰκὼν - eikon - image, likeness, form, appearance (Rom. 1:23; Rev. 13:14; Rev. 14:9, 11)
- F. ἱερόθυτος - hierothutos - an adjective, used only as a noun in the New Testament, signifying things (meat) sacrificed to idols. (1 Cor. 10:28); cf. "A" above.
- G. κατείδωλος - kateidolos - an adjective, denoting being full of idols (Acts 17:16)

4. Idolatry is **forbidden** (Ex. 20:3, 4, 23; 23:24; Deut. 4:25; 5:7, 8; 6:14; 7:16; 8:19, 20; Judges 2:17). In the Ten Commandments, the **first commandment** prohibits mental or soulful idolatry; the **second commandment** prohibits overt idolatry. (Levit. 19:4; cf. 1 John 5:21)
5. Idolatry is **spiritual adultery**, an attack on "Category One" love (toward God). (Jer. 3:8-10; Ezek. 16:23-43; 23:24-30; Rev. 17:1-5)
6. Idolatry of mind precedes idolatry of practice; mental idolatry occurs before overt idolatry. (Judges 2:10-13; Ezek. 14:7 - "...sets up his idols in his heart")
7. Idolatry is **caused by rejection** of God, His plan, His Christ, or **negative volition** toward Bible doctrine (1 Sam. 15:23-26; 2 Chron. 7:19-22; Acts 7:39-43). Negative volition causes scar tissue and emotional revolt of the soul and reversionism; hence, apostasy expresses itself as idolatry. (Rom. 1:18-25; cf. Eph. 4:17-19; Col. 3:5)
8. Demons function through idols and the practice of idolatry. (Zech. 10:2; 1 Cor. 8:4-6)
9. Idolatry is the **Devil's communion table**. (1 Cor. 10:19-21)
PRINCIPLE: Behind every religion or cult is a demon!
(Religion is here defined as a man-made system which attempts to gain the approval of some idol, force, man, or god other than the Lord God, presented in the Bible. Therefore, **Christianity** is defined here as a relationship with the living God of creation and not a religion.)
10. The **source** of idolatry is the "**flesh**", the Old Sin Nature". (Gal. 5:19, 20)
11. Idolatry is said to be **synonymous with covetousness**. (Col. 3:5; Eph. 4:19; 5:5)
 The sin of covetousness, the tenth commandment in the decalogue, can cause us to break all the other categories of sin because it puts things in place of God and is therefore tantamount to idolatry. (Ex. 20:17; Deut. 5:21; cf. 2 Pet. 2:14, 15)
12. Since idolatry is related to **emotional revolt of the soul** (1 Cor. 10:7; Ex. 32:6) and reversionism (Jer. 7:18-24 ff), it often produces phobias, or other neurotic or psychotic behavior patterns. (Jer. 50:37, 38 - "**Madness**"; cf. 2 Pet. 2:16)

13. Idolatry is **almost always related to sexual sins**. This is graphically demonstrated by the function of the phallic cult (Levit. 17:7; Jer. 3:6-11; Ezek. 16:17; 22:3-18; Ezek. 23:37-49). Consequently, idolatry has an adverse effect on both body (Jn. 8:34; Rom. 6:16; 2 Pet. 2:19; cf. Num. 25:1-5; Rev. 2:14) and soul (1 Cor. 6:9).

PRINCIPLE: Anything which weakens one's control over one's own volition or prompts one's volition to go negative toward God, His plan, His Christ, or His Word is of demonic or Satanic origin.

14. Idolatry and immorality are **encouraged by false prophets**. (Deut. 13:1-5; Rev. 2:14)
15. Idolatry is sometimes associated with **human sacrifice**, especially child sacrifice. (Levit. 20:2-4; 2 Kings 16:3; 17:17; Jer. 19:5; Ezek. 16: 20, 21; 23:37, 38)
16. Idolatry is the practice of those who are slated for **divine discipline** (King Saul - 1 Sam 15:26; 28:7-19), even dying discipline, a [*“sin unto death,”* 1 Jn. 5:16]; (1 Cor. 10:7-10), or the **condemnation** of God (1 Cor. 6:9; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8; 22:15).
17. Idolatry causes **national judgment** in “Five Cycles of Discipline” culminating in the destruction of that national entity (Levit. 26:14-39):
- A. Isaiah writing to the Southern Kingdom regarding 586 B.C. (Isa. 2:8, 18-20; Isa. 10:10, 11)
 - B. Jeremiah writing to the Southern Kingdom regarding 586 B.C. (Jer. 2:27-30, 35; 7:17-20; 17:1-4)
 - C. Ezekiel writing to the Southern Kingdom regarding 586 B.C. (Ezek. 6:4-6)
 - D. Hosea writing to the Northern Kingdom regarding 721 B.C. (Hosea 4:17; 8:4-7; 9:10; 13:1-3)
 - E. Prophecies regarding the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C. (Isa. 21:9; 45:16; 46:1; Jer. 50:2, 38, 39; cf. Dan. 5:2-5, 23-28)
 - F. Prophecies regarding the fall of prophetic Babylon (Rev. 9:20; 14:8-10)
18. Idolatry is not to be tolerated in the church. (1 Cor. 5:10,11; cf. 2 Thess. 3:13, 14)
19. The New Testament admonition given to the church by the apostle Paul is: “Therefore, my brethren, **flee from idolatry**”. (1 Cor. 10:14; cf. 1 Cor. 10:7)