

TOPICAL SERMON: IS THE IMAGE OF THE CROSS GOOD OR BAD?

[2] The title of the sermon today is "IS THE IMAGE OF THE CROSS GOOD OR BAD?"

Is The Cross Always A Graven Image?

- You won't find images of the cross in this church. There's a very good reason for that.
- You won't find an "old-fashioned altar" up here with a cross for you to bow down to either.
- Is the cross a graven image? Is every graven image bad?
- Is it bad to wear cross necklaces? Is it bad to have an image of a cross in your home?

We're going to answer all of those questions today with some common sense and the Scriptures.

- And I highly doubt you've ever heard a sermon like this before because I haven't.
- And I hope this sermon helps you to see the truth about the image of the cross.
- Is the cross a graven image? What do you think a graven image would be?
- A graven image is anything made with the hands of man that turns into an object of worship.

[3] Exodus 20:4-6 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; 6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

- That's the second commandment within the 10 commandments.
- Thou shalt not make unto thee ANY GRAVEN IMAGE, or any likeness of anything.
- If you make an image of ANYTHING and you bow down to that image, this is called breaking the second commandment of the ten commandments.
- If you worship that image in any way, you've made that image into a graven image.

For example, do you have a cross hanging in your house that YOU MUST HAVE?

- Do you ever look at that cross, stop, pray in front of that cross, and kneel to that cross?
- Do you have to have that cross on your wall? If so, then you've got a graven image in your house.
- Would you take that cross down and throw it out because you know there's really nothing to it?
- It's just a wooden cross, graven cross, and it's something made by the hands of man.
- BUT YOU MUST HAVE IT? Think about that. You don't need that cross hanging on your wall.
- Do you think you must have that cross so that God will hear you? He sure says nothing like that.

Look closer at verse 5 right there in Exodus Chapter 20 after the colon.

- "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God."
- When you take anything else and act as if it has importance related to God, HE'S GOING TO BE JEALOUS.
- "But I must have my cross necklace in my hand when I pray to God. I must squeeze it in my hand."
- "If I don't have my cross necklace in my hand when I pray, God won't hear my prayers."
- Listen, this is what many, many people believe.

They've turned that man-made necklace into something they must have in order for God to hear them.

- This means they have a graven image that they are worshipping. Not good.
- So, this can easily be fixed. STOP DOING THAT. Throw the necklace away if you can't.
- A cross necklace isn't a graven image unless you turn it into a graven image. It's your choice.
- God says to not make ANYTHING a graven image.
- If you use any graven image at all in your worship of God, then you have a problem.

Here in this church, we don't worship any image here. See this pulpit here.

- We could turn this into a graven image. This was made by my hands.
- I could have you come up here and bow down to this pulpit and act like it's an altar to God.
- Many churches do this. "Well, we aren't worshipping the pulpit."
- Many of those same preachers will say:
- "You aren't worthy to come into this pulpit until you're a great man of God like me."
- They've turned a man-made pulpit into something it's not. They worship their pulpits.

We don't come up and bow down to this pulpit. We don't have a cross up here.

- I don't say, "You all need to get right with God and come up to this cross, bow down, and pray."
- We don't make graven images and act as if they are a part of worship.
- We don't bow down to that TV right there. We simply use it to display God's words.
- We use it to display the words of songs so we can all sing together as a congregation.
- But what about the background images in the songs we use to worship God? Let's talk about those.
- But let's read some more Scripture first.

[4] Exodus 32:15-16 And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. 16 And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.

- Think of God's creation and then think of man's creation. A graven image is the creation of man.
- For example, a statue that is worshipped and admired of men is a graven image.
- The tables of the 10 commandments were GRAVEN by God Almighty.
- "And the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables."
- We wouldn't take those tables of the 10 commandments and worship them. God doesn't want that.

[5] Exodus 32:17-19 And when Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said unto Moses, There is a noise of war in the camp. 18 And he said, It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear. 19 And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

- When people see that Moses took those tables and threw them, they almost pass out.
- Some people say, "WOW, HE JUST DESTROYED THE WORD OF GOD!!!"
- But did Moses destroy the word of God? No, of course he didn't. Moses was close to God.
- God already knew that Moses would take those down, see the people worshipping a false god, get angry, and throw those tables.

Do you think God was angry with Moses or with the people who were bowing down to a graven image?

