

11-7-2021, COTR Texarkana

Title: Let the Worshippers Arise, pt. 4

Purpose: Expose modern idolatry and provoke people to worship God and God alone.

Truth for Today: Don't let anything or anyone become more important than God.

Text: 1 John 5:21, Revelation 14:7

Topic: Worship, Idols, Idolatry, Worldly, Devotion, Selfishness

Serie Title: Let the Worshippers Arise

Series Purpose: Lay a foundation for Biblical worship and provoke people to be devoted worshippers of God.

## Let the Worshippers Arise, pt. 4

### I. Introduction

- A. Review series: 'Let the Worshippers Arise'. We've been answering questions like: What is worship? What can happen when we worship? How do we express worship? Today we'll answer the most important question, Who or what are we worshipping?
- B. Text: [Rev. 14:7 (ESV) And he (*an angel*) said with a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory...**worship him who made heaven and earth...**Rev. 22:9 (NLT)...**Worship only God!**"] It seems obvious that God should be the object of our worship, but there are other things we can worship. [1 John 5:21 (ESV) Little children, **keep yourselves from idols. (NCV false gods) (NLT)...keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts.]**
- C. Today we'll talk about 3 things: (1) God alone is to be worshipped; worship of other gods is idolatry (2) Modern day idols (3) How do I know if there is an idol in my life?
- D. Title: Let the Worshippers Arise, pt. 4
- E. Truth for Today: Don't let anything or anyone become more important than God.

### II. God alone is to be worshipped. Worship of other gods is idolatry.

- A. The 1<sup>st</sup> of the 10 commandments, [Exodus 20:3–5 (NLT) "**You must not have any other god but me. 4 "You must not make for yourself an idol** of any kind...5 You must not **bow down to them or worship them...**"]
- B. Def. God: The eternal Supreme Being, the only true God, the Creator, and sovereign Ruler of the universe.<sup>9</sup> He alone is to be the object of our worship and devotion.
- C. Def. god: a false, counterfeit God, an idol.<sup>9</sup> Anything people worship and are devoted to more than God. Pagan religions of the biblical world made statues, i.e., idols, to represent the powers they worshiped. This practice is called idolatry. Most of these idols were in the form of animals, human beings, the sun, moon, and stars.<sup>2</sup> Pic idols
- D. Def. worship: Worship is our devotion to God, expressed by how we live and how we praise Him. Worship is our devotion to false gods/ idols, expressed by how we live. We worship who or what we're most devoted to, i.e., whatever captures our primary passion, i.e., God, our job, our hobbies, possessions, money, science, or causes like environmentalism, or politics. Our challenge is how to be involved in these activities yet not let them become more important than God.
- E. Def. idolatry: worshipping/ being supremely devoted to anyone or anything instead of God; a God substitute. We can worship a person, a hobby, our job, or a celebrity/hero. One day the antichrist will be worshipped, [Rev. 14:9–10 (NLT)...**"Anyone who worships the beast and his statue... 10 must drink the wine of God's anger.**], Money

or possessions can be idols, [Eph. 5:5 (ESV)...everyone who is...**covetous (that is, an idolater)**], has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ...] We practice idolatry if we give anyone or anything the devotion and commitment that rightfully belongs to God. We are idolatrous if we put our ultimate confidence in something other than God<sup>5</sup>, e.g., government as provider or science as being the source of true knowledge.

