

Do Catholics worship statues?

Do Catholics worship statues, icons, and other objects? Was this practice introduced in the fourth century by the Emperor Constantine? Is the root of the Catholic Church the *Babylon Mystery Religion* that many Evangelicals believe?

This theory comes from several sources. Today's proponents are Tim Lahaye and Jerry Jenkins the authors of the popular *Left Behind* book series that has sold millions of copies and their book *Are We Living in the End Times?* Their source is a book written in 1853 by Alexander Hislop titled *The Two Babylons* and another book titled *Babylon Mystery Religion* by Ralph Woodrow published in 1981.

Catholic apologist Mark Shea points out in his book *Mary Mother of the Son Volume 1* that "Ralph Woodrow, to his great credit, came to disavow his own work and has now published *The Babylon Connection?* correcting his own false assertions and debunking Alexander Hislop's *The Two Babylons*."

Mark Shea, a convert from Protestantism, refers to the circulation of this myth as "pseudo-knowledge" meaning it is "stuff that everybody knows, not because it is true but because somebody with important hair said it on TV or because your favorite magazine said so."

Mr. Shea concludes that the idea the Catholic Church is pagan in its origin is "circulated in thousands of Evangelical sermons, read in thousands of Evangelical books and magazines and heard on thousands of Evangelical TV and radio shows" even though there is no basis for it.

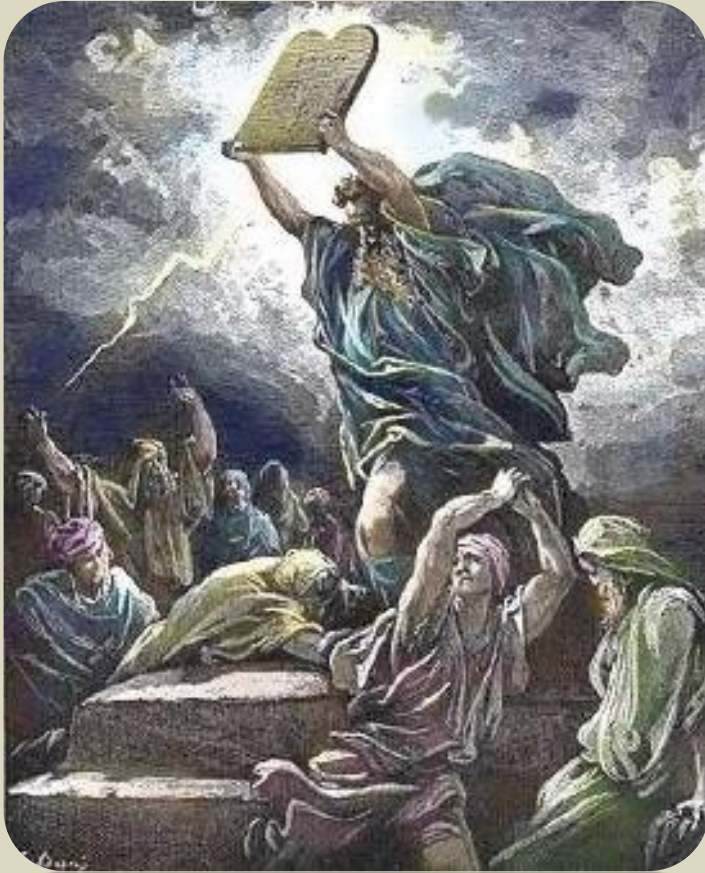
Mr. Shea concludes: "Even though Woodrow has repudiated his own work and exploded Hislop's theories, even though Lahaye depends on Hislop" without a "particle of hard evidence at all, it remains "common knowledge" among Evangelicals that Marian devotion and doctrine are fundamentally pagan in origin because, well it's common knowledge."

What does scripture say about statues and images? Are they forbidden?



Please Scroll down

The Ten Commandments



I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.

Does the Catholic Church violate the first commandment with the Church's practice of using statues, icons, crucifixes and other sacred images to depict Christ, Mary and other saints? Of course not! The first commandment says that one cannot make an image and "bow down to them nor serve them." Catholics do not bow down or serve an image as if the image has some type of mystical power. Worshiping anything other than the One True God is idolatry and for Catholics idolatry is a mortal sin.

Please scroll down

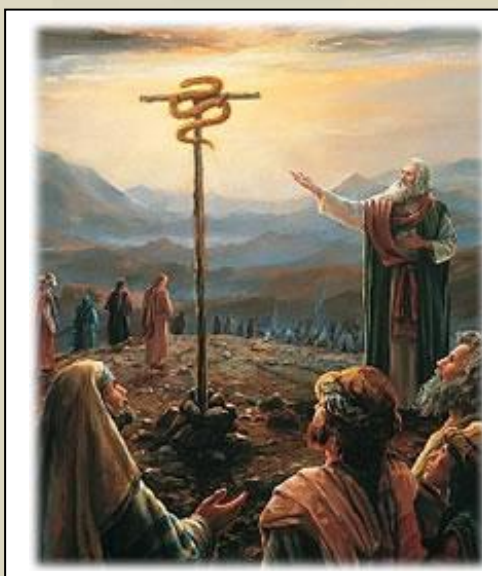
“Cursed be the man who makes a graven or molten image, an abomination to the Lord, a thing made by the hands of a craftsman, and sets it up in secret. And all the people shall answer and say, “Amen.” Deuteronomy 27:15

God detests idolatry. But do His commandments absolutely prohibit the making of statues or images for religious purposes? We know from the Word of God that **they do not**. In Exodus, God commands that **statues and images be made** for religious purposes.



