

# **Idolatry**

In this study we will be looking at idolatry in ancient times and the areas in which idolatry effects the modern believer. This will be a two part study in which the first study will be on the laws and definitions pertaining to idolatry & some of the idolatrous holidays. In part 2 we will look at Food sacrificed to idols, idolatry in prayer, idolatry in speech, Idolatry in self and marriages.

## **Idolatry laws and definitions**

Idolatry by definition is the worship and exaltation of anything other than the one true G-d as if it were G-d or the placing of anything above the Yahweh. The word idolatry comes from the Greek word eidololatria which means image/figure worshiper the latter part of the word has the root latron which can mean to worship or payment. In today's context, idolatry is not limited to religious concepts of worshiping carved or foreign G-ds but extend also to ideas and just about everything imaginable.

There are numerous laws in the torah forbidding idolatry here is a few.

**Deuteronomy 4:15-20** "You saw no form of any kind the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire. Therefore watch yourselves very carefully, <sup>16</sup> so that you do not become corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman, <sup>17</sup> or like any animal on earth or any bird that flies in the air, <sup>18</sup> or like any creature that moves along the ground or any fish in the waters below. <sup>19</sup> And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshiping things the LORD your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven. <sup>20</sup> But as for you, the LORD took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as you now are".

**Deuteronomy 4:23-24** <sup>23</sup> Be careful not to forget the covenant of the LORD your God that he made with you; do not make for yourselves an idol in the form of anything the LORD your God has forbidden. <sup>24</sup> For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

**Exodus 20:3-5** <sup>3</sup> "You shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing

the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me"

**Exodus 20:22-23** <sup>22</sup> "Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites this: 'You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven: <sup>23</sup> Do not make any gods to be alongside me; do not make for yourselves gods of silver or gods of gold".

**Exodus 34:10-17** Then the LORD said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the LORD, will do for you. <sup>11</sup> Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. <sup>12</sup> Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. <sup>13</sup> Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. <sup>14</sup> Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

<sup>15</sup> "Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. <sup>16</sup> And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

<sup>17</sup>Do not make cast idols."

**Leviticus 17:5-8** <sup>5</sup> "This is so the Israelites will bring to the LORD the sacrifices they are now making in the open fields. They must bring them to the priest, that is, to the LORD, at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and sacrifice them as fellowship offerings. <sup>6</sup> The priest is to sprinkle the blood against the altar of the LORD at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and burn the fat as an aroma pleasing to the LORD. <sup>7</sup> They must no longer offer any of their sacrifices to the goat idols <sup>[e]</sup> to whom they prostitute themselves. This is to be a lasting ordinance for them and for the generations to come.'

<sup>8</sup> "Say to them: 'Any Israelite or any alien living among them who offers a burnt offering or sacrifice <sup>9</sup> and does not bring it to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting to sacrifice it to the LORD - that man must be cut off from his people'.

**Leviticus 26:1** " 'Do not make idols or set up an image or a sacred stone for yourselves, and do not place a carved stone in your land to bow down before it. I am the LORD your God'.

### **The History and Origins of Idolatry**

As with all sin the origin of idolatry happens in the garden of Eden. Although Adam and Eve were not the first people to call on the names of other gods they did commit the sin. In hearkening to the voice of the serpent Eve placed the serpent's words above Yahweh's words and as Adam was there he too gave his authority away. It should then be noted that when we

as believers get into unbelief we are committing idolatry on some level. Unbelief, in my opinion, is the ultimate form of idolatry in that it causes the person to exalt his/her situation above what Yahweh's word says. We as believers often say how could Israel have gotten into doubt and unbelief when they had Yahweh amongst them with all his miracles not realizing that because we have these documented accounts of these miracles in his word that anytime we doubt and don't believe him we are guilty as well in that his word testifies against us. This is why the word says that without faith it is impossible to please G-d and that faith comes by hearing his word. The first human to worship other gods and profane the name of G-d is Enos the son of Seth. In Genesis 4:26 we read " <sup>26</sup> **Seth also had a son, and he named him Enosh. At that time men began to call on the name of the LORD**". On the surface this seems like a wonderful thing and that men are actually turning to call on Yahweh however this poses a problem in that prior to this mankind had already had interaction with Yahweh and in order to do that they had to have known his name and been able to relate to him. We see that both Cain and Able had interaction with Yahweh in making their sacrifices. A closer look at Genesis 4:26 in Hebrew unlocks the key to this puzzle. the word for began in Hebrew is the word **chalah** . According to strong's concordance this word means

**1)** to profane, defile, pollute, desecrate, and begin

**a)** (Niphal)

**1)** to profane oneself, defile oneself, pollute oneself

**a)** ritually

**b)** sexually

**2)** to be polluted, be defiled

**b)** (Piel)

**1)** to profane, make common, defile, pollute

**2)** to violate the honour of, dishonour

**3)** to violate (a covenant)

**4)** to treat as common

**c)** (Pual) to profane (name of God)

**d)** (Hiphil)

**1)** to let be profaned

**2)** to begin

**e)** (Hophal) to be begun

**2)** to wound (fatally), bore through, pierce, bore

**a)** (Qal) to pierce

**b)** (Pual) to be slain

**c)** (Poel) to wound, pierce

**d)** (Poal) to be wounded **3)** (Piel) to play the flute or pipe

Going with this meaning we see that the text is actually saying that in the time of Enosh men began profaning calling on the name of G-d. In the book of Jasher 2:3-9 referenced in Joshua 10:13 and 2nd Samuel 1:18 we get