- GOD WAS ANGRIER THAN MOSES. God didn't get angry with Moses for breaking those tables.
- Do you really think Moses destroyed the word of God? YOU CAN'T. The word of God is spirit and truth.
- Moses knew that those tables weren't the ACTUAL WORD OF GOD. God doesn't forget His words.
- God can create His words at any time. He can say them again any time He wants.
- He can write them on tablets again any time He wants. For example, we use our Bibles in church.
- We use our Bibles to worship God, but it's not THE ACTUAL BIBLE that we're worshipping.

MUST You Have Something That You Can't Part With?

For example, MUST you have your special and perfect Bible to read from? Or, will any of these Bibles work?

- If it's a King James Bible, it will work. If you want my Bible, I'll give it to you.
- This doesn't mean I've lost the word of God. I don't worship this Bible.
- I have an expensive Bible at home that I read from. If you told me you wanted it, I would give it to you.
- I am not attached to any Bible. I don't think THIS PARTICULAR Bible gives me any special powers with God.
- I don't put the Bible in front of me and worship the Bible.
- I don't hang the Bible on the wall and bow down to it.
- All of these Bibles were made by man. We could turn these into graven images. But we don't.
- And don't ever do that. WORSHIP GOD ONLY. AND SERVE HIM ONLY.

So, there's a difference in man's creation and God's creation. God created His words.

- God's words created us. God's words created this earth.
- The pictures that we use on the background of our music are pictures of God's creation.
- The pictures were taken by man, but the images are of God's creation.
- We don't look at the images of His creation and bow down to the mountain that we see.
- We don't say, "Oh mountain, you are so great. I love you mountain."
- We don't look at the picture and say, "Oh picture, please save me. You are so great, picture."

Have some common sense. Some people will say all graven images are bad.

- When the definition of graven image is any man-made object that becomes an object of worship, then yes, every graven image is bad.
- If your definition of graven image is ANYTHING MADE BY MAN, then any graven image isn't bad.
- For example, this Bible made by man isn't bad unless the actual man-made object is worshipped.
- Yes, an image can turn into a graven image. A chair can turn into a graven image.
- Do you have a specific chair that you sit in at church and you believe that God only hears your prayers when you're sitting in that chair?

Hey, look, some people do these things. That chair becomes a part of worshipping God.

- That chair becomes worshipped by you. That chair is a graven image.
- God becomes jealous because you think you need something else to worship Him.
- You don't need that chair. God never says anything like that.
- For example, I can delete the images that are the background of the music and it won't bother me at all.
- I don't need them to worship God. I can make up my own song in my head to worship God.

For example, Pam can make up her own song in her head right now to worship.

- And she can sing it for us. Pam, would you sing a song for us?
- Look, you can worship God without ANY IMAGE AT ALL at any time.
- For example, if you think you have to be at a church building to worship God, you've turned that church building into a graven image.
- Some so-called "Christians" would never step foot in this building for church.
- This building isn't good enough for them. We don't have our own church building.
- We don't have great architecture, statues of saints, massive organs, throne chairs, or anything like that.

We don't need any of those things to worship God. We just need a place to gather together in person.

- And that's what we have here. We don't have the top church building in the United States.
- But we don't have the worst building either. We have great place to worship. I thank God for this place.
- And I don't want anything else. I just want a place where we can gather together and worship God.
- A building doesn't make a church. Not even close. A church is made with people who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and love God with all their heart, soul, and mind.
- I'll trade a billion dollar building for one person who loves Jesus Christ and will die for Jesus Christ.

And you might say, "Oh, you're crazy." Well, God as my witness, I would. I don't care about a billion dollars.

- I don't care about a fancy church building. Do you? If so, you need to wake up.
- For the people who won't come here because of our building, you need to change your mind about that.
- And if you won't change your mind about that, I don't want you here anyway.
- But, I hope with all my heart, soul, and mind that you would change your mind.
- I don't want someone who worships a church building in this church.
- You'll pull everyone else away with your worship of a false god. We won't have that here.

[6] Exodus 34:14 For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God:

- What's the name of the Lord? HIS NAME IS JEALOUS. If you give Him competition in your life, He's angry.
- Does He have a right to be jealous? HE MADE YOU. Do you understand that? He loves you.
- He gave you life. Why won't you listen to Him? Why won't you hear His words?
- He has THE RIGHT to be jealous of your worship because He wants that from you so much.

For example, I am jealous of my wife. If another man tries to look at her, we'll have a BIG problem.

- Don't try to take her from me. I've been with her since I was 16 years old.
- I've put a lot of work into her. I work very hard for her every single day. I take care of her.
- If you try to steal her from me, I will get jealous and angry.
- I will fight for my wife, and I will win because I care more for her than you do.
- You can't surpass my love for her. Her and I are one. You mess with her and you mess with me.
- I will die for her. If another man comes along and wants her, I am jealous. Get away from my wife.
- If she gives another man her attention that she only gives to me, I am going to be very angry.

