

Eastern, Russian & Greek Orthodoxy Consists of Idol 
Worshippers Venerating Pagan Icons

By Larry Wessels

Bible Text: Ezekiel 30:13, Exodus 20:4

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Hello, this is Larry Wessels. Before we start this program on Eastern Orthodoxy and icons, I'd like to mention to our viewing audience that we have already done several other videos on Eastern Orthodoxy in the past that you can find here on YouTube, and here's one of the shows "Eastern Orthodoxy, spiritual death or spiritual life, twin sister of Roman Catholicism and dead works." That one features former Roman Catholic priest, Richard Bennett, and his guest who was a former Eastern Orthodox practitioner. Next we have a video called "Eastern Orthodoxy, salvation by earned works, icons, tradition, deification, and the Virgin Mary." Next we have our video called "Copts, Orthodox, Catholics, Nestorians, Cults, Evangelicals, Early Christians and Liberals." Eastern Orthodoxy is also mentioned in this video called "Similarities and differences between major so-called 'Christian' groups, a short review." And finally at the time of this recording we have this video called "Hank Hanegraaff, Walter Martin's greedy Judas, the fake Bible Answer Man," and here we cover a lot of the nefarious activities of the fake Bible Answer Man, Hank Hanegraaff, who at the time of this recording had converted to Eastern Orthodoxy just a few years before this.

And now on with the broadcast.

Christian Answers of Austin, Texas
presents
The Early Church Never Venerated Icons

with Steve Morrison
and host Larry Wessels

Larry Wessels. Greetings and welcome once again to our program. This is Larry Wessels with Christian Answers and you're about to see an episode of "Christian Answers Presents." I want to thank you for being with us today.

Those of you that are familiar with our format know that for decades we've been doing shows presenting an Evangelical theological perspective on different religious issues that we have to deal with in this life and the world. There's all kinds of religions out there, there's all kinds of teachings, Christians get questions about those teachings and other things, other issues, and so we deal with that, and today we're going to do another part of our series on Eastern Orthodoxy. Eastern Orthodoxy is a subject that a lot of people don't know much about and for 30 years we didn't really cover it much. We had a couple of shows on it but not much, but I decided to bring the big gun in on this, our Director of Research, Steve Morrison, who's been great. He's created websites, done all kinds of research far beyond anything I could have imagined that he would do, and I don't know, months ago I asked him to do something on Eastern Orthodoxy and, of course, he always amazes me by how much research he's capable of doing. When I'm thinking he's gonna just put some little ditty together, he comes up with this massive research that's truly impressive and to join me in studio today, well, actually he's far away from me, but this modern technology we have, he can be far away and we can still do the show together, so I want to introduce Steve Morrison, our Director of Research for Christian Answers.

Steve, everybody's looking at you. Thanks for being with me today for this broadcast and I want you to basically mention as we've done in our previous shows, your three websites just to get people a little familiarity of the kind of research you've done in the past and what these three websites for Christian Answers represent. Go ahead, brother.

Steve Morrison. Alright, well, the oldest first website is www.biblequery.org, that's one word, b-i-b-l-e-q-u-e-r-y.org and it answers about 8,900 or so questions on the Bible that people would have whether they would be atheists, people in other religions, or even Christians, and someone said that you can see far when you stand on the shoulders of giants. There are a number of other people, Norm Geisler, R. C. Sproul, Walt Keiser, that have answered questions from the Bible and I've read through their books in kind of distilled, you know, that and then added a lot of my own stuff too, so hopefully any question that you could have in the Bible, you'll find the answer, and it's okay to answer a question by telling somebody, "I don't know but I'll get back to you," and then find the answer and then get back to them. And it also has other stuff about witnessing to people in other religions, a lot about history, a lot about different Christian doctrines and practices whether it be in the Holy Spirit or it be on envy and jealousy or angels or demons or stuff like that. So there's a lot of stuff that you can look at through that, so you can just go to biblequery.org and then there's a little square on the left that will bring up a menu where you can either type in what you want or you can select menu items.