**3 And it was in the days of Enosh that the sons of men continued to rebel and transgress against God, to increase the anger of the Lord against the sons of men.**

**4 And the sons of men went and they served other gods, and they forgot the Lord who had created them in the earth: and in those days the sons of men made images of brass and iron, wood and stone, and they bowed down and served them.**

**5 And every man made his god and they bowed down to them, and the sons of men forsook the Lord all the days of Enosh and his children; and the anger of the Lord was kindled on account of their works and abominations which they did in the earth.**

**6 And the Lord caused the waters of the river Gihon to overwhelm them, and he destroyed and consumed them, and he destroyed the third part of the earth, and notwithstanding this, the sons of men did not turn from their evil ways, and their hands were yet extended to do evil in the sight of the Lord.**

**7 And in those days there was neither sowing nor reaping in the earth; and there was no food for the sons of men and the famine was very great in those days.**

**8 And the seed which they sowed in those days in the ground became thorns, thistles and briars; for from the days of Adam was this declaration concerning the earth, of the curse of God, which he cursed the earth, on account of the sin which Adam sinned before the Lord.**

**9 And it was when men continued to rebel and transgress against God, and to corrupt their ways, that the earth also became corrupt."**

The sages also give commentary on this by saying the following.

**Rashi** explains that in Enosh's time they began calling every object in the world in the name YHVH. They called the Sun, the Moon, and everything else in the name of YHVH. Or they prayed to everything as if it is YHVH.

**The RaMBaM** explains, that in Enosh' time they began calling YHVH as the KING. Then they worshipped the Sun and the Moon and all powers in Nature as the KING'S servants. After that, they forgot YHVH altogether and worshipped idols for their own sake.

The Targum of Onkelos explains it: "then in his days the sons of men desisted from praying in the Name of the Lord."

The Targum of Jonathan says: "That was the generation in whose days they began to err, and to make themselves idols, and surnamed their idols by the Name of the Word of the Lord."

Maimonides, in his ***Commentary on the Mishna*** (a constituent part of the Talmud), A.D. 1168, in a long treatise on idolatry, gives the most probable account of the origin of idolatry in the days of Enos.

The name Enos agrees with this; for his name means ***frail, weak, sickly, incurable***. The sons of men, as "Enosh", are so called for a similar reason (Job 7:17; 15:14. Psalm 9:20; 103:15. Daniel 2:43).

**'Enosh**. First occurrence Genesis 6:4, ***men of name***. Always in a bad sense (Isaiah 5:22; 45:14. Judges 18:25). Morally = ***depraved***, and physically = ***frail, weak***. It is from ***'anash, to be sick, wretched, weak***, and denotes ***inability***, for strength, physically; and for good, morally (compare 2Samuel 12:15. Job 34:6. Jeremiah 15:18; 17:9; 30:12,15. Micah 1:9). Note the contrasts, Isaiah 2:11 and 17, "The lofty looks of man (***'Adam***) shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men (***'Enosh***) shall be bowed down" (compare Isaiah 13:12. Job 25:6. Psalms 8:4; 90:3; 144:3. Job 4:17; 10:5; 7:17. Daniel 4:16). Other instructive passages are Isaiah 8:1; 66:24. Ezekiel 24:17 (afflicted, or mourners. Compare Jeremiah 17:16, "day of man").

If Cain was a type and picture of the antichrist then Enosh is most certainly a picture of the false prophet. Hebrew tradition says this of him "There was never, ever, a charismatic spiritual leader as Enosh. As Adam and Eve's grandson, he was revered by his generation. His father Shet was the youngest son of Adam and Eve, on whom the Torah says that he was born in "Adam's form and image." Since Adam himself was made in the

form and image of HaShem, the verse hints that Shet inherited the spirituality of Adam and Eve. This enormous spirituality he bequeathed to Enosh. Thus Enosh towered as a great luminary in the history of mankind. Tradition describes him as a giant, towering above the rest of his generation both physically and spiritually. He had a marvelous body which was a wonder, a miracle, since he never aged. At age thousand years, his body was still strong as of a man of thirty years. His mind too was sharp, and he used logic. Enosh was also blessed with enormous charisma. He was a great orator, a prophet and a preacher, who aroused much passion in his sermons. He also was a compassionate person, full of mercy and forgiveness. And most importantly, he was a true prophet whose visions did materialize".

I believe that this was the birth of what led up to the next episode in Idolatry which was the great flood found in Genesis 6 forward. Following the flood we get the episode of Nimrod and the tower of Babel from which all the other idolatrous nations gained their religious practices and from which modern holidays such as Christmas and Easter gain their origins. All of the religious idolatry that we can find that has affected the world and separated mankind from Yahweh was founded at the tower of Babel and Babylon. Let's look at this episode in Genesis 11 and the book of Jasher to find some interesting points. Genesis 11:1-9 reads "Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. <sup>2</sup> As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there.

<sup>3</sup> They said to each other, "Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly." They used brick instead of stone, and tar for

mortar. <sup>4</sup> Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth."

<sup>5</sup> But the LORD came down to see the city and the tower that the men were building. <sup>6</sup> The LORD said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them. <sup>7</sup> Come, let us go down and confuse their language so they will not understand each other."