And if I love my wife that much, how much do you think I love God and His words?

- I'll give my life in a split second for God. No second thought.
- Do you think I'll compromise preaching His words? Not going to happen.
- Do you think I'm scared of the homosexuals? Do you think I'm scared of the demons?
- Do you think I'm scared of any man, woman, organization, government? NO!!! I'm not.
- Why? Because I love God, and I KNOW HE'S TAKING CARE OF ME. I love Him.

I love Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who is God, with all my heart, soul, and mind.

- And that love of Him causes me to love my wife so very much. I do what He says, and I love my wife.
- Is it wrong for me to be this way? Is it wrong for me to want to protect my wife with my life?
- No, it's not wrong. God does the exact same for us. We are to give our lives for our friends.

God Has Put A Lot Of Work Into You And He Deserves Your Worship

Think about God in this same way. He's put a lot of work into you. He works hard for you every day.

- He keeps your heart beating. Have you ever listened to your heart beat? Try it. It's amazing.
- God keeps your heart beating. God keeps your lungs working. God gives you oxygen.
- God gives you water. God gives you food. God gives you clothing. And you should be happy with that.
- Why in the world would you HAVE to have your cross necklace? What in the world is that doing for you?
- Why in the world would you HAVE to have some great church building?
- Why in the world would you NEED that cross on your wall so much? It's doing nothing for you.

After everything that God has done for you, and you NEED something else other than Him?

- Let me tell you something right now: YOU DON'T NEED ANY OF THOSE THINGS.
- But you do need the Almighty God of all creation. You do need Jesus Christ to live. He's jealous.
- He wants your attention. Don't give it to anything else. Do you hear that? Make sure you do.

[7] Deuteronomy 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

[8] Deuteronomy 6:13-15 Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name. 14 Ye shall not go after other gods, of the gods of the people which are round about you; 15 (For the LORD thy God is a jealous God among you) lest the anger of the LORD thy God be kindled against thee, and destroy thee from off the face of the earth.

- When you read the word of God, you won't hear God command you to love your cross images.
- Instead, when you constantly read the word of God, you won't want an image of the cross.
- I don't want to turn anything into a graven image. I don't want to take chance because I fear God.
- When we think we're even close to worshipping something other than God, we should fall to our knees and worship God in heaven.

[9] Acts 14:9-11 The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be healed, 10 Said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked. 11 And when the people saw what Paul had done, they lifted up their voices, saying in the speech of Lycaonia, The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men.

[10] Acts 14:12-14 And they called Barnabas, Jupiter; and Paul, Mercurius, because he was the chief speaker. 13 Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city, brought oxen and garlands unto the gates, and would have done sacrifice with the people. 14 Which when the apostles, Barnabas and Paul, heard of, they rent their clothes, and ran in among the people, crying out,

[11] Acts 14:15-16 *And saying, Sirs, why do ye these things? We also are men of like passions with you, and preach unto you that ye should turn from these vanities unto the living God, which made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein: 16 Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways.*

- Paul and Barnabas TORE THEIR CLOTHES when they started to worship them.
- They HATED IT. Don't worship ANYTHING other than God Almighty. And don't be deceived into it either.

[12] Leviticus 26:1 *Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone in your land, to bow down unto it: for I am the LORD your God.*

- So, if we turn any image into an object of worship, then we have a graven image.
- If we turn anything else besides a graven image into an object of worship, we have an idol.
- What is worship? The Bible tells us one form of worship is bowing your head.

[13] Genesis 24:24-27 *And she said unto him, I am the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. 25 She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. 26 And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. 27 And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I being in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren.*

- This servant of Abraham bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord.
- Bowing your head to something and raising that thing up is worshipping.

[14] Genesis 24:48 *And I bowed down my head, and worshipped the LORD, and blessed the LORD God of my master Abraham, which had led me in the right way to take my master's brother's daughter unto his son.*

[15] Genesis 24:52 *And it came to pass, that, when Abraham's servant heard their words, he worshipped the LORD, bowing himself to the earth.*

[16] Exodus 4:31 *And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.*

[17] Exodus 12:27 *That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the LORD'S passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.*

[18] Exodus 34:8 *And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.*

- Do you see how clear this is in the Bible? Bowing your head is worship. The Bible says so.
- And then you know I have to share one of my all-time favorite Scriptures. I use this one often.

