

# It Is Written

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## Idolizing God

*By Dan S. Shipley*

Bible students soon learn that idolatry is not confined to graven images and pagan people. MacKnight shows why this is so in commenting on 1 Cor. 8:4. The Greek word *eidolon*, translated idol, signifies an image formed in the mind and which exists nowhere else (Apostolical Epistles). Of all the idols formed by the inventive imaginations of men, none are more popular or dangerous than those existing as perverted concepts of the true God. Many religionists pay lip service to the one God and Father of all of Eph. 3:16, but imagine Him to be a kind of God that does not exist. As the idolatrous Gentiles of Rom. 1, they exchange the glory of the incorruptible God — whether for graven or mental images is academic. Because the true God is immutable (Ps. 102:27; Jas. 1:17), He is what He has always been, eternally consistent with His true nature as revealed in His word. Therefore, any imagined god that differs from this God is false and nonexistent.

For instance, there are those who conceive of a fiendish sort of a god that sanctions suffering, poverty, wars and other calamities that befall men. Even among his professed friends this god is pictured as one who sometimes robs parents of infant children or otherwise brings tragedies to our loved ones. This is not the God of the Bible! It is contrary to His very nature. Because God will not directly intervene to counteract the free moral agency of man or His own eternal laws (called laws of nature), He is foolishly charged with much evil. God will not force parents to keep their children from playing on busy streets any more than He will keep a man from getting drunk. Why then, is God blamed when the drunk runs down the child in the street? God is love; He is a good, righteous and merciful Father (1 Jn. 4:16; Ps. 145:7-9). It is impossible for Him to do anything that is wrong or contrary to His nature. To picture Him otherwise is to see but an idol; a false god.

Others hold to a distorted image of God as one approving all kinds of religion as practiced by men. To them and their imagined god. Bible truth is not only relative, it is subordinate to such things as honesty, sincerity, and feelings; faith is purely subjective; right is right as men see it. Serving such a god makes for an easy and comfortable religion — just enough to satisfy the demands of a weak conscience in a carnal mind. But this god too, is as false as Baal. The God who cannot lie teaches that He is honored and served only in the doing of His will (Matt. 7:21). Man only chooses whether, not how he will serve God. Nothing is more worthy of man's confidence and acceptance than the words of his Creator! — even He who is able to save and destroy. What can any man trust more than what He says?

So, in these and many other ways, God is idolized by professed believers, even if unwittingly. True faith in the true God and salvation itself is made dependent on knowing His word (Rom. 10:17; Jn. 8:32). Imagined gods may give a false and temporary sense of security, but they make poor partners for facing death and eternity.

## The Names of Sin

*by Stan Cox*

There many synonyms used in scripture for sinful actions. Each of these words has it's own story to tell. Here are a few of them.

Sin — (*hamartia*) “to be without a share in; to miss the mark; to err, be mistaken; to miss or wander from the path of uprightness and honour, to do or go wrong; to wander from the law of God, violate God's law, sin. (Thayer)

The etymology is helpful here. “to miss the mark” as an archer would miss his target with his arrow. If the target is God's expectations or will, to miss it is to violate that will, whether by commission, or by omitting what is required.

“Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4).

Lawlessness — (*anomia*) “the condition of without law; (because ignorant of I, because of violating it); contempt and violation of law, iniquity, wickedness. (Thayer)

1 John 3:4 shows that sin and lawlessness are the same thing. Being without law, being contemptuous of the law is a wicked thing. The laws of God have been established for the good of man. Hence, good and righteous people keep them. To disregard God’s law shows contempt for God Himself.

Iniquity — (*adikia*) “unrighteousness of heart and life; a deed violating law and justice, act of unrighteousness.” (Thayer)

You will notice the strong similarity to the word lawlessness above. In fact, in the KJV, in Matthew 7:23 the word *anomia* is translated iniquity. Both terms carry the idea of great wickedness. Christians understood just how serious it was to disregard God’s law.

Transgression — (*parabasis*) “a going over; metaphorically a disregarding, violating; the breach of a definite, promulgated, ratified law.” (Thayer)

This term is very precise. Again, God has promulgated (made known) His law for man. If we breach this law, that is disregard or ignore it. We are guilty of a transgression.

“And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression” (1 Timothy 2:14). Eve knew God’s command, and because of the influence of the serpent, breached that command.

Disobedience — (*parakoe*) “a hearing amiss; disobedience.” (Thayer) The text of Romans 11 is interesting here in that Paul talks about the disobedience both of the Jew and the Gentile. As both were disobedience, both were dependent upon God’s mercy for salvation. The Jew was cut off because of disobedience, but could be grafted back in upon repentance. The Gentile who had repented had been grafted in, but could be cut back off if their pride led to disobedience.

Offense — (*skandalon*) “the movable stick or trigger of a trap, a trap stick; a trap, snare; any impediment placed in the way and causing one to stumble or fall; any person or thing by which one is (entrapped) drawn into error or sin.” (Thayer).

“Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes!” (Matthew 18:7). Interestingly, it is sinful to cause another person to commit sin. To sin is to stumble.

All of these, and other terms indicate the serious nature of sin. They also demonstrate that sin occurs when men deviate from God’s will, either by committing a transgression or omitting a command. God takes sin seriously. We should too!