

MASS IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE CONDEMNATIONS OF IDOLATRY

God hates idols - a false god is anything that denies the duty of sole allegiance to God and is itself unfit for such allegiance.

God categorically stated that he will not accept the worship granted to false gods (Exodus 20:2-6; Isaiah 44). In the book of Exodus (22:19) God warns the Israelites not to adore any other God proving that to adore another is not adoring him for he didn't say, "Don't adore me by adoring another god." Some pagan gods were perfectly good yet he says that honouring them is honouring what does not exist and not him. He told us, "My glory I will not give to another, nor My praise to graven images" (Isaiah 42:8).

Paul told the Athenians that when they worshiped what they called the unknown God they were adoring his God implying that when they honoured the other gods that they didn't contact him (Acts 17:23).

Some critics say:

Acts 17:22-31 says Paul said that you can be an educated pagan and innocent before God of having wrong ideas about the divine. Paul's Romans 1 is clear that nobody has an excuse at all for not knowing God for he makes his reality plain to them. The following from Acts 17 is even more telling as a fabrication put into Paul's mouth, "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent."

End of critics view.

This contradiction would be very serious for there is no compromise between saying nobody but a Jew/Christian knows God and then saying that an educated pagan might.

The answer is that Romans is saying nobody has an excuse for not knowing God as in having a relationship. Acts is saying smart people know of there being a God. Naturally any worship not given to God is no good and is an abomination simply because it flows from the person at some level not wanting the real God or to give him any real love. Nobody can go to Heaven the place of relationship with God unless they drop idols.

The honour given to false gods and idols belongs to Satan (1 Corinthians 10:19, 20). To adore the Eucharist is to adore the Devil.

God told Cyrus that though he was a sincere worshipper of Marduk that he did not know the true God (Isaiah 45:5,6). And there wasn't much to know then for it was simple: there was one God and he authored the Torah. There has been a lot more to learn and know since!

Jeremiah 43

"10 Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: ...12 I shall kindle a fire in the temples of the gods of Egypt, and he shall burn them and carry them away captive. And he shall clean the land of Egypt as a shepherd cleans his cloak of vermin, and the shall go away from there in peace. 13 He shall break the obelisks of Heliopolis, which is in the land of Egypt, and the temples of the gods of Egypt he shall burn with fire."

Jeremiah 44

2 "Thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: You have seen all the disaster that I brought upon Jerusalem and upon all the cities of Judah. Behold, this day they are a desolation, and no one dwells in them, 3 because of the evil that they committed, provoking me to anger, in that they went to make offerings and serve other gods that they knew not, neither they, nor you, nor your fathers. 4 Yet I persistently sent to you all my servants the prophets, saying, 'Oh, do not do this abomination that I hate!' 5 But they did not listen or incline their ear, to turn from their evil and make no offerings to other gods. 6 Therefore my wrath and my anger were poured out and kindled in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, and they became a waste and a desolation, as at this day. 7 And now thus says the Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel: Why do you commit this great evil against yourselves, to cut off from you man and woman, infant and child, from the midst of Judah, leaving you no remnant? 8 Why do you provoke me to anger with the works of your hands, making offerings to other gods in the land of Egypt where you have come to live, so that you may be cut off and become a curse and a taunt among all the nations of the earth? 9 Have you forgotten the evil of your fathers, the evil of the kings of Judah,

the evil of their wives, your own evil, and the evil of your wives, which they committed in the land of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem? 10 They have not humbled themselves even to this day, nor have they feared, nor walked in my law and my statutes that I set before you and before your fathers.

“As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we will not listen to you. 17 But we will do everything that we have vowed, make offerings to the queen of heaven and pour out drink offerings to her, as we did, both we and our fathers, our kings and our officials, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem. For then we had plenty of food, and prospered, and saw no disaster. 18 But since we left off making offerings to the queen of heaven and pouring out drink offerings to her, we have lacked everything and have been consumed by the sword and by famine.” 19 And the women said, “When we made offerings to the queen of heaven and poured out drink offerings to her, was it without our husbands' approval that we made cakes for her bearing her image and poured out drink offerings to her?”

