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## The Mystery of The Cross 2: Images and saint worship

### ARTICLE HIGHLIGHTS

- The use of images in worship is forbidden under the old and new covenants.
- The truth about saints and saint worship.
- Jesus is the only mediator (priest) of the new covenant.
- The use of images in worship is associated with the occult.

### ARTICLE SUMMARY

The use of the cross (crucifix) in Christian worship was discussed in the previous and first article of the mystery of the cross series, *'The mystery of the cross: The cross is an idol'*. However, there are other items and practices in "Christianity" that are nothing more than man-made traditions such as the use of images and saint worship, that like the cross, contradict God's commandments.

#### THE USE OF IMAGES IN WORSHIP IS FORBIDDEN UNDER THE OLD AND NEW COVENANTS

The definition of an image is provided by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, which not only describes an image as a picture, but encompasses a range of definitions, of which two are relevant to Christianity. Firstly, an image can be described as "a visual representation of something" (Merriam-Webster, 2020), or as "a reproduction or imitation of the form of a person or thing especially: an imitation in solid form: statue" (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Therefore, based on the aforementioned descriptions of an image, it can be concluded once again that the cross is not only an idol, but an image, and furthermore, there are common "Christian" traditions such as the use of pictures or items featuring

images or items featuring images including jewelry, charms, rosaries, and statues for the purpose of worship, whether of the cross; the Lord Jesus Christ; Christ's Apostles; Mary, the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ; or angels. Notably, the Scriptures Exodus 20:4-6 of the Old Covenant, and Acts 17:29 of the New Covenant specifically indicate that the use of images is against the commandments of the Lord:

- **Exodus 20:4-6**—<sup>4</sup> “You shall not make for yourselves an idol, nor any image of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: <sup>5</sup>you shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and on the fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup>and showing loving kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.
- **Acts 17:29**—<sup>29</sup> Being then the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold, or silver, or stone, engraved by art and design of man.

Hence, this makes it explicitly clear that the use of images is rooted in idolatry, and is therefore not of the Lord, the Most High God. Therefore, possessing or using images in worship does not signify or define a Christian because it is contrary to, or the opposite of, God's commandments. The Holy Bible makes it clear that true Christian worship is grounded in the Biblical concept of love, which is to keep God's commandments, the first and foremost of which is to worship or serve God only, which is equivalent to loving the Lord with your whole heart, and to do no intentional harm or evil to others:

- **1 John 5:3**—<sup>3</sup>For this is loving God, that we keep his commandments. His commandments are not grievous.
- **Matthew 22:37-38** — <sup>37</sup> Jesus said to him,—"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'<sup>38</sup> This is the first and great commandment"
- **Romans 13:9-10** — “<sup>9</sup> For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other commandments there are, are summed up in this saying, namely: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” <sup>10</sup> Love doesn't harm a neighbor. Love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.

## THE TRUTH ABOUT SAINTS AND SAINT WORSHIP

To fully explore the use of images in “Christian” worship, it is important to elaborate upon the “worship” of saints that has stemmed from the use of their image in the “Christian” religion. The word, saint, is a Biblical term used to describe a person who has entered the New Covenant, and is therefore an individual who has been granted the Holy Spirit by God, the Father. Therefore, sainthood is typical among Christians, meaning that it is not a specialised title reserved for churches to bestow. There is also Biblical evidence to support that the saints were as mentioned, normal everyday people who are simply members of God’s spiritual church (the Body of Christ or the Kingdom of Heaven). This is made clear by apostle Paul in the book of Ephesians, where he encourages Christians i.e. saints to pray for one another:

- *Ephesians 6:18—<sup>18</sup> with all prayer and requests, praying at all times in the Spirit, and being watchful to this end in all perseverance and requests for all the saints.*
- *Romans 16:15 - <sup>15</sup> Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them.*
- *Philippians 6:18—<sup>22</sup> All the saints greet you, especially those who are of Caesar’s household.*
- *Ephesians 5:3 — <sup>3</sup> But sexual immorality, and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be mentioned among you, as becomes saints;*

Overall, this indicates that the tradition of praying in the name of saints has no place in Christianity. Notably, no person in the Bible actually prays in the name of a saint or any servant of the Lord, with the exception of Jesus Christ who is God.

