

This paper is basically a walk-through of the Bible's attitudes and definitions of idolatry. I will try and cite all references to idolatry to teach my reader how serious this sin is. What I am going to propose is that G-d makes it explicit in His Holy Book; statues of foreign gods are abominations and they have no place in our society. We must work together to end idolatry.

As you will see if you're willing to read this paper, idolatry is a major moral issue in G-d's eyes. If you didn't know that, I'm here to educate you. That's the purpose of this paper. Education. Not hatred.

Let's start with Genesis chapter 1, the creation of the cosmos.

In Genesis chapters 1 and 2, G-d takes sole credit for creating the universe and mankind. This establishes our loyalty and allegiance to Him and Him alone as our Creator. Creation includes the sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, land, the seas, day, night, weather patterns, the seasons, the elements, time itself, plant life, the animal kingdom and of course mankind. G-d created the universe and He makes no mention of a sidekick or co-creator in the Genesis narrative. If Jesus created the universe alongside G-d, this would have been the opportune time to tell the reader. The fact that Jesus is left out of the creation narrative is a problem for Christians.

Why is this important for our case as we gear up for the verses on idolatry?

If the idea that a human could create the universe makes you wonder, you are not alone. But this notion that Jesus of Nazareth is eternal and the co-creator of the universe is a belief of Christianity. This idea that G-d and Jesus together created the universe is polytheism because we are meant to worship only the one true Creator, and not a man from Nazareth who died two thousand years ago. Monotheism is built on allegiance and fidelity to one G-d, and that G-d not coincidentally created the universe and He created you. Jesus did not create you.

People must make a choice. Was Jesus G-d or not? Christianity believes he was G-d and that means he created the cosmos. No other religion believes Jesus was G-d. We will examine this belief.

First let's discuss the pagan model of creation which essentially dominated the Mediterranean world until the advent of Christianity. The pagan model of early civilization pre-Bible could not imagine a G-d powerful enough or awesome enough to create all aspects of the universe at once. Pagans saw aspects of creation like the sun and the moon, day and night, as being in direct conflict, so no unified person could have created them simultaneously. So pagans assigned different gods for each aspect of creation, hence a sun god and a separate moon god. But Genesis and the Torah argued on the pagan model when the one true G-d of Israel takes credit for creating each and every aspect of the universe.

And to further dispel the notion that multiple gods govern different aspects of the universe such as different planets and the tides and the seasons, the G-d of Israel makes the bold claim that it is He who governs each and every aspect of the universe. This idea was incomprehensible to pagans and mind blowing in scope. Only a small nomadic tribe called the children of Israel were at first entrusted with this revolutionary idea that 1) there was only one Creator and 2) He created and governs all aspects of reality.

So what did Christianity do with this formula that was supposed to overcome the idea of multiple creators which pagans fancied so much?

Let's read John 1:1-4 from the New Testament and look at the Creation story through the eyes of Christians.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men." KJV.

As you can see, the King James Version makes two claims. Number one, it says the word, who is obviously Jesus, was with G-d in the beginning before time. When the book of Genesis says "in the beginning" it means before time, in eternity. And John uses the same wording when he describes his creation story. But we know that G-d alone is eternal and only He existed before time when He created the universe. See my book "Was Jesus of Nazareth G-d" for many verses that proclaim one G-d and one Creator. The second claim the New Testament makes in this opening narrative from the gospel of John is that Jesus was G-d Himself. "...the Word was God," the verse says.

As I said, this article has nothing to do with hate. I have a valid criticism of a religion that believes a human being created the universe. And that belief is from the New Testament. I sure didn't make it up. I'm merely making a critique of this belief.

It is from this verse, this introduction to the Book of John, where the trinity comes from and the claim that Jesus created the universe. For Christians' sake, Jesus had better be G-d Himself. Because if Jesus and G-d are two different persons, then Christianity has two gods and that is more or less polytheism. I for one will claim outright that Jesus was not G-d and that Christianity is in fact polytheism.

I'll give Christianity credit.

It pretty much eradicated paganism and the idea of multiple gods creating and governing different aspects of the universe in the Mediterranean world during late antiquity. We don't have sun gods or moon gods in the Western world anymore. But Christianity replaced those pagan deities with a human being - Jesus of Nazareth - and Christianity assigned the miracle of Creation to this human being. But I don't think Jesus created the universe.

So people are asked to decide whether Jesus was G-d or not. The choice of G-d you make can lead one to monotheism or it can lead one to idolatry and in Christianity's case polytheism. Although this paper will focus on the stricter sense of idolatry, which is the creation and use of statues in worship, we will examine this Christian claim shortly to see whether Jesus was G-d or not. If he was G-d, then Christianity is probably accurate when it says all non-believers are damned. However, if Jesus was not G-d, would not the same hold true for Christians? Or to put it differently, if Jesus was not G-d, and Christians routinely worship him and think he created the universe, wouldn't that make the real G-d jealous? I devoted a whole book to the subject and it is available on Amazon.

Despite the fact that all other religions deny the belief that Jesus was G-d Himself, that stubborn trinity, which will not seem to go away, still proclaims loudly that Jesus was equal to G-d and that this carpenter from Nazareth was in fact G-d Himself. And if you believe he was G-d, you believe he is your Creator.

So let's put that to the test. Let's see if Jesus matches up to the G-d of Israel before we proceed. As I said, this paper deals with the issue of idolatry, but it is central to my thesis whether Jesus was G-d or not. Plus, many experts will tell you that worshipping a foreign god is idolatry anyway, with or without the statues.

Everyone knows the one true G-d is 1) all-powerful, 2) all-knowing and 3) good. Those are three of his key traits which frankly no other being can lay claim to. As for #3, even saints and prophets are not always good, but G-d is. So let's search the New Testament to see if Jesus was or was not these traits. If we cannot trust the New Testament to tell us about Jesus, then we're left with practically nothing. If he was not all three of these traits - all-powerful, all-knowing and good - then he cannot be the one true G-d and we can rest assured he did not create the universe. If he was not these three traits, then what was he? My guess is he was a human being. But if you want to be creative and call him a half-god of some kind, you're still up the proverbial creek without a proverbial paddle because then you have two gods on your hand - the half-god Jesus and the real G-d who gets jealous when we worship half-gods. That's called polytheism. But rest assured, nearly every denomination of Christianity believes Jesus was indeed the one true G-d and that means Christianity believes that Jesus created the universe. If Jesus was not G-d Almighty and did not create the universe, then the trinity is false and so is Christianity. If Jesus was not G-d then those opening verses that we quoted from the Book of John about 1) Jesus being "the word," 2) Jesus existing eternally "in the beginning" and 3) Jesus creating "all things" are complete lies, to be perfectly frank.

And that's what I'm telling you upfront. Christianity's fundamental beliefs are lies. It's not hate speech; Christians need to know this. As I will show, the real G-d gets angry when we worship other gods, so I feel I have a duty to tell my Christian friends the truth about Jesus and idolatry.

If Jesus was not G-d then worshipping him can be interpreted as idolatry - with or without the statues. If you worship a foreign god, you've committed idolatry, and I think even priests, pastors, reverends and preachers will agree with that. The First of Ten Commandments is "I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." So we're only permitted to have one G-d and if you've never read the Bible, I can tell you that this G-d wants a monogamous relationship with each human soul. He wants to be the only G-d in each person's life. And monotheism is dedicated to that principle. At that point I don't know what to say to people who want to have two or more gods, but maybe this paper will change your mind. Maybe I'm assuming people believe in judgment, the afterlife, theism, morality and such. Or maybe I'm just hoping.

People can debate the definition of "idolatry" until they are blue in the face or until the cows come home. But if you have a second god in your life other than the author of these Ten Commandments, you've clearly broken the First Commandment that this G-d wrote. Maybe you don't think that's such a bad thing. Based on the Bible, it is a bad thing, and I'll show you that. But if you believe in the Ten Commandments, and you believe their source is G-d Almighty, then we're asked to have only one god and that's Him, the G-d who created the universe and Who wrote the Ten Commandments. So the question is whether Jesus was G-d or not. If he's not G-d you cannot worship him.

So, to reiterate, if Jesus was not G-d, and you serve him, bow to him, or worship him as your god, you've almost certainly broken the First Commandment. That is the risk that every Christian takes when

he or she bows to Jesus. If the fundamental belief of Christianity, which is the trinity and the incarnation of G-d as Jesus, is wrong, then Christians break the First Commandment by having a second god. The bottom line is that most experts will tell you that this is idolatry - with or without the statues - because you've worshipped "another god." So we really need to know if Jesus was G-d or not if we care about monotheism and morality.

In Judaism, we have laws such as the First Commandment, which says have no other gods before the Almighty. And we also have the Second Commandment that says do not make graven images, or statues, and do not bow to them. These can be considered the foundations of the definition of idolatry.

But just to provide a fuller description, let's look at some outside definitions.

Wikipedia says idolatry is the worship of a cult image as if it were G-d. I would expand that to say as if it were *any* god. Wikipedia goes on to say that in monotheistic religions, idolatry is the worship of something or someone other than G-d Almighty. So using that second definition, if Jesus was not G-d, then worshipping him is idolatry. And this paper is meant to educate people as to how serious a sin idolatry is.

