

## **Idolatry: Alive & Well**

For those of us who live in the United States, it is hard to realize that there are people who still believe in and practice idolatry like those in Athens (Acts 17:16). Yet, there are many places in the world where people bow down to wood, stone, or metal images. For instance, we were recently handed an article from Modern Machine Shop magazine (October 2000, pp. 194, 196). The article said, in part, "A 500-foot statue of religious figure Maitreya in Bodh Gaya, India" will be built, "The hope and goal of this project is for the completed statue to serve as a destination for pilgrims and tourists..." and, "In the Buddhist tradition, Maitreya is the future Buddha." Idolatry is alive and well! However, many in the USA would deny that it exist, at least to any large extent, here in our country. It is a mistake to think this way.

The Bible says, "Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness...and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5). Also, "For this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" (Eph. 5:5). Yes, the Bible clearly identifies the covetous, materialistic man as an idolater. Hence, idolatry is alive and well in the USA, because there is a host of covetous men and women in our country.

When men rejected God for idols, God rejected man and gave him up to follow his evil passions (Rom. 1:18-32). This brought much pain and suffering to man. In like manner, the idolatry of materialism brings about great heartache and destruction to man. "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:9-10).

Further, it can be argued, with relative ease, that any time a man puts anything ahead of his service and homage to God, he is guilty of idolatry (cf. Ex. 20:3; Matt. 4:10; 6:33). Some men worship themselves in pride, others worship pleasure and engage in every form of dissolute living (drunkenness, fornication, homosexuality, etc.). Some men worship their occupations, while others worship recreation and sports. Too many people have shoved God out of their lives and replaced him with the cares and affairs of this life, including Christians. These are all guilty of

idolatry. What about you?

Steven F. Deaton