20 Then Jeremiah said to all the people, men and women, all the people who had given him this answer: 21 “As for the offerings that you offered in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, you and your fathers, your kings and your officials, and the people of the land, did not the Lord remember them? Did it not come into his mind? 22 The Lord could no longer bear your evil deeds and the abominations that you committed. Therefore your land has become a desolation and a waste and a curse, without inhabitant, as it is this day. 23 It is because you made offerings and because you sinned against the Lord and did not obey the voice of the Lord or walk in his law and in his statutes and in his testimonies that this disaster has happened to you, as at this day.”

Note: Harmless worship of the Queen of Heaven was condemned and condemned strenuously The Bible keeps it simple, it condemns the worship of other gods and never focuses on their moral failings.

Ezekiel 20:8

But they rebelled against me and would not listen to me; they did not get rid of the vile images they had set their eyes on, nor did they forsake the idols of Egypt. So I said I would pour out my wrath on them and spend my anger against them in Egypt.

Note: God warns against idolatry in the severest terms even though a lot of the worship was not ostensibly evil. He does not care if it is harmless or not. He hates it and its a grave sin.

In Acts, Stephen attacked the notion of God living in temples made with human hands. The temple was not an idol. So what was the problem? Obviously it was the notion that you needed to go to the Temple to get close to God. If you don't see that you are as close to God in a toilet as you are in a temple then that is very very wrong. The Bible sees that as equal to worshipping an idol - it implies an unworthy view of God. The Mass implies that you are closest to God when you are at Mass and especially if you take holy communion which is therefore blasphemy and insults the approachability of God.

In Deuteronomy 7:26, God says that his people are not to bring an idol or image of a false God into their house for it is so despicable that it should be hated ferociously. He wants us to utterly abhor it because it places us at risk of being cursed like it. This says there is no benefit to God in idols which is why we must hate them with all our might. So, the true disciple of God cannot enter a pagan temple. The Christian who thinks the Blessed Sacrament is idolatry cannot enter a Catholic Church. And not even when it is absent for the place is still meant to be a Temple for it.

All who adore false gods mean their prayers to go to the true God in the sense that if they have the wrong gods they hope that the true divinity, will accept them for they are being sincere. Nobody ever worshiped a statue thinking it was only a statue. They thought the god was inside or received the worship offered to it for it represented him. The Bible would say that since we would rather sin than love God it follows that we do not have this intention at all but even if we do have it, it is no help.

The pagan can honour God with idols. Yet the Bible says God despises such worship and that it is not the worship of God. God says that there is such a thing as worshiping false gods. There wouldn't be if he takes the worship for then all attempts to adore what is not God fail for nobody worships without wanting their worship to go the real God and friend of all humanity.

God could forbid idolatry even if the worship goes to him for it is still not the ideal.

Doctrinal truth means too much to God for him to welcome for himself the worship offered to false gods. Truth is even more sacred than love because without truth love and reason could not exist or have value. For example, if you hate truth and reason what is to stop you killing a person out of love? To accept idol-worship would be to say that it is okay to desecrate truth. The Bible speaks of divine dogmatism. We are told to choose death before apostasy. The trust the Bible desires has to be complete. There is no room for saying, “I won't die for God in case my beliefs are wrong”. The evidence

may tell you faith is probably true but you have to forget the probably and put it out of your mind and say that it IS true or “I know” and act accordingly. The word know or gnosis is used to describe this in the Bible. Think about it, the Bible tells you to love God alone and others for his sake (in other words, don't love yourself or others at all). If faith to you means what is probably true then there is a side to you that is not completely sure it is right to believe and love God. Jesus asked us to love God with all our hearts not as much as we could for though we should love as much as we can we must improve so that we can do better which will take time. If God accepted the Mass he would be letting us down when he asks that of us. The gospel of John is full of opposition to doubt and unbelief. If he accepted it then he would be giving the world a licence to worship whatever they like. He does not agree with the majority of people who say that whatever your theological beliefs are they don't matter as long as your moral beliefs are sound. We see that only those who accept strict doctrines revealed by God can be saved or in touch with him. Outside the true faith or Church there is no salvation.