It's hard for our Western minds to grasp this. We have no laws in liberalized democracies about idolatry. In fact, we have just the opposite. We're given the freedom to commit idolatry and this "right" is protected by Freedom of Religion in the First Amendment in America. Most other Western nations protect the right to commit idolatry. We're allowed to worship other gods in the Western world. So the idea that idolatry is wrong is difficult for us to wrap our minds around. I concede that. What do we base our morality on? Many people base morality solely on the laws of the land that govern our day to day life. This makes abortion morally acceptable in many states. Smoking is morally acceptable. So is gambling, some drug use, hoarding wealth, adultery, homosexuality and many other morally questionable activities.

Do we want to give our idea of morality over to government, which is essentially majority rule? This is obviously a much deeper discussion and a philosophical one, but each person must decide his or her own set of moral values. If you do not believe in G-d, then your morals will obviously come from a myriad of sources, if you have morals at all. But if you do believe in a G-d, then your morals should naturally come from that G-d, and that means placing stock in the Ten Commandments. And the Ten Commandments forbids idolatry, the worship of second gods and their images.

The term idolatry itself comes from the Greek, combining the words for image and worship. As we will see, the worship of images is strictly forbidden in the Bible, and Catholics are forced to defend their practice of incorporating statues into their Church architecture from a barrage of sources such as Protestants, Muslims and Jews. In other words, even other Christians rebuke Catholics for their use of statues in worship.

There seems to be a difference between worshipping another god and worshipping an image of that other god. Almost all experts agree the latter is clearly idolatry under any definition. What I will argue is that G-d rebukes His people for worshipping other gods as well, even without physical representations, so the point may be moot. Worshipping Jesus in your mind may very well be idolatry if we can prove that he is not G-d. This is important because if Jesus was not G-d, then worshipping him is clearly wrong whether his image is involved or not. We cannot worship non-gods.

Again, I concede the point may be lost on people who do not believe in G-d, absolute morality, the Bible, etc. If you believe morals come from the democratic process, then you may be lost. And as I interact with the people around me and try to share my beliefs, that is what I'm beginning to find. Most people put their stock in the First Amendment over the First Commandment.

I think now is the right place in the paper to describe G-d's future for humanity. He has promised us a peaceful world with no war. We will be led by a king, making democracy obsolete. That king, as many of you may already know, is referred to as the messiah, or moshiach in Hebrew. These ideas are from the Bible, so if you don't believe in G-d or His book this is likely going in one ear and out the other. But for those of you who claim to believe in some higher power, it may be important to know.

What will morality be based on in this messianic world? It will be based on a code of laws that have already been pretty much well-defined and that set of precepts is the Torah, which contains the Ten Commandments. So idolatry is very important if not for us who live in the temporary world, then at least for our children who will inherit this messianic paradise. Many Christians think Jesus was the messiah who will rule as this king. I disagree. But as I will show, I don't think it's appropriate to worship him as G-d anyway. And I surely don't think we can worship his image based on the Second Commandment. And it is these commandments that will form the basis of law and morality in the messianic kingdom.

So let's see if Jesus was G-d. Remember we said G-d is 1) all-powerful, 2) all-knowing and 3) good.

If we cannot rely on the New Testament to prove Jesus was G-d, then what are we left with aside from conjecture and hearsay? What I am going to show is that Christianity's own "holy book" proves he was not G-d.

This is about to get interesting.

Mark is the first written gospel of the New Testament. The New Testament has four gospels that all biographize Jesus's life. Mark was written around 70 CE, about 37 years after Jesus died. Matthew and Luke were the next two written gospels, both penned around 85 CE. And John is the last, written around 100 CE.

Chapter 6 of the Book of Mark of the New Testament discusses Jesus's return to his hometown. The people there do not believe he is a prophet. He is merely a carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joseph, Judah, and Simon, as the verses state. You can follow along in your family bible or in an online version if you wish.

Jesus famously says a prophet is not without honor except in his hometown. He means to say that prophets are rejected by their families and childhood acquaintances. Mark 6:5 is the interesting verse for our case. The gospels are broken down into chapters and verses. Mark 6:5 is the fifth verse from the sixth chapter of this gospel of Mark.

It reads as follows. "And he [Jesus] could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching."

A more modern translation from the New International Version is "He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them."

Think about the wording of this verse as it pertains to an all-powerful G-d. Does anything about this verse stand out to you? Does this verse describe an all-powerful G-d?

The verse says he could do no mighty work. The obvious implication from the wording of this verse is that Jesus was incapable of casting miracles because the people lacked belief. He required their belief in him to cast miracles, meaning he was not powerful enough to cast miracles without their devotion. The wording, to repeat, is Jesus "could not do any miracles there." He was unable, without power, incapable, powerless, unfit, inept, ineffectual, lacking, etc.

These adjectives cannot and do not describe G-d Almighty. Let's look at two stories about the real G-d and disbelief. Sarah from Genesis laughed in disbelief when G-d's angels said she'd give birth at the age of 90. But the real G-d cast the miracle anyway despite her disbelief because the real G-d is all-powerful, meaning He can perform miracles in His unbelieving hometown or anywhere else. So Sarah miraculously had a child at the age of 90 after menopause has set in.

As another proof, when the children of Israel were cornered by the Egyptians at the Sea of Reeds after escaping Egypt, no Israelite believed they could be saved. But the real G-d cast the miracle anyway, despite their disbelief, and He split the sea in two. The Jews walked through the split sea on the dry sea bed. G-d saved the Israelites. Jesus, on the other hand, lacked power to cast miracles in his hometown because his neighbors didn't believe he was a prophet. So he wasn't all-powerful. If he were all-powerful, Mark 6 would say the townspeople didn't believe in Jesus at first, but he triumphantly cast miracles anyway, thus earning their admiration and respect. But Mark 6 says just the opposite. He could not do miracles in his hometown. And he was surprised at their disbelief.

As an important aside, the gospel of Mark was the first written gospel, which to me makes it the most reliable. It was written around the year 70 CE, 37 years after the crucifixion. Matthew and Luke followed around the year 85 with their gospels and nearly all New Testament scholars agree that Matthew and Luke borrowed heavily from Mark's account, sometimes word for word. Matthew and Luke based their gospels on Mark's gospels, reinforcing the idea that Mark is the most authoritative gospel historically speaking.

So what would account for changes in the word of G-d? Why would Matthew and/or Luke make changes to Mark? Shouldn't the stories be exactly the same if this were considered the word of G-d? Would you deliberately change the word of G-d? That's a whole book unto itself. But we will discuss briefly one such change as it pertains to this verse, Mark 6:5, the unbelieving townspeople and Jesus's inability to cast miracles. It appears that I am not the only reader to take issue with the wording of this verse. Matthew also had a problem with it.

Let's compare and contrast some verses from Mark 6 and Matthew 13 to see how Matthew copied, and sometimes changed Mark's gospel. Again, I'll reiterate. Matthew 13 is based on Mark 6.

Mark 6:2 reads from the New International Version, "When the Sabbath came, He [Jesus] began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard Him were astonished. "Where did this man get these ideas?" they asked. "What is this wisdom He has been given? And how can He perform such miracles?"

And Matthew 13:54 from the same translation similarly reads, "Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?" they asked."

Those verses are so similar it's obvious they came from the same source. That source may be the transmission of the story that was passed down from eyewitnesses to Apostles, to disciples, to followers to Mark and perhaps later to Matthew. I believe that source was first passed to Mark, who wrote it down in his gospel. Then Matthew in his travels came upon that gospel and he used it to fabricate his own gospel. Here is the transmission story that many Christians swear by. G-d, through the Holy Spirit, inspired Mark to write down his gospel, without or without any eyewitness accounts. Then later the same Holy Spirit inspired Matthew to write down his gospel.

Why is the unlikely? If this were true, I'd expect the words to be exactly the same. Why would G-d change His story even slightly? And if you were to look at different copies of the Torah, you will find such consistency. There are no different versions of the Torah in existence. When they are copied, they are word for word, letter for letter, and even marking for marking. So we do have examples of how the word of G-d is to be treated, even if you don't believe the Torah is the word of G-d. I'd expect G-d's story to be exactly the same. But we don't find such consistency in the New Testament and I personally think that's a problem.

So to reiterate, my hypothesis is that Mark wrote his gospel in 70 CE using "testimony" or accounts he had gathered from followers of Jesus who probably got their stories from Apostles. To be honest, I'm being somewhat lenient in my approach. My New Testament scholars and skeptics will simply tell you that Mark made up his stories based on his own imagination and even from pagan mythology. Many people think the historical Jesus bears no resemblance to Mark's version of Jesus. But let's use my hypothesis for the time being. So Matthew and Luke used Mark's gospel as their source, plus other accounts that Mark left out. I contend that Matthew and Luke added their own "interpretations" to make the steak sizzle, so to speak. And obviously if you're adding your own stories that have no reliable tradition, that's just story-telling and it's not the word of G-d. If Matthew and Luke deliberately changed Mark's stories, then we have problems. So let's continue with the analysis.

Mark 6:3 reads, "Isn't this the carpenter, the son of Mary and the brother of James, Joseph, a Judas, and Simon? Aren't His sisters here with us as well?" And they took offense at Him." So Mark records what seems like a very believable story. The townspeople know Jesus as the son of Mary, and not as a prophet. They take offense when Jesus claims to be a prophet.

And Matthew 13:55-56 similarly reads, "'Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offense at him."