<sup>8</sup> So the LORD scattered them from there over all the earth, and they stopped building the city. <sup>9</sup> That is why it was called Babel —because there the LORD confused the language of the whole world. From there the LORD scattered them over the face of the whole earth. ( read Jasher 7:21-51,chpt8,chpt9 the tower of babel episode, chpt 11, chpt 12 giving commentary). Let's look at 4 holidays that were born at babel.

### Idolatrous Holidays

Scripture is clear on what we must and must not do. We were given specific guidelines as to what we can and cannot associate ourselves with. The church is celebrating holidays that started with undeniable **IDOL WORSHIP**, yet they refuse to acknowledge the festivals outlined in Leviticus 23. It is a most misguided replacement of

Yahweh's "sacred appointments" with pagan based idolatrous days.

We will discuss some of these holidays, but before we do...let's see what Torah says to us...

**Deuteronomy 18:9-14** <sup>9</sup> When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. <sup>10</sup> Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in <sup>[a]</sup> the fire, **who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, <sup>11</sup> or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead.** <sup>12</sup> Anyone who does these things is detestable to the LORD, and because of these detestable practices the LORD your God will drive out those nations before you. <sup>13</sup> You must be blameless before the LORD your God. <sup>14</sup> The nations you will dispossess listen to those who **practice sorcery or divination.** But as for you, the LORD your God has not permitted you to do so.

### Halloween

Following that scripture, we'll discuss an ominous idolatrous holiday. It happens to be right around the

corner. Halloween's origins go back some 2000 years ago with the Celts, in what is now modern day Ireland. These people celebrated their new year on November 1. It signified the end of summer for them and the beginning of winter. They associated the winter season with human death. Their belief was that on the night before the new year began, **October 31**, the line between the world of the living and the world of the dead could be breached. They had a celebration on that night and called it the Festival of Samhain(sow-in). Now, on this night they believed that the ghosts of the dead could and did, in fact, cross that line between the living and the dead. They believed that, though sometimes destructive, these spirits' presence made it easier for Druids(Celtic priests) to make predictions about the future. These were a people who lived their lives during the winter months based on the predictions the Druids received from the spirits. On this night, the Druids built large "sacred" **bonfires**. The people gathered around them and burned crops and animals in sacrifice to the spirits. To celebrate this night, they dressed in **costumes**, mostly of animal head and skins. They held fortune telling events around the bonfire. When the celebration was over, each man lit the hearth in their home from the "sacred" bonfire. This was their mode of protection for the winter months.

Well along come the Romans in about A.D. 43 and did what they are still known for doing today. They took over most of the Celtic territory and combined two of their own festivals with the Celtic's Samhain.

Feralia, the date in late October that Romans commemorated the passing of the dead and a day to honor Pomona, the Roman goddess of fruit and trees are the two festivals they brought to the table of paganism. Coincidentally, or NOT, the symbol for Pomona was the **apple**. Hence, the birth of the bobbing for apples Halloween tradition. Are any bells ringing yet? Well, here's a really loud one! In the 7th Century, Pope Boniface IV, made November 1 All Saints' Day. It is speculated, and I tend to agree, that it was his attempt to replace Samhain with a "churched up" version easier for the growing Christian population to swallow.

His celebration(Nov.1) was called All-Hallowmas or All-Hallows(meaning All Saints' Day) and the night before it(the old Celtic festival) was called All-Hallows Eve and later Halloween. You still hear it called "All-Hallows Eve" in some circles. Later, the church made Nov 2 "All Soul's Day". Ironically it was celebrated similar to Samhain and to the way Halloween is celebrated now..costumes of saints, angels and devils, parades and bonfires. Together those three days were called the Hallowmas.

European immigrants flooded America and along with them came this, and many other idol worshipping customs.

The correlation is crystal clear to me. Halloween's origin began with worship and homage to something other than the one true, living G-d. **That is the definition of idolatry.** Sacrifices, even ones of blood, were made to these spirits. Undoubtedly, prayers were spoken. There were costumes, bonfires, parades, fortune telling, witchcraft etc. We see these same things today during the celebration of this holiday. Wiccans believe this night to be a sacred night when their powers are at their peak and they are optimal for channeling spirits and contacting the dead. They even believe they can summon them to earth on this night.

Yahweh was absolute in his Torah about this(**referring back to Deuteronomy 18:9-14**). Pay particular attention to the beginning of verse 12. "**Anyone who does these things is detestable to the L-RD...**". That hasn't changed. Fooling yourself into thinking it is some harmless, funny day does NOT make Yahweh's word void. Just because you aren't sacrificing crops and animals does NOT make Yahweh's word void. We are told to be set apart, not to do what the Pagans do. If you are partaking in a holiday that began, and still exists, in idolatry and all of the other detestable

things mentioned in those verses, you are partaking of idolatry and mixing the Holy with the profane. **You are doing what the Pagans do.**

## Christmas

Next we come to Christmas. This is the "so called" celebration of the birth of our Messiah. Some of us still get a warm fuzzy feeling inside when we think about it and the memories of family during that season. That is why this is one of the most clever of deceptions; because it pains some to give up a holiday they have been taught commemorates the birth of their Messiah and family unity. At the base of this holiday is idol worship and again, its assimilation into the church to make the conversion transition for Pagans easier.

First, I want to say that most of the traditions celebrated on Christmas actually started BEFORE the birth of Yeshua. Amazing how a holiday we are taught centers around the Messiah's birth originated BEFORE He was born..but I digress.