- *Philippians 2:5-7—<sup>5</sup> Have this in your mind, which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, existing in the form of God, didn’t consider equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men.*

Hence, the notion of praying in the name of a saint is entirely contradictory to God’s commandments. Furthermore, there is no Biblical evidence to support that the act of praying in the name of a “saint” results in intercession between the one who prays, the “saint” and God. Instead, it is further discredited because in the Bible it is stated numerous times that the Lord Jesus Christ is the only mediator or intercessor of the New Covenant: after all, the Lord said

Himself: *But you, when you pray, enter into your inner room, and having shut your door, pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ~ Matthew 6:6*. It is also of note that “Father” refers to God, the Father, and not any other person.

- **Matthew 23:9—<sup>9</sup>** *Call no man on the earth your father, for one is your Father, he who is in heaven.*

To provide more context, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, is the one who spiritually hears and communicates prayers to God, the Father – as Jesus Christ is the one and only priest of the New Covenant. This concept is explained by the fact that the Lord is One, meaning that God exists as the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit. Hence, God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit are one entity, and the only variance is His form. God, the Father, is God in His most true and Heavenly form; God, the Son, is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God in the form of a man; and the Holy Spirit is an infinite portion of God’s Spirit that grants eternal life and/or spiritual gifts in varying forms at the Lord’s discretion:

- **Galatians 3:20—<sup>20</sup>** *Now a mediator is not between one, but God is one.*
- **James 2:19—<sup>19</sup>** *You believe that God is one. You do well. The demons also believe, and shudder.*

Hence, the Lord Himself is the intercessor (mediator/ priest) of Christians, and the one who also answers their prayers: there is no other, or rather others who are ordained to act as a priest, whether a saint, angel, messenger, or any other person who titles themselves as a priest or father.

### **JESUS IS THE ONLY MEDIATOR (PRIEST) OF THE NEW COVENANT**

Most notably, all the prayers recorded in the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments are made in the Name of the Lord, the Most High God and/or the Lord Jesus Christ, which is fitting because the Bible repeatedly states that Jesus is the one and only mediator or priest of the New Covenant:

- **1 Timothy 2:5—<sup>5</sup>** *For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus,*
- **Hebrews 4:14—<sup>14</sup>** *Having then a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let’s hold tightly to our confession*

- *Hebrews 9:11–11* But Christ having come as a high priest of the coming good things, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation

Therefore, Christians or potential Christian converts should only call on the Lord's Name in prayer and pray in His Name alone. To further emphasize that the Lord is the only mediator or priest of the New Covenant: the Biblical Scriptures which describe the God approved and ordained roles of the Body of Christ makes no mention of the role of priests or a priesthood by saints. The only priesthood mentioned in the New Testament is the order of Melchizedek, but only Jesus Christ is named to be a priest of this office:

- *Hebrews 5:4-10*—<sup>4</sup>Nobody takes this honor on himself, but he is called by God, just like Aaron was. <sup>5</sup> So also Christ didn't glorify himself to be made a high priest, but it was he who said to him, "You are my Son. Today I have become your father." <sup>6</sup> As he says also in another place, "You are a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek." <sup>7</sup> He, in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and petitions with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, <sup>8</sup> though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered. <sup>9</sup> Having been made perfect, he became to all of those who obey him the author of eternal salvation, <sup>10</sup> named by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek.

This reaffirms that the Lord Jesus Christ holds the sole title and position of the High Priest of the New Covenant and the Head of His Body, which is His spiritual church and the true church.

- *Ephesians 5:23* - <sup>23</sup>For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the assembly, being himself the savior of the body.

It is of note that the Body of Christ may exist as a different multitude of assemblies, or no assemblies at all in certain circumstances, as the New Covenant is not defined by a collective covenant, but an individual's personal faith and lifestyle choices. Regardless, God directs the individual members of His Body to fulfill His will, whether it is teaching, evangelism or simply repentance, which is defined by beginning to live a Christian lifestyle, after all it is written in *Philippians 2:12-15*—<sup>12</sup>So then, my beloved, even as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

