
Subject: The Idols we worship in Christianity (No. 9).



Dear Saints

Today we will finally end off our parable about Con Demt (or rather, Rae Deemt!) with a discussion of the message of the parable. You are more than welcome to comment on these. I anticipate that the facts below might rattle a few cages.

My gratitude to everybody who'd made "stone" deposits into our bank account (for the kidney stone operation I've had). Once again, our banking details are copied at the end of this email.

Next week we'll start a new parable.

Enjoy!

Eben Swart

I know far too many Christians who have an excellent relationship with their Bibles, but no personal relationship with Jesus by the Holy Spirit.

I know far too many Christians for whom Christianity is nothing more than an intellectual concept derived from their Bibles, and who have no personal relationship with the ever-present Holy Spirit.

I know far too many Christians who have no experiential knowledge of the supernatural reality of our Comforter (although the Bible is expressly clear on this fact).¹

I know far too many Christians who are blissfully oblivious of, or don't even recognize the fact that they themselves possess a human spirit (although the Bible is unambiguously clear on that fact).²

I know far too many Christians who believe that the Holy Spirit only speaks via the Bible (although the Bible expressly contradicts this notion).³

I know far too many Christians who believe that our Christian walk is primarily via the Bible, and hence via our intellect (although the Bible expressly says that we primarily live by the Holy Spirit).⁴

I know far too many Christians who believe that the only way to access God's Word is via the Bible (although the Bible expressly contradicts this notion).⁵

Please don't get me wrong on this. I have absolutely no qualms with the Bible. I believe that every word of the Bible is the truth. I love and cherish it as a prized gift from God to mankind. I don't intend to violate the Bible in whichever way.

But I do believe that Christians have made of the Bible something that it was never intended to be: An idol.

The problem is not with the Bible as such. The problem is with what man has made of the Bible.

(This is not the first time in history that God's people have made an idol from a Godly gift that was intended for good!).⁶

Let's get a couple of facts straight:

1. Christianity is not "the religion of the Bible". Christianity is a living, day-to-day personal relationship with a Person - a relationship with Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit (not necessarily through the Bible: few Christians ever had access to physical parts of Scripture for the first 1500 years of Christianity. And even if they had, most wouldn't have been able to read them!).

2. The Bible is not God or Jesus. It is but one of many ways by which God reveals Himself to mankind. Although the Bible is certainly Godly, the scroll, book or text file is definitely not God. And although the Bible says that the Word became flesh (in Jesus),⁷ that very verse itself hadn't even been written down yet at the time when Jesus was born (so how could that have been part of the Word that became Jesus?).

3. The Bible is not a goal in itself. It is a means to a Goal - the Goal being Jesus. As soon as we make the Bible a goal in itself, we have missed the plot, and are engaging in idolatry.

In terms of our parable above: Whenever we make the Bible a goal in itself, we "pitch our camp" at some or other Biblical hoop or road sign - with Dr. Good long forgotten. And we repeatedly study and jump our favourite, idolatrous hoops.

4. The Bible never says of itself that it is the Word of God. At best, the Bible says that the Old Testament is the Word of God. If we believe the entire Bible to be the Word of God, then we do so by a choice of our wills - not because the Bible says so (we simply cannot substantiate this belief from the Bible!). The Bible calls the events of the New Testament the "testimony/witness of Jesus".⁸

5. The Bible is expressly clear on the fact that Jesus (Who is NOT equivalent to the Bible!) is the Word of God.⁹

6. The Bible never even says that the entire Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit. At best, it says so of the Old Testament¹⁰, simply because the New Testament, as we know it today, had not even existed at the writing of that verse. Finality on the compilation of the

entire Bible was reached only at about 300 AD. If we believe that the whole Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit, then we do so by a choice of our wills - not because the Bible says so (we simply cannot substantiate this belief from the Bible!).