The second website is www.muslimhope.com, m-u-s-l-i-m-hope.com, and it is for the great hope that Muslims can have when they leave Islam and find the real Jesus Christ and become a Christian. And it actually is kind of funny, when it started, I had a lot of material on Islam and a good friend of mine that I taught Sunday school, her name was

Hope, she wanted material on that because her parents were interested and I knew both her parents, and so I gave it for her and I just, you know, had Muslim stuff for Hope and I thought, "Hmm, that kind of make sense," because, you know, there's hope for all of us are lost and all of us regardless of where we're at or also we're hopeless without Christ, but with Christ we can all have hope. And whether you were an atheist or a Muslim or even a liberal Christian or whatever, you need to come to Christ and you can have hope and we don't write anybody off but we say, you know, all of them come to Christ. And we want, we're not hateful toward Muslims, we actually love Muslims and want the best thing possible to happen to a Muslim that they could live forever in heaven with us, you know, a worshipping God, including Jesus, okay?

And a third website is kind of a distillation of the historical parts of biblequery.org and muslimhope.com, and it's called historycart.org, you know history, then c-a-r-t.com, and it has a lot of stuff. I read through all the Hadiths...

Larry. I didn't realize you put the Muslim stuff on the historycart website. I always thought that website was, of course, I've looked at it lots of times, I just thought it was early church, Christian church history, but you've actually added some of the historical information about Islam there as well.

Steve. The historical stuff on Islam, the historical stuff on early Christianity, and the historical stuff on post-Nicene Christianity except the post-Nicene Christianity is not very complete because I haven't studied as much and there's a lot [unintelligible] there [unintelligible]. I mean, just looking at what Augustine and Chrysostom wrote, those two men in particular just wrote so much and a lot of it is good stuff. But anyway, so those are the three websites.

Larry. Excellent. Excellent. And people watching this video right now, if they have any other questions, they can email you at cdebater@aol.com.

Steve. .com, right.

Larry. Very good. Just wanted to throw that in if people have any questions about things. Of course, you answer a lot of questions on your biblequery website, and of course, I get bombarded with questions on our YouTube videos. We've got over 720 videos on YouTube right now at the time of this video that we're recording. So anyway, brother, we're going to cover, we've been doing, we did an overview already in this series on Eastern Orthodoxy and so we're going to continue here in this series with another show on Eastern Orthodoxy and this one's gonna be on the Eastern Orthodox view of venerating pictures and icons of people and things of that nature. Basically your particular research paper on this is called "The Orthodox Err in Venerating Pictures of People," which of course, is also known as icons. So, brother, I'm gonna let you take it away and we'll get right into this subject. Go ahead.

Steve. Alright, well, you know, a kindergarten teacher once asked a little girl what she was drawing and she said she was drawing God. The teacher said, "But no one knows

what God looks like." The little girl replied, "They will when I'm done." We can laugh at her audacity but when people draw definitive pictures of the apostles, Jesus, or even God, the little girl would feel right at home.

What would you think if your spouse, let's say your wife, had a big picture of this guy at work and he was, you know, young and rugged and handsome, and it wasn't you, wouldn't you feel kind of odd about that? Well, what does God think when we have these big pictures of Jesus and the apostles, or even a picture of God for Russian Orthodox, and God's not like that at all? It's like aren't they kind of like the little girl?

Anyway, this video will focus on just one of the key errors of Eastern Orthodoxy which is venerating icons or images used for veneration. Now, Eastern Orthodox, they don't claim to worship these images, okay, and that's good, but they say they venerate the one represented by them, and to me that's uncomfortably close to worship. They don't pray to the image they say, but they pray through the images.

Now as Evangelicals who want to follow the Bible, we don't say that images are always bad, okay? For example, we acknowledge that early Christians drew fish and crosses, even we ourselves today have crosses and sometimes even murals and they have pictures of people on the murals, okay, and we have crosses in our homes, but we don't pray to those murals or pictures or crosses, and the Old Testament, the ark, the ark of the covenant had two statues of cherubim, alright, but these are statues and people didn't pray to them and they weren't people either. Alright, so the early Christians prior to Nicaea did not venerate icons and I say that having read every single thing that we have preserved that was written up to 325 A.D., and we'll have a whole video on this later.

