

The CROSS Is Pagan Idolatry **Part 4**

THE CROSS - ICONOCLASMS - THE ARCANES MYSTERIES OF EGYPTIAN IDOLS

In our 4th and final study on the Pagan Idolatry of the Cross, we will cover the Egyptian connection more, iconoclasm, and Biblical ways to worship. We will also provide one last warning to the Body of Christ to forsake the evil deception of the devil.

FORSAKE THE IDOLS AND IMAGERY OF EGYPT

 International Study Bible Encyclopedia: Cross

(1) Extra-Scriptural

The sign of the cross was well known in the symbolics of various ancient nations. Among the Egyptians it is said to have been the symbol of divinity and eternal life, and to have been found in the temple of Serapis. It is known either in the form of the Greek cross or in the form of the letter "T". The Spaniards found it to be well known, as a symbol, by the Mexicans and Peruvians, perhaps signifying the four elements, or the four seasons, or the four points of the compass.

EZEKIEL 20:5-7 Tell them, 'Thus says the Lord Yahweh: "In the day when I chose Israel, and swore to the offspring of the house of Jacob, and made myself known to them in the land of Egypt, when I swore to them, saying, 'I am Yahweh your God;,' (6) in that day I swore to them, to bring them out of the land of Egypt into a land that I had searched out for them, flowing with milk and honey, which is the glory of all lands. (7) I said to them, 'Each of you throw away the abominations of his eyes. Don't defile yourselves with the idols of Egypt. I am Yahweh your God.' (8)

 Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature: Cross

Among the Indians and Egyptians the cross often appears in their ceremonies, sometimes in the shape of the letter T, at others in this shape +. At Susa, Ker Porter saw a stone cut with hieroglyphics and cruciform inscriptions, on which in one corner was the figure of a cross, thus, \$. The cross, he says, is generally understood to be symbolical of the divinity or eternal life, and certainly a cross was to be seen in the temple of Serapis as the Egyptian emblem of the future life, as may be learned in Sozomen and Rufinus. Porter also states that the Egyptian priests urged its being found on the walls of their temple of Serapis as an argument with the victorious army of Theodosius to save it from destruction.

GOD WILL COME TO DESTROY THE IDOLS OF EGYPT AND THOSE THAT HOLD TO THEM

ISAIAH 19:1 “The burden of Egypt. “Behold, Yahweh rides on a swift cloud, and comes to Egypt. The idols of Egypt will tremble at his presence; and the heart of Egypt will melt within it.”

EZEKIEL 20: 8 ““But they rebelled against me, and would not listen to me. They didn’t all throw away the abominations of their eyes. **They also didn’t forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said I would pour out my wrath on them, to accomplish my anger against them in the middle of the land of Egypt.**”

THE CALL OF THE CHURCH OF ACTS

ACTS 15:18-20 “All of God’s works are known to him from eternity.’ (19) “Therefore my judgment is that we don’t trouble those from among the Gentiles who turn to God, (20) but that we write to them that they **abstain from the pollution of idols**, from sexual immorality, from what is strangled, and from blood.”

ACTS 15:28-29 “For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay no greater burden on you than these necessary things: (29) that you **abstain from things sacrificed to idols**, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality, from which if you keep yourselves, it will be well with you. Farewell.”

● **Paul, Who Helped Deliver The Above Letters, Also Wrote:**

1 THESSALONIANS 1:8-10 “For from you the word of the Lord has been declared, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone out; so that we need not to say anything. (9) **For they themselves report concerning us what kind of a reception we had from you; and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God,** (10) and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come.”

● **John, The Disciple Of Jesus, Also Tells Us:**

1 JOHN 5:19-21 “We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one. (20) We know that the Son of God has come, and has given us an understanding, that we know him who is true, and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. (21) **Little children, keep yourselves from idols.**”

ICONOCLASM & THE IDOLS OF THE HEART

When certain and select symbols take on greater importance, representation, and are said to represent something of spiritual significances- this has created an idol in the heart. When gazed upon by the worshipful masses, it is believed through faith and thought to embrace a place of importance. We are not to place spiritual importance upon shapes, designs, statues, or any other image. This is idolatry of the heart and mind. These often build in a person an excuse and desire of their own wishes and making.

