

Images Unto God?

- A. Question: Is it appropriate to make images of things as adjuncts to faith and worship?
1. image: An artificial imitation or representation of the external form of any object, esp. of a person...
 2. Some maintain that idols are wrong but images of saints or angels are permitted or even recommended or required.
 3. idol: An image or similitude of a deity or divinity, used as an object of worship: applied to those worshipped by pagans, whence, in scriptural language, = false god, a fictitious divinity which 'is nothing in the world' (1 Cor. viii. 4). b. Applied polemically to images or figures of divine beings and saints, and, more generally, to any material object of worship in a Christian church.
 - a. We are to flee idolatry. **1CO 10:14; 1JO 5:21.**
 - b. Covetousness is idolatry. **COL 3:5; EPH 5:5.**
- B. According to **LEV 26:1; 2KI 23:24**, images and idols are distinct but both condemned.
1. It is not that any and all images men form are condemned. **MAT 22:20; 2CO 3:18.**
 2. It is images that rival, substitute for, corrupt man's identification with God, or presume to enhance worship and depict God or heavenly things contrary to written revelation which err.
- C. Making images of the Godhead is flatly forbidden. **EXO 20:4-6; DEU 5:8-10.**
1. To this end, God did not reveal Himself in such a way that Israel could fashion an image of Him. **DEU 4:15.**
 2. Not even Moses beheld the full face of God. **EXO 33:20-23.**
 3. God is a Spirit, invisible. **JOH 4:24; 1TI 1:17; 6:16.**
 4. Jesus Christ alone has seen God the Father. **JOH 1:18; 6:46.**
 5. It is the invisible and unknown aspect of God, the Father of all things, that impels superstitious man to make images of God from things they can see. **ROM 1:23.**
 6. The stupid vanity of idolaters is manifest to themselves. **ISA 46:5-7; ACT 17:23-29.**
 7. If the resurrected and ascended Jesus Christ is God, how is making images of Him right?
- D. Making and/or using images of angels is popular among many "Christian" communions and considered by some to be necessary adjuncts of duty, intercession with, and worship of God.
1. Mind that angels are invisible creatures. **COL 1:16 c/w EPH 3:10.**
 2. They are fiery spirits only visible to man by special means. **PSA 68:17 c/w HEB 1:7; NUM 22:31; 2KI 6:17.**
 3. When they did materialize in Scripture, they appeared as grown men, not babies or women. **GEN 18:22; 19:1-5.**
 4. There is no way for us to know as fact what an angel looks like so as to make an image of him.
 - a. Their invisible, fiery spirit nature defies material depiction.
 - b. There is no record in Scripture which exactly describes a materialized angel's appearance.
 - c. Images of angels are speculation, imagination. But the gospel emphasizes what we KNOW and casts down imaginations. **JOH 3:11; 2CO 10:5.**
- E. Cherubim are special fiery angels, living creatures under God in heaven. **EZE 1:4-25; 10:1-22.**
1. They are definitely not chubby infants with wing sprouts.
 2. God told Moses to make images of them for the ark. **EXO 25:18-20.**
 3. Once fashioned, nobody except the priesthood saw them and they were only moved under cover. **HEB 9:3-7; NUM 4:5.**
 4. God also authorized an ointment of the apothecary for only the priests and duplications for

- common use by others invited wrath. **EXO 30:22-25, 33.**
5. Lucifer/Satan was an anointed cherub (**EZE 28:14**). How can the painter or sculptor who fashions an angel image be sure that he is not actually depicting the devil, especially an image which has cosmetic, aesthetic beauty? **EZE 28:17.**
 6. This issue of presuming to artfully depict the unseen things like angels ties in with Paul's warnings about being duped into the sin of worshipping angels. **COL 2:18.**
- F. Religious images have inherent dangers.
1. Moses's brazen serpent became an occasion for idolatry and had to be destroyed. **NUM 21:8-9 c/w 2KI 18:4.**
 2. Tangible images in religion tend towards unhealthy objects of veneration.
 3. Even Paul's glorying in the cross of Christ was not a material depiction of it, but a recognition of what was fully accomplished by Christ for sinners. **GAL 6:14.**
 4. Want to display to the world that you identify with Jesus Christ? Skip the images of the cross and put Him on in practice by believing His gospel and crucifying your natural thinking. **GAL 3:27; 5:24; COL 3:10.**
 5. Where do you draw the line on making images unto God?
 - a. The Philistines made images for God of mice and hemorrhoids. **1SAM 6:4.**
 - b. Perhaps the little angel figurine on the top of the Christmas tree could identify.
- G. Why provoke the Lord to jealousy with an image of jealousy? **EZE 8:5-6 c/w 1CO 10:22.**
- H. The only image that should interest us in relating to God is Jesus Christ. **HEB 1:3.**
1. Curiously, Scripture is almost silent about how He looked. **ISA 50:6; 52:14; 53:2.**
 2. Forget about fables like the Shroud of Turin or the handkerchief of Veronica which supposedly have impressions of His countenance.
 3. The image of God we have by Jesus Christ is not by descriptions of His looks but of His words and works in Scripture so that we see Him by faith as One now invisible. **2CO 5:7; 1PE 1:8; HEB 11:27.**
 4. Faith that needs the tangible is actually doubting, not believing. **JOH 19:24-29.**
- I. The closest thing we have to a material object between us and our unseen God is our Bible which tells us how to know and relate to Him properly without images and speculations but with knowledge of the truth, and this is real faith and hope. **HEB 11:1.**