Mark 6:4 and Matthew 13:57 are almost exactly the same. If Matthew was copying directly from Mark, why not copy word for word? I'm not sure. Perhaps Matthew wanted to pass his gospel off as his own. Perhaps he was writing from memory. Perhaps a dictator was reading Mark to Matthew, and the latter changed the words. What we do know is that many stories from Matthew *are* word for word copies from Mark. So my theory, which is well-supported by scholars, is still that Matthew used Mark as his source.

Mark 6:4 reads, "Then Jesus said to them [his disciples], "Only in his hometown, among his relatives, and in his own household is a prophet without honor.""

So prophets are rejected by their childhood acquaintances.

Matthew 13:57 reads, "But Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor except in his own town and in his own home.""

As I said, Matthew was written 15 years after Mark and Matthew clearly used Mark as a source. However, I will contend that Christianity as a belief system had changed by the time Matthew wrote his gospel. And that's very important. In Mark, Jesus is not G-d, as we will see. Matthew, on the other hand, has left open the door for curious pagan Roman believers who are entertained by the idea of a man being the G-d of the Israelites.

And now we'll look at one of these major changes that Matthew made to Mark. Look for yourself. Here, Jesus is trying ineptly to cast miracles but he cannot because the townspeople lack faith.

Mark 6:5-6 reads, "So He could not perform any miracles there, except to lay His hands on a few of the sick and heal them. And He was amazed at their unbelief."

But Matthew 13:58 reads, "And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith."

Matthew has changed the words "could not perform any miracles" to "did not do many miracles." That's a big difference theologically speaking and if you don't understand that, I'd ask that you reread the two versions. A man who *cannot* do miracles cannot be G-d because G-d is all-powerful and G-d can do whatever miracle He wants. But a godman who "did not do" many miracles simply made the decision not to perform any wonders. Notice also that Matthew has left out a very telling verse. Matthew does not include in his gospel Jesus's afterthought. "And He was amazed at their unbelief." That last verse coincides with the fundamental fact from Mark that Jesus was unable to cast miracles because of the townspeople's disbelief. Matthew's version of the story does not say anything about Jesus's *inability* to cast miracles. In Matthew's version, Jesus simply does not do any miracles, and we're not given that last verse about Jesus's amazement because it does not fit in with Matthew's narrative. But in Mark's story, Jesus's amazement is very relevant.

I contend that Matthew read Mark 6:5 and felt it did not conform to his new evolving theology, which developed over the course of the fifteen years between Mark's and Matthew's writings. Mark did not think Jesus was G-d so he wrote Mark 6:5 describing a prophet, but Matthew thought Jesus was G-d so he could not include a verse in his gospel about a G-d incapable of performing miracles. So when Matthew saw in Mark's gospel a human being incapable of casting miracles, he merely changed the text and envisioned a godman who simply "did not do" any miracles. Am I conspiratorial? Yes. The change Matthew made from Mark was deliberate and it covered up the fact that Jesus was not G-d in the gospel of Mark.

The bottom line? I'm not the only one who has a problem with Mark 6:5 as it pertains to whether Jesus was G-d or not. Matthew felt the same way so he changed the wording to suit his theological agenda.



Mark chapter 13 is a discussion between Jesus and his disciples regarding the signs of the End Times. The details are as follows. I invite my readers to use one of the many Bible websites out there to compare the texts. During the End Times, many false messiahs will come. Wars, earthquakes and famines will be only the beginning of the world's sorrows. Councils will apprehend the Apostles and they'll be beaten in the synagogues. Jesus's disciples will be hated because of their allegiance to him. The abomination of desolation will appear in Judea. The sun will be darkened, the moon will remain unlit. The stars will fall. And of course, Jesus will return to earth with "great power and glory." That last verse is Mark 13:26. Jesus will return to earth during the End Times.

Jesus later says the following regarding the timing of these cataclysmic events in Mark 13:32. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

So in Jesus's own words, no one besides G-d knows the timing of the End of Days. Not man, not the angels, but most importantly, not even the son knows when these events will take place. Only the Father knows. I agree wholeheartedly. Only G-d knows the timing of the End Times. Jesus does not know when the world will end, in his own words.

Think about this declaration for a moment. Do you have a theological problem with it? Jesus has just told us in Mark 13:32 that he does not know when the world will end. But we said before that G-d is all-knowing, and Jesus seems to agree because he says G-d does in fact know when the world will end! I have a theological beef with Christianity's idea that Jesus was G-d. How can he be G-d if he does not know when the world will end?

The bottom line? Jesus is not all-knowing and he cannot be G-d. Oddly, this admission that the son does not know the End Times does not stop Jesus from taking a stab at the transpiring of these end of world events.

Mark 13:30: "Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done," he says.

Jesus is saying that his generation will witness the false messiahs, the wars, the darkened sun, the unlit moon and Jesus's return to earth. Guess what folks, that generation passed away and none of those cataclysmic events like a darkened sun or an unlit moon occurred. We would have noticed. And we surely would have noticed if Jesus returned to earth with "great power and glory." So Jesus just added false prophecy to his list of accolades. Let's look at some other verses very briefly.

Matthew 24:34: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled."

Luke 21:32: "Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled."

Matthew 16:28: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom."

Luke 9:27: "But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God."

Mark 9:1: "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."

That's six verses from the New Testament in three different gospels where Jesus essentially takes a stab at predicting his return to earth and the coming kingdom of G-d. In Mark 13:32 he says he does not know the exact timing, which means he cannot be G-d because G-d knows all. But then he tells his audience they will witness his return to earth and the kingdom of G-d, which he was wrong about. In each case he says "this generation" standing before him or some who "stand here" will see these cataclysmic events before they die. Did you know that Jesus thought he would return to earth 2000 years ago? You do now.

Jesus thought he'd return to earth before his disciples died, but they kicked the bucket and he no-showed. That's a false promise, and G-d does not make false promises. So in addition to the three traits of G-d that Jesus lacked, we also know he thought he'd return to earth 2000 years ago but he failed to make good on that promise.

How did the later gospel writers treat this verse Mark 13:32 where Jesus says the son does not know the End Times? We earlier compared Mark 6 and Matthew 13 where Matthew made a small but noticeable change to his gospel to leave the door open for the belief that Jesus was G-d and not a man.

Luke chapter 21 is the cross reference of Mark 13. It's the same scene as Mark 13 and I believe Luke just copied the verbiage for the most part. You can do the comparison yourself. They describe the same events and it is the same scene. As I said, Luke wrote his gospel 15 years after Mark and he used Mark as a source.

But what is striking is that Luke leaves out the verse we just talked about, Mark 13:32. That verse reads as follows, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

And another translation for emphasis: "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father."

Luke more or less copied Mark's chapter 13, but he deliberately left out a verse that seems to tell us Jesus was not G-d. So I am not the only one who has a theological problem with Mark 13:32. Luke also had a problem with it, so he removed it from an otherwise remarkably similar scene. As I've said, Luke wrote his gospel 15 years after Mark, and I think Christianity had changed by that time. Christianity around Mark's time was a Jewish sect that obviously did not believe in pagan ideas like godmen. By Luke's time, Christianity was beginning to missionize non-Jews more, and so Luke was writing for a different audience. A pagan audience who would be entertained by a G-d in the flesh because that was a cornerstone to pagan stories at that time. You can research Mediterranean mythology at the time of Christ on your own, but many stories contain ideas of godmen descending from other gods and performing miracles.

So, no, Luke did not include the verse Mark 13:32, although the rest of the scene is strikingly similar to Mark's account. Let's look at some verses from Mark 13 and then look at some verses from Luke 21.

**Mark:** “Many will come in My name, claiming, ‘I am He,’ and will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. These things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, as well as famines. These are the beginning of birth pains. So be on your guard. You will be delivered over to the councils and beaten in the synagogues. On My account you will stand before governors and kings as witnesses to them. And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all the nations. But when they arrest you and hand you over, do not worry beforehand what to say. Instead, speak whatever you are given at that time, for it will not be you speaking, but the Holy Spirit. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child. Children will rise against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by everyone because of My name, but the one who perseveres to the end will be saved. So when you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let no one on the housetop go back inside to retrieve anything from his house. And let no one in the field return for his cloak. How miserable those days will be for pregnant and nursing mothers! Pray that this will not occur in the winter. For those will be days of tribulation unmatched from the beginning of God’s creation until now, and never to be seen again. If the Lord had not cut short those days, nobody would be saved. But for the sake of the elect, whom He has chosen, He has cut them short. At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There He is!’ do not believe it. For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform signs and wonders that would deceive even the elect, if that were possible. So be on your guard; I have told you everything in advance. But in those days, after that tribulation: ‘The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.’ At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And He will send out the angels to gather His elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. Now learn this lesson from the fig tree: As soon as its branches become tender and sprout leaves, you know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things happening, know that He is near, right at the door. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.”

Mark 13:32 is then “No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.”

As tedious as this sounds, we’ll now look at Luke.