So this thing about venerating images, how important is it? Well, Evangelicals say based on the Bible, don't do it, but what do the Orthodox say about that? Okay, well, here's an Orthodox quote, "Thus, according to St. John Damascene," who is also called John of Damascus, "those who refuse to venerate an icon also refuse to worship God's Son, who is the living image and unchanging reflection of God the invisible. Be it known, he says, that anyone who seeks to destroy the icons of Christ or his mother, the Blessed Theotokos," which is Greek for mother of God or heir of God, "or any of the saints, is the enemy of Christ, the Holy Mother of God, and the saints, and is the defender of the devil and his demons." This is according to the site <http://site.stspp.org/category/library/icons>.

Are icons really essential for worship in salvation? According to this Greek Orthodox writer, according to John of Damascus, yes. Okay?

Here's another one. It may be a little bit milder but it says, "In many ways, it's difficult to imagine how our liturgy could subsist without icons." Emphasis in the original. "They are an irrevocable part of the life of the Church." And this is by Ouspensky, "Theology of the Icon," volume 1, page 8.

Alright, or here's another quote, "It is absolutely impossible to imagine the smallest liturgical rite in the Orthodox Church without icons. The liturgical and sacramental life of

the Church is inseparable from the image. The liturgical and mystical life of the Church is inseparable from icons because they together proclaim the same faith and truth – and that truth is Jesus Christ. All icons are icons of Christ expressing images of God the Father. The truth conveyed by icons is one and the same with the words of our fathers, the Scriptures, and our prayers and hymns." This is from <https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/onbehalfofall/liturgy/andicon>. So they sound like they're pretty important.

Then here's another kind of explanatory thing, maybe a little bit milder here but still, "One of the first things that strikes a non-Orthodox visitor to an Orthodox Church is the prominent place assigned to the holy icons. The Iconostasis," which means icon screen, "dividing the altar from the rest of the church is covered with them, while others are placed in prominent places throughout the church building. Sometimes even the walls and ceilings are covered with them in fresco or mosaic form. The Orthodox faithful prostrate themselves before them, kiss them, and burn candles before them. They are censed by the priest," i.e. with the incense and the censor, "and carried in processions. Considering the obvious importance of the holy icons, then, questions may certainly be raised concerning them. What do these gestures and actions mean? What is the significance of these icons? Are they not idols or the like prohibited by the Old Testament?" And this is from <https://www.stseraphim.org/holyicons.html>. It is also repeated on <http://www.stots.edu/article.php?id=32>.

So you agree, Larry, that icons are really seems like essential to worship in the Eastern Orthodox church.

Larry. Well, of course, that's what they're saying right here from these quotes you have given and, once again, as we said in the overview video we did of Eastern Orthodoxy before this one in this series, you know, when they're making it essential, essential for salvation, they're adding something to the Gospel. It's not faith alone and Christ alone, through faith alone, through Xscripture alone, it's, "Oh, well, to get saved you better say Jesus' mother or bearer of God or you're damned, or you've got to be water baptized in order to get born again," which we haven't really talked about that much yet, "or you've got to have these icons all over the walls, and you've got to pray through them even though you claim you're not worshiping, but still it's an essential factor." What they're basically doing is they're adding to the Gospel. They're adding. I mean, it's so simple, really, it's so basic.