To elaborate the fear of the Lord is not to be scared of Him, but to stop doing or practicing the behaviours and actions that God defines as evil. This is made clear by the Scripture Job 28:28: *“To man he said, ‘Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom. To depart from evil is understanding”*, where understanding is defined as choosing to stop doing what God considers as evil or wrong (Elekwachi, 2020). As for trembling, the Merriam-Webster dictionary provides a definition related to fear, which is “to be affected with great fear or anxiety” (Merriam-Webster, 2020b). Therefore, as people tremble when a serious threat or fear confronts them, in the same way, salvation is to be taken seriously, after all it pertains to the death or life of your soul. Hence, trembling emphasizes the need to take God’s commandments seriously, because it pertains to the salvation of your soul, especially if you serve or worship other gods. As in such circumstances, relying on God’s grace is meaningless because the New Covenant requires people to choose God and do His commandments, because it is the condition of entry along with faith. There is the common misconception that the Holy Spirit i.e. salvation is a free gift given to anyone or everyone, but it is not the truth. In truth, it is considered “free” because eternal life is priceless, and therefore, no matter how righteous someone is, it is still gifted by God according to His discretion or choice:

- *Romans 2:12-13*<sup>—12</sup> *All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup> For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous.*
  - **NOTE:** To obey the law is to do God’s commandments.
- *Romans 3:31*<sup>—31</sup> *Do we then nullify the law through faith? May it never be! No, we establish the law.*

Under the New Covenant, Christians are not required to uphold the entire Law of Moses (Old Covenant), instead they uphold the key natural, moral and ethical laws. Natural laws pertain to concepts such as relationships occurring between men and women only, while moral and ethical laws are grounded in the Biblical concept of love from 1 Corinthians 13. Furthermore, the wages of sin are death meaning that if you have no issue committing sins that lead to death, then your reward or rather consequence is death, and not eternal life, for it is written:

- *1 John 5:16-17*<sup>—16</sup> *If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life for those who sin not leading to death. There is a sin leading*

*to death. I don't say that he should make a request concerning this. <sup>17</sup> All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death.*

The sins leading to death are repeated plainly throughout the Bible in Scriptures such as Galatians 5:19-21, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Matthew 15:19, 2 Timothy 3:1-5, Romans 13:13, and Colossians 3:5-9; where it is specified that people who willingly do these things without issue will not enter God's kingdom/The Body of Christ. Hence, *1 John 5:16-17* says that even prayer for people who choose to commit sins that lead to death is redundant, and this is because God will not grant them the Holy Spirit (Elekwachi, 2020).

To return to the main point, here are some examples of God approved and ordained roles within the Body of Christ that are specifically mentioned in the New Testament, and represent the appointments that may be undertaken by God's elect (chosen) within an assembly or in the absence of an assembly:

- **1 Timothy 3:1-6** — *This is a faithful saying: someone who seeks to be an overseer desires a good work. <sup>2</sup>The overseer therefore must be without reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, modest, hospitable, good at teaching; <sup>3</sup> not a drinker, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; <sup>4</sup> one who rules his own house well, having children in subjection with all reverence; <sup>5</sup> (but how could someone who doesn't know how to rule one's own house take care of God's assembly?) <sup>6</sup> not a new convert, lest being puffed up he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.*
- **1 Timothy 3:8-10** — *<sup>8</sup> Servants,<sup>[b]</sup> in the same way, must be reverent, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for money, <sup>9</sup> holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. <sup>10</sup> Let them also first be tested; then let them serve if they are blameless.*
  - *[b] deacon is an alternative word to describe servant (verse 8)*
- **Ephesians 4:11-12** — *<sup>11</sup> He gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, shepherds<sup>[a]</sup> and teachers; <sup>12</sup> for the perfecting of the saints, to the work of serving, to the building up of the body of Christ,*
  - *[a] pastor is an alternative word to describe shepherd (verse 11)*



- **1 Corinthians 12:28-31** — <sup>28</sup>God has set some in the assembly: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracle workers, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, and various kinds of languages. <sup>29</sup>Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all miracle workers? <sup>30</sup>Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with various languages? Do all interpret? <sup>31</sup>But earnestly desire the best gifts. Moreover, I show a most excellent way to you.

### THE USE OF IMAGES IN WORSHIP IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE OCCULT

Finally, it is of note that the use and worship of images is associated with occultic practices that are typically tied to cults, including “Christian” church cults and “secret” societies. The practices of such cults or groups are of Satanic origin, whether serve Satan directly or indirectly. In brief, Satan is the highest evil spirit or god, who is classified as a demon.

