

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT IDOLS?

Exodus 20:3–6 “You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Characteristics of Idols - What are they like?

Man Created

- Acts 7:41 “And they made a calf in those days, and offered a sacrifice to the idol and were rejoicing in the works of their hands.”

Part of the Creation, Inanimate (without life)

- Isaiah 44:15 “Then it becomes fuel for a man. He takes a part of it and warms himself; he kindles a fire and bakes bread. Also he makes a god and worships it; he makes it an idol and falls down before it.”
- Jeremiah 10:5 “idols...Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, neither is it in them to do good.”
- 1 Corinthians 8:4 “Therefore, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that ‘an idol has no real existence,’ and that ‘there is no God but one.’”

Dedicated to Demons, Continuing to the Last Days

- Revelation 9:20 “The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands nor give up worshipping demons and idols of gold and silver and bronze and stone and wood, which cannot see or hear or walk”

Counterfeit of God-Worship and God-Directed Sacrifices

- 2 Corinthians 11:14–15 “And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. [15] So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.” (see Matthew 4:9, Satan’s desire to be worshiped)

Purposes of Idols - Why are they made and worshiped?

- 1. Fake Religion**
- 2. Self-Control**
- 3. Self-Worship**
- 4. Ancestor Worship**
- 5. Fearful Avoidance of Suffering**
- 6. Covetous Desire for Pleasures**

Examples of Idols

1 Corinthians 8:5–6 “For although there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”—[6] yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist”

- **Ancestor Worship** - dedicated to family members who have died as a form of worship & respect
- **Animism/Spiritism** - crafted in tribal religions in varying forms dedicated to either named or unnamed spirits for specific purposes or protections
- **Polytheism** - common in formal religions to named deities, sometimes particular “gods” are assigned to certain families, villages, or people groups
- **Occult** - more overtly connected to demonic worship with the desire for demonic wisdom, empowerment, or protection
- **Atheism** - objects of materialism or self-knowledge that bring temporary comfort or relief from the fear of death or for a greater sense of self-identity, self-satisfaction, or self-empowerment
- **Nominal Christianity** - health, wealth, status, materialism, family, sports, entertainment, substances, appearance, work, education, food,

Dangers of Idols

Evidence of Lostness, Destined to Hell

Galatians 5:19–21 “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Connected to the Demonic

1 Corinthians 10:14–22 “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. [15] I speak as to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say. [16] The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ? [17] Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread. [18] Consider the people of Israel: are not those who eat the sacrifices participants in the altar? [19] What do I imply then? That food offered to idols is anything, or that an idol is anything? [20] No, I imply that what pagans sacrifice they offer to demons and not to God. I do not want you to be participants with demons. [21] You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.

Provoking the One, True God to Anger

- 1 Corinthians 10:22 “Shall we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than he?”

Just Wrath and Punishment

- Acts 7:42 “But God turned away and gave them over to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the prophets”

Cycle of Enslavement

- 1 Corinthians 12:2 “You know that when you were pagans you were led astray to mute idols, however you were led.”

Commands from God about Idols

Avoid Idols & Idolatry-Connected Items & Practices

- Acts 15:20 “but should write to them to abstain from the things polluted by idols, and from sexual immorality, and from what has been strangled, and from blood.”
- 1 John 5:21 “Little children, keep yourselves from idols”
- 1 Corinthians 10:14 “Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry”

Be Bothered By Them: Cannot Serve Both Idols and God

- Acts 17:16 “Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within him as he saw that the city was full of idols.”
- 2 Corinthians 6:16 “What agreement has the temple of God with idols?”
- 1 Thessalonians 1:9 “how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God” (see Eze 23:29)

Share the Gospel with Idol Worshipers

- Acts 17:22–23 “Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: “Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription: ‘To the unknown god.’ What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.”

Avoid Behaviors Similar to Idol-Worship: Avoid Hypocrisy

- Romans 2:22 “You who abhor idols, do you rob temples?”

Destroy Your Idols

- Colossians 3:5 “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

Food Sacrifices - Be Careful and Wise

- Acts 15:29 “you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols”
- 1 Corinthians 8:9–13 “But take care that this right of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak person is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. [12] Thus, sinning against your brothers and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.”
- 1 Corinthians 10:27–28 “If one of the unbelievers invites you to dinner and you are disposed to go, eat whatever is set before you without raising any question on the ground of conscience. [28] But if someone says to you, “This has been offered in sacrifice,” then do not eat it, for the sake of the one who informed you, and for the sake of conscience”
- Revelation 2:14, 20 rebuke for “eating food sacrificed to idols”

Worship Services - Avoid Them Altogether

1 Corinthians 10:21 “You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You cannot partake of the table of the Lord and the table of demons.”