As I mentioned in a previous broadcast in this series, the overview show, Galatians 1:6 through 9, Paul's damning to hell these Judaizers for simply adding circumcision. You know, you must be circumcised in order to be saved, and they had to have a council on this and in Acts 15, just to discuss this issue, and they said, "No, that's not right." But Paul said this was just adding the simple circumcision in order to get saved, just that one thing was a damnable offense. He put the divine curse on those Judaizers for just adding circumcision. And that word "anathema" is the strongest word you can use in the Greek language for like the sovereign decree of damnation on that person. Well, here we have the Eastern Orthodox saying, "Well, you've got to do this and you've got to do that, and

you've got to do these icons, and you've got to...". And you know, it's just one thing after another or you're damned, you're not saved, you can't have the Gospel. And it seems to me these guys are going way beyond what the Judaizers did in Galatians, you know, because apparently these Judaizers that Paul's mentioning in Galatians, they were in the "Christian community," they were part of the Christian community, but they were simply adding one little aspect, circumcision, so you can get in the club, basically, and Paul just damned them to hell. And now what have you got here in Eastern Orthodoxy? You're seeing everything you've just mentioned, adding that as a condition for salvation which is, according to Paul in Galatians 1, and when you also read Revelation 22, it says if you add or subtract from the word of God, they are clearly adding the traditions of men and all these ordinances that Paul condemns in like Colossians 2 and Colossians 4, Philippians 3. I mean, all these things are condemned by the Apostle Paul and the Gospel writers.

So I just, you know, this is just a different Gospel. This is what Paul talked about in 2 Corinthians 11:4, there is another Jesus, another Gospel and another spirit, and then as you read the rest of that chapter, he goes on to talk about ministers of Satan. So, I mean, this is serious serious stuff and we're basically talking here with these icons and everything, about an alien religion going under the guise of so-called Christianity, of claiming to be Christian but then at the same time denying what the Scripture clearly says about these matters.

Eastern Orthodoxy is very similar to Roman Catholicism in denying clear biblical doctrines and replacing them with heretical doctrines instead. 1. Claiming to be the one true Church of Christ going back 2,000 years while all others are not despite historical facts proving this to be false. 2. The denial of justification by faith alone which then is replaced with a works righteousness system of church related sacraments. 3. The equal authority of church traditions and Scripture. So they put their traditions on the same plane as the word of God. Point 4: discouragement of individuals interpreting the Bible apart from Greek Orthodox or Eastern Orthodox tradition. Point 5: the perpetual virginity of Mary. 6. Prayer for the dead. 7. The possibility of receiving salvation after death.

The Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church has been in a state of official schism from one another since the East/West schism of 1054. The schism was caused by historical and linguistic developments and the ensuing theological differences between the Western and Eastern Churches.

Go ahead, Steve.

Steve. Alright, so the Eastern Orthodox say that venerating pictures of people is essential for the Gospel and worship, and we are saying venerating pictures of people is essentially wrong and what we're gonna do now is we're gonna go through the arguments as to why it's wrong, however, I will tell you the Eastern Orthodox have answers to these arguments and we will as objectively as we can, you know, bring up their answers and then we will discuss that.

So, first of all, let's go and start off with the Old Testament. In the Old Testament it says don't worship any image of anything in heaven or on the earth and it says this in Exodus 20:4 through 5 and Deuteronomy 5:8 through 9. It doesn't say don't give worship to those things, but don't worship anything of their images of either. Okay?

Now just looking back through the history of man, you know, yes, people are sinful but people have certain tendencies, they just have a tendency towards the sin of idolatry. They want to have an image. Look at all the ancient religions with all their statues, look at Hinduism today, look at Mahayana, you know, 1 billion Hindus, they have images, you know, statues and pictures and stuff, also Mahayana Buddhists, not other Buddhists so much but Mahayana, today they worship a lot of images. But there are two different ways that sinful people worship idols. The first way, they think of the idol as a rock or a piece of wood or whatever, that it has no power in itself but is a representative of the spiritual being they're trying to worship; second, others think the actual rock or piece of wood itself has magical or supernatural power.

Okay, so many Orthodox venerate icons including pictures of Christ, the first way. They don't say that the actual picture has any magic power but it's a representation of Christ. However, some Eastern Orthodox venerate the second way too, and they have stories where these images themselves actually have power where the icons weep or the icon or the picture save somebody, the picture does this, and they all say Christ did this or Mary did this, but the picture of Christ, the picture of Mary did it. So there are kind of two different ways of sinning here and pagans have done both and Eastern Orthodox seem to do both also, okay?