EZEKIEL 14:2-4 “Yahweh’s word came to me, saying, (3) “Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their heart, and put the stumbling block of their iniquity before their face. Should I be inquired of at all by them? (4) Therefore speak to them, and tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord Yahweh: “Every man of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart, and puts the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and comes to the prophet; I Yahweh will answer him therein according to the multitude of his idols;”

Now, many have said that they are just pictures- that they are just line drawings and not an idol that stands up on its own. Surely there is a difference between a picture and a carving, compared to upright idols. The simple answer is “no”, there is no difference. Here, we will see a very dreadful situation playing out in the temple of God. The priest had taken their idols and carved them as pictures upon the wall inside the temple of God. God hates even the image of idols. Pictures, shapes, or statues.

EZEKIEL 8:2-12 “As I watched, I noticed a form that appeared to be a man. From his waist downward was something like fire, and from his waist upward something like a brightness, like an amber glow. (3) He stretched out the form of a hand and grabbed me by a lock of hair on my head. Then a wind lifted me up between the earth and sky and brought me to Jerusalem by means of divine visions, to the door of the inner gate which faces north where the statue which provokes to jealousy was located. (4) Then I perceived that the glory of the God of Israel was there, as in the vision I had seen earlier in the valley. (5) He said to me, “Son of man, look up toward the north.” So I looked up toward the north, and I noticed to the north of the altar gate was this statue of jealousy at the entrance. (6) He said to me, “Son of man, do you see what they are doing – the great abominations that the people of Israel are practicing here, to drive me far from my sanctuary? But you will see greater abominations than these!” (7) He brought me to the entrance of the court, and as I watched, I noticed a hole in the wall. (8) He said to me, “Son of man, dig into the wall.” So I dug into the wall and discovered a doorway. (9) He said to me, “Go in and see the evil abominations they are practicing here.” (10) So I went in and looked. I noticed every figure of creeping thing and beast – detestable images – and every idol of the house of Israel, engraved on the wall all around. (11) Seventy men from the elders of the house of Israel (with Jaazaniah son of Shaphan standing among them) were standing in front of them, each with a censer in his hand, and fragrant vapors from a cloud of incense were swirling upward. (12) He said to me, “Do you see, son of man, what the elders of the house of Israel are doing in the dark, each in the chamber of his idolatrous images? For they think, ‘The LORD does not see us! The LORD has abandoned the land!’”

You see, what I am pointing out and what I believe God is calling for is not new in the Church. The same cycle of “purity, putrefaction, purity, putrefaction, cont.” when it comes to idols, has been a consistent presence in the followers of God. Ever since Israel was called out and a nation was formed, idolatry has waxed and waned. We are now at a peak of putrefaction, and we are called back once more into purity.

ECCLESIASTES 1:9-10 “That which has been is that which shall be; and that which has been done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. (10) Is there a thing of which it may be said, “Behold, this is new?” It has been long ago, in the ages which were before us.”

Without going too far into the subject, which is worthy of deeper study, let's do a brief overview of “Iconoclasm.” It should be said that there was a great strife in the church over this issue. Many call the pro- Iconoclasts as enemies of Christ, the Virgin, and the saints. Going as far as saying that the: “Pictures are standing memorials of triumph over the devil; whosoever destroys them is a friend of the devil.”