[19] Joshua 5:13 *And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand: and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?*

[20] Joshua 5:14-15 *And he said, Nay; but as captain of the host of the LORD am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my lord unto his servant? 15 And the captain of the LORD'S host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.*

- Hey, look, that's who you worship!!! That's Jesus Christ right there. He is the captain of the Lord's host.
- That's who we bow our heads to and that's who we worship.
- Just make sure you aren't including worship to anyone or anything else.
- Don't put anyone else about God Almighty. Joshua, a mighty warrior, was a wise man.
- He thought he was in for a fight. Jesus showed up, and Joshua fell flat on his face.
- His face was in the earth or the dirt. That's where I will put my face when Jesus shows up.
- Nothing else is going to get my worship. Let's give it all to Jesus Christ. Let's give it all to God.

Who Or What Are You Actually Worshipping?

God knows who you're bowing your head to. Who are you praying to? Who are you worshipping?

- And you might be thinking: "But I don't do the same thing. I just need my cross necklace when I pray."
- Look, that's not Jesus Christ in that picture. He's not in that statue. He's not in that cross.
- That's not where He is. He's in heaven on the right hand of His Father.
- His Spirit is within me. Why would I need to put an image up to access Jesus Christ?
- He is THE ACCESS to God. Not an image or a statue or another human.
- A cross necklace does nothing for you.

So, some people will say: "But my cross necklace helps remind me of Jesus Christ."

- Think about that. Should a cross necklace remind you of Jesus?
- He should be on your mind without a necklace to remind you.
- Christian Prayer Necklaces are being sold in large quantities now.
- I obtained this quote from a Christian website:

[21] "Prayer necklaces can be used as a way to worship God by being intentional with personal style and personality. You can use even the design of the necklace to remind you of memory with God or of one of his attributes. Whether you simply have a cross necklace, one with images on it, or prefer gold to silver or vice versa, a prayer necklace could be a great way to worship God through being intentional with style and design."

- This must be a joke. You don't need a prayer necklace to pray to God or worship God.
- "Prayer necklaces can be used as a way to worship God with personal style and personality???"
- They end the article I looked at by saying we are meant to worship God in everything that we do so why not worship him by simply wearing necklaces?
- And on the page is all the affiliate links for that person to make money.

We don't worship God through jewelry. How silly is that?

- Seriously, you don't worship God through jewelry. "But it will help me pray more!!!"
- Most likely, it won't. That's just a sales tactic to make you think it's going to help you.
- What's the actual reason you MUST wear a cross necklace? Do you want to be fashionable?
- Many people want to wear a cross necklace because Kanye West and Justin Bieber wear one.

- It's a fashion statement now, and it makes me want to vomit.
- If you want something to remind you to pray, why don't you use an alarm on your phone? It's free.
- Let's look at some Scriptures that people will use to support their use of the cross in their worship.

[22] Numbers 15:37-38 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, 38 Speak unto the children of Israel, and bid them that they make them fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations, and that they put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:

[23] Numbers 15:39-40 And it shall be unto you for a fringe, that ye may look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them; and that ye seek not after your own heart and your own eyes, after which ye use to go a whoring: 40 That ye may remember, and do all my commandments, and be holy unto your God.

- These were the physical children of Israel. God commanded them to make fringes in the borders of their garments throughout their generations.
- This fringe was to be a border of blue ribbon. This was to remind them of God's commandments to them.
- This was to remind them to do the commandments of the Lord.
- But remember, this is God's exact commandment to them.
- Put a blue ribbon in the borders of your clothes. Why don't you try that? It's not the image of a cross.

God never once commands us to use the cross to represent Jesus Christ. NOT ONCE.

- But He does command other things and those commandments are directly from Him.
- We cannot assume that He's okay with something else that isn't directly from Him.
- Let's look at another example within the Bible.

[24] Numbers 21:8-9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. 9 And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

- Moses makes a serpent out of brass.
- When someone who has been bitten by an actual serpent looks upon this brass serpent, they shall live.
- God commanded Moses to make this serpent or image of brass.
- The people looked at it and were saved from the poison of the actual serpents.
- Did they worship this brass serpent and turn it into a graven image here? NO, THEY DIDN'T.
- But they do later on. The Bible tells us this. Watch this from 2 Kings Chapter 18.
- So, we're moving along into the future. From the time of Moses to the time of King Hezekiah of Judah.

[25] 2 Kings 18:1-3 Now it came to pass in the third year of Hoshea son of Elah king of Israel, that Hezekiah the son of Ahaz king of Judah began to reign. 2 Twenty and five years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned twenty and nine years in Jerusalem. His mother's name also was Abi, the daughter of Zachariah. 3 And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that David his father did.