7. The Bible, stripped of the Holy Spirit, is a dead book. Well-known ways of stripping the Bible of the Holy Spirit are the academic, intellectual, doctrinal, institutional, sectarian, legalistic, religious, traditional, occult and systematic avenues.

8. Treating the Bible without the Holy Spirit is always lethal, since the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.¹¹ Also, the Old Covenant is a covenant of death.¹²

9. The Bible never claims itself to be the only vehicle by which God speaks to mankind.

10. By believing the Bible to be a *canon* (which means "measuring rod"), we make a choice of our wills (not because the Bible says so!) to employ the Bible as the standard by which we measure everything in life. Everything that contradicts it, we reject. Everything it teaches, we embrace, believe and do. Once again, if we believe that the whole Bible as we know it today is a *canon*, then we do so by choice - not because the Bible teaches us so. We simply cannot substantiate this belief from the Bible.

11. The Bible teaches vast truths and many answers, but it does not contain all truth or have an answer for every question in life. That's what we've been given the Holy Spirit for - for He will guide us into ALL truth.¹³ He might often do so via the Bible, but He might also do so via many other avenues, like words of knowledge or wisdom, prophecy,¹⁴ etc.

This fact is offensive to many Christians who, for some unbiblical reason, choose to believe that God only speaks through the Bible.

12. The Reformation slogan (1500's) of *Sola Scriptura!* (the Scriptures alone!) was historically intended to fill the authority vacuum which had developed via the protestant denial of the ultimate authority of the Catholic Pope on all spiritual matters - hence the Greek New Testament was mockingly referred to as "the paper Pope" in the sixteenth century.

Historically, *Sola Scriptura!* simply expressed the reformed sentiment that not the Catholic Pope, but the Bible has the final authority and say in all matters spiritual. It was never intended to mean what church leaders have today made of it, i.e. to mean that our every ounce of spiritual nourishment and knowledge springs forth from the Bible and the Bible alone. Not even the Bible makes this claim about itself. This interpretation of *Sola Scriptura!* is, ironically, unbiblical.

And once again, if we believe that the Bible has the final authority in all matters spiritual, we do so by choice - not because the Bible teaches us so. We simply cannot substantiate this belief from Scripture.

13. The Bible is no "magic wand". Contrary to what most Christians would like to believe, the Bible is extensively employed in the occult world to substantiate occult doctrines and teachings, to do magic with, as well as to perform evil via curses, hexes and spells.

If you now feel as if the carpet has been pulled from underneath you, then you are most certainly rooted in the Bible, but not in Jesus. We need to be primarily rooted in Jesus - not primarily in the Bible.

Shall we repent of our Bible idol now?

1. John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.

2. Gen. 2:7, 41:8; Ex. 35:21; Deut. 2:30; Jud. 15:19; 1 Sam. 30:12; Prov. 16:32; Dan. 2:1; Acts 17:16; 2 Cor. 7:13.

3. Acts 9:4, 10, 11,15; 10:19; 11:28; 13:2, 9; 18:9; 21:11; 23:11; 26:25.

4. Joh. 6:63; Rom. 8:4, 5, 13; Gal. 3:3, 5:16, 25; 1 Pet. 4:6; 1 Joh. 3:24, 4:13.

5. Acts 9:4, 10, 11,15; 10:19; 11:28; 13:2, 9; 18:9; 21:11; 23:11; 26:25.

6. 2 Kings 18:4.

7. John 1:14.

8. Rev. 1:2, 9, 6:9, 20:4.

9. John 1:1 - 4; Rev. 19:13.

10. 2 Tim. 3:16.

11. 2 Cor. 3:6.

12. 2 Cor. 3:7.

13. John 16:13.

14. 1 Cor. 12:8, 10.

Next week:

A new parable on "Systems".

(If you are too curious to wait for next week, you may read the rest of the article on our website: <http://trumpetcall.co.za/articles.php?id=35>)

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