 **Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature: Iconoclasm, or Image-breaking.**

(εἰκὼν, image; κλάζειν, to break), is a name for the struggle in the Christian Church in the Middle Ages., which, as its name indicates, had for its object the destruction of all images used for worship in the churches. From the age of Constantine the reverence for pictures and images constantly increased, as they were supposed to possess a certain sanctity or miraculous power; and at so early an age as that of Augustine we hear him confess that many had fallen into the superstition of adoring pictures rather than the Deity. But the Iconoclastic controversy assumed a more serious aspect in the 8th century, when the emperor Leo III, the Isaurian (717-741), who, previous to his accession to the throne, had associated much with Jews and Mohammedans, on taking the side of the Iconoclasts in the tenth year of his reign, issued an edict against the use of images in churches. He was influenced, no doubt, by a desire to draw into the Christian Church the Mohammedans and Jews, who, aside from their simple theistic faith, were debarred from joining the Christians by an aversion to the use of images. But the people-who felt that “it swept away from their churches objects hallowed by devotion, and supposed to be endowed with miraculous agency; objects of hope and fear, of gratitude and immemorial veneration” rose up in masses against the edict, and violent disturbances, especially at Constantinople, where the patriarch himself sided with them, were of daily occurrence. The superior power of the government, however, soon made itself felt, the pictures were destroyed, the insurrectionists slain or banished, and order restored, after a fearful massacre.

The pope himself, Gregory III, put all the opposers of images under ban; but, despite this and other efforts on his part, Leo's successor, Constantine Copronymus, went even further than Leo. Having obtained the condemnation of image worship in the Synod of Constantinople in A.D. 754, he enforced it against the clergy and the most noted of the monks. Many monks, who, together with the patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, were in favor of the images, and were unwilling to subscribe to the decrees of the council, were cruelly persecuted.

The emperor Leo IV also enforced this law; but his widow, Irene, one of the basest of women, used the tendency of the people in favor of image worship to enable her to ascend the throne. With the aid of the newly elected patriarch of Constantinople, Terasios, she called a synod at Nicaea in 787, wherein the adoration of images by prostration, kissing, and incensing was reestablished.

The Greek Christians have since retained images in their churches, but without worshipping them. The Latins also decided that the images should be retained, but not worshipped; while the French Church declared most positively against image-worship in the Synod of Gentiliacum in 767, and in 790 Charlemagne presented to the Council of Nicaea a memorial, *De impio imne qunzcum cultu* (Libri Carolini). Thereupon images were allowed to be retained for purposes of education only. At the Synod of Frankfort in 794, Charlemagne, with the assent of the English Church, caused image-worship to be condemned. After the 9th century the popes were gradually more inclined towards image-worship, and it soon became general throughout the West. The Roman Catholic Church continued to favor the practice, and the Council of Trent decided formally in its twenty-fifth session that the images of Christ, of the holy Virgin, and of other saints are to be placed in churches; that they ought to receive due veneration, not because they have any divinity or virtue in them, but because honor is thus reflected upon those whom they represent; so that the people, by kissing the images, bowing to them, etc., pray to Christ and honor the saints whom the images represent. This image-worship led to pilgrimages to the shrines of saints great in repute for their power. The Greek Church admits only the painted and raised images, not carved figures, like the Church of Rome. All the Christian sects in the East are given to image-worship with the exception of the Nestorians, the Christians of St. Thomas, and the Russian Roskolniki. The German Reformers, although opposing image-worship, held somewhat different opinions on the subject: thus Luther tolerated images as an ornament, and also as edifying mementoes, and condemned the destruction of the images and the altars at Wittenberg in 1522. The Swiss Reformers opposed images in any shape or for any purpose, and had them taken out of all the churches-often with great violence, as in the Netherlands. They are not even now tolerated in the Reformed Church, nor in the particular denominations that have sprung from it.

This is a very deep subject and has lasted a long time in the church, as it seems to also for the majority of the Christian world to be settled. As most of the body in some form or another uses idols, images, the pagan cross, and also the crucifix. Many actors and players have fought for and against the images. While I, Lance McClintock, would have sided with the Iconoclasts. Yet, we see this is not a new issue or point of view. This concept of images in the Body has been fought for a long time. The issue is clearly settled in Scripture. God is not for this in His church.