[26] 2 Kings 18:4 He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan.

- They kept this brazen serpent that Moses made and it turned into an idol.
- Was it an idol to begin with when God commanded Moses to make this fiery serpent?
- No, it wasn't an idol. They were not worshipping the fiery serpent made of brass.
- It was not a graven image of worship.

Now, here in 2 Kings Chapter 18 we see that King Hezekiah did that which was RIGHT in the sight of the Lord.

- He removed the high places and brake the images and cut down the groves.
- HE BRAKE IN PIECES THE BRASEN SERPENT THAT MOSES HAD MADE.
- God told Moses to make this serpent, the people started to worship it after that, and King Hezekiah broke it to pieces.
- And God says this was right in the eyes of the Lord. Why? They turned this brass serpent into an idol.

Do Not Allow An Image Of The Cross To Turn Into An Idol

We allow images to turn into idols. This is what happened right there. We allow many things to turn into idols.

- This is why I will not use the image of the cross anywhere.
- Is it because I think the image of the cross is a graven image that we're all going to worship? No, I don't.
- But I do think that the image of the cross can turn into a graven image.
- And I do know the image of the cross has turned into a graven image of worship for many people.

If you think you can make it without the image of the cross ever turning into an idol for you, go ahead.

- If you think your use of the cross will never affect your children, grandchildren, friends, family or anyone else, then go ahead and use it.
- If you think that the people you influence will always understand that your use of the cross isn't related to worship in any way, then go ahead and use it.

But, really, why would you need to use it so badly? You don't need it at all to worship God.

- You don't need an image of the cross AT ALL to show people that you love God.
- You don't need an image of the cross AT ALL to remind you of Jesus Christ. Do you?
- I sure hope not because a saved or sanctified person will have the Spirit of God within them.
- For example, I don't need a cross to remind me of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made for me.
- Those people didn't need a fiery serpent to worship and turn into a graven image.
- What was the intent of the fiery serpent? Let's read some more and understand this.

[27] Numbers 21:5-6 And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. 6 And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died.

[28] Numbers 21:7-8 Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. 8 And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live.

- We see that the people tempted God. They spoke against God. God sent fiery serpents.
- Much people died the Bible says. The remaining people came to Moses. They say, "We have sinned."
- "We have spoken against the Lord. Please ask the Lord to take away the fiery serpents."
- And the Lord does by commanding the creation of this fiery serpent made by the hands of a man.
- So we see that God commands this fiery serpent to be made.

Does God ever once command us to make an image of the cross and keep it close to us?

- Does God ever once command us to hang a cross in our homes to remind of us Jesus Christ?
- No, He doesn't. He does want His words in our homes but not images.
- Why would we want to do something that God never commands us to do?
- Why would we want to take chances of making God angry?
- Did you see the example in Numbers Chapter 21 right there?
- Some people will say, "Well, that's the Old Testament. God doesn't get angry anymore."
- Let's go to the book of 1 Corinthians, which is the New Testament, and see what God says.
- This Scripture is related to the fiery serpent in Numbers Chapter 21.

[29] 1 Corinthians 10:5-7 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. 6 Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. 7 Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.

[30] 1 Corinthians 10:8-11 Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. 9 Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. 10 Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. 11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

- The people in Numbers Chapter 21 were destroyed because they tempted Jesus Christ.
- They were destroyed of serpents that Jesus Christ sent to them to destroy them.
- Many false preachers would flinch when I say that Jesus Christ destroyed them.
- But look very closely at verse 10 in the NEW TESTAMENT. Remember, this is Jesus Christ.
- Jesus Christ is God, and He's always been God. At the end of verse 10, we see this:
- "And were destroyed of the destroyer."

Take Notice Of What Happens In The Bible When People Worship Graven Images

If you don't think Jesus Christ is a destroyer, you should read the Bible and take notice of what happens.

- You should especially take notice of what happens when people use graven images.
- Using a cross as an image to remind you of Jesus Christ is playing with fire, and I mean literal fire.
- That image of the cross just might turn into an image of worship at some point.
- And you don't want that to happen to you, your family, or anyone else who might use the cross as a graven image.

[31] 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, 8 In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: 9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*

- Jesus Christ will destroy all of those who do not believe.
- If you are a believer, you need to hear the word of God and do your best to follow it.
- God doesn't command you to have a physical image that you must have with you.
- He doesn't command you to wear a cross.
- He doesn't command you to use an image of the cross in any way.
- The brazen serpent was a picture of something very important that God commanded Moses to make.

