

“Idolatry”

Virtual Class with Rubel Shelly | Isaiah 44:9-20

These questions are designed to help you explore the basic idea raised in Juan’s sermon last Sunday about the danger of idolatry in the lives of Christians.

Unit 1 – Isn’t Idolatry an Old Testament Problem?

1. Since Rubel recorded this video *before* Juan had preached on idolatry, are there any key points from the two presentations that you see as mirror images? Significant differences?
2. After reading Isaiah 44:9-20, what is your impression? How “subtle” was Isaiah in his description of the idolatry he witnessed in his day?
3. What do you understand by these statements from Isaiah about persons who make idols: “they are nothing,” “they will be put to shame,” “Save me, for you are my god!”?
4. What conclusion was Isaiah trying to get people to draw about their idols? See v.20.
5. How do you understand the “jealousy” of God? Did the video explanation help?

Unit 2 – Two Common Modern-Day Idols

1. How infused with religion was first-century culture? For example, each city had its patron deity, rulers were often worshipped as gods, etc.
2. Had you thought about the “Caesar is Lord!” versus “Jesus is Lord!” choice first-century Christians had to make? The price some paid for their refusal to honor Caesar with a divine title? See 1 Cor 8:5 and the setting for the Book of Revelation.
3. What do you make of David Foster Wallace’s comment on atheism? (“There is actually no such thing as atheism. ... Everybody worships. The only choice we get is *what* to worship.”)
4. How does Rubel define “idolatry” in this video? Does that definition make sense to you?
5. What two items does this video classify as “idols of the modern time”? Why do think they were named? Do you agree or disagree?

Unit 3 – “Worship the Lord Your God, and Serve Only Him”

1. Read 1 John 5:21. Why do you think the Epistle of 1 John ends with this specific appeal?
2. Does idolatry have to involve the worship of something evil? Can a good or neutral thing become an idol? (Recall the definition of “idolatry” from the second video.)
3. This video quotes from Tim Keller’s *The Reason for God* to name some of the “good things” people make into idols. Which ones do you recall?
4. Are there other items you would add to Keller’s list?
5. What were Jesus’ final words to Satan in the temptation scene of Matthew 4? Why are they a fitting conclusion to our study about idolatry?