

The Idolatry of Sto. Nino

Idolatry is the giving of honor, worship, adoration and veneration, any form of devotion, reverence, respect, and praise to any person or anything other than God. Idolatry is anything that occupies the first place position in a person's kardia or soul and succeeds to dislodge God's Lordship to be the seat of a creature or something. An idolatrous act is committed when a person exhibits respect, admiration, adulation, devotion or love for some body or something, taking the place of Christ in the life of a person.

There were two prevalent forms of idolatry in the Old Testament times, both banned by the Decalogue: (1) The first commandment prohibited the Israelites from worshipping any other god than the Lord (Exodus 20:3), thereby eliminating the false forms of idolatrous religion practiced in neighboring nations. (2) The second commandment forbade the worship of the God of Israel in the form of an image or idol (Exodus 20:4-6).

Of the two prohibitions, the latter was crucial to the integrity of Israel's theology. To worship God in the form of an idol would be to reduce God the Creator to the substance of creation (that which was represented in the idol), thereby undermining fundamentally the conception of the transcendent creator God.

The idol gave to devotees a sense of the physical proximity of a deity and perhaps also the conviction that the deity's power could be harnessed by human beings. The God of Israel was immanent, but that immanence could not be expressed in physical or tangible form; it remained the essence of faith and of experience. Despite the prohibition of idolatry in Hebrew law, it clearly remained a fundamental form of temptation throughout Israel's history, whether in worshipping false gods through their idols or in reducing the worship of the one true God to idolatrous form.

Hence, the denunciation of idolatry in its various forms is a recurrent theme in both the law and the prophets (Deut. 7:25-26; 29:16-17; Isaiah 40:18-23). Idolatry is as old as the Devil. The modern form of idolatry is nothing but the revival of some ancient forms.

The first to be mentioned in the Bible as temple of idolatry was built by Nimrod 400 years after the flood [Genesis 10:8-12, 114].

The god of Nimrod was also worshiped in some other names as Marduk, Shamash, Baal, Bul and Bel.

During the reign of Nabopolassar, the emperor of the New Babylon, the city known for its 53 temples of gods and 180 altars to Sun-god Istar. In the Old and New Testament Israel, the gods of Egyptians, Babylonians, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Medes, Macedonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans took various modifications and changes.

New names and facelifts were added. Several religious sects appeared in Israel with ancient gods with new names and in their new forms. It was the Romans who internationalized many of the ancient gods in their new forms and names. For example, the Babylonian god Baal was also called Marduk, Bel, and Bul by the Israelites.

The Chaldean called it Shamash. The Greeks called it Zeus or Jupiter. The Romans after the political conversion to Christianity called it St. Peter. The Babylonian god Ashtoreth was renamed Astarte by the Greeks and Romans. The Sidonians (Nineveh) called it Ashtorothe. The Phoenicians called it The Lady of the sea, while the Romans called it the Queen of heaven, today; they called it the mother of God.

4 Types of Man-made images:

- The assumed representation of the true God
- The assumed representation of earthly material gods
- The assumed representation of heavenly or supernatural gods
- The assumed representation of other entities that are venerated because of the person they represent.

For God's commandments concerning idolatry, study Exodus 20:4-5, and Deuteronomy. 5:6-9, and also Isaiah 45:20. For God's distress call against the act of idolatry, study Deuteronomy 4:16-20, 29:16-17, Leviticus 19:4, 26:1, Ezekiel 22:3-4, Galatians 5:20-21.

Studying the following text will be a great help for refuting the teaching and practice of idolatry: Isaiah 44:9-20, 45:16, Jeremiah 10:1-15, Hosea 8:4, 13:2, Romans 1:17-22, Ezekiel 14:6, Acts 17:29, Colossians 3:5 and Revelation 21:8.

Idols are nothing and the worship of idols is actually the worship of Satan behind the idols [1 Corinthians 10:20-21]. One of the most peculiar idols around us is the Sto. Nino.

Sto. Nino according to traditional religion is the representation of Jesus Christ's true humanity.

Sto. Nino is not the representation of the Lord Jesus Christ but only the assumed representation because of the following reasons:

Its identity is unclear. There are too many forms from here and around the world. Almost every community has their own version- representing a different a people.

The humanity of Christ did not remain an infant. Such teaching is contrary to the Bible doctrine (Luke 2:52).

The Lord Jesus Christ did not minister to man not until after His baptism or when He was 30 years old.

The Lord Jesus Christ did not have multiple faces like the Sto. Nino scattered around us. Even the unsold plastic dolls in the market are being converted into Sto. Nino.

The Lord Jesus Christ is not a saint but the Second person of the Trinity, He is God incarnate. A saint is a living regenerated believer [Col. 1:1, Phil. 1:1-2], once a sinner before God but by faith received the free gift of salvation.

The Sto. Nino is treated irreverently. They just put it anywhere- inside the motel rooms, karaoke bars, sauna cubicles, drinking saloons, etc. prostitutes, swindlers, Drugs pushers are wearing tiny icons of Sto. Nino.

The Sto. Nino has been widely commercialized and scandalized. Some barter it for wrappers of soaps, toothpaste, etc. They are peddling it and even available for installment in the Philippines.

The cult of Sto. Nino is nothing but superstition because of so many baseless claims attributed to it. Its various forms are often similar to pagan deities. Its miracles are often doubtful and ridiculous contrary to the will and plan of God.

Its miracles are often inconsistent with God*s perfect character and way of doing things. Its miracles are not the act of God for it did not point to the way of salvation (Job 1:16, 19, 2:7, Rev. 13:1-4, 11-15). Its miracles are not the work of God.

Its messages leads the blind devotees astray and depriving them with the precious truth of God*s Word [Deuteronomy 13:1-3]. It does not point to the true salvation but instead misleads the people.

Like all the other icons, it is nothing but the worship of pagan gods [Exodus 20:4-5, Acts 17:29-30, Psalm 135:15-18, Revelation 21:8].

All the veneration, adoration, praise, worship, and offering for the Sto. Nino are sacrifices to demons and not to God (1 Corinthians 10:20). Sto. Nino is an ancient cult god that has changed its name and forms.

When Constantine became the emperor of the Roman Empire he decreed that all Roman's cults must be converted to his newly found Christianity or face execution. The heathen Rome accepted the new religion of Constantine but they changed the appearances and names of their cultic gods. They baptized their pagan gods with Christian names.

The Sto. Nino has many forms, too many variations; and too many myths surrounding them. In the Philippines, there are Sto. Nino for everyone, like for example:

- Sto. Nino de Palaboy for the street children
- Sto. Nino de Panadero for bakers
- Sto. Nino de Bombero for the fire fighters. The list is endless under the hands of inventive religion.

The Sto. Nino is not cute and harmless because it is an object of demonic worship and household god representing the Devil.

The Lord Jesus Christ is not the Sto. Nino but the devil under the guise of piety and self-righteousness. The devil does not care whoever you worship as long as it is not the God of the Bible or if He is the God of the Bible, that you worship Him contrary to God's given manner.



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