[32] John 3:14-15 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.*

- Many people know John 3:16, but they don't see John 3:14 about the brass serpent that Moses made.
- That brass serpent being lifted up in the wilderness was a picture of Jesus being lifted up on the cross.

[33] Galatians 3:13-14 *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: 14 That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

- The serpent was cursed. Jesus Christ was cursed because He took all of our sins.
- He was made a curse for us. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."
- Again, God used the serpent as a picture of the cursed Jesus Christ being raised up.
- And God commanded this to be done by Moses for a perfect reason.
- He doesn't command us to use an image of the cross. He didn't forget to make this commandment.
- We have the Spirit of Christ living within us and we don't need an image to remind us of that.

We don't need an image to show others that we believe in Jesus Christ.

- We are commanded to open our mouths and preach the Gospel to other people.
- We are not commanded on wearing an image of the cross to show people that we believe in Jesus Christ.
- Again, if you want people to know you love Jesus, open your mouth and actually do what God commanded you to do.

Another argument people make for the use of images to worship God is the fact that God commanded Moses to make images for the tabernacle.

- We see images that God commanded them to make within the tabernacle and the temple.
- Did God command them to worship these images, though? Of course not.
- Exodus Chapter 20 is where God gives us the 10 commandments.
- We started the sermon with the second commandment to not make unto thee ANY graven image.
- "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them."
- Then, in Exodus Chapter 25, just 5 chapters later, we see this:

[34] Exodus 25:18-20 *And thou shalt make two cherubims of gold, of beaten work shalt thou make them, in the two ends of the mercy seat. 19 And make one cherub on the one end, and the other cherub on the other end:*

even of the mercy seat shall ye make the cherubims on the two ends thereof. 20 And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be.

- People will then get a little confused by this and think it's okay to make images to be used in worship.
- If any image is a part of worship, you've turned it into a graven image. God won't be happy.
- We've already seen the example with the fiery serpent.
- So, why did God command these cherubims of gold to be added in the tabernacle?
- Let's go back a few verses in Exodus Chapter 25.

[35] Exodus 25:8-9 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. 9 According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.

- God commanded these things to be made after the pattern of the tabernacle.
- This tabernacle is His sanctuary so that He may live among the people there with Moses.
- Notice that you won't find a cross within the tabernacle anywhere. It's not there.
- And yes, God knew that Jesus Christ would die on the cross in the future.
- But yet, no cross image in His tabernacle. So, these images are a picture of God's tabernacle.

[36] Hebrews 8:5 Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

- God commanded these exact images to be made in His tabernacle. Moses made these things EXACTLY.
- Make sure you understand this. Moses didn't stray from the pattern that God showed him.
- He built these things EXACTLY. He did EXACTLY what God told him to do.
- He didn't add a cross or other images because he liked them and wanted them in there.
- Just because you like something, like an image of the cross, it sure doesn't mean that God likes it.

Liking Something Yourself Doesn't Mean God Likes It Too

"But, I think a huge cross should be at the front of the church where we bow down to worship."

- "I think God will love this huge cross that represents Him."
- Hey, listen, if God loved something like that so much, He would have written to us and told us.
- But He didn't. He didn't write to us about a huge image of a cross and tell us to bow down to it.

[37] 1 Chronicles 28:9-10 And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: for the LORD searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever. 10 Take heed now; for the LORD hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary: be strong, and do it.

[38] 1 Chronicles 28:11 *Then David gave to Solomon his son the pattern of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasuries thereof, and of the upper chambers thereof, and of the inner parlours thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat,*

[39] 1 Chronicles 28:12-13 *And the pattern of all that he had by the spirit, of the courts of the house of the LORD, and of all the chambers round about, of the treasuries of the house of God, and of the treasuries of the dedicated things: 13 Also for the courses of the priests and the Levites, and for all the work of the service of the house of the LORD, and for all the vessels of service in the house of the LORD.*

- This pattern for the temple was given to David by the SPIRIT OF GOD.
- Again, this was given by God exactly. These were patterns of God's house in heaven.
- Again, you don't see a cross image anywhere in the tabernacle or temple.
- People love to take images and worship them. People love to worship man.
- People love to worship anything and everything but God Almighty.

Is the image of a cross evil and wicked? No, it's not. Same thing with a gun. The gun is not evil and wicked.

- The image of the cross is not even alive. A gun is not even alive. They don't make decisions.
- They are made of dead things. A wooden cross is made from a dead tree.
- A gun is made from dead things. Dead things are not doing evil.
- Men and women turn these dead things into evil things.
- If you wear a cross necklace, I don't think that you're evil just for wearing the necklace.
- If you have a cross picture in your home, I don't think that you're evil just for having that picture.