Not to my surprise, and hopefully not yours as well, this holiday's origin is Roman pagan. Roman pagans worshipped Saturn, the fire god(also known as Nimrod and Osiris). He was believed to be the god of sowing because it was the heat from the sun that made things grow. These people worshipped him more vigorously in the winter months in hopes that he would be pleased enough to come back when it was time to plant the spring crops. They believed him to be THE SUN! The festival that ran from around Dec. 17-25, was called Saturnalia. It occurred every year around the beginning of winter, or the winter solstice. It was a week long time of complete lawlessness in its early days. It was a time when businesses were closed, drunkenness was encouraged, Jews were dehumanized, humans were sacrificed, sexual immorality was common as was rape and murder. Gifts were exchanged among the feasting and singing while priests of Saturn did processions through the temples carrying wreaths made of evergreen.

The 25th was actually the date that the victim chosen on day one as "an enemy of the Roman people", representation of the "Lord of Misrule"(after being forced to indulge in all manner of immorality for that week) was brutally murdered. Roman authorities believed they were

purging themselves of the forces of darkness by taking  
that innocent life.

Along came the time to convert the pagans and they were not going into a religion that would take away their sinful week of celebration. Rome, as usual, decided that compromise beget compliance and allowed them to keep their week. In the 4th century, masses of pagans converted with the promise of keeping their holiday. The church had plans on "taming down" the magnitude of sinful activity but was unsuccessful in doing so. In 350, to keep the peace on both sides, Pope Julius I named Dec. 25th as the birth of Yeshua. The pagans still celebrated much as they had and the church felt "more at peace" about it because it now had a "religious" side to it. The earliest Christmas holidays were celebrated with drinking, indulging in sexual immorality and singing in groups naked in the streets (the birth of Christmas carols).

Christmas was NOT celebrated by the early church because of a belief that the Messiah was born on that date. It was celebrated because of its importance in the assimilation of the pagans into the Christian church. The pagans were in large numbers in Rome at that time.

Because of its origins, the holiday was banned by the Puritans and it was illegal to observe it in Massachusetts between 1659 and 1681. Yet today, we want to choose to overlook the origin of a learned behavior and try to justify it by tacking the Messiah's name on it. How shameful.

The argument has been made that origin doesn't matter if you are dedicating something to the L-rd. Well, the rebuttal for that is found in Matthew.

**Matthew 15:3** <sup>3</sup> Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?"

Some would say that this scripture is referring to a specific thing, and this is true..but I clearly see application in this instance. The Christian church will not celebrate the appointed festivals outlined in Leviticus 23. The weight of their importance is shown in verse 1. <sup>1</sup> The LORD said to Moses, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'These are my appointed feasts, the appointed feasts of the L-RD, which you are to proclaim as **sacred assemblies**.'

Conversely, they celebrate a holiday built on idolatry with customs as pagan as they come, and dedicate it to the Messiah's birth. They have replaced the appointed times with their own holidays....they have broken Yahweh's command for the sake of their own traditions.

Couple of side notes and we can move on:

The Roman church was particularly anti-Semitic and in 1466, some of the events that the pagans used to dehumanize Jews were reinstated by Pope Paul II and done as part of their celebration. Rabbi's were dressed in clown like outfits and paraded through the streets while being jeered at and pelted with whatever the Romans had at hand. This was a source of amusement for the masses. Jews were killed and 2 million rubles(over \$65,000 US in this day and time) worth of their property destroyed. Jews were forced to eat to the point of pain and put in an arena to race. Forcing a naked Jew, in pain from excess consumption, racing against one of his brothers in the same state under threat of death was apparently an appropriate way to celebrate Yeshua's birthday. Something for you to think about just in case you believe you can have a love for Israel and celebrate Christmas too.

According to Langer's Encyclopedia of World History, (article "Santa"), "**Santa**" was a common name for Nimrod throughout Asia Minor. This was also the same fire god who came down the chimneys of the ancient pagans and the same fire god to whom infants were burned and eaten in human sacrifice.

## **Easter**

Easter's origins center around Nimrod(Molech, Baal etc) too. How is that for coincidence? We all know of Nimrod's lineage and his betrayal of Yahweh. We remember how he decided that

he would build a tower that would reach into heaven and because of this, Yahweh confused the language of the people of the land. We also know of his wife, Semiramis.

After Nimrod's death, his wife, Semiramis had him deified. He became known as the sun-god. This woman was a liar, adulterous and idolatrous. She gave birth to an illegitimate son and being her nature, lied about his conception. His name was Tammuz. She convinced people that he was Nimrod reborn. People had been looking for the Messiah so this wasn't such a hard pill to swallow, especially when she tossed the immaculate conception in. Just as has happened time and time again in our lifetime, people were blinded into believing that this imposter was the Messiah and they worshipped him. Well, it wasn't long before they were worshipping the woman who had given birth to the "so called" Messiah through immaculate conception. She became the goddess of fertility and the moon. She's also known as Ishtar, Ashtur and Easter.

After Tammuz died(amazing that a god reborn can die), Semiramis instituted a springtime ritual that gave birth to what we know as Easter. It is said that Tammuz went to the underworld at his death. It is believed that at the death of her son, Semiramis cried and the power of the tears of a mother with a broken heart "resurrected" him as new vegetation on the earth. Every spring the ritual was done to reenact Tammuz' so called resurrection from the underworld.

