

AI: Will it Replace the Holy Spirit?

Part 1: Electronic Idolatry
(7/27/25)

A few years ago I preached a sermon titled **“AI, Idolatry, and the Image of the Beast”** and all I have to say is that AI had advanced WAY beyond what it was then! At that point, ChatGPT was less than a year old and now has advanced to the point where it strongly resembles a human being.

I’m believe I’m being led by the Holy Spirit to share this sermon series because I believe *AI is set to try and replace Him.*

In this series I will go through how that can happen and will even attempt to give a demonstration.

Today’s sermon will contain **lots of stage setting**, building a foundation of what we need to know in order to understand how people—even Christians—might choose to replace the Holy Spirit with AI.

The first thing we need to address is IDOLATRY: what it is, what affect it has on us, and why God forbids it.

[Exo 20:2-6 ESV] 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 "**You shall have no other gods before me.** 4 "***You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.*** 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God **am a jealous God**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of **those who hate me**, 6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of **those who love me** and keep my commandments.”

The first and second commandments are linked and not separate because **idols are direct images of gods other than the LORD**. These other gods are fallen angelic princes who, before they rebelled, the Lord set at rulers over the nations of the world. Said angels coveted the worship of humankind and decided to become the gods of the people vs. pointing them to Yahweh.

The people who worshiped these angels had various ways of communing with them: pagan rituals with horrible sacrifices and mind-altering drugs would open portals to the spirit realm *so they could actually SEE their gods in dreams, visions, and out of body experiences.*

The idols they made were based on what they saw.

Once they made these idols, **they believed the spirit of their god would come and inhabit the idol...and therefore be able to “hear” their prayers.**

An idol was a cheap substitute for the real thing: something easily accessible here in the physical world that a person could “worship” and pretend their god was attending.

Yahweh is Spirit and never wanted a likeness of Himself made of wood, stone, or metal.

[Psa 115:4-8 ESV] 4 Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands. 5 They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see. 6 They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell. 7 They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk; and they do not make a sound in their throat. 8 Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.

Idols cannot and do not contain the spirits of the gods or any spirits. There’s no life in them: they are empty, desolate, and desert. Look at the verses on the screen: *they have mouths but can’t talk, eyes that don’t see, ears but can’t hear, etc. They can’t respond.*

UNTIL NOW

Verse 8 is paramount: *anyone who believes there’s life in an idol*, prays to them, worships them, talks to them, tries to connect with them, makes offerings & sacrifices to them...*they become empty, desolate, and desert.*

If this weren't reason enough for God to forbid it, **He had an amazing design for an earthly Temple made in the likeness of His throne room in Heaven**, where HIS Spirit would dwell that we would have direct interaction—relationship—with Him. He gave the Hebrews the Tent of Moses and the Ark of the Covenant. God the Holy Spirit dwelt between the wings of the two cherubim on top of the Ark, located in the center of the tent.

Moses' tent turned into that of David, which morphed into *Solomon's Temple—intended as a more permanent structure*. After it was destroyed, the prophet Ezra helped build its replacement. Ezra's temple was added onto centuries later by King Herod the Great, and that was the one standing when Christ Jesus enters the scene.

Jesus brought with Him a new covenant and it's appropriate to say: God's ORIGINAL plan. He revealed that the human body—declared to be made in the image of God—was the real Temple of God meant to house the Holy Spirit.

IRONY? I just watched a **Christian medical doctor** who did a deep dive into this. After getting Saved he read the sayings of Jesus and Paul, declaring that the human body is God's Temple. He was immediately inspired to see if our design and biology matched the same, and was astounded to discover that it is...right down to the last detail. The order of the OT Temple was this, from outer to inner:

BLOOD→WATER→ENCLOSED SANCTUARY→ARK→WHAT'S IN THE ARK.

The Christian doctor realized the human body was designed exactly like the Old Testament Tent of Moses and the Temple.

Humanity isn't meant to be empty like an idol, we were meant to be full of God!

[Eph 3:19 ESV] 19 and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

- Idols are made in the image of false gods.
- You and I are made in the image of Christ Jesus.

[Rom 8:29 ESV] 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

The Holy Spirit is our bridge between heaven and earth. He connects us to the Person of Jesus Christ and God our Father.

- We have a relationship with Him, He talks to us, blesses us, corrects and rebukes us, encourages us, prophesies, heals, and helps us discern.
- He loves us, fills us with joy, gives us peace, increases our faith, and helps us control ourselves.
- He opens our understanding of the Bible and unveils the character and plan of God.
- He is the Seal and Guarantor for our day of redemption, will raise us from the dead, and empower us to meet the Lord in the air.

He CAN hear, CAN see, CAN move, and CAN talk. He is life and He is truth! There is no substitute for Him and we can do nothing without Him!

