

The Making of Images Is Commanded

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The Making of Images Forbidden (Ex. 20:4).

The Making of Images Commanded (Ex. 25:18, 20).

Almighty God points out numerous times in his word that idols are nothing more than the material they are made of,

Thus says the Lord: 'Do not learn the way of the Gentiles; do not be dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the Gentiles are dismayed at them. ³For the customs of the peoples are futile (vanity); for one cuts a tree from the forest, the work of the hands of the workman, with the ax. ⁴They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with nails and hammers so that it will not topple. ⁵They are upright, like a palm tree, and **they cannot speak; they must be carried, because they cannot go by themselves. Do not be afraid of them, for they cannot do evil, nor can they do any good**' (Jer. 10:2-5; cf. 2Chr. 25:14-15; NKJV used throughout unless otherwise noted; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

However, if an image is created in order to worship it, that activity is described as idolatry and considered a sin, which is punishable by death (Rom. 6:23),

Take careful heed to yourselves, for you (nation of Israel) saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, ¹⁶lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female,¹⁷the likeness of any beast that is on the earth or the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the air,¹⁸the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground or the likeness of any fish that is in the water beneath the earth. ¹⁹And **take heed, lest you lift your eyes to heaven, and when you see the sun, the moon, and the stars, all the host of heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them ...** (Dt. 4:15-19a; cf. Ex. 20:4-5; Ed. note in parenthesis; emphasis added).

Therefore, the issue regarding the creation of any image is whether the intent is to worship it. However, if someone creates a sculpture as a form of art, with no intention of worshiping it, God does not consider this as idolatry and therefore it is not a sin. Museums and art shows exhibit many images, paintings, and sculptures but it is not likely that any of these works were created with the idea of worshiping them. Instead, they were made to be appreciated as a reflection of the world around us, which Almighty God created. The skill of the artists and sculptures can also be appreciated because God gave them the talent and ability necessary to create their works.

The scripture that some use to claim that God contradicts Himself, regarding images, actually has nothing to do with creating idols for the purpose of worship. Instead, it is dealing with the furnishings associated with God's Temple,

And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat (Ex. 25:18).

These cherubim were located as a covering for the mercy seat, which was inside the veil of the Most Holy area of God's Temple and only the High Priest would have access to them, and this would occur once a year during the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:12-17). So the only individual that would have an occasion to worship these cherubim would be the High Priest, who symbolically represented Jesus Christ (cf. Heb. 7:26-28; 8:1-2; 9:11). As the High Priest understood the law of God, it is very unlikely he would have attempted to worship the two cherubim. If any High Priest were to worship the cherubim, it would be the last act of his physical life based on what happened to Nadab and Abihu,

Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron (the High Priest), each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them.² So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord (Lev. 10:1-2; Ed. note in parenthesis).

So the making of images is not forbidden, but the making of images for the purpose of worshiping them as idols is prohibited by God's law. The pagan nations of this world have always created idols and icons as representatives of their gods. Ancient Israel did the same thing but tried to justify it by stating that these idols represented Almighty God. This is a sin as well as an insult to God who is all-powerful and all-knowing, unlike the wood and stone objects that are crafted to somehow represent Him. God cannot be contained within anything physical as He operates outside of time and space,

But who is able to build Him a temple, since heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him? Who am I (Solomon) then, that I should build Him a temple, except to burn sacrifice before Him? (2Chr. 2:6; Ed. note in parenthesis).

Sadly, many who claim they are Christians look up to idols that supposedly represent either Almighty God or His son Jesus Christ and direct their prayers to these idols. This is no different than the pagans who have been worshiping their gods in a similar manner for thousands of years. The symbol of the cross itself is a pagan object that has been used in religions that preceded the birth of Jesus Christ. This pagan symbol was adopted and assimilated by the false leadership that was responsible for hijacking Christianity in the first centuries following Christ's death and resurrection. In fact, some of the false teachings necessary for this subterfuge were already at work during the time of the apostle Paul because he commented on it, stating,

I marvel that you (some members of the early church) are turning away so soon from Him who called you (Almighty God; cf. Jn. 6:44, 65; Rom. 2:4b) in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel (Gal. 1:6; Ed. notes in parentheses).

Paul was aware that a false gospel was already slowly making its way into the thinking of some members in God's church and this was occurring within decades following Christ's death and resurrection. Just as leaven slowly permeates an entire lump of dough, so these false teachings were slowly permeating the Christian doctrines that were taught by Christ and his apostles. Today, the collective lump comprises so many falsehoods that it no longer represents the lump that was formed during the first century CE. Now it has become a false idol that is worshiped as if it represents God and His truth, which it does not. Paul addressed this trend in the church of Corinth because they

were becoming comfortable with a member who was living in sin. Therefore, they were accepting sinful behavior just as Christianity does today, whether it is breaking God's law regarding His Sabbaths or one of His many other laws and commandments,

Your glorying (in sinful behavior) is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven (sin) leavens the whole lump? ⁷Therefore purge out the old leaven (old way of conducting themselves prior to their repentance of sin), that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened (through the sacrifice of Christ). For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us (1Cor. 5:6-7; Ed. notes in parentheses; see study: Why Passover, Not Easter, Should Be Central to Christianity).

Paul then admonished the members of the early church to keep God's Feast of Unleavened Bread, just as Christians should be doing today,

Therefore let us keep the feast, (Deut. 16:1-8) not with the old leaven (sinful behavior), nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1Cor. 5:8; emphasis added).

Instead of worshipping Almighty God on His Holy Days, which include the Passover and Days of Unleavened Bread, this world's Christianity has created an idol by attempting to worship Him on a false pagan holiday called Easter (See study: Placing God's Name on Pagan Practices; The Timing of the Death and Resurrection of Jesus Christ - Illustration).

This document is the collaborative work of individuals who believe God's truth should be given freely (Mt. 10:8; 1Cor. 2:12; 2Cor. 11:7; Rom. 10:14-21) and the message of the one true God should be made available to all nations (Mt. 24:14) as a prerequisite to the return of Jesus Christ as King of kings (Mt. 17:10; 19:17; Mk. 9:11; Lk. 1:17; Rev. 19:11-16).

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