These people were a special type of evil. They were into sun worship, moon worship, child sacrifice(to Molech aka Nimrod), astrology, demon worship, mysterious rituals and star worship

to name some of their degradation. This takes us back to our original scripture. Yahweh said in Deuteronomy 18:12, that people who do these things are detestable to Him. Are we to believe that we can embrace a holiday that has the stench of all of these things permeated through it, while rejecting the Passover, and not be detestable to Yahweh?

With the confusion of the language of the people of Babel came the many names for Nimrod, Semiramis, and Tammuz. Also with their migration, came their evil, idolatrous religious traditions out to the rest of the world. Semiramis was worshipped as the goddess of spring, fertility and a mediator between man and god. Orgies and temple prostitutes were used in worship to her.

The rabbit(Easter bunny) is a sexual symbol of fertility. It is literally seen as a representation of Semiramis; the Mother Goddess.

The egg(Easter egg) was a sacred symbol of ancient Babylon. The story goes that a huge egg was supposed to have fallen from heaven into the Euphrates(how fitting) and from that egg, Goddess Astarte(Semiramis) was hatched. Again, it literally symbolizes her.

In short, this holiday is literally named after a woman who deceived people into believing that her husband was reborn in her son, and that her son was resurrected(which is what's celebrated each spring..around Easter time..no coincidence there). Children are hiding eggs and eating chocolate bunnies

that symbolize a woman who condoned, even commanded the murder of babies, and established all manner of religious offense toward Yahweh. Yet again, the church adopted pagan ways to bring the pagans in. They again added Yeshua in to make it go down more smoothly. Much like pastors today are willing to compromise the truth to fill the pews.

### **Valentine's Day**

This is the holiday of love, the one in which you show your adoration for your mate with gifts. It is a holiday all about couples. Depression even sets in when people find themselves alone at that time of the year. That is how strongly it has become ingrained in our psyches. At schools all over the country, children are exchanging cards commemorating this wonderful, loving holiday. There is even a box in some of the packets that you can construct and put your cards through the slot in the top. Surely there can't be anything pagan or idolatrous about Valentine's Day. It's a holiday of love, right?

### **WRONG!**

We go back to good ole Rome again. Is anyone other than me starting to see a pattern here?

Roman pagans celebrated a festival dating back to the third century called "The Feast of Lubercus" or "The Feast of Lupercalia". Not surprisingly, this feast was in honor of a god, with celebration to a goddess of fertility during that same time. The festival was held on the eve of February 14 and February 15th. The purpose of it was to honor the god Lupercus. This god

was called by a different name by the Greeks , "Pan". The Semites called "Pan" "Baal". In case you haven't picked up on it yet. This is the very same Baal we spoke of earlier, aka Nimrod. This is another example of how the language confusion that Yahweh put on these people caused Nimrod to be known by many name in many different areas.

This "god" was supposedly responsible for keeping the wolves at bay who were, at that time, ravaging the sheep herds outside the Roman gates. He was their mighty hunter. The festival was supposed to ensure his continued protection of their shepherds and flocks. Now During this festival, and in honor of the goddess Juno Februata, the names of young women were put into a box and young men picked them out.

The name chosen was to be his entertainment and sexual partner for the year, which began in March. The young men would pin the name of the woman on their sleeve and parade around the town so that the goddess could see and be pleased with them. After that year, the names would go back in the box and the women would be chosen by another man for that next year. This festival was as much a fertility celebration as it was to Lupercus. It wasn't a festival of love, but one of lust.

A part of this festival centered around the twins Romulus and Remus. The priests sacrificed two goats and a dog at the foot of the Palentine Hill where the twins were to have been suckled by a she-wolf. Two boys were then chosen to represent the legendary twins, and brought to the cave, where the priests anointed them on the forehead with the bloodied knives used in the sacrifice. The knives were immediately wiped on

goatskins soaked in milk. The boys would then join in the race of the Luperci, clad only in goatskin loin cloths. The Luperci used strips of the sacred goats' skin, called februa, to whip women in the streets and purify them. In this way, the women were afforded fertility and protection in childbirth.

Now the church came in as usual and decided that they would assimilate and make this 800 year holiday their own with their own twist to it. In 469, emperor Gelasius declared February 14th a holy day in honor of St Valentine's day which in essence was their replacement for Lupercus. Instead of young men pulling young women's names out of the box, now both sexes were pulling the names of martyred saints out of a box. When we first hear the story, in our modern day knowledge of the Catholic church, it's not a stretch for us to believe that St. Valentine was of their doing. After all, they are the most predominant saint worshipping religion. There was just one small problem with that chain of thought though. The name Valentine didn't come in with the church. It was already there.

Valentine was a common name in Rome in that day. That fact seems odd until you understand why. Valentine comes from the Latin word "Valentinus". It's a proper name which comes from the word "valens" which, according to Webster's Unabridged Dictionary means "to be strong, powerful, mighty". Roman pagans also referred to their MIGHTY, POWERFUL HERO AND HUNTER Nimrod as Valentine. Roman pagan families were naming their children that name frequently in dedication to him.