Listen, we don't need any of these things. If you have them, don't allow them to turn into something else.

- Don't influence others to end up worshipping any of these images or turn them into idols.
- Just because God commanded EXACTLY one thing in the Bible DO NOT act as if something else is okay.
- "Well, God told Moses and Solomon to use all of those images so it must be okay for us to use different images in a different way."
- Again, images of the cross are not evil and wicked.
- It's what men and women do with those images that turn them into evil and wicked graven images.

Please understand that the cross was used by the Romans as a form of capital punishment.

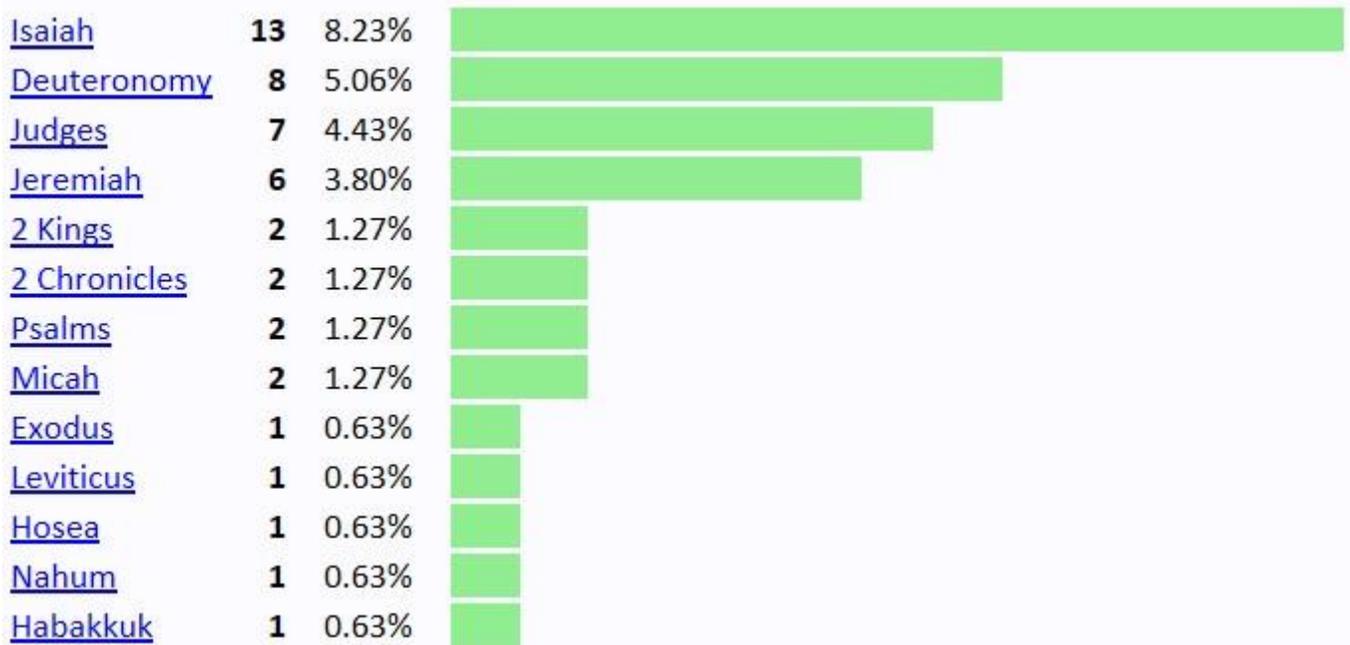
- People were put to death on crosses. Jesus wasn't the first or last to be put to death on a cross.
- God didn't command someone to build a cross just for Jesus Christ and that's the only one ever used.
- Crosses were used all the time by the Romans to put people to death.
- You have to stop and think about these things. The cross is not unique to Jesus Christ.
- The tabernacle, the temple, the blue border in the clothes, and the fiery serpent are unique to God.
- He commanded all of those things to be created and to be used in the way that He commanded.

Where Is The Word Cross Found In The Bible?

The word cross is found 28 times in 28 verses within the King James Bible.