**Luke:** “See to it that you are not deceived. For many will come in My name, claiming, ‘I am He,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and rebellions, do not be alarmed. These things must happen first, but the end is not imminent. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines, and pestilences in various places, along with fearful sights and great signs from heaven. But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. On account of My name they will deliver you to the synagogues and prisons, and they will bring you before kings and governors. This will be your opportunity to serve as witnesses. So make up your mind not to worry beforehand how to defend yourselves. For I will give you speech and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers and relatives and friends, and some of you will be put to death. And you will be hated by everyone because of My name. Yet not even a hair of your head will perish. By your patient endurance you will gain your souls. But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, you will know that her

desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country stay out of the city. For these are the days of vengeance, to fulfill all that is written. How miserable those days will be for pregnant and nursing mothers! For there will be great distress upon the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the edge of the sword and be led captive into all the nations. And Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. There will be signs in the sun and moon and stars, and on the earth dismay among the nations, bewildered by the roaring of the sea and the surging of the waves. Men will faint from fear and anxiety over what is coming upon the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to happen, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near. Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. So also, when you see these things happening, know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away.”

These transcripts are from the same Berean Standard Bible translation. Notice that Mark’s verse about Jesus not knowing when these events will transpire is not included in Luke’s version. Also notice the similarities between both gospels. The stories are clearly from the same source. It’s the same exact scene. And my hypothesis is consistent with what scholars say. Mark was written around 70 CE. Luke had Mark in front of him around 85 CE when he wrote his gospel. The two versions are too similar.

So why did Luke more or less copy an entire chapter that describes the End Times, but then leave out an important verse about who knows the timing? I think Luke had the same problem with Mark 13:32 that I have theologically speaking, so he took it out purposely. Luke thought to himself, how can Jesus be G-d if he did not know the timing of the End of Days? It is my contention that Luke purposely left this verse out of a very similar scene because it shows Jesus did not know something, and that means he could not and cannot be G-d. G-d knows everything.

We said G-d is 1) all-powerful, 2) all-knowing, and 3) good. We already proved Jesus was not all-powerful from Mark 6:5. He could not do some miracles, the gospel said. Nor was he all-knowing from Mark 13:32. He did not know the timing of the End of Days. But for some reason he predicts the End will come before the death of his generation, which he was wrong about. Luke and Matthew include these false promises even though G-d is not wrong. Think about that for a moment. Jesus predicted he’d return to earth 2000 years ago but he was wrong. That shatters the idea that he may have been G-d, messiah or a prophet, doesn’t it?

As an aside, the gospel of John leaves these predictions about Jesus’s return to earth occurring before the death of his generation out of his gospel. John was the last written gospel, penned around 100 CE. And by that time, Jesus’s generation was dead and could not witness his return to earth. Did John consciously make the decision to leave out prophecy that can never come true knowing full-well other gospel writers included it? Probably. Is that conspiratorial? Probably a little.

Let’s move on and see if Jesus was good. That was the third trait we listed that only G-d has. We said some people are *often* good, but only G-d is always good. Was Jesus a good person? Did he consider himself a good person? Mark chapter 10 describes Jesus’s journeys through the coasts of Judea on the Jordan River.

As he was leaving a man runs up to Jesus, kneels before him and says in Mark 10:17: "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"

Other translations use the phrase "good teacher."

Notice this disciple calls Jesus "good." How does Jesus respond?

In Mark 10:18, the carpenter says, "Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God."

Let's look at a more modern translation.

"'Why do you call me good?' Jesus answered. 'No one is good--except God alone.'" That's the New International Version. Look at that verse. Do you have a problem with it, theologically speaking? Were these words said by a Supreme Being? Were these words said by someone who even thought he was a Supreme Being?

So in one verse, Mark 10:18, Jesus denies being good because he obviously does not think that adjective applies to him. Furthermore, Jesus makes a clear distinction between himself and G-d, saying only one is good, and that is G-d. No one is good except G-d, Jesus seems to say. But Jesus also says he's not good. So he is clearly not G-d. So, if Jesus does not think himself G-d, why should I? And if Jesus himself draws a distinction between himself and the only "good" one, who is G-d, then how can Jesus be G-d's equal let alone G-d Himself? As you can see, the trinity just fell apart. This man from Nazareth is not G-d's equal and he surely is not G-d. He says so himself. The Church seems to think Jesus was G-d and was G-d's equal. That's a core belief of Christianity. But the book of Mark has now three times contradicted the doctrine of the trinity.

How do Luke and Matthew treat this verse?

Let's compare Mark and Matthew again to see if Matthew changed the text for theological reasons. We should be used to this by now, but let's reiterate the terms. Mark wrote his gospel around 70 CE and it is my contention, and most scholars' contentions, that Matthew wrote his around 85 CE and he based his stories on Mark's in many cases.

So let's compare and contrast Mark and Matthew.

Mark 10:17 reads from the New International Version, "As Jesus started on his way, a man ran up to him and fell on his knees before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?""

Matthew 19:16 reads, "Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, "Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?""

Matthew's character in 19:16 does not call Jesus "good teacher." Matthew has apparently changed the text. Let's move on to the next verse.

Mark 10:18 reads, "'Why do you call me good?' Jesus answered. "No one is good—except God alone."

Matthew 19:17, on the other hand, reads, "'Why do you ask me about what is good?' Jesus replied. 'There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.'"

So Matthew keeps the stories similar. He uses the word "good," but in an entirely different context. It's obviously the same scene, though. A man runs up to Jesus and asks what he must do to inherit eternal life. The New International Version even uses the same heading, "The Rich and the Kingdom of G-d" to describe the scene for its readers. But the wording is different from that point on. In Mark, the disciple calls Jesus "good." In Matthew he does not. In Mark Jesus denies being good, but in Matthew that verse is obviously not there because the disciple in Matthew's version never called Jesus good in the first place.

Again, my contention is that Matthew more or less copied the scene from Mark, but he adapted it to fit his theological view. Mark did not think Jesus was G-d. But Matthew may very well have had this belief because he changed this important verse. But what is written in Mark is already set in stone, so to speak, and Mark describes a humble Jesus who is very uncomfortable being called "good," and who goes on to say that only G-d is good, which means Jesus did not think he was G-d in Mark. That verse negates the trinity because if Jesus and G-d were equal, then Jesus would be "good" and he would not have a problem being called "good teacher." If the two people - G-d and Jesus - are unequal, you might be wondering, then you have two gods and that's called polytheism.

The bottom line? I have a problem with Mark 10:18 from a theological point of view because Jesus denies being good, but I know that G-d is good. To make matters worse for Christianity, Matthew also had a problem with Mark 10:18 because he changed the "word of G-d."

I think based on these three proofs - Mark 6:5, Mark 13:32 and Mark 10:18 - we can say the New Testament is inconsistent when it comes to the facts regarding Jesus's divinity. These three verses seem to prove that Jesus was not 1) all-powerful, nor was he 2) all-knowing and 3) he was not good. And in each case, Matthew or Luke seem to embellish the narrative to suit their theological agendas, which appear to be different from the earlier Mark.

So if you ever read these three verses and questioned how they could describe G-d Almighty, you're not alone. I also question them, and more importantly so did Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke in fact changed the text because Mark's wording did not meet their theological agendas. And if you ever doubted whether Jesus was G-d or not, you're not alone. And if you think Jesus was just a human being, then the author of Christianity's earliest gospel seems to agree with you. And furthermore, if you don't think Jesus was G-d, then Jesus himself seems to agree with you when he says don't call him good, only G-d is good.

This is all very serious. If Mark is the infallible word of G-d and Jesus said and did the things this gospel describes, then Jesus cannot be G-d.

Let's look at some of the excuses Christianity uses to explain these inconsistencies.

Mark 6:5. One explanation of why Jesus is incapable of casting miracles is that the unbelieving and sick townspeople stayed inside, so Jesus was unable to heal them. But if Jesus was all-powerful he could have cast a very broad miracle, curing them despite their stubbornness. Another excuse is that Jesus found it unwise to cast miracles amongst unbelievers. In other words, Jesus could not possibly cast a miracle amongst unbelievers because they might reject the miracle somehow and thus turn further away from G-d. But if this reasoning holds true, Jesus would never cast any miracles because disbelievers would always reject the miracles and turn further away from G-d. Let's review the Christian

logic. Jesus *could have* cured the disbelieving people from Nazareth, but he chose not to because they'd reject the miracle and be driven further from G-d. But then why cast any miracle? The bottom line. Not only did I have a problem with Mark 6:5. Matthew also had a problem with it. And Christians of today have a problem with it! The difference is Matthew changed the text. Christians of today simply make up what appears to be an illogical excuse why Mark worded his gospel in this way.

Mark 13:32. One excuse says the trinity is a mystery and that Jesus is a part of the trinity, but Jesus is not G-d. I'm not lying, check [bibleref.com](http://bibleref.com). The same apology says Jesus was not all-knowing while on planet earth. But G-d does not change, so this excuse does not hold water. Malachi 3:6. Another excuse says Jesus's deity was in "sleep mode" at this time. But G-d does not sleep. Psalm 121. Another excuse is that Jesus knew the "year" of his return, but not the "day" or "hour." But that doesn't answer the question. Why does Jesus not know something if he's G-d?

Mark 10:18. Here, the apologists say Jesus was hiding his true identity. But what good is a deceitful G-d? Another excuse is that Jesus was just giving the rich man who called him good teacher something to think about. But if only G-d is good, and the rich man called Jesus good, and Jesus *were* indeed G-d, then wasn't this rich man onto something? Why does Jesus make him look like a fool if the rich man was accurate calling Jesus good? And yet another excuse is that when Jesus says only G-d is good, he's really just telling the rich man that *he* is not good, but of course Jesus is good.