Could God make an exception of Catholic idolatry?

Some would say that it is okay for God to refuse pagan worship and accept Catholic idol-worship for Catholics have a clear understanding of the true God and of Jesus Christ. But all idol-worship is the worship of the true God in the sense that it is meant to go to him if the gods you pray to do not exist. Most pagans thought that the worship of the gods was the worship of a mystery. They only did it for the sake of touching the mystery through these gods. Pagans were relativists in religion. Whatever made them feel they touched the mystery kept them happy. For example, the Greek worshipper of the goddess Aphrodite, goddess of love, could also worship her Roman counterpart, Venus. Whether it is Catholic idolatry or pagan idolatry you have there is no difference.

When God rejects pagan worship it wouldn't be fair to accept that offered to the bread and wine by Catholics. When they adore the host they are not even aware of the truths so why should God make a difference over that?

He didn't accept the idolatry of the Hebrews, followers of what was once the true religion according to the Bible, when they made images of him despite the fact that Aaron their high priest appointed by God himself and a figure of trust misled them (Deuteronomy 4:15,16; 30:15-20) so he wouldn't take a different stance with Catholics who don't have a divine figure comparable to Aaron guiding them. He has no favourites (John 3:16; Romans 5:8).

God says that he is so mysterious that the more you learn the less you understand so allegedly having a “clearer understanding” of God makes no difference regarding whether or not he should take the worship.

If God seems unreasonable in rejecting the worship of pagans we must remember that he said we cannot understand his goodness. God is good and just and will not accept the eucharistic adoration unless the Eucharist is really Jesus.

Suppose God never intended to turn bread and wine into Jesus, God the Son. Would he do it for Catholics for their sake anyway? If he does then anyone who believes they can turn bread and wine into Jesus can do it. This is heresy for Catholic dogma and tradition and canon law say that only a validly ordained priest can do transubstantiation and excommunicate anyone who thinks otherwise.

Pagans adored images thinking that the deity lived in them for nobody would adore mere wood and stone. If God lives in the host for the sake of the Catholics then he should have lived in the idols of the pagans and the Jews to get the worship but he did not. He would not make a difference. The pagans were furthest from Christianity and needed more help and closeness from God and he would not give it to them so when he turns his back on them he will do it on Catholics quicker for they need less light and grace.

If the Bible teaches that the bread and wine become the flesh and blood of Jesus then instead of transubstantiation there is a physical change. The bread could be a piece of Jesus' multiplied body. But there is no reason to think it is the whole Jesus and conscious and entitled to worship.

While adoring the host, Catholics forget to make the intention that if it is just bread the worship shall go to God - so it can't be accepted by God if that is all it is for it is not really for him. It goes to the idol made of flour and water. If God answered prayers to false Gods he would be furthering their worship – he would be increasing the hold of false doctrine over the deluded. No one who declines to convert Catholics from bread worship has the right to be called caring or Christian.

When God condemned idolatry as sinful and evil he forbids eucharistic adoration now. He would not do this if he turned the Eucharist into himself. If he does that he would be anti-truth for people will use his bending over backwards as a licence for inventing all the doctrines and idolatrous rites they wish.

If God did that then people would be getting spiritual strength from their wrong worship which would only serve to deepen their attraction to it. We wouldn't know then what religion is right. The revelation that the Bible says every Christian receives from God by grace that the faith is true would not exist for there would be no way to tell who was right or wrong.