- All instances of the word cross within the Bible are found in the New Testament.
- Here's where all of the cross occurrences are within the Bible:

[40]



- As you might expect, the most Scriptures come from the Gospels where we see the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- All of these occurrences, again, are within the New Testament.
- So, we know for sure that God didn't command Moses or Solomon to add an image of a cross.
- Here's the first occurrence of the word cross within the entire Bible:

[41] Matthew 10:37-39 *He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. 39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.*

- Now, please take a look at what chapter this is in. Matthew Chapter 10, right?
- Jesus died on the cross in Matthew Chapter 27. Make sure you see this.
- "And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me."
- Jesus isn't talking about an image of a cross or an actual cross. He's talking about persecution for Him.

He mentioned a cross there because it's a form of Roman punishment.

- People were put to death on crosses. Jesus knew He would be put to death on a cross and be persecuted.
- He died for you and I and took all of our sins at the cross where He died.
- Jesus doesn't mean to go and make you a heavy cross out of wood and carry it around with you.
- He's saying that you are going to be persecuted by this world and you might even be killed by this world.
- When you actually follow Jesus, the world will hate you and persecute you.

[42] 1 Corinthians 1:17-18 *For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.*

- When the cross is mentioned in the Bible, it's not talking about an image of the cross.
- There is no image in existence that can represent God or the sacrifice that He made for us.
- The cross of Christ is the pain and suffering that He went through for you and I.
- His death, burial, and resurrection is the POWER OF GOD.
- His power is shown through the preaching of the cross. We don't need a cross image to remember Him.
- We have His words to remember Him and to get to know Him even better.
- We have the Holy Spirit living within us. We have His words within us.

People can take your cross images away. You can lose your cross necklace, your cross ring, your cross bracelet.

- A church building can burn down. The cross images can burn up. A tornado can destroy them.
- A flood can rip them all to pieces. Cross images can be stolen. But the Holy Spirit of God cannot be lost.
- Once you believe on Jesus Christ, you have the Holy Spirit within you.
- Why in the world would you need an image of the cross to remind you of Jesus Christ?

[43] Ephesians 1:12-14 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

- Be careful in your use of images. Don't allow them to turn into objects of worship.
- Don't allow your use of those images to persuade others in the future to use them as objects of worship.
- The safest way is to not use them at all when they are related to worshipping anything.
- You don't want to take a chance for you, your children, your family, your friends, or strangers.

[44] Deuteronomy 4:15-17 Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the LORD spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire: 16 Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17 The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air,

[45] Deuteronomy 4:18-19 The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: 19 And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the LORD thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.

- Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves. Keep in mind what God says about graven images.
- Lest ye corrupt yourselves and make you a graven image. "Don't do it," God says.

[46] Deuteronomy 4:23-24 Take heed unto yourselves, lest ye forget the covenant of the LORD your God, which he made with you, and make you a graven image, or the likeness of any thing, which the LORD thy God hath forbidden thee. 24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God.

- God has forbidden graven images. Do not lift anything up other than God Almighty.
- Take heed unto yourselves, remember this, don't forget this, and don't make any graven images.
- Why? "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God."

Make Sure You Read All The Scriptures Concerning Graven Images

Also, I've put all of the Scriptures with the phrases "graven image" and "graven images" on the website.

- If you're still unsure about using the image of a cross, please see all of those Scriptures.
- There's 47 Scriptures with those phrases within the Bible. You should read them.
- The first one in all the Bible is the second commandment within the ten commandments of Exodus Chapter 20.
- We've looked at that Scripture today. I want to show you the last Scripture in the Bible with the phrase graven image.

[47] Habakkuk 2:18-20 What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it; the molten image, and a teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein, to make dumb idols? 19 Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach! Behold, it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it. 20 But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

- If that last Scripture in all of the Bible doesn't change your mind about the images of the cross that you believe you MUST have, then I'm not sure what will.
- Don't make graven images and dumb idols that you must have in your life.
- Don't believe that those DUMB THINGS can do anything for you. They don't at all. They aren't alive.
- There is no breath in those things. But I know who is alive and who can help you.
- "But the Lord is in HIS HOLY TEMPLE." He's alive. He can help you. Go to Him. Don't go to dumb things.
- "Let all the earth keep silence before HIM." He is the one. He is God and there are no other gods.
- Please take heed to all of these warning within the Bible.

So, let's answer the question. The title of the sermon is "Is the image of the cross good or bad?"

- The actual image of a cross isn't evil or wicked but you can turn it into something evil and wicked.
- For example, personally, I wouldn't put one up above in the front of a church. Why?
- Because some people might turn that cross image into an object of worship. Why have it there at all?
- I'm not going to have an image of the cross up where someone might worship that image.
- I don't want the appearance of evil around anywhere.
- I don't want people bowing down in front of a cross. I don't want to use any image to represent God.

Let's pray.