You can do your own research and look at how the Church explains these verses. My feeling is the excuses are extremely lame and often misleading. If you don't understand something from scripture, just say so. I'd be happier with that than with very lame excuses that attempt to explain away obvious contradictions in the gospels and the trinity. You can be the judge for yourselves, but the bottom line is that these verses are well-known discrepancies that Christianity is well aware of. But to me, the explanations simply don't do it for me.

We started the paper describing idolatry as the worship of other gods. I am now poised to say that Jesus is one of many "other" gods. His religion which thought he was G-d began after Mark wrote his gospel presumably because Matthew and Luke made changes to Mark's text to leave the door open for the belief that Jesus was indeed the G-d of Israel. There was no internet back then and no media, so Matthew's and Luke's audiences likely did not know about Mark's gospel and certainly did not know the details of the verses we just looked at.

So life went on.

In some parts of the Roman Empire, Jesus was thought to be G-d and in other locations, he was merely a man. This is all very consistent with Christian history and the matter was resolved for the Church's purposes at the Council of Nicaea hundreds of years later when Jesus was declared G-d in the flesh when the Church voted on the matter. But now that you know the truth about Mark 6:5, Mark 13:32 and Mark 10:18, what will you do?

What I am willing to say is that there is a G-d who is all-powerful, all-knowing and good. And His name is not Jesus of Nazareth. Furthermore, this Supreme Being wrote the Ten Commandments, and He forbids His followers from having other gods, and He also warns us about making statues. The whole point of showing that Jesus was not G-d was to show how serious graven images of him are now that we know he cannot be G-d based on Mark's gospel.

Now, depending on your definition of idolatry, a Christian who worships Jesus may be in violation. The First Commandment is have no other gods. Since Jesus and G-d are clearly different based on our research, if you worship them both you have two gods and that's certainly polytheism. And based on many definitions, it might be idolatry. Regardless of what you call it, it's certainly a sin to worship Jesus. It may be legal in this country, but G-d forbids the worship of other gods.

So let's get to the meat and potatoes of this paper. The use of statues in worship.

Catholicism procures and displays statues of their god named Jesus of Nazareth. And that is the textbook definition of idolatry. Statues of foreign gods, whether they are bowed to or not, are idols. And as we will see, simply making these statues is idolatry. This practice also breaks the Second Commandment, which is considered the foundational law concerning idolatry. G-d made it really simple for us. Don't make statues. And don't bow to them. We've all seen the Jesus statues. They're all over Catholic Churches from Rome to Rio de Janeiro. And they're all idols of a man who the Church believes is G-d but who likely did not think himself G-d at all, if we believe Mark.

But I have an announcement to make.

The real messiah is coming and he's going to establish a kingdom based on commandments like One and Two, which forbid other gods and physical images of such gods. And we'll see every idol disappear one way or another before the messianic kingdom of G-d is completely established. There won't be any idols in the messianic kingdom. I propose it is our job to teach Catholics about Jesus and these statues so they can remove the statues themselves. These idol-statues of Jesus and of the saints are morally wrong even if our country protects the right to bow to them. Our morals should come from G-d's commandments, not from politicians in Washington. And that's the transition that we need to make so the messiah can rule in what will essentially be a theocracy where laws are based on the Torah.

We now know Jesus was not G-d based on Mark's gospel and based on Matthew's and Luke's creative embellishments to hide or distort Mark's testimony. And we know Jesus prophesized falsely by predicting his generation would witness his return to earth. So the trinity is bogus based on the New Testament itself. And that makes Christianity a false religion because its core beliefs are not true. I'll probably be ridiculed for saying that, but it's not about hate. It's about education. And given our research, we must state the obvious. Christianity is based on the trinity and the incarnation of G-d as Jesus. But we've proven otherwise and that makes this core belief of Christianity false.

In case you did not know, the root belief of Christianity is that Jesus was G-d in the flesh. But we've uprooted that belief. As we're going to see, worshipping a second god is a spiritually dangerous practice and I want to lead my readers away from Christianity because it is my contention that Jesus was not G-d. And Mark would agree. And so would Jesus, based on Mark's account.

Let's now look at the word of G-d to show how the real G-d feels about idolatry, especially statues. Christians cannot bow to Jesus of Nazareth or his statues if they want to follow the First and Second Commandments. And when I'm done chronicling G-d's attitude towards the creation and use of statues in worship services, Christians who heed my advice will hopefully repent, and they can be forgiven by the real G-d. I want to educate people about idolatry because it's spiritually dangerous. But the real G-d gives us repentance, and that is the proper path for modern day idolators who bow to statues. Historically, the Jews did not choose repentance. We chose to continue our idolatrous practices



and we were punished for it. This paper is not just about Catholic bashing, as my detractors will claim. I will also look at Jewish malfeasance.

Let's start chronologically in the Bible from Genesis. Let's educate people about idolatry so we can end idolatry peacefully together. That's my hope. This way we can all welcome the messiah when he comes.

What we'll find is that idolatry is so serious a sin that nearly every book of the Bible touches upon it. G-d wants His people to be monotheistic. And the mere presence of statues is so tempting to humans who may worship them that He forbid the very creation of statues.

Let's start with Genesis. In Genesis, Jacob's brother, Esau, takes two wives...Judith and Basemath. Genesis 26:35 says: "and they were a bitterness of spirit unto Isaac and Rebekah," Esau's parents. For those who are unfamiliar with the story, we're talking about the Biblical patriarchs and matriarchs here from Genesis. Jacob turned out to be the patriarch of the Jewish people and Esau became the patriarch of Christianity, according to rabbis. So what did these two wives of Esau do that proved to be a source of spiritual rebellion to Esau's mother and father? We have to read the Midrash, which is a compilation of rabbinic stories that provide further detail to the Torah and other books of the Bible.

This may get a little technical. The rabbi Rashi links the name Basemath to the word besamim, which refers to the fact that she offered incense to false gods. While the real G-d certainly commands the Jews to burn incense to Him in the Torah, He forbids using incense like Basemath used incense...in the worship of foreign gods. Burning incense to foreign gods is obviously forbidden and a fairly overt act of idolatry.

In addition, we are specifically told a certain mixture of spices to use in the incense blend to make sure it meets G-d's demands. What is the penalty in Jewish law for leaving out spices? The death penalty. The use of incense is more familiar to readers of the Bible as a pagan practice devoted to false gods.

The Jews in the Bible are consistently reprimanded for offering incense to foreign gods throughout the Bible. Esau's righteous mother, Rebecca, says in Genesis 27:46: "I am weary of my life because of the daughters of Heth," referring to Esau's wives. She goes on to say, "If Jacob takes a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as [Esau's wives], of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" Rebecca was disgusted by Basemath's improper incense service dedicated to foreign gods.

Let's look at G-d's attitudes towards statues, sometimes called graven images. Graven merely means carved. It can apply to stone images, wood images, metal images, etc. This article is more about statues than incense.

Let's look at the bedrock of G-d's attitude towards the creation and use of statues. Look no further than the Ten Commandments.

In Exodus 20:3-6, G-d speaks on Mount Sinai for all time: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the

fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments."

In other words, don't make statues of anything, in heaven, on earth, or in the seas. Don't bow to them or serve them. G-d is a jealous G-d. This is a sin and He visits the sins of the fathers upon their children but shows mercy to the descendants of those that love Him and keep these commandments. He even seems to say that people who do bow to or serve graven images hate Him by implication.

G-d doesn't just rebuke people who *bow* to graven images. Catholicism consistently says they do not worship statues. They just have them in their churches. But G-d rebukes people who make statues in the first place. And Catholicism has ordered probably close to a million graven images for its 200,000 parishes. That estimates five statues per parish.

I cited the Catholic defense. They don't bow to the statues and they don't think these statues are gods, so this cannot be idolatry, they say. But G-d strongly disagrees with this defense because He says don't *make* statues in the first place. Imagine your wife caught you with a naked woman in your home. "I never had sex with her so it's not adultery." OK. But you shouldn't have naked woman in your home anyway. We'll use this analogy going forward. G-d knows what humans are like; He created us. He knows the adoration and praise we are capable of bestowing upon mere statues of stone or wood. So He made a judgment call and forbid making statues outright to prevent us from idolizing physical creations. G-d forbids the creation of statues and the excuse that you don't think it's G-d does not hold water.

How could the Pope and Catholics disregard this Second Commandment that clearly says don't make statues unto oneself? We'll get to that. But let's first look at some other verses that show G-d's disdain for statues.

As an aside, aren't statues everywhere? We have them in our civic centers, in our parks, in our toys and dolls. Can't all these be construed as the type of idols that G-d outright forbids in the Second Commandment? Maybe. The messiah will have to determine that. And until then individuals, families and communities will have to decide what is an idolatrous image and what is not. But certainly, a statue of a god such as Jesus is an idol. We've proven he is not G-d and that makes statues of him strictly forbidden. We don't honor foreign gods. And statues used for religious purposes seem to fit into the Second Commandment's prohibition against their use.

What we'll find as we progress is that my attitude towards statues is from the Bible. I'm merely adding commentary to G-d's attitudes to adapt His ideas about statues for a modern audience.

Leviticus 19:4 says: "Turn ye not unto the idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the LORD your God."

A molten god is a metal statue. I've seen churches that actually have metal statues of Jesus. But the medium is not what matters here. G-d is equally revolted by statues made of wood, clay, stone, and yes, metal.

