

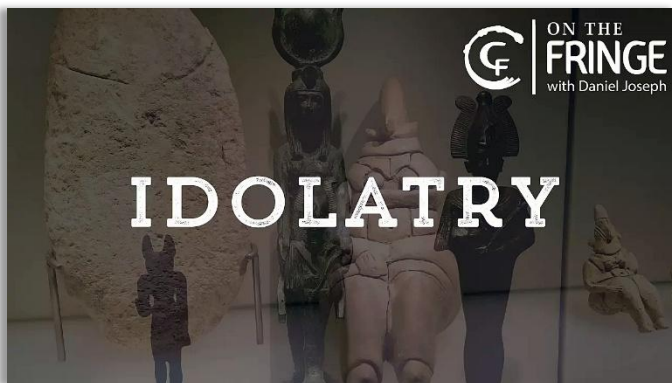
On the Corner Fringe: Idolatry January 12, 2018

The following text is a message from Corner Fringe Ministries that was presented by Daniel Joseph. The original presentation can be viewed at <https://cornerfringe.com/media/5ysdfdz/otcf-idolatry>

*Portions of this document have been edited from the video message to better present a comprehensive, written document. Special attention was given to preserve the original context, but this document is **not verbatim**. Scripture verses are in the red text with other quotes in blue. Therefore, it is recommended that this document be printed in color. The Hebrew words are generally accompanied by the transliteration into the English alphabet. In most cases, the Hebrew is to be read from right to left.

The Danger of Syncretism and Idols of the Heart

This transcript of a message delivered by **Pastor Daniel Joseph** of **Corner Fringe Ministries** explores the dangerous nature of **self-deception** regarding **idolatry**, specifically through the lens of **syncretism**. Daniel argues that ancient Israel often did not completely abandon God, but rather improperly combined **pagan practices** and other deities with their worship of **Yahweh**. He cites archaeological findings of inscriptions linking God to a consort as physical evidence of this corrupted faith. Daniel warns modern believers that **idols** can manifest internally as misplaced priorities, such as an obsession with **wealth, entertainment, or career**. Ultimately, he calls for a **spiritual audit** to ensure that one's time and resources are dedicated solely to God. This message serves as a reminder to **examine one's faith** and avoid the trap of mixing worldly desires with a holy life.



[Introduction]

Insightful—Challenging—Cutting Edge—
Biblical

[Daniel Joseph]

Shalom everyone. Welcome to *On the Fringe*; I'm Daniel Joseph. And today I want to talk a little bit about idolatry. Specifically, the deception that comes with idolatry, and the self-deception that is so dangerous.

I just got back from Israel not long ago, and one of the things that really troubled me as I went over there was the idols. They're absolutely everywhere. Every time they put a shovel to the ground, they're not just digging up incredible biblical history, stuff we read about in the Bible, or amazing things like Jericho and so on, but there are other things. There are all these figurines, all these idols, everywhere.

You might say, "Well, Daniel, there were pagan nations that inhabited the land long before Israel ever was brought into the land, so it is to be expected to find these things." I agree, there were many, many pagan nations there, and we would expect to find all these pagan gods.

However, and this is critical, what I'm concerned about is what is found during Israel's history and the reality of idolatry and idol worship and what that really looked like. You know, so often we have this perspective, and we read the stories in Scripture, and what we read is okay: Israel turned their back on God, and He had to send them prophets because they started worshiping false gods, whether it was at Tophet, where they were offering their children to Molech and Baal, or all these other gods that we read about in Scripture. In our minds, what we think is they just totally abandoned God and had nothing to do with Him. We think they didn't call upon His name, they didn't continue to worship, they just totally abandoned everything which their forefathers had done and instead went after these other gods. That's not true.

What do I mean by that statement? What I mean is, there was syncretism. There wasn't as much from a fleshly perspective, but, spiritually, we can say if you introduce any other god, you go there; you completely abandon God on a spiritual level. We see that in the word. However, on a deceptive level, on a fleshly level, Israel, most of the time, wasn't necessarily turning their back on God, but rather introducing the pagan ways, the ways of the Gentiles, into their own religion. There was syncretism, introducing gods into their religion. And let me tell you, that is vastly different.

You know, after reading these Bible stories, I have had so many conversations with fellow believers, and they just see it wrong. They don't see the deception. They think, "Oh, they just stopped worshiping the God of Israel, and they moved on to these other gods." No, that's not what happened. They actually retained God. They still called upon His name, yet they introduced other gods into their lives. And I'm going to tell you, if you don't see that measure, if you don't see this from the right perspective, you're going to have some issues in your own life with deception. These are things we need to recognize.

Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. In 1975, Dr. Ze'ev Meshel, an archaeologist from Tel Aviv University's Institute of Archaeology, took a team out into Kuntillet 'Ajrud, and they did a dig, and what they found was incredible. They found these pithoi, and these are storage jars, and what they found on them was incredible. They found all sorts of symbols. They found pictures of animals. They found pictures of humans and of deities. Really incredible, but the most amazing thing they found was the inscriptions. And they weren't just any inscriptions, but they were inscriptions about the Yahweh of Israel and Asherah, the pagan goddess, almost in a context where Asherah is presented as Yahweh's consort, as Yahweh's wife.