Now one Eastern Orthodox answer is what about Nehustan? And Nehustan is better known as the bronze snake in the wilderness. Now, if you remember and I think this is a good example about both the good and bad use of images. Alright, so when the children of Israel were wandering in the wilderness in Numbers 21:4 through 8 in the Bible, they grumbled against God and God sent venomous snakes against them. When the people repented, God commanded Moses to set up a bronze snake on a pole. Anyone who was bitten could look up at the graven image of the animal on the pole and live. Furthermore, Jesus compared himself to the bronze snake in John 3:14, that anyone could look up to him and live, okay? So that is in the Old Testament and that's a constant use of an image. Hmm, you know, in Eastern Orthodox, people will point that out.

Okay, however, let's continue with the story. What did the people eventually do with the bronze snake? In 2 Kings 18:4, it tells us they called it Nehustan and they started burning incense to worship it, so the godly King Hezekiah had the bronze snake of Moses destroyed because people started worshiping what God gave them in addition to God. So the bronze snake wasn't evil of itself because God commanded them to make it, but once they started worshiping it, which they should not have, then Hezekiah did the right thing and destroyed it.

Okay, so, I have to say this is probably, Nehustan is probably one of the two strongest arguments that Eastern Orthodox make for venerating pictures of people, however, if this

is the strongest argument, I want to point a couple of things. This was a graven image, a statue, it wasn't a picture. 2. They had no pictures of any Old Testament person to look up to, even under Bar Cochba who revolted about 150 A.D. or so; the Jewish coins had only images of the temple or plants but never people. So they never had pictures of people, okay, because even the bronze snake, it was a snake, it wasn't a person. You go into an Eastern Orthodox church and say, "Where are the pictures of the snake?" They don't have any, they just have pictures of people, alright, and they didn't look up to Nehustan because they honored snakes, they looked up to [unintelligible] snake bite. Then ultimately they sinned because they valued that too highly and we should look up to Jesus who took our sins upon himself, not the sin or the serpent behind it in this evil world.

Okay, so that's one of the arguments and I think we pretty much demolished that. They don't have snakes and they try to say looking up to a statue of a snake is the same as a picture of a person. No, not really. Okay, first of all, it wasn't venerated or worshiped until later, and then that was a sin, okay?

So let's look at these what I think at least, is their second strongest argument. What about the ark of the covenant? Well, the ark was a box, but on top of the box were two carvings of cherubim, angelic creatures, okay? So in Exodus 25:18 through 20, God commanded Moses to make two cherubim out of hammered gold to place on top of the ark. Now Eastern Orthodox say that since these images were commanded by God, they were, and then these religious objects were used in worship, therefore, say Eastern Orthodox, images are okay in worship, okay? So this is probably also one of the two strongest ones.

Alright, second though, notice, these again are carvings, not pictures, alright? But also notice that the tabernacle and the curtains in the veil of the Holy of Holies had cherubim woven in them according to Exodus 26:1 to 31. So these were part of the design, not independent pictures but they were pictures, okay? So I guess the Evangelical answer to that is, yes, images can be okay in the church. Alright, they didn't pray to the cherubim or worship the cherubim but they did have the cherubim, both the ark cherubim and the image of the cherubim, and Evangelicals as well as Eastern Orthodox, have prominent crosses in their church and even pictures with Bible characters. We have also found carvings by early Christians of crosses and they used the fish as a symbol too, however, this doesn't support venerating people for a number of reasons. The cherubim were angels, not people. They were graven images, not pictures. They did not worship these because Exodus 20:4 through 5, and Deuteronomy 5:8, you are not to make or bow down to any idols, okay, so and the Bible does not say to venerate the cherubim and both early Christians and Evangelicals never mentioned venerating cherubim, angels, crosses, or any carved images or pictures. And by the way, the Eastern Orthodox, they do not venerate statues or carved images, it's just pictures, okay?