So not only did the Catholic church come in and try to pass off this holiday as a spiritual one, but they also kept the name of the actual god it was in honor of and fabricated a St Valentine of their own. Research has shown that during that time, there were STORIES of three Valentine's that the church could have been referring to. The stories changed to varying degrees depending on who and from what area you got the tale. The only thing that all accounts had in common was that they were all martyred, although the methods differed by account. There was no validation that any of it was true and it didn't help matters when the church wouldn't say specifically which one they were referring to. This, of course, led historians to come to one of two conclusions. Either this was a celebration for all three saints(although it wasn't clear why the church would be vague on the issue for so many years) or their first line of thought; that the church kept the pagan Valentine, to appease the pagans. Since no proof of these men existing could be found and no validation of the events of their lives, as told in the stories, could be made, the first line of thought prevailed. Also, if you recall earlier, one of Nimrod's names was "santa". According to Webster's New College Dictionary, "[Santa](#) (sän'tä, san'tə) **adjective** holy  
**noun** saint."

There are so many things we have been taught are harmless. It's been said that they're tradition and no matter what they started out as..they're not that now. All of these holidays retained, and still have today, the pagan rituals they started with. Easter still has the eggs and the bunny. Christmas still has

the wreath, mistletoe and groups going out in the streets singing. Halloween still has the masks, bonfires and the belief that spirits will walk the earth that night. Valentine's day still has the heart and the mating of male and female. The worst part of this all is that these things were endorsed and brought into the circle of Christianity by the church. The motive was impure and there was little, in some cases no, attempt to remove the paganism from them. The holy was mixed with the profane and from that coupling, a tree of disgust to Yahweh has grown. Again, I say, it was said clearly in Matthew. We have broken the commandments of our Father and traded his laws for our traditions. It wasn't acceptable then and it's not acceptable now. No ordinance Yahweh gave us was happenstance. He gave us the festivals as a convocation FOR ALL TIME. His word doesn't change nor does his mind. As we conclude the first part of this study let us go into this holiday season with an understanding and renewed vigor to keep the commandments of Yahweh and witness the origins of these holidays and the laws pertaining to them to our relatives so that they will be able to make an informed decision when as we spend time with them during the holidays. In the second part of this study we will be dealing with idolatry on a personal level.

### **Food Sacrificed to Idols**

Eating is something that we as humans do on a daily basis and the laws pertaining to eating within the bible are the ones that are most often broken within today's society. We have already addressed the importance of keeping kosher in a previous teaching so we will not look at these issues heavily in this portion of the teaching. Instead we will look at eating as part of a process of the covenant we have with Yahweh and how we as believers should not eat foods sacrificed to idols or when dealing with people from other beliefs when it comes to supporting their system of beliefs. The fall of man began with eating and, although it is not taught, in a sense there was a very simple covenant established with food being a very integral part of it. In Deuteronomy 30:15 we read **"See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction"**. This was the exact same thing that was placed before Adam and Eve. In Genesis 2:16 we read **God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; <sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."** Here we have the same covenant of obedience for life and death for disobedience. Food has always been associated with covenants. In Exodus 24:9-11 we read <sup>9</sup> **Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up <sup>10</sup> and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. <sup>11</sup> But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.** Prior to this experience we also see the Passover story in which the eating of the Passover was a part of Yahweh's covenant of deliverance. Yeshua further solidifies this in Luke

22:19-20 by saying <sup>9</sup>**And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me."** <sup>20</sup>**In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.** Food and eating were also an integral part of idol worship and in all religions is seen as an integral part of identity and cutting a covenant.

One of the most notable accounts of this within the ranks of the children of Israel is the story of the golden calf found in Exodus 32. In verses 5-6 we read **When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, "Tomorrow there will be a festival to the LORD."** <sup>6</sup>**So the next day the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings and presented fellowship offerings. Afterward they sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry".** We all know how this incident turned out and as is noted the eating of food sacrificed to idols is a part of it. In Acts 15:19-21 part of what is decided for the Gentiles coming to the faith is to keep the kosher laws and abstain from food sacrificed to idols. This is reiterated in the same chapter in verses 28-29 and in Acts 21:25. In modern Christian circles Paul is often cited in 1st Corinthians 8 as giving limited approval on eating food sacrificed to idols and violating of the Kashrut laws so we will conclude this segment of the study by examining these scriptures and looking at various places that we see food sacrificed to idols in modern times. In 1st Corinthians 8 we read <sup>1</sup>**Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that "We all possess knowledge."** But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. <sup>2</sup>**Those who think they know something do not yet know**

as they ought to know. <sup>3</sup>But whoever loves God is known by God.

<sup>4</sup> So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that "An idol is nothing at all in the world" and that "There is no God but one." <sup>5</sup> For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many "gods" and many "lords"), <sup>6</sup> yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.

<sup>7</sup> But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. <sup>8</sup> But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do.

<sup>9</sup> Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup> For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol's temple, won't that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? <sup>11</sup> So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. <sup>12</sup> When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup> Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall". First we have a comparison of love vs

knowledge and what is being said is that knowledge while good if misapplied can become as leaven that puffs up or sin. A simple read of this scripture supports the beginning theme in that Paul says we who possess knowledge know that there is only one true G-d and all comes from him. It seems to say that Paul is saying that if you have a clear conscience about it that you may eat food sacrificed to idols because food doesn't determine your relationship with Yahweh. However if this is the case then it would contradict what was established in Acts 15 where Paul was one of the members there who agreed to this and where no allotment was made to be able to eat food sacrificed to idols.