- **1 Corinthians 10:21**—<sup>21</sup>You can’t both drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons. You can’t both partake of the table of the Lord and of the table of demons.

The defining hallmark of Satan is that he pretends to be the Lord, the Most High God, after all it is written in 2 Corinthians 11:14-14 *And no wonder, for even Satan masquerades as an angel of light*. To further elaborate, a demon is a spirit that presents itself for worship, and is able to grant spiritual abilities to its worshippers, which often include spiritual practices that are intentionally harmful to other people and malicious in nature. Hence, if you serve a god that is not Satan, it would be considered a lesser demon, and therefore, the lesser demon is your lord, and Satan is your father— as they are of the same house or kingdom, as all demons fall under Satan’s dominion. This is similar to Jesus being the Lord of Christians, and God, the Father of Christians, except that the Lord is One, whereas Satan and lesser demons are separate but related entities. Furthermore, the Satanic and evil origin of images is emphasized in the book of Revelations Chapter 13:

- **John 8:43-44** - <sup>43</sup>Why don’t you understand my speech? Because you can’t hear my word. <sup>44</sup>You are of your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and doesn’t stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks on his own; for he is a liar, and the father of lies

- **Matthew 12:26-27**—<sup>26</sup>*If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? <sup>27</sup>If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges.*
  
- **Revelations 13:13-15**—<sup>13</sup>*He performs great signs, even making fire come down out of the sky to the earth in the sight of people. <sup>14</sup>He deceives my own people who dwell on the earth because of the signs he was granted to do in front of the beast, saying to those who dwell on the earth that they should make an image to the beast who had the sword wound and lived. <sup>15</sup>It was given to him to give breath to it, to the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause as many as wouldn't worship the image of the beast to be killed.*

The Scriptures Matthew 12:26-27 and Revelations 13:13-15 indicate that exorcisms can be performed by the power of Satanic and demonic forces, therefore, exorcism does not always indicate the power of the Lord, the Most High God. Most notably, Satan must keep up the pretense of being the Most High God, and so, even through his own power, wonders or signs are performed by those who serve him in order to deceive other people:

- **John 8:44**—<sup>44</sup>*You are of your father, the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and doesn't stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. **When he speaks a lie, he speaks on his own; for he is a liar, and the father of lies.***
  - **NOTE:** “he speaks on his own” means that the teachings and practices of Satan do not come from God, but from Satan himself, which is why Satanic-influenced teachings twist the interpretation or meaning of Scriptures i.e. the misuse of proper context and contradicting God's commandments. This is made clear by Satan's testing of the Lord in Matthew 4:1-11.

Overall, it is clear from the Bible that the use of images in worship is a practice that belongs to other gods, and not the Lord the Most High God. Most evidently, the use of images and increased occultic activity is a hallmark of Satanic influence and is therefore a strong indicator of the course of time, and therefore, the end of the age.

### ARTICLE PINPOINT

The Holy Bible is provided to help you identify what is of God and what is not; what is good and evil in the eyes of God; and the nature and course of the world from it's beginning to the end of the age, and beyond. People can lie and deceive for a variety of reasons i.e. selfish gain, ill-will, or to be idolized, but God's Word is of the truth and will never lead you astray. The VMFCP is founded on the truth of God's Word, The Holy Bible, and so, you are encouraged to use The VMFCP free eBook, 'Calling: Special Edition' to help guide your lifestyle choices, especially for those who are currently associated with the occult, but want to become Christian (Elekwachi, 2020). The next and final article of this series will investigate the association between the ancient Sol Invictus cult, who practice sun worship (Bruun et al., 1954), and the corruption of the Christian faith through and by the god of the Sol cult, Satan, who, *"<sup>14</sup> And no wonder, for even Satan masquerades as an angel of light" ~ 2 Corinthians 11:14.* Hence, solving the mystery of the cross, as its true origin and identity as a symbol of Satan is able to be fully explained, which also allows for the true Biblical significance of the cross to be elucidated.

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Scripture quotations are derived from the 'Holy Bible: World English Bible Version', published by Bible Domain Publishing in 2016 (Public Domain Work)–ISBN-13:978-1530857654, and ISBN-10 1530857651 (BDP, 2016).



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