DEUTERONOMY 4:15-19 “Be very careful, for you saw no kind of form on the day that Yahweh spoke to you in Horeb out of the middle of the fire, (16) **lest you corrupt yourselves, and make yourself a carved image in the form of any figure**, the likeness of male or female, (17) the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the sky, (18) the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water under the earth; (19) and lest you lift up your eyes to the sky, and when you see the sun and the moon and the stars, even all the army of the sky, you are drawn away and worship them, and serve them, which Yahweh your God has allotted to all the peoples under the whole sky.”

EXODUS 20:4-6 “*You shall not make for yourself a carved image OR any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water below. (5) You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, responding to the transgression of fathers by dealing with children to the third and fourth generations of those who reject me, (6) and showing covenant faithfulness to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.*”

GOD CLEARLY SAYS NOT TO WORSHIP HIM THIS WAY

● God Says Don't Worship Him The Way The Pagans Do

DEUTERONOMY 12:29-32 “When the LORD your God eliminates the nations from the place where you are headed and you dispossess them, you will settle down in their land. (30) After they have been destroyed from your presence, **be careful not to be ensnared like they are; do not pursue their gods and say, “How do these nations serve their gods? I will do the same.” (31) You must not worship the LORD your God the way they do!** For everything that is abhorrent to him, everything he hates, they have done when worshiping their gods. They even burn up their sons and daughters before their gods! (32) You must be careful to do everything I am commanding you. Do not add to it or subtract from it!”

● God Says Don't Make Idols To Represent Him, Jesus, Or What They Did.

JEREMIAH 10:2-5 “The LORD says, “**Do not start following pagan religious practices.** Do not be in awe of signs that occur in the sky even though the nations hold them in awe. (3) For the religion of these people is worthless. **They cut down a tree in the forest, and a craftsman makes it into an idol with his tools. (4) He decorates it with overlays of silver and gold. He uses hammer and nails to fasten it together so that it will not fall over.** (5) Such idols are like scarecrows in a cucumber field. They cannot talk. They must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not be afraid of them because they cannot hurt you. And they do not have any power to help you.”

GOD DETESTS IDOLATERS

LEVITICUS 26:27-32 “And if you will not for all of this listen to Me, but will walk contrary to Me, (28) then I will walk contrary to you also in fury. And I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. (29) And you shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters you shall eat. (30) And I will destroy your high places and cut down your images, and throw your carcasses on the carcasses of your idols, and My soul shall despise you. (31) And I will make your cities waste and cause your sanctuaries to be deserted. And I will not smell the savor of your sweet odors. (32) And I will turn the land into wasteland. And your enemies who dwell in it shall be astonished at it.”

EZEKIEL 11:19-21 “And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you. And I will remove the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh, (20) so that they may walk in My statutes and keep My ordinances, and do them. And they shall be My people, and I will be their God. (21) And as to those whose heart is going after their hateful things, and also their heart is after their disgusting idols, I will give their way on their own heads, says the Lord Jehovah.”

EZEKIEL 20: 8 ““But they rebelled against me, and would not listen to me. They didn’t all throw away the abominations of their eyes. **They also didn’t forsake the idols of Egypt. Then I said I would pour out my wrath on them, to accomplish my anger against them in the middle of the land of Egypt.**”

REVELATION 9:18-21 “By these three plagues were one third of mankind killed: by the fire, the smoke, and the sulfur, which proceeded out of their mouths. (19) For the power of the horses is in their mouths, and in their tails. For their tails are like serpents, and have heads, and with them they harm. (20) The rest of mankind, who were not killed with these plagues, didn’t repent of the works of their hands, that they wouldn’t worship demons, and the idols of gold, and of silver, and of brass, and of stone, and of wood; which can’t see, hear, or walk. (21) They didn’t repent of their murders, their sorceries, their sexual immorality, or their thefts.”