The key to reconciling these two scriptures lies in the fact that this letter does not have chapters and was not written in the way that it is chaptered in the bible. So what happens is that in chapter 9 Paul temporarily switches thought and then completes his thoughts on this issue in chapter 10. Let's look at what chapter 10 says. <sup>1</sup> **For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. <sup>2</sup> They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. <sup>3</sup> They all ate the same spiritual food <sup>4</sup> and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. <sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness.**

<sup>6</sup> **Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. <sup>7</sup> Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: "The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry."** <sup>8</sup> **We should not commit sexual immorality, as some**

of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died.<sup>9</sup> We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes.<sup>10</sup> And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel.

<sup>11</sup> These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.<sup>12</sup> So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!<sup>13</sup> No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.

<sup>14</sup> Therefore, my dear friends, flee from idolatry.<sup>15</sup> I speak to sensible people; judge for yourselves what I say.<sup>16</sup> Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ?<sup>17</sup> Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.

<sup>18</sup> Consider the people of Israel: Do not those who eat the sacrifices participate in the altar?<sup>19</sup> Do I mean then that food sacrificed to an idol is anything, or that an idol is anything?<sup>20</sup> No, but the sacrifices of pagans are offered to demons, not to God, and I do not want you to be participants with demons.<sup>21</sup> You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons too; you cannot have a part in both the Lord's

table and the table of demons. <sup>22</sup> Are we trying to arouse the Lord's jealousy? Are we stronger than he?

<sup>23</sup> "I have the right to do anything," you say—but not everything is beneficial. "I have the right to do anything"—but not everything is constructive. <sup>24</sup> No one should seek their own good, but the good of others.

<sup>25</sup> Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, <sup>26</sup> for, "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it."

<sup>27</sup> If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience. <sup>28</sup> But if someone says to you, "This has been offered in sacrifice," then do not eat it, both for the sake of the one who told you and for the sake of conscience. <sup>29</sup> I am referring to the other person's conscience, not yours. For why is my freedom being judged by another's conscience? <sup>30</sup> If I take part in the meal with thankfulness, why am I denounced because of something I thank God for?

<sup>31</sup> So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God. <sup>32</sup> Do not cause anyone to stumble, whether Jews, Greeks or the church of God— <sup>33</sup> even as I try to please everyone in every way. For I am not seeking my own good but the good of many, so that they may be saved.

Here we see Paul resuming his previous thoughts on Idolatry. In verses 6-10 we are given some other examples of sins that

constitute idolatry. They are sexual immorality and Lashon Horah which constitutes both the grumbling and complaining and the testing of Yeshua to bring serpents upon the children of Israel in numbers 21:4-8. Exodus 32:6 is also quoted. The next verses are pretty clear that we cannot partake in the worship of demons and that we are to indeed flee from idolatry which includes food sacrificed to idols. It's at verse 25 that we seem to have what most believers consider justification for breaking Kashrut laws. A look at the Greek gives us the same word that we found in our teaching on Kashrut. The word that is used for anything in verse 25 and whatever in 27 is the word **pas** and as we learned in our earlier teaching it's the same word used for all in Mark 1:5 and it should almost always be rendered as some of all. At verse 23 he commands us to tear down the ultimate idol ourselves. He then says to keep kosher when we go to the meat market so as not to raise questions of conscience by the person selling meat and that when an unbeliever puts food before you keep kosher so that you don't raise questions of conscience. We know that the conscience is that of the other person not the believer but what does the term question of conscience mean? At verse 32 we get the answer and that is to not cause anyone to stumble. We all know that causing someone to stumble is causing them to break the laws of G-d so when Paul says to do it all for the glory of Yahweh in verse 31 he is not giving us a license to eat whatever and just say that we are doing it unto the Lord and because of that it's ok to break the law. Conversely he is saying to keep the law as a witness to that person about Yahweh so that many may be saved. He also quotes Psalm 24 at verse 25

and many look at that as saying because everything was made by Yahweh that it's justification to eat anything but reading verses 3 and 4 of this psalm clears up the matter. **"Who may**

**ascend the mountain of the LORD?**

**Who may stand in his holy place?**

**<sup>4</sup> The one who has clean hands and a pure heart,  
who does not trust in an idol  
or swear by a false god".**

This reiterates his stance on idolatry. The irony of this scripture is that Christians in modern times have used this scripture to justify doing the very thing that Paul is saying not to do and that is being a stumbling block.

Now that it is established that Paul indeed is a supporter of keeping G-ds laws and commandments when it comes to Kashrut and eating food sacrificed to Idols let's look at some examples that we face today. Aside from other religions the most obvious would be on religious holidays such as Easter, Halloween, Valentine's Day and Christmas. I am not saying you can't eat a meal on these days but rather to stay away from foods that can represent these days such as Halloween candy, Valentine's day candy, Easter Eggs and Christmas cookies. This should also be something that is filtered through the Holy Spirit, in comparison with what the Torah says, per each individual. Another place would be Asian food places in many of these places if you look you will see incense and altars to their G-ds to bring good fortune and prosperity to their businesses. Again this is not all Asian restaurants but we should be vigilant and cautious when eating at these establishments. We should

also be leary of eating foods that are named after people of prominence and stars. Food at sporting venues, and concerts can also fit into the categories but again i would like to reiterate that i am not being dogmatic and legalistic here and that the Holy spirit is the ultimate filter when it comes to this.