So that's another argument. A third argument that I don't think carries, is as strong but they do bring it up, is they say, "Well, in Solomon's Temple there were carvings, not statues but carvings on the wall, cherubim, lions, bulls, palm trees and flowers." Okay, and they were cherubim made olive wood according to 1 Kings 6:23 and on the walls around the temple there were palm trees and open flowers in 1 Kings 6:29. The doors of

the temple were carved with the same, 1 Kings 6:32. So I'm giving verses that I guess Eastern Orthodox would have brought up to say that these support, you know, they had images back then. On the side panels, there were bronze furnishings where Solomon carved lions, bulls and cherubim according to 1 Kings 7:29 and 36. Okay, now the Jews didn't venerate them but, yes, they had images, okay, and we agree. You know, we already agree that images can be okay but, A. they weren't people and, B. they didn't venerate them.

So Eastern Orthodox agree with Evangelicals that carved images should not be venerated. The Roman Catholic Church would venerate carved images but not Eastern Orthodox. Second, Eastern Orthodox in general would agree that in the Old Testament they weren't to venerate anything as an image of God, however, when Jesus came, Jesus is the image of the invisible God and so the Eastern Orthodox claim that in New Testament times, they can have pictures of Jesus because Jesus is the image of God. So the Greek Orthodox, though not the Russian Orthodox, say they can't venerate pictures of God the Father or Holy Spirit today but they can venerate pictures of Jesus. John of Damascus said the same thing about not venerating the Father or the Spirit, but Jesus, in an "Exposition of the Orthodox Faith," chapter 16, page 88.

Everything about this does nothing to justify pictures of people besides Jesus. Eastern Orthodox would agree that Jews did not venerate pictures of Moses, David, Isaiah, or anybody else in the Old Testament times. Can you imagine the 12 disciples in the Gospels or many disciples in Acts carrying around pictures of Jesus, Peter or Paul or others when they worshiped instead of looking at the apostle directly? I hardly think they did that. Even today if we have Jesus inside of us, what do we need a made up picture for? Why would someone venerate an image of a person besides Christ unless perhaps they thought they should be devoted to that person too because they believe they are part of the Godhead also. In Eastern Orthodox, they do believe that people become part of the Godhead, so venerating pictures of people and people becoming part of the Godhead, they kind of go together unfortunately. But since they believe that people are deity, you know, there's a fine line between veneration and worship which gets kind of hard to see, however, in 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul had a fear that some would lead the church astray from their sincere and pure devotion to Christ. Unfortunately, I have to say that Paul's fear was justified. The Greek Orthodox Church even has a hymn to the Virgin Mary. Now hymns and singing, that's kind of worship to me, but they have a hymn to Mary.

Larry. Well, in response to a lot of what you're saying here, I wanted to say that obviously their arguments, if these are their best arguments, they don't have any arguments. I mean, they have to depend on people being ignorant. They have to be, if these are the arguments, they have to depend on people being ignorant of what the Scripture says. Now if you're knowledgeable in Scripture, then of course, these things mean nothing. But what's funny about it all is it goes back to what you were saying before when you started this and you were mentioning how the Hindus have pictures and idols and all kinds of statues, and the Buddhists, and so forth, and it's just kind of endemic to the whole world across the populations of the world to, you know, this is something they want to do. Even when Moses went up on Mount Sinai to get the 10

Commandments, the children of Israel even though they had seen all these miracles, what did they end up doing when Moses was late coming down? They suddenly said, "Well, we need some gods to go before us. Make us a golden calf." And all of a sudden they're worshipping a golden calf.

I heard a sermon by Martyn Lloyd Jones on this one time, it was just a great sermon, but he just said why did they do this? And Martyn Lloyd Jones just says, because they were fools, and you know, that really hit me strongly when he said that because, yeah, I guess they really were fools but you don't think it's that simple, you know, but really it is because when the word of God is so clear and so obvious what you're to do or not to do and they just do it anyway and make up all kinds of excuses, well, then it's just a foolish thing to do.