### III. Modern day idols

- A. [1 John 5:21 (ESV) Little children, **keep yourselves from idols. (NCV false gods) (NLT)...keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts.**]
  1. *keep yourselves from idols*, Literal def. idol: an image or statue of a deity fashioned to be an object of worship.<sup>3</sup> Def. idol as a metaphor: anything which occupies the place of God in our life.<sup>7</sup>
  2. What place should God have in our heart? [Mark 12:28–30 (NCV)...he asked Jesus, “Which of the commands is most important?” 29 Jesus answered...**The Lord our God is the only Lord. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.**] I.e., God wants to be 1<sup>st</sup> in our life and anything or anyone we're more devoted to than Him, is an idol or a God substitute.
  3. Video: Bert Price, Deer leases aren't bad, but he had become more devoted/obsessed by it than Jesus. Idolatry is the greatest challenge we face when God blesses us with things of this world. Jesus warned us not to make anyone or anything more important than Him. [Matthew 10:37 (NLT) “If you love your father or mother **more than you love me**, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter **more than me**, you are not worthy of being mine.] We can add hobbies, jobs, turkey hunting, possessions, causes, etc.
- B. *#1 possible modern-day idol*: The things of this world. A parable of Jesus, [Mark 4:3–19 (NLT) A farmer went out to plant some seed...7 Other seed fell among **thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants so they produced no grain**...10 ... they asked him (*Jesus*) what the parables meant...18 The seed that fell among the thorns represents others who hear God's word, 19 but all too quickly **the message is crowded out by the worries (ESV cares) of this life, the lure of wealth, and the desire for other things, so no fruit is produced.**] Fruit is what our life produces for God. Followers of Jesus must see heaven as our home and life on earth as temporary. Our #1 priority is to serve Jesus and tell others about Him, not pursue worldly things.
  1. We live in a material world. Money and possessions aren't bad until obtaining and keeping them become more important than God. They become a God substitute. Sometimes, to get what the world offers, we have to make God and His priorities 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>, e.g., work so much we don't have any time to pursue our calling.
  2. A solution to worldly idolatry is to look for ways to serve God, and witness to others in the things we do, e.g., my job is where I do ministry AND make money. E.g., athlete who does a ‘look at me dance’ or Tebow looks to heaven after TD.
- C. *#2 possible modern-day idols*: Causes such as politics, social justice, concern for the environment causes us to worship mother earth, the cultural priority of being “woke” , i.e., sensitive to social issues, can make a new world order more important than God.

1. [Colossians 2:8 (NLT) Don't **let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense** that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.]
  2. E.g., American Thinker.com "Woke" is a religion. That's been affirmed by dozens of smart observers, including New York magazine columnist Andrew Sullivan. He described what he called "the cult of social justice, whose followers show the same zeal as any born-again Evangelical."<sup>8</sup> If we dedicate our life to a movement or an ideal other than Christ we're devoted to an idol.
- D. #3 *possible* modern-day idols: Worship/ exaltation of self, [Pr. 12:15 (NLT) Fools think **their own way** is right...] [Judg. 17:6 (NLT) In those days Israel had no king; all the people did whatever seemed **right in their own eyes**.]
1. A God-like view of self. Video Movie Malice<sup>11</sup> I'm the man. Alec Baldwin. An attitude of superiority/ arrogance enthrones self and doesn't recognize God.
  2. I do whatever I want, [Phil. 3:18–19 (NLT)...there are many whose **conduct** shows they are really enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 **Their god is their appetite, (what they crave)** (NCV...**They do whatever their bodies want**)...and **they think only about this life here on earth...**] e.g. This is an attitude that says I do what I want, and nobody tells me what to do. I determine what's right. In essence, we act like we're god. Therefore, if I'm offended, I can demand you do what I want and stop doing what I disagree with.
  3. I worship my body, [1 Tim. 4:7–8 (NLT)...train yourself to be godly. 8 “**Physical training is good, but training for godliness is much better**, promising benefits in this life and in the life to come.”] Pic. How much time do I spend to look good?
  4. Followers of Christ have given up the right to sit on the throne of our heart/ be in charge. [Gal. 2:20 (NLT) **My old self has been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...**] I.e., God is 1<sup>st</sup> and I'm 2<sup>nd</sup>.
- IV. Conclusion: How do I know if there is an idol in my life and what should I do?
- A. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you and get rid of it. // HS showed Bert the fence at his lease. He got rid of his idol so God would be more important than His hobby.
  - B. Ask yourself, does God get my 1<sup>st</sup> and best or my leftovers? Look at your bank account and calendar. What we do with our time and money reveals our heart. [Mt. 6:33 (NCV) **Seek first** God's kingdom and **what God wants**. (NLT) Seek the Kingdom of God **above all else...**] If the Lord isn't 1<sup>st</sup>, it's time to make changes before idols take over. Put Jesus 1<sup>st</sup> (1) On our calendar by giving Him the 1<sup>st</sup> few minutes of our day for prayer and Bible reading; (2) In our priorities by praying 'let your Kingdom come' before we pray about our desires; (3) In our money by tithing. If Jesus is 1<sup>st</sup>, we won't let anything or anyone become more important than Him.
- V. Response
- A. Prayer: Ask the Holy Spirit, what are you saying to me? Do I have any idols in my life?
  - B. Souls
- VI. Bibliography/ Resources: Logos Bible Software and Library, Platinum Edition, was used to prepare this message.

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