### The First Letter in Idolatry is I

In the final chapter of this teaching we will be looking at idolatry in speech, prayer and our conduct as believers as well as other sins that are considered as idolatry. The reason for the title of this chapter is that all these things deal with self and it is ourselves that can be the biggest idols. On some level all sin is connected with self and is in some way linked to idolatry in that the Lawlessness that is sin on its most basic level is the exaltation of our will versus the will of Yahweh. In the Yahweh's prayer given by Yeshua we get "**Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven**". In Romans 12:1-2 we read "**Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will**". Here we are compared to living sacrifices and told to offer our bodies as them. The living sacrifices were the animals that were given to

the temple but for whatever reason were not offered immediately. They were given special care and penned up and checked for imperfections regularly. They were marked for Yahweh and had special attention given to them at all times. Their offspring were also considered holy to Yahweh. In this verse we are told that this is our true and proper worship. Let's look at some scriptures that refer to other sins as idolatry.

Ephesians 5:3-5 reads <sup>3</sup> **"But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. <sup>4</sup> Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving. <sup>5</sup> For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God".**

In Colossians 3:5-11 we read **"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. <sup>7</sup> You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. <sup>8</sup> But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. <sup>9</sup> Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices <sup>10</sup> and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. <sup>11</sup> Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all".**

As we have also discussed in a previous teaching, Lashon Horah, the wicked tongue and evil speech constitute idolatry, murder and immorality. One of the more commonly used phrases within the modern church that I consider a blatant but subtle form of idolatry is the term "I rebuke you Satan in the name of Jesus". There are other variations of this statement that are used such as binding or casting down Satan. There are several issues with this statement. First there are no biblical accounts of this type of exorcism ever being used by believers and the result was ever good. The common formula for casting out a demon was to ask the demons name then ask Yahweh to cast it out of the person. Secondly the terms binding and loosening are being grossly misused as they were terms that were exclusive to the Beit Din or Court in Yeshua's day and could only be rendered by judges. To bind meant there was a decision that forbade and to loosen meant that there was a decision to allow. Finally at the heart of this statement is the fact that the believer places himself or herself in the place of G-d by saying "I rebuke". So even if it does work Yahweh gets no glory. There are two examples in scripture of where Satan is rebuked and one example of someone attempting to rebuke demons with a similar formula to the one discussed above let's look at what the word of Yahweh says. In Zechariah 3:2 we read

**"The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"**

Supporting this we find in the New Covenant Jude 1:9 we read

**"But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with**

**the devil about the body of Moses, did not himself dare to condemn him for slander but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"**.

Here we see that in both these instances it is Yahweh that rebukes and not a person. I believe that even when done incorrectly on some level the earlier method works because of the persons faith and the name of Yeshua being all powerful but again I think that this is a clear case of what is meant in the scriptures that say " there is a way that seems right unto a man but in the end it leads to death" I also believe that this is the kind of person that Yeshua was addressing in Matthew 7:22 that says <sup>22</sup> **"Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?'** <sup>23</sup>**Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'**

Now let's look at the one place in scripture that the method of "I command" was used and see what the results were. In acts 19:11-17 we get the story of the seven sons of Sceva let's look at what the scriptures say.

<sup>11</sup> **God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, <sup>12</sup> so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.**

<sup>13</sup> **Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus**

**whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.”<sup>14</sup> Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this.<sup>15</sup> One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?”<sup>16</sup> Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.**

**<sup>17</sup> When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.**

Several points should be noted here first as In Paul's case if we are truly being led by the spirit and doing the will of Yahweh we won't have to go through much effort to heal the sick and cast out evil spirits. Secondly we must always be aware of someone like these individuals who want to commercialize the power of Yeshua's name and put themselves as the god over it. Using the term "I" is one of the easiest ways to get on a slippery slope into idolatry and in my opinion it is a term that we should practice avoiding at all costs. I mean how much more easier is it to say "In Yeshua's name leave this person" or "In Yeshua's name come out" etc. I also believe that before this kind of thing is done we should pray and ask Yahweh to cast this spirit out and above all before any of us attempt this sort of thing we should seek the spirit. In closing I would like to address idolatry in our prayer life. Prayer is one of the most common things in the life of a believer and sometimes i believe we can get into idolatry if we are not careful. in James 4:1-3 we read.

**<sup>1</sup>" What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? <sup>2</sup>You desire but do not have, so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want, so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God. <sup>3</sup> When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures".**

This verse and the rest of this passage speaks volumes to our tongues and prayer life. One of the largest areas that this is evident is people praying for money and teachings like "name it claim it" and all the other prosperity teachings that are out there. Yahweh has said that if we seek his kingdom and his righteousness he would take care of our material needs (Matthew 6:31-32). He also said that if we are giving cheerfully and paying our tithes that he will provide for us and rebuke the devourer ( Luke 6:38 & Malachi 3:8-12). As we look through scripture we don't really see a mandate to pray for money and prosperity but rather we see Yahweh promising us to meet the needs and take care of our physical being if we will seek him out and do the possible. Please note here that I am encouraging you that if you have a need give something in your tithes or pray that Yahweh help you to seek him more and stand on what he has already written in his word versus just praying for money. There is so much more that can be said here about this subject but I will close with several words of encouragement for us. The first is let us as believers strive to do what Paul did by crucifying our flesh daily and examine ourselves as living sacrifices to help deal with the "I" factor. Let us be mindful of

the words we speak to our brothers and others as we go about our day to day lives to avoid committing idolatry with our tongues as much as possible. Let us be mindful of what we eat and seek Yahweh and his spirit especially during the holiday seasons that are filled with paganism. Finally let us remember a warning in Revelation 22:15 that reads "**Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood**".