Now, let me show you one of the inscriptions and what it said. "I bless you by Yahweh of Teman and by his Asherah." See, this is an accurate perspective of what oftentimes happened to Israel as they got into idolatry, as they got into what was abominable. I mean, the LORD said in Deuteronomy 5:7, "You shall have no other gods before Me." You shall not make any gods to be with Me on any level; this is abominable. This is forsaken, but you don't realize how deceptive it really was in the day. Instead of just turning their back on God, no, no, they retain our God. They retain Yahweh; this is the God of their fathers. But, you know, we will also recognize other gods.



I mean, what did Solomon do? Nowhere will you find that Solomon stopped calling upon the name of the LORD or that he just literally came to a point and said, "You know what? Yahweh is not the true God of Israel, despite me literally having multiple dreams and speaking with Him and Him blessing me and anointing me with wisdom". He never said that. What did he do? He started introducing other gods into a pure and holy religion, a pure and holy faith. This is the deception.

Now here's my point. We need to be careful; if you think it is so easy to avoid doing the same thing. If you think, "Oh, I don't worship other gods, I haven't fallen into this," you may very well be deceived. Because if you set up things in your own heart, if you set up idols in your heart that take precedence, or are even with God at His level and they take up your time or your resources. You may have a serious problem.

I want to take you to Ezekiel 14:1-4—**Now some of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me. ² And the word of the LORD came to me, saying, ³ "Son of man, these men have set up their idols in their hearts, and put before them that which causes them to stumble into iniquity. Should I let Myself be inquired of at all by them? ⁴ "Therefore speak to them, and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God: "Everyone of the house of Israel who sets up his idols in his heart, and puts before him what causes him to stumble into iniquity, and then comes to the prophet, I the LORD will answer him who comes, according to the multitude of his idols.**

In other words, if you set up idols in your heart, vile things which are taking the place of God, or you bring in things that ought not to be with God, and then you're going to go call upon His name, that is a problem. See, there's a reason the LORD is dealing with this in this context. Notice this is not the context in which they just turn their backs on God and have nothing to do with His name. It is not them just going to grab another god. No, no, no, no, no, this is syncretism. This is total deception. They're retaining; they believe they're in right standing because they call upon the God of Israel, everything's fine, and they're in good standing. No, no, not if they have brought in idols. And the LORD says you're going to continue to call upon My name, and yet you've brought in idols? I'm going to answer you with those idols. In other words. It's not going to be pleasant. There's going to be judgment that's going to happen here.

And so, if we think about all the things in our lives, we must ask ourselves, have we set up as idols? It could be anything; it could be your job, where you turn your job into an idol; where you stop trusting in God; or where you're seeking to be rich, seeking after riches, making foolish decisions in your life, and compromising your faith. Maybe you're compromising more time with God. It could be TV. How much time do you spend on TV compared to the Word of God? Just do an audit. I mean, if you're spending more time watching TV, maybe the majority of your free time, if not almost all of it. Have you set up an idol?

What is drawing your heart? Is it your career? Is it money? Is it TV? Whatever it is, is it where you've actually been coveting? Have the meditations of your heart turned completely wicked? Do you find yourself not taking captive every thought to the obedience of Messiah Yeshua. This is real spiritual warfare. These are things we need to self-test. We're to test ourselves. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 13:5, **"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves..."** We're to (Philippians 2:12)... **work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.**

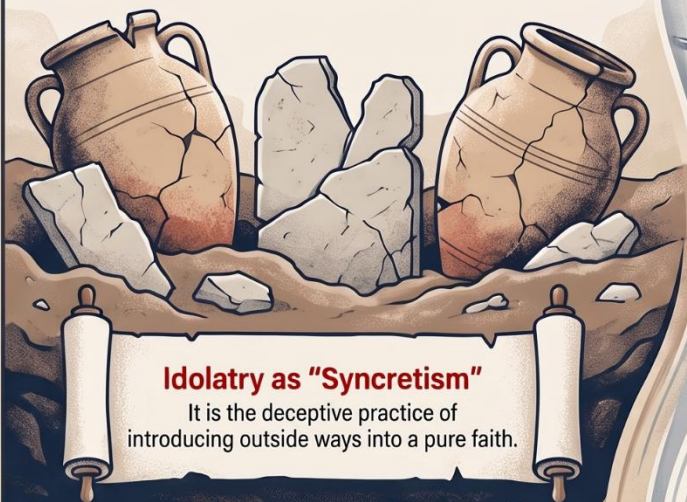
I shared this with you today to encourage you to do an audit, a spiritual audit of your heart. A spiritual audit of your time and your resources. Where are you putting them? Time is short. Time is so short; we are at the very end of the age. This is not a time for you to be giving in to syncretism, or to idols, or to fear or anything else. But this is the time to (Deuteronomy 6:5) **love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.**

Well, shalom to you. Bless you from the only one true God and through His Messiah, the Messiah Yeshua.

The Deception of Syncretism:

Understanding Modern Idolatry

THE HISTORICAL REALITY OF SYNCRETISM



Idolatry as "Syncretism"

It is the deceptive practice of introducing outside ways into a pure faith.

Archaeological Evidence

(Kuntillet 'Ajrud)



Inscriptions were found pairing the name of Yahweh with the pagan goddess Asherah.



The Case of King Solomon

Solomon never stopped calling on God; he simply introduced other gods alongside Him.

THE MODERN "IDOLS OF THE HEART"

Ezekiel's Warning



God judges those who "set up idols in their hearts" while still inquiring of Him.

The "Time Audit" Test



MEDIA & CAREER

TIME IN THE WORD

Conduct a Spiritual Audit



HEART
Examine your heart



RESOURCES
Identify what takes precedence over God.



TIME
Examine resources and time