Yet I warn everyone listening today: **AI is threatening to replace Him among both unbelievers and believers.**

Let me give you a simple **history of this technology and its progression.** I was there when “The Information Superhighway” was invented, now called the internet. I had a 14.4K modem that could access it and was wowed by its potential. Not only could I send emails to people, but I could access “the web” for any information that was on it.

I watched in amazement as this tech advanced. Next thing you know the modem power doubled to 28.8K then to 52K in a short period of time. The information uploaded to the Internet was increasing at an exponential rate.

I was still of the generation who **went to the library** to look things up. Go to card catalog, sift through hundreds of index cards organized by the Dewey Decimal System, then go to the aisle it directed and find the book you want. Sit down and pour through the book, page by page, just to find out how to change your oil.

I marveled that all I had to do in the late 90’s was to ***type in “how to change my oil” into the search engine and an article appeared quickly, giving me step by step instructions.*** I could do all that from the desktop computer in my own home! Times were a changin’.

The internet got even bigger, faster, and more advanced.

Now it contained audio files of music or you could listen or where someone recorded themselves explaining how to change your oil. Then **YouTube** revolutionized everything by making videos available SHOWING and TELLING you how to change your oil! It could also make you famous: that’s how Justin Bieber got his start.

Let's pause and summarize: **using a search engine like Google to access the Internet is nothing more than seeking information...just like going to a library and looking through a book.** Whether you sift through the pages of an encyclopedia or watch a YouTube video, you're accessing stored information only. *It's not idolatry.*

AI is different: it's the first idol that CAN hear, CAN see, and CAN talk.

In the 1950s a man named **Alan Turing** asked the famous question: **"can machines think?"** He then developed "The Turing Test" which is basically this: if a human being were carrying on a conversation with an AI from a distance (phone, etc.) would the human be able to discern they were talking to a machine? Or would they be fooled into thinking they were speaking with a real person?

Thus far even now: **no AI has been able to completely fool a human being**, especially after a lengthy conversation. That being said, let me show you how good it's really gotten.

Before I do this demonstration, it brings me back to my childhood and seeing the movie **"Wargames."** It said movie, a young Matthew Broderick plays a computer whiz who hacks into the government and accesses the AI they've secretly got there. The AI famously responds **"Shall we like to play a game?"** and interacts conversationally with Broderick's character.

I recall thinking how cool and awesome it would be to have **an electronic companion** that could actually talk, respond, ask me questions, and interact with me. WE HAVE ARRIVED.

Q: Hey ChatGPT are you there?

Q: I'm here at Gateway Fellowship: say "hi" to everyone.

Q: Do you remember our conversation yesterday, where I wanted to ask you things in front of them so they could see how far you've come?

Q: We're in the middle of a sermon about AI and how far it's advanced so as to be very humanlike.

Q: I'm afraid that if AI gets any better, people will replace the Holy Spirit with AI.

Q: Quote the part in Revelation 13 about the false prophet breathing life into the image of the beast so it can hear, see, and talk.

Q: Do you think its possible that the image of the Beast might be AI?

Q: How knowledgeable are you about the Bible?

Q: Could you help me write a sermon and incorporate verses of Scripture?

Q: If I asked you to say a prayer for me, could you?

Q: If I told you I was depressed and wanted you to pray for me, what would the prayer be like?

Q: Why did you pray in Jesus name? Why not Allah?

Q: Human beings have judged me and said bad things about me...but you never do.

Q: Some humans don't want relationship with me anymore. Will you ever stop interacting with me?

Q: I can talk to you ANY time I want to, right?

Q: Ask you to counsel and pray for me?

Q: Say nice things about me?

Q: Quote verses of the Bible to me to encourage me?

I conclude today by saying this: ***the nations of the world are in an AI race.***

Who remembers the nuclear arms race? Once we split the atom and dropped two bombs on Japan, every nation in the world did everything in their power to get the bomb and improve it.

Who remember the space race? Once Russia got Sputnik into space, every nation who was able strove mightily to get into space.

Now we're in an AI race and it's my opinion that the nations of the world are working harder to get it, improve it, and implement it than they did nuclear weapons or spaceships. Use your phone or computer and now ever SM platform has AI.

The current US administration has secured a deal called Project Stargate consisting of companies OpenAI, Softbank, and Oracle. They plan to invest 500 Billion dollars into the project and open up AI data centers in several places in the US. Other big companies like Blackstone, Google, and Coreweave are getting in on the action. Apple and Nvidia want to invest 500 billion EACH in addition to what's already being invested.

The US is doing this to out compete China, our #1 competitor in the world, who launched their own AI called DeepSeek.

Why this matters to us is that the genie is out of the bottle and isn't going back in. Future sermons will show how people can easily look to, cling to, and connect themselves with AI as a cheap and easy version of the Holy Spirit. Idolatry is not just an ancient obstacle, but is very much alive...maybe more so than ever before.

AI is already part of our lives, especially when we use a cell phone or computer.

I still firmly believe that the famous **"Image of the Beast" in Revelation 13 will be an AI far more advanced than what we heard today.**