



Lightning strikes the statue of Christ in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, during a storm in 2014, chipping the right thumb.

IDOLATRY: CARVED IMAGES AND LIKENESSES OF YHWH (THE LORD)

By George Lujack

A great sin often mentioned throughout Scripture that greatly angers God is the sin of idolatry. This article will illustrate some of the ways in which man commits idolatry against God by making, serving, and praising God through artistic works and carved images of Him.

MICAH 5:13:

Your carved images I will also cut off, and your sacred pillars from your midst. You shall no more worship the work of your hands.

The command to not make carved images, or any fixed images representing God, is the second commandment of the Ten Commandments, and is further mentioned and elaborated on in many other verses throughout Scripture.

EXODUS 20:4-5:

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 nor serve them. For I, YHWH (the Lord) your God, am a jealous God...

ISAIAH 42:8:

I am YHWH (the Lord); that is My name. My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to carved images.

When God gave the command to not make any images to represent Him, He also gave the reason why. He is a jealous God who will not share His praise with carved images. He views artwork, paintings, carved images, or any object representing Him as an unworthy worthless substitution for Him.

The best way to relate this in human terms would be in the following manner... A man goes on a business trip. His wife decides to surprise him and greets him at his hotel room. When the wife arrives, she discovers her husband is with a mistress or prostitute. The husband tries to beg and explain to his wife that his mistress or prostitute means nothing to him, but he just needed someone to be with, as a substitute for her, while he went away on his business trip. The wife, who loves her husband, is rightfully angry, appalled, and jealous. All the apologetic words of love coming from her husband cannot comfort her.

This is how God views man when he makes artistic or carved images of Him and sets up those images, serves those images, and praises, reveres, and worships those images.

The Catholic Church is the greatest violator of the second commandment that prohibits making and setting up images of God. The Catholic Church, from its early foundation, never had any intention of obeying God's second commandment. The Catholic Church changed its version of the Ten Commandments to accommodate its use of artwork images and carved statues of Yeshua (Jesus) and others [1]. The Catholic Church hid the second commandment as part of the first; essentially omitting it, then split the tenth commandment against coveting in two, to make the ninth and tenth commandments. Catholicism's ninth commandment is against coveting your neighbor's wife and its tenth commandment is against coveting your neighbor's property.

A Catholic argument used to defend its use of images of God is that its members are not actually 'worshiping' God through artwork or carved images; they know that the images are not actually God. The second commandment actually prohibits the use of *any likeness* of God. Even if people fully know that an image is not God, but is just a likeness of God, they are still breaking the second commandment if they set up, serve, and praise any image likenesses of God.

After the Hebrews departed Egypt in the Exodus, they decided to make themselves a golden calf representation of God (Exodus 32). Moses' brother Aaron made the calf, so he and the Hebrews surely knew that the golden calf *was not actually* God. Aaron knew he could not make God into a golden calf. Scripture records this as a great sin that angered God and God brought judgment to about three thousand people for this sin (Exodus 32:28).

Another Catholic argument used to defend its use of artistic and carved images of God (and others) is that people have photographs displayed throughout their homes, and having artistic images and statues of Messiah (Christ) is just like having photos displayed of loved family members.

This is not the case. Photos are *actual images*, capturing an *actual likeness* of an *actual moment* in time, not artistic paintings or the work of a sculptor's hands. Imagine if you entered a person's home and instead of seeing family photographs, this person had nothing but paintings and statues of his family in his home. That might be a little creepy.

Hypothetically, if Yeshua (Jesus) could be photographed, His photo would represent an actual image of Him, not the work of a craftsman's hands. If in the future, Yeshua (Jesus) allows people to photograph Him, and place a picture of Him in their homes, He would certainly NOT allow people to bow down and pray before a photographic image of Him.

The Catholic Church is by no means the only violator of the second commandment. Many denominational Christian churches set up images of Yeshua (Jesus) in their places of worship and individual people of many denominational faiths have artwork or statues of Messiah (Christ) set up somewhere prominently in their home.

During the pagan holiday Christmas season, Christians set up images of Messiah (Christ) in manger scenes, and set up Christmas tree idols of worship in their home, to which they offer sacrifices (of labor / money for gifts) and bow down and place their sacrifices (gifts) under the Christmas tree idol. These Christmas tree idols must be set up, served (decorated), and then carried away from the home, because they cannot go by themselves (Jeremiah 10:1-6).

JOHN 4:24:

God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.

Yeshua (Jesus) commands us to worship God in spirit and in truth, not through artistic images or carved statues. We cannot worship God in a manner of our choosing. We cannot worship God through breaking the second commandment.

1 CORINTHIANS 6:9-10:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the reign of Elohim (kingdom of God)? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor IDOLATORS, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor covetous (greedy of gain), nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the reign of Elohim (kingdom of God).

GALATIANS 5:19-21:

Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, IDOLATRY, drug sorcery, hatred, quarrels, jealousies, fits of rage, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the reign of Elohim (kingdom of God).

REVELATION 21:7-8:

He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. The cowardly, untrustworthy, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, drug sorcerers, IDOLATORS, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Catholics and other believers who engage with artistic images and carved statues of YHWH (the Lord) are playing a dangerous game with their salvation. Setting up and serving images of God might seem like a harmless activity that actually honors Him, but Scripture repeatedly declares it to be a great sin, a sin that could cause a believer to not inherit the kingdom of God.

1. "Catholic Religion Purposely takes out one of God's Ten Commandments,"
<<http://www.jesus-is-savior.com/False%20Religions/Roman%20Catholicism/tencomma.htm>>.