

IDOLATRY

Part 1b

What Is Idolatry?

1st Co. 10:1-21

INTRODUCTION

- I. IDOLATRY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS WHOLLY THE SERVING OF INANIMATE GODS.
 - A. Worship of idols generally occurred in specific locations.
 1. They worshipped idols on “high places” -- “bamah” -- -- *a place of elevation; is associated commonly with idolatrous worship of other gods by the heathen and Israel.* Cf. Lev. 26:30; 2 Chr. 14:5:34:4
 2. They worshipped idols at “altars”
 - B. Idol worship directed towards:
 1. “Graven/molten images” are
 - a) “*An embodiment or living manifestation of God form, appearance.*” -- Friberg lexicon
 - b) “*Carved inanimate things made to reflect animals or people with whom the worship is directed.*” -- K.D.J. cf. Dan. 3:5; Rev. 13:14
 2. Nature: Deut. 4:19; Jer. 44:19
 - c) Sun -- the word used for sun gods is “Bethshemesh” which is used in the Hebrew of “house of the sun”.
 - (1) The word is found 19 times in the Old Testament.
 - (2) Bethshemesh seen as an Egyptian god. Cf. Jer. 43:14
 - (3) It became the place of a city of Judah. 2 Chr. 25:21; 1st Ki. 14:11
 - d) Moon -- is yareh which is translated “*wanderer*”; *it was worshipped by the nations of the far east as a divinity or the representative of one or more deities.*” -- I.S.B.E. Deut. 4:19; 2 Kings 23:5 (Israel worshipped)
 - e) Stars is the Hebrew word “kokab” -- “*blazing; as round or as shining*”. -- Strong’s lexicon. Deut. 4:19
 - f) “Host of heaven” -- Acts 7:42 (Israel did); Zeph. 1:5
 - (1) The word “host” is a military term in the Greek it is stratia which is a word used of an army or military troops. Cf. Acts 7:42
 - (2) “Of heaven” can be translated belonging to the heaven.
 - (3) The “host of heaven” are equated with angels in Scripture. Cf. 2 Ch. 18:18
 - (4) Israel worshipped. 2 Chron. 33:3, 5; 2 Kings 17:16

- B. Popular Old Testament gods worshipped by the heathen and Israel:
1. Baal -- ***“As the Sun-god, Baal was worshipped under two aspects, beneficent and destructive. On the one hand he gave light and warmth to his worshippers; on the other hand the fierce heats of summer destroyed the vegetation he had himself brought into being.”*** -- I.S.B.E. Jer. 32:35; Nub. 22:41; Hos. 13:1
 2. Moloch -- means “king”; it is the worship of a deity by the sacrificing of one’s children as a burnt offering. Amos 5:26; Ez. 23:39; Acts 7:43
 3. Remphan -- ***“Probably the planet Saturn is intended by the name. Astrologers represented this planet as baleful in its influences, and hence the Phoenicians offered to it human sacrifices, especially children.”*** -- Easton Bible dictionary Amos 5:26; Acts 7:43

II. ALL IDOLATRY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT ENCOMPASSES THE SERVING OF INANIMATE OBJECTS AND MORE.

- A. The Gentiles worshipped inanimate objects. Rev. 9:20
1. *“Works of their hands”* is a phrase used to note idols formulated by men to worship. Cf. 2 Kings 22:17; 2 Chron. 34:25 (of things made to other gods)
 - a) Seen in images of idols. Cf. Acts 17:16,23
 - b) Seen in sacrifices to idols. 1st Co. 8:1,4,7,10
 2. Inanimate things that pertain to the world system: Rev. 9:20
 - a) Gold -- cf. Rev. 18:12, 16 (a trade of the world system); Gen. 13:2; 24:35 (Abram was rich in); Dan. 5:4 (gods formed after); Ez. 16:17 (used to make images for worship by Israel); Ja. 5:3 (worshipped by some in the early church)
 - b) Silver -- Rev. 18:12 (components of the world system)
 - c) Brass -- a fixture of trade in the world system. Matt. 10:9; Rev. 18:12
 - d) Wood -- among the components used in the World System for the purpose of living. Cf. Rev. 18:12
- B. Idolatry is seen as being practiced in some early churches.
1. Some at Pergamos held to idolatrous practices. Rev. 2:14
 2. “Jezebel” at Thyatira led some to eat things sacrificed to idols. Rev. 2:20
 3. The Corinthians were concerned about the practice of eating foods sacrificed to idols. 1st Co. 8:1,4,7

CONCLUSION