Ark of the Covenant

“(God said) have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you. Have them make an ark of acacia wood.....Overlay it with pure gold, both inside and out, and make a gold molding around it....And make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. Make one cherub on one end and the second cherub on the other; make the cherubim of one piece with the cover, at the two ends. The cherubim are to have their wings spread upward, overshadowing the cover with them.” Exodus 25:8-20



The Lord said to Moses, “Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole; and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live.” So Moses made a bronze serpent, and set it on a pole. Numbers 21:8-9

King Solomon

God commanded King Solomon to build the Temple in Jerusalem and God said to Solomon: "If you will walk in my statutes and obey my ordinances and keep all my commandments and walk in them, then I will establish my word with you.....and I will dwell among the children of Israel and will not forsake my people Israel." 1 Kings 6:11-13



God told Solomon to "walk in His statutes and obey His ordinances and keep all His commandments" and when Solomon begins to build the Temple he carves statues and images.

"He made two cherubim of olivewood...he put the cherubim in the innermost part of the Temple...he carved all the walls of the Temple with carved figures of cherubim and palm trees and open flowers." 1 Kings 6:23-29

"Then he made the molten sea.....it stood upon twelve oxen, three facing north, three facing west, three facing south and three facing east." 1 Kings 7:23-25

"And on its panels he carved cherubim, lions, and palm trees according to the space of each with wreaths." 1 Kings 7:36

Please scroll down

Objection: In Exodus 20:4-5 God clearly forbids the making of images

Catholic Answer: God forbids the worshiping of images not the making of them. Just five chapters later in Exodus 25:16-20 God commands Moses to make images.

In Numbers 21: 8-9 God commanded Moses to make a bronze serpent and place it on a pole. However centuries later the Israelites began to **worship** the bronze serpent and they gave it a name and called it “Nehushtan.” King Hezekiah destroyed it because they were worshiping the image. 2 Kings 18:4

No Evangelical Protestant would say that these men are worshiping these flags. They would recognize that they are honoring the flags for what they represent.....



Yet those same Evangelical Protestants would say that this couple is worshiping a statue of Mary while in actuality they are honoring the statue for what it represents, the Mother of God.



Please scroll down

As Mark Shea pointed out this idea that the Catholic Church is pagan comes from Alexander's Hislop's book *The Two Babylons* and from Ralph Woodrow's book *Babylon Mystery Religion*

Fortunately, most Protestants are not anti-Catholic. They see Catholics as born again Christians and brothers in Christ. However, there are mainstream Pastors like Robert Jeffress of the First Baptist Church in Dallas, one of the largest in the world, who teach that the Catholic Church is pagan in origin and that Satan is behind the creation of the Catholic Church. He gets this idea from Ralph Woodrow's book *Babylon Mystery Religion*. Here is a short 2-minute video from Pastor Jeffress where he asserts that the Catholic Church is pagan. [HERE](#)

I highly recommend getting Ralph Woodrow's second book *The Babylon Connection?* where he retracts everything that he wrote in his first book. He completely dismantles the idea that the Catholic Church adopted pagan practices.

Mr. Woodrow is a Protestant and therefore there are some errors in his book concerning the Catholic Church but overall it is an excellent resource to dispel these charges of paganism.

Did the Catholic Church change the Ten Commandments?

Protestants often accuse the Catholic Church of changing the Ten Commandments by not having the Second Commandment "Thou shall not make any graven images" in their abbreviated list. As we have already seen God commanded that images be made and placed on the Ark of the Covenant. God also commanded that Moses make a graven image, a serpent on a pole, and God allowed graven images to be made by Solomon and placed throughout the Temple.

In 1 Kings 8:10-11, we see that the Lord approved the newly-built Temple because His glory cloud filled it. In 1 Kings 9:3, the Lord Himself says that He consecrated the Temple - which means that He definitely approved of what was in the Temple. But, even more to the point, in 1 Chronicles 28:19, we see that the plans of the Temple were given to Solomon by David, and that these plans were "from the hand of the Lord." The prohibition is against bowing down and worshiping images not from making them or having them in your house or in a Church.

If images are a violation of God's commands then no Christian should have his picture on a driver's license, photographs or videos of his children, artwork of any kind or watch television. The statue of Lincoln and the Statue of Liberty must be removed. Clearly that is not the intent of the Second Commandment.

Please Scroll Down

Why does the Catholic Church have an abbreviated list that leaves out the Second Commandment? This tradition comes from Saint Augustine in the 4th century. Please

[Click Here](#) to read about St. Augustine.

The Lutherans also use Augustine's abbreviated list and do not list the commandment against graven images yet no one ever accuses the Lutherans of changing the Ten Commandments. To see the Lutheran list go

[HERE](#)

The Jewish list is also not like the Protestant list and no one ever accuses them of removing the Second Commandment which proves that the false charge the Catholic Church changed the Commandments is merely an anti-Catholic bias.

To see the Jewish list, go [HERE](#)

On page 496-497 of the Catechism of the Catholic Church it has the NON-ABBREVIATED list of the Ten Commandments showing that the Catholic Church has not removed the command not to make graven images. To see the Catechism please go

[HERE](#)

Next apologetic topic: **The Communion of Saints. Can we pray to saints for their intercession?**