I've never told anyone this I think in my entire life in 30 years of doing telecasting. I don't think I've ever told the story but it's kind of interesting. When I was a small kid, I think I was around four or five years old but I still remember it, my mom and my grandmother on my dad's side, she, they were both into witchcraft. My grandmother on my dad's side had a book, I've shown it on some of our videos on the occult.

Just to augment the story I'm about to tell here, I wanted to mention that you can find more about what I'm talking about in our video called, "Haunted houses, poltergeists, Carl Jung, witchcraft, magic spells, demon possession, the occult," on our YouTube channel. The following is a quick clip from that video.

Video:

Larry. But the deception here much like the deception in a lot of these so-called Bible-based cults like Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists, they use Bible terminology to make themselves look like they're Christians but it's just a deception to get people to buy into that religious cult. Well, the occult, sorcery and witchcraft, is no different. It's just a trick that devil has used for millennia to deceive people into thinking, "Hey, this is good stuff, like it mentions Bible stuff." Well, a lot of these spells in the book start out with, "In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," and what's amazing about all this, I remember my grandmother Wessels used to take me to church on Sunday when I was there as a small child, she would take me to church and I still remember in my mind's eye there at that old Lutheran Church in Schulenberg, yet she consistently and constantly is using these witchcraft spells to help people out, or my dad or whoever, you know, for whatever she needs, and that generationally was transferred over to my mom who started doing all this stuff. And you know, mom would go to church and stuff like this but she's into this stuff.

Larry. I think it was copyrighted 1867. I still have that book hidden away somewhere in the house for reference but I want to make sure nobody can get their hands on it. It's pure evil. But I didn't show the spells in the book either. It's called "Simon Magus' White

Egyptian Secrets of White and Black Magic." And what's interesting about the book is almost every spell that you cast in there starts out with invoking the name of the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and then you go into all this occultic witchcraft stuff to cast spells either good or bad, either to heal things. In fact, my grandmother was like the county faith healer. You know, people would come to her from all over the county to get healed from whatever. She would use that black magic, white magic book to heal people. Even my dad said that every time he got a sty in his eye, she would do some spell and the sty in his eye would go away just like that.

So anyway, I remember I got sick or something one time and they took me to one of these kind of people. I guess I was too sick for my grandmother to heal me so she took me to this other guy that was supposed to be better than her and what I had to do in there was sit and stare at this picture of Jesus. They had a picture of Jesus on the wall at this faith healer's place and I had as a kid to just sit there while they were in the other room and just stare at this picture of Jesus. I was told to just sit there and stare and ask for healing or something and use this picture as my focus to get healing or whatever. Of course, I'm four or five years old, you know, and I don't know, I'm just doing what my grandmother and my mom were telling me and this faith healing guy or whatever he was, and I didn't really understand the ramifications of the occult back then. You know, I was pretty ignorant and oblivious. You're four or five years old, you don't know what all this stuff.

So I'm kind of told to put magical emphasis on this picture on the wall, like this picture is going to give me some kind of supernatural healing and help and all this stuff, and I remember even now as a little kid just sitting there staring at the picture for a long time and, of course, half the time I was thinking, "Where is grandma and mom? When am I gonna get out of here?" But I was told to sit there and stare at this picture on the wall. And finally they came and, of course, I never understood what the whole thing was really about or the deep ramifications, but knowing now based on what you're saying this kind of brought this to mind, is this emphasis on pictures and looking at things like it's going to do some kind of supernatural or occultic thing that's supposed to help you out. And all of a sudden I thought while you're talking about all this veneration and icons and pictures of people, it reminded me of that which I hadn't thought of in, what, 55, 56 years. It's kind of in the recesses of my mind but it kind of came to mind as you were saying all that.

Steve. But, Larry, out of curiosity, what did that picture look like? Did it look kind of like a northern European maybe?