Leviticus 26:1 says: "Ye shall make you no idols, neither shall ye rear you up a graven image, or a pillar, neither shall ye place any figured stone in your land, to bow down unto it; for I am the LORD your God."

This verse is very simple. Do not make graven images or any figured stone.

The Church talks about idolatry in very roundabout ways, I've noticed. They talk about idolatry as money, as obstacles to G-d, and in other intellectual terms. One clergy member's video even talked about "worshipping the worship" whereby the Church liturgy becomes an idol. These ideas are thoughtful and insightful but to me it is all a distraction from the real idols in Church. The statues.

And we need to educate everybody about the use of statues in worship services. Catholics just happen to be more involved in it than other denominations so I talk about them a lot in this article. I care about Catholics and that's why I've written this article, to lead them away from the use of these statues. As an aside, my son is a baptized Catholic so I truly care about this people.

G-d keeps it simple. He says don't make statues. Catholicism blindly ignores this precept by decorating its churches with graven images. And this is the kind of idolatry that G-d speaks about in the Ten Commandments. And this is the kind of idolatry that angers G-d throughout the Bible.

Deuteronomy 5:9 says: "Thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate Me."

Deuteronomy 8:19 says: "And it shall be, if thou shalt forget the LORD thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them, and worship them, I forewarn you this day that ye shall surely perish."

This is a stern warning from the Torah regarding those willing to walk after other gods. Christians need to answer the question. Is Jesus an "other" god like this verse describes? I think I proved he's not G-d. Mark seems to agree with me, and so does Jesus it would seem. So why worship him? Where does that leave Jesus in the pantheon of "other" gods? There's only one G-d and He says don't have other ones no matter how great they seem.

We used the adultery analogy before. Do you think it would be any consolation to your wife if you cheated on her with a bright, attractive, successful, and well-educated woman? No, it's still adultery. And idolatry with Jesus is still idolatry even if he was an impressive and talented human being.

No matter how good you think Jesus was, if he did not create the universe, if he was not all-powerful, if he was not all-knowing, then he's not G-d. And that means worshipping him makes the real G-d jealous just like adultery makes a devoted wife jealous. So honest Christians need to rethink things if they serve Jesus of Nazareth. The time is now. And it's someone's job to act as a light to the nations. We need to educate and that's what this website is all about. But we cannot hide our head in the sand and ignore verses like Deuteronomy 8:19. If you walk after other gods besides the real G-d, you will perish.

I don't want you to take your anger out on me. I'm merely the messenger. These verses are from the Bible that witnesses in courtrooms swear upon, so that book has authority. These verses are from G-d Himself. I did not make them up. I merely read them and over time began worrying about my Catholic son and Catholic friends.

Deuteronomy 27:15 offers the most severe rebuke we've seen so far: "Cursed be the man that maketh a graven or molten image, an abomination unto the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and setteth it up in secret."

G-d calls graven images an abomination unto the Lord. And those who set up graven images in secret are cursed, according to this important verse. Which is worse, a public sin that entices others to sin or a secret sin that you think G-d does not see?

Jews can be guilty of idolatry as well. I'm not just reprimanding Catholics. In the Torah we have the infamous scene of the Golden Calf. This is perhaps the worst case of idolatry in the Bible. The Israelites recently escaped Egypt. They are led through the wilderness to Mount Sinai to receive the Torah, the laws that will eternally guide the new nation. As the Israelites await their leader's return from the top of Mount Sinai, they use their gold jewelry to carve a graven statue of a cow in verse 32:4, saying to Moses's brother, Aaron, "make us a god" in Exodus 32:1. After they make the calf, for some reason they say, "This is thy god, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" thus replacing the G-d of Israel with a molten image of a bull. Bull worship was apparently very common in ancient times. The Israelites then worship the golden bull and sacrifice to it, according to Exodus 32:8, and G-d threatens to destroy the entire nation and to create a new one from Moses's seed. Moses pleads with G-d and He relents of His plan to destroy Israel.

The Jewish people did not stop worshipping idols then, as we will see. The Jewish people are remarkable in that we record our nation's history, even our failures. The incident of the Golden Calf had long-lasting repercussions, some eternal ones. For example, the firstborn males used to have an exalted statues before the sin of the Golden Calf. But afterwards, that role was shifted to the tribe of Levi because they opposed the idolatry. Is it fair to compare the Golden Calf with statues of Jesus? I'm not going to argue either way, but when G-d says do not make graven images, He means it. So learn from our mistake at Mount Sinai, and listen to G-d when He says graven images anger Him. He almost destroyed the entire nation of Israel for this sin.

Again, we have freedom of religion in this country, so it may be hard to hear me speak about religions being at fault. But the truth is any religion can go astray, as we just saw with the Jews. I'm merely trying to educate people so we stay on course.

Joshua is the sixth book of the Bible. It chronologically follows after the Torah and the Mount Sinai experience where the laws were given. Joshua 24:14 says: "Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth; and put away the gods which your fathers served beyond the River, and in Egypt; and serve ye the LORD." Joshua is imploring his people to abandon the foreign gods they used to serve. He's asking them to worship the G-d of Israel alone. I include this verse to show that the anti-idol theme continues throughout the Bible. It is not unique to just the Torah or the Ten Commandments. And since G-d does not change, His anti-idol attitude continues until this day.

In the Book of Judges chapter 6, the warrior Gideon breaks down the altar of Baal and the Asherah that was by it. An Asherah is thought to be the sun goddess carved into an image out of a branchless tree trunk. The Jewish people actually used to bow to tree trunks. It certainly qualifies as an idol. And the Baal was a common god in the region for hundreds of years. The Jews and surrounding cultures made images of him. So after Moses and Aaron, and after Joshua, idolatry still remains amongst the Jews and in the Promised Land. It is truly one of the most important commandments. And its continuation is a blight on humanity. Sadly it continues until this day in fairly stark terms. Of all the things G-d could have asked Gideon to do, He asks him to break down the altar of G-d's biggest competitor. So we know idolatry is an important aspect of morality. It's not just spirituality. G-d sees

something morally corrosive about statues and other gods. And I am conveying His message in this paper.

Judges 10:14 continues the Bible's assault on idolatry. The Jews turned their back on the Lord and served other gods, only to be attacked by the Philistines. Only *then* do the Israelites cry out to the Lord asking for His help. He says: "Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen; let them save you in the time of your distress."

After the period of Judges, around the year 1000 BCE a righteous king named David rises up and writes the Psalms, a book of poetry dedicated to G-d. These poems are no strangers to verses about the idolatry that David must have witnessed and rejected.

Psalms 135:15-18 says: "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they speak not; Eyes have they, but they see not; They have ears, but they hear not; Neither is there any breath in their mouths. They that make them shall be like unto them; Yea, every one that trusteth in them."

Whether the idols are made of silver, gold, stone or wood, the point from the psalmist is the same. Idols cannot help you. And based on man's instinct to assign worship to carved images, idolatry can hurt somebody's standing with G-d, whether the country you live in allows it or not. But in the messianic kingdom, statues that Psalms refers to will be forbidden and there will be legal consequences for having them. We need to transition to that point.

In Jonah 2:8-9, the Bible says: "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the LORD; And my prayer came in unto Thee, Into Thy holy temple. They that regard lying vanities Forsake their own mercy."

Those "lying vanities" are statues of foreign gods. By now you can see that G-d devotes a great amount of time discussing the sin of idolatry - whether that's serving other gods or literally bowing to their forms. Many Christians who only read the gospels may be unaware of these verses. Jesus does not comment on the use of graven images anywhere in his ministry except at times to deride the "pagans" of his era. However, he does not mention graven images specifically. But historically we know the Romans used images and statues in their worship and even Caesar was seen as a divine being. There are a few verses in the New Testament's Epistles section that do comment on idolatry, and we'll get to them later.

I'll tell you a brief story. At a local monastery there used to be a Jesus statue with an engraving of the Ten Commandments underneath it. The Second Commandment was removed. I told the priest the "error" and he gasped in horror. He said he'd fix the "oversight." When I came back weeks later, the problem remained. There was no Second Commandment under that statue of Jesus to warn believers not to make graven images. I guess you cannot trust everything you read because that stone-engraved Catholic set of the Ten Commandments was missing the Second Commandment, which would have forbidden the statue the tablets sat under. It is my hope that Catholicism wakes up one day and pays greater attention to the Second Commandment and the prohibition against statues in religious services. I believe I have a duty to educate people about graven images so they don't forsake their own mercy, as the verse states. I write this article out of love, not out of hate.

The Book of Isaiah comes next. It is loaded with verses denouncing foreign gods and the statues that often accompany them.

Isaiah 2:8 says: "Their land also is full of idols; Every one worshippeth the work of his own hands, That which his own fingers have made."

Idolatry and monotheism are opposites. Idolatry is the worship of something the worshipper created, while monotheism is the worship of something that created the worshipper. It is vanity to worship the work of one's hands and an act of humility to worship the Creator who forged existence.

Isaiah 17:7-8 and 19:18 also contain prophecies of nations turning *away* from idolatry. So we are given this hope in Isaiah that the blight of idolatry which will not seem to go away will someday clear like a storm. People and nations will someday wake up and serve the Creator as opposed to the created.

In another story of hope, Isaiah 36-37 describes the fate of the city of Jerusalem against the king of Assyria. The Assyrian messenger reminds the besieged Jews that the other gods of the land could not save their worshippers from destruction. Countless pagan tribes fell to the king of Assyria. But the Jews remain true to their all-powerful G-d. G-d then shows these inhabitants of Jerusalem the difference between monotheism and idolatry when He strikes down the Assyrian army overnight, thus preventing them from attacking Jerusalem. The idolaters who mocked G-d were destroyed.

Isaiah 42:8: "I am the LORD, that is My name; And My glory will I not give to another, Neither My praise to graven images." While idolaters are quick to praise the works of their own hands, G-d tells us His praise will never be given to another. It's another example of worshipping the created and the Creator. The difference is night and day.

Anyone can use idolatry in their day to day lives. We idolize movie stars and baseball players. We gush over photos. These practices probably constitute as idolatry. This article is about a history of idolatry as well. We've seen ancient nations and the Jews make catastrophic mistakes by worshipping idols. The Jews were nearly destroyed, as we'll see in Jeremiah. These are the practices that we as a nation and as a society need to steer clear of.

Isaiah 42:17 says: "They shall be turned back, greatly ashamed, That trust in graven images, That say unto molten images: 'Ye are our gods.'" This is an example of the perversity that accompanies the use of graven images. I said from the outset this article was written with modern day idolatry in mind, but I don't think many people call the statues of Jesus and the saints their gods. But in acts of desperation, when times are difficult, people do embrace and turn to these statues literally and spiritually. And that is something G-d wants to prevent. G-d wants people to turn to Him.

Isaiah 44:9-11: "They that fashion a graven image are all of them vanity, And their delectable things shall not profit; And their own witnesses see not, nor know; That they may be ashamed. Who hath fashioned a god, or molten an image That is profitable for nothing? Behold, all the fellows thereof shall be ashamed; And the craftsmen skilled above men; Let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; They shall fear, they shall be ashamed together."

Isaiah seems to be describing the deplorable practice where worshippers actually assign godlike traits to their statues. I do not think Catholics do this because I've read many articles that say they know better. Catholics do not actually think a stone statue can save them. I earlier made the analogy of having a naked woman in one's house. You may not have intercourse with her or love her, but why have her there in the first place? And that's what I would ask of Catholics who are quick to say they obviously don't think their statues are gods. Why have them in the first place, especially if G-d forbids making

them in the Second Commandment? G-d knows the perversity associated with graven images and He goes out of His way to say those who fashion a god shall be ashamed. Graven images are risky propositions. Modern day idolatry seems to say it is acceptable to adore or venerate an image, but they stop short of worshipping one. It is clearly a slippery slope. What's the practical difference of venerating an image and worshipping one?

Isaiah 44:15 describes that shameful practice of bowing before an idol. "Then a man useth it for fuel; And he taketh thereof, and warmeth himself; Yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; Yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; He maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto."

Verse 17 from Isaiah continues: "And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image; He falleth down unto it and worshippeth, and prayeth unto it, And saith: 'Deliver me, for thou art my god.'"

So these idolaters from Isaiah are hardcore idolaters. They worship and pray to their graven images.

Isaiah 45:20 says: "Assemble yourselves and come, draw near together, Ye that are escaped of the nations; They have no knowledge that carry the wood of their graven image, And pray unto a god that cannot save."

Isaiah 46:6-7 says: "Ye that lavish gold out of the bag, And weigh silver in the balance; Ye that hire a goldsmith, that he make it a god, To fall down thereto, yea, to worship. He is borne upon the shoulder, he is carried, And set in his place, and he standeth, From his place he doth not remove; Yea, though one cry unto him, he cannot answer, Nor save him out of his trouble."

G-d makes it clear in Isaiah. He frowns upon graven images. The idol worshippers of Isaiah are way beyond using graven images as conversation pieces, works of art and as reminders of the people they represent. The idolaters of Isaiah bow to their statues, they pray to their statues, and they call out to their statues in time of need.

Perhaps the Second Commandment is a precautionary measure. Perhaps G-d in His infinite wisdom foresaw the trouble that simply *having* statues would bring, just like simply having a naked woman roam the house will bring problems. The creation of statues is forbidden for a reason. It leads to perversity and G-d is therefore against the very creation of statues.

Whether they're made of gold, silver, wood, metal or stone, G-d dislikes graven images. In this country we have Freedom of Religion. So you can legally bow to stone statues of Jesus all you want. But G-d sees all and that's as stark a warning as I'm willing to provide.

I'd like to weave the verses of Jeremiah and Ezekiel into a cautionary tale for today. In Judaism, we record our history, even our shameful history, and we recount it so we can learn from our mistakes. Jeremiah and Ezekiel are descriptions of the fall of Judah and Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians. The Temple was destroyed at this time. After a close reading of the two books of prophecy that describe the fall of Jerusalem, one cannot deny that idolatry was the main reason for G-d's wrath. This all takes place roughly 2500 years ago. The results of the attack were catastrophic. In addition to losing our Temple, many people were killed by the invading army. Many died due to famine and pestilence. And those lucky enough to survive were driven into exile in Babylonia.

Jeremiah 2:8 describes what took place. "The priests said not: 'Where is the LORD?' And they that handle the law knew Me not, And the rulers transgressed against Me; The prophets also prophesied by Baal, And walked after things that do not profit."

So the very people who were supposed to protect the law and teach is had lost their way. When our leaders turn to selfish pursuits and ignore G-d's wisdom, we have little chance for success.

In Jeremiah 2:11, G-d ridicules the Jews who exchanged their real G-d for gods who do not profit. As an aside, if G-d forbids us from worshipping other gods, then what can our worship of them profit us?

G-d goes on to chastise the Jews for forsaking Him and going after the Baal, a popular pagan god, in verse 2:23. The Jews were known to say to their wood idols, "You are my father" and to their stone idols, "You have birthed us." They were hardcore idolators.

In 3:9, G-d chastises the kingdom of Judah for committing adultery against Him with stone and wooden idols. The idea that idolatry is adultery against G-d is a familiar theme in scripture. G-d goes on to rebuke the Jews for seeking out "strange gods." Before Jesus walked the earth, no one had ever heard of him. No one expected a new god in monotheistic circles. No one thought G-d would incarnate. And the trinity was completely unknown. Jesus is the quintessential strange god that the one true G-d warns us not to go after. He was a human being.

In 5:19, G-d continues his rebuke, faulting the Jews for worshipping alien gods. This is all leading up to the destruction of Jerusalem. History is clear. Jerusalem was destroyed because of the Jews' idolatry.

And then in 8:19 we have that rhetorical question that has echoed down from Biblical times to today's age. G-d asks why have the people angered Him with their idols? Idolatry sadly continues today. And so does G-d's divine anger. We need to own up to our idolatry and make amends with our Creator.

By this time in the prophecy of Jeremiah, G-d has pretty much promised vengeance upon the Judean kingdom. But he offers them a chance to repent. They refuse. But in Jeremiah 12:17, G-d vows destruction for the nation that refuses to listen. "then will I uproot that nation, uprooting it and destroying it, saith the LORD." Idolatry does not only apply to statues and icons. Money, greed, celebrity, material possessions and other false securities can act as obstacles to G-d and thus be considered idolatry. When we couple the idolatry of statues with this "softer" idolatry, and then we compound the mess by adding our other sins of violence and sexual immorality, G-d fearing souls must acknowledge that we are in a mess of our own making today in 2023.

But we have a loving father who is often willing to forgive. Let's turn away from our lives of sin and devote some time and energy to His ways. Let's read the Torah, let's pray, and let's donate to charity. Time is of the essence, but we can still turn things around and change our fate. Am I crazy for thinking the world is ending? I certainly hope so.

In Jeremiah chapter 16, we get to the heart of the matter. What is the iniquity of this nation that has earned destruction?



Jeremiah 16:11: "Because your fathers have forsaken Me, saith the LORD, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken Me, and have not kept My law;"

The reason G-d is destroying Judah is because the Jews of the land walked after other gods.

Let's keep going. And again we have the reason for G-d's destruction of Jerusalem. Jeremiah 22:9. "Because they forsook the covenant of the LORD their God, and worshipped other gods, and served them."

Jeremiah 25:6 continues the message: "and go not after other gods to serve them, and to worship them, and provoke Me not with the work of your hands, and I will do you no hurt."

I care about my country and this society so I feel obliged to speak out against idolatry. We know violence is wrong. And we know sexual immorality is wrong. But idolatry passes for spirituality and that is a problem. We need to answer the question whether Jesus was G-d or not. I've written a book on the subject on Amazon. Once it is determined that Jesus is a foreign god, we cannot wait and see what the consequences our worship of him will bring. We need to wake up.

People talk about adoration and veneration of their statues, but these are red herrings. They say it is alright to adore a statue as a representation of Jesus or a saint, but they would never *worship* a statue. Obviously, there is some gray area. What is the difference between venerating a statue and worshipping it? And that is why G-d specifically says in the Second Commandment, do not MAKE these statues in the first place. So, forget about the argument that believers are not actually *worshipping* these statues.

G-d says don't make statues in the first place. It's not hard to interpret. "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;"

A graven image can be used for the most serious of sins. It can lead us to worship a false god in place of the real G-d. This type of sin brought down a kingdom in Jeremiah. Why not remove the graven images as a precautionary measure? I hope you agree with me.

The verse says do not make graven images. It doesn't say it's ok to make statues of Michael Jordan, or Buddha, or Jesus. It just says don't make them in the first place. G-d made a judgment call, and in this case it's pretty clear. G-d issues a preemptive warning, perhaps as a precautionary measure, to ensure statues are not worshipped.

Despite what Jesus may or may not have done, the fact remains it is a sin to make a statue of him, and it is surely a sin to bow before that statue. Whether Jesus was a good man or not is debatable. But it remains a sin to make graven images of him and that's my point. In fact, it will always be a sin to make a statue of Jesus, even if you think he was perfect. Whether you merely look at the statue for its artistic significance, whether you adore it, whether you venerate it, whether you bow to it, or whether you actually worship it is another matter. It is a sin to *make* graven images. These statues break the Second Commandment.

This is a major moral issue that has gone ignored for too long in the name of politics and Freedom of Religion. But as we transition to the messianic kingdom, there will be growing calls for these statues to come down.

The issue is not new, though long ignored. John Calvin, a Reformer preacher of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, inspired iconoclasm, or the destruction of icons, during his time. His followers entered Catholic churches and destroyed the “artwork” because it broke the Second Commandment. If this happened today, it would be considered a hate crime in this country. So how will these statues come down if Catholics themselves don’t change their beliefs and eradicate their own icons? That’s why we need to educate people to take down their own graven images.

You cannot change the fact that G-d orders His faithful to refrain from creating statues.

My message is don't wait until the last minute. Choose to follow the Second Commandment now. And it's time to reach out to your local worship center to tell your spiritual leader about graven images. And Rabbis need to speak up! We’ve been quiet for too long. Jews have been waiting for messiah but waiting is getting us no where. We need to prepare and that means speaking out against idolatry.

Let's continue with the verses.

In Jeremiah 44, the prophet again summarizes the sin of the Jews. "because of their wickedness which they have committed to provoke Me, in that they went to offer, and to serve other gods, whom they knew not, neither they, nor ye, nor your fathers."

The practice of serving other gods is a serious one, and it is the main reason, among others, that G-d Himself declares as the reason for Judah and Jerusalem's destruction.

Jeremiah 51:17 says, "Every man is proved to be brutish, for the knowledge— Every goldsmith is put to shame by the graven image— That his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them."

Jeremiah, like Isaiah, has now accused the idolater of not only making the image in the first place. He has accused the idolater of worshipping that image.

We'll now weave Ezekiel and his message into this work. Ezekiel is another prophetic book of the Bible. Ezekiel prophesied at the exact same time as Jeremiah. He prophesied to the Jews of Babylonia in exile but also spoke of Jerusalem around the time of its destruction at the hands of the Babylonians 2500 years ago.

In Ezekiel 5:9 G-d says, "And I will do in thee that which I have not done, and whereunto I will not do any more the like, because of all thine abominations. Therefore the fathers shall eat the sons in the midst of thee, and the sons shall eat their fathers; and I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter unto all the winds. Wherefore, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely, because thou hast defiled My sanctuary with all thy detestable things, and with all thine abominations, therefore will I also diminish thee; neither shall Mine eye spare, and I also will have no pity."

G-d continues his message from Jeremiah citing altars, high places, sun-images and idols as the reasons for the impending destruction of Jerusalem in chapter 6 of Ezekiel. G-d speaks of a remnant who is to survive only to retell the horrors of the tragedy. Ezekiel 6:8 says, "Yet will I leave a remnant, in

that ye shall have some that escape the sword among the nations, when ye shall be scattered through the countries. And they that escape of you shall remember Me among the nations whither they shall be carried captives, how that I have been anguished with their straying heart, which hath departed from Me, and with their eyes, which are gone astray after their idols; and they shall loathe themselves in their own sight for the evils which they have committed in all their abominations."

Again, the reason for the destruction is the worship of idols. That is clear. Later in chapter six, G-d describes a horrifying scene where corpses lie alongside the idols they served.

Ezekiel 7:5-6 says, "Thus saith the Lord GOD: An evil, a singular evil, behold, it cometh. An end is come, the end is come, it awaketh against thee; behold, it cometh."

Again, just to summarize. We're moving chronologically through the Bible and we're now examining the Book of Ezekiel for warnings from the prophet regarding idolatry. Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, lived through the destruction of Jerusalem in the 6th century BCE roughly 2500 years ago. History is clear. Judah, Jerusalem, and much of the Jewish people were destroyed by G-d because of the sin of idolatry. This included burning incense to foreign gods, bowing to foreign gods, and using physical representations in worship.

Chapter 8 is perhaps the worst example of idolatry. G-d shows Ezekiel the Temple, the very abode of G-d. Inside he sees "all the idols of the house of Israel, portrayed upon the wall round about." Ezekiel 8:10. The elders of the house of Israel were burning incense to foreign gods. Still worse, the Jews used the Temple to worship the sun later in the chapter. It sounds hard to believe. While Ezekiel references the violence of the land as another reason for G-d's wrath, the underlying reason for the Almighty's anger is certainly idolatry and that's my message to my reader. Idolatry is a serious sin.

Even the violence that Ezekiel at times refers to is a symptom of Israel's turning away from the Lord. 11:12 says, "for ye have not walked in My statutes, neither have ye executed Mine ordinances, but have done after the ordinances of the nations that are round about you." In other words, Israel as a people betrayed G-d by serving other gods, and one of the consequences of betraying G-d was the forsaking of G-d's laws, which include prohibitions on violence. So, the other sins that may have brought about the destruction of Jerusalem seem to have come about from the initial sin of idolatry. In Ezekiel 11:18, G-d goes on to describe the idols used by the Jews as "detestable" and "abominations." This is very strong language that G-d reserves for statues of foreign gods.

In Ezekiel 12:11 G-d issues the sentence that would befall the surviving Jews...captivity.

Chapter 14 of Ezekiel decries the elders of Israel who set up idols in their minds. G-d calls these statues abominations and asks that the elders to return to Him, thus offering the Jews a chance to repent.

In Ezekiel chapter 20, G-d chastises Jews who want to inquire of Him but still worship idols. The Jews respond, "We will be as the nations, as the families of the countries, to serve wood and stone."

Ezekiel 22:4 strikes a key theme for me. G-d chastises the Jews who "art defiled in thine idols which thou hast made..." Let's read this verse carefully. It does not say the Jews are defiled in the idols they adore, or the idols they venerate. It does not say anything about art or conversation pieces. It says

the Jews were defiled because of the idols which they MADE. It's not just what one does with the idol, it's the actual manufacturing of the idol itself that is a grievous sin in G-d's eyes.

Ezekiel also describes the Jews as a harlot. The Jews tried to please all the nations around them by serving their gods and practicing their rites. But in doing so, they forsook their husband, who in this metaphor is obviously G-d. "with all their idols she [Israel] defiled herself," it says in 23:7. This act of idolatry is nothing less than betrayal. And the idolator is regarded as a harlot in this metaphor. G-d chastises Jerusalem who witnessed her harlot sister, Samaria to the north, be destroyed by Assyria. But Jerusalem continued her harlotries.

The metaphor comparing Jerusalem to a harlot and her idolatries to lewdness is summarized in 23:49. "And your lewdness shall be recompensed upon you, and ye shall bear the sins of your idols; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD.'" So G-d promises to punish those who use idols.

We'll now review the remainder of the Bible for verses regarding idolatry.

Habakkuk 2:18-19 says, "What profiteth the graven image, That the maker thereof hath graven it, Even the molten image, and the teacher of lies; That the maker of his work trusteth therein, To make dumb idols? Woe unto him that saith to the wood: 'Awake', To the dumb stone: 'Arise!' Can this teach? Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, And there is no breath at all in the midst of it." Again, G-d chastises the "maker" who has "graven" the image. Do not be fooled, the statues themselves are idols. And the makers are idolaters by default.

And even if the statues of today were not technically "idols" because of some newly rendered definition, the fact remains they are forbidden from being constructed. And that makes their very presence a sin. Do not create statues. That's the Second Commandment.

Micah 5:12 says, "And I will cut off thy graven images and thy pillars out of the midst of thee; And thou shalt no more worship the work of thy hands."

We've now searched the Hebrew Scriptures to see G-d's attitude towards the use of images, iconography and statues in worship service. He's clearly against it. Let's now go over some verses from the New Testament for the Christians out there. The New Testament also speaks out against idolatry.

Ephesians 5:5 says, "For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." That's pretty strong language. Idolaters have no inheritance in G-d's kingdom.

1 Corinthians 6:9 says, "Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men." The theme repeats. Idolaters do not inherit G-d's kingdom.

Galatians 5:19-21 says, "The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God."

1 Corinthians 10:14 says, "Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry."

Again, the New Testament repeats the claim that idolaters do not inherit G-d's kingdom. It is shocking that modern day idolaters allow statues into their churches given this language from their own book.

Revelation 21:8 repeats the theme. "But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."

There does not appear to be salvation for idolaters.

So what are modern day idolaters to do? Judaism offers the answer. There is something called a Noachide gentile, named after Noah, a righteous gentile who was saved from the flood and became the father the mankind. Noachide gentiles need to follow just seven rules and one of them is a prohibition against worshipping idols. I suggest you speak with an Orthodox rabbi or do some research to find out more. You can have a relationship with the one true G-d and not rely on Jesus or Christianity to be saved.