FINAL WARNING

EZEKIEL 20:38-39 “I will purge out from among you the rebels and those who disobey me. I will bring them out of the land where they live, but they shall not enter into the land of Israel. Then you will know that I am Yahweh.” (39) ““As for you, house of Israel, thus says the Lord Yahweh: “Go, everyone serve his idols, and hereafter also, if you will not listen to me; but you shall no more profane my holy name with your gifts and with your idols.”

REVELATION 18:2-5 “He cried with a mighty voice, saying, “Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great, and she has become a habitation of demons, a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird! (3) For all the nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her sexual immorality, the kings of the earth committed sexual immorality with her, and the merchants of the earth grew rich from the abundance of her luxury.” (4) I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **“Come out of her, my people, that you have no participation in her sins, and that you don’t receive of her plagues, (5) for her sins have reached to the sky, and God has remembered her iniquities.”**

What Are We Called To Come Away From Exactly?

2 CORINTHIANS 6:14-18 “Don’t be unequally yoked with unbelievers, for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? (15) What agreement has Christ with Belial? Or what portion has a believer with an unbeliever? (16) What agreement has a temple of God with idols? For you are a temple of the living God. Even as God said, “I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they will be my people.” (17) Therefore **“‘Come out from among them, and be separate,’** says the Lord. ‘Touch no unclean thing. I will receive you. (18) I will be to you a Father. You will be to me sons and daughters,’ says the Lord Almighty.”

- BIBLICAL WAYS TO WORSHIP -

It can be hard on people when they feel like you are taking away something that feels sacred to them. So, I thought it was best to give something back. While these will likely become bigger studies, let us briefly go over things God finds acceptable as expressions of worship.

Displaying Bible Verses & The Law Of God.

DEUTERONOMY 11:18-23 “Take these words of mine to heart and keep them in mind. Write them down, tie them around your wrist, and wear them as headbands as a reminder. Teach them to your children, and talk about them when you're at home or away, when you lie down or get up. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates. Then you and your children will live for a long time in this land that the LORD swore to give to your ancestors-as long as there's a sky above the earth. Faithfully obey all these commands I'm giving you. Love the LORD your God, follow all his directions, and be loyal to him. Then the LORD will force all these people out of your way. Then you will take possession of the land belonging to people taller and stronger than you.”

Making An Altar Of Un Hewn Stones.

EXODUS 20:25-26 “If you make me an altar of stone, you must not build it of stones shaped with tools, for if you use your tool on it you have defiled it. (26) And you must not go up by steps to my altar, so that your nakedness is not exposed.”

GENESIS 28:16-19 “Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, “Surely Yahweh is in this place, and I didn’t know it.” (17) He was afraid, and said, “How awesome this place is! This is none other than God’s house, and this is the gate of heaven.” (18) Jacob rose up early in the morning, and took the stone that he had put under his head, and set it up for a pillar, and poured oil on its top. (19) He called the name of that place Bethel, but the name of the city was Luz at the first.”

GENESIS 35:3 “Let us go up at once to Bethel. Then I will make an altar there to God, who responded to me in my time of distress and has been with me wherever I went.”

In Closing:

I believe over the last 4 studies we have effectively proven God’s will and desires. We did this using the Bible, history, and good old common sense. The cross is not, nor has ever been a symbol of Christianity; it is borrowed from the pagans and their worship of evil spirits. History proves this. We have also seen in these studies that it is a trick of the Devil to rob us of our God-given glory by turning back to idols. Lastly, we have learned that we are called out of and away from these things. The conclusion of the matter is this: Forsake the cross idol, repent, and turn back to God with your whole heart. Be the symbol upon this earth that represents the work of Christ. Retain the glory of God placed upon you. Do not give away your rightful position to dried, dead wood, nor to graven shapes or patterns. You are the Body of Christ; you are the light in the world as God lives in you, making you the Temple of God. Forsake the idol of paganism and become pure in the sight of God. Come out and be clean once more!