Larry. Yes. It was sort of like, have you ever looked at a book of Mormon and you see the white Jesus on the inside cover of a book of Mormon or you look at a lot of Seventh-day Adventist works? They have the white Norwegian Jesus with the hairdresser hairdo and all that kind of stuff. In fact, one of my videos when we went to San Antonio at the Seventh-day Adventist worldwide convention, in fact there were a lot of people speaking foreign languages when Dan and me were over there, but they had pictures all over the place of Jesus, right, and all of them were this white guy that looked like, well, he was kind of a long-haired dude so in the pictures they had, so that you or me wouldn't qualify

as being exactly like him and most of the time he had a beard and stuff, but you know the kind of pictures that people put up.

I'd like to interject right here concerning this painting that I had to look at as a small child to get some kind of healing done or whatever, from staring at this painting. Here's a little background information about it from Wikipedia that anyone can access on the internet. But this painting was done by Warner Sallman, born April 30, 1892 - May 25, 1968. He was an American painter from Chicago best known for his works of Christian religious imagery. He worked in commercial advertising as well as a freelance illustrator. He's most associated with his portrait of Jesus called "Head of Christ," of which more than 500 million copies have been sold. In 1994, the New York Times wrote that he is likely to be voted the "best known artist of the century," mainly because of this "Head of Christ" painting that he did.

Now he came from, as you can see here on Wikipedia information down here in the biography section, it says Sallman was a lifelong member of the Swedish Evangelical Mission Covenant of America which was later renamed the Evangelical Covenant Church, an Evangelical Protestant denomination. And of course, he came up with this painting which was designed in 1940 and since then it just joins a whole menagerie of other paintings and icons of Christ throughout the centuries of which people use for just pure idolatry in many cases; they pray to those paintings or icons, bow down to them, and all these types of things.

What I find interesting also is the fact that there is relationship here with the cults. Many of the cults you find, particularly American cults, have a love for images of a white Jesus, even though he came from, you know, the Middle East and Israel, where that's located, they like to think of him as an American like them, I guess, in appearance.

Along these lines, here's a clip from one of our videos that has over 400,000 views at the moment at the time of this recording called "Ellen White's Seventh-day Adventism qualifies as a pseudo-Christian Antichrist American cult." Now that's a long title but I generally make long titles for a lot of our videos because it hits the search engines more often so you get more views in a lot of cases, so that's one reason the title is so long, but also it explains a lot at the same time. And here's what we said in this video.

Video.

Larry. But I did bring with me, I don't know if you can see it on the screen here, here's in Seventh-day Adventism, if people go to that video I mentioned already that's our number one most-watched video over the last 28 days of the Seventh-day convention, but this is what the Seventh-day Adventist Jesus looks like. You can see that. And here's another depiction of him. But over and over they've got many. If you do an internet search, a Google search, a Yahoo search on images of Jesus and Seventh-day Adventism, you're going to find a multitude and they all pretty much look like this white guy that was a hippie during the seventies.

Speaker. Talk about an anachronism.

Larry. Yes. But if you go to Mormonism and do an internet search on images of Jesus in Mormonism, you're going to find that their Mormon Jesus, and here's a couple shots of it, looks an awful lot the same as the Seventh-day Adventist Jesus. And you start to see these similarities and when I was at that Seventh-day Adventist conference and the images of Jesus were just like these samples I just showed you all over the place. I mean, it's just this white 1970s hippie guy from America, and I was sitting there walking around, "Man, that's just like Joseph Smith's Jesus. That's just like Mormons. How did this happen?"

Larry. Now, you just saw that, now I have a comment that's down in the comments section if you go to that on any of my YouTube videos on Seventh-day Adventism. If you look down and look for the CANSWERSTV comments, you'll see that I have a comment that starts with, "Was Jesus a white man as Mormons and Seventh-day Adventists depict in their books, artwork, tracts, pamphlets, and numerous outreaches? Many people ask the question, 'Why did God make Jesus white when the majority of peoples in the world are nonwhite?' Ellen G. White, the prophetess of Seventh-day Adventism certainly taught that Jesus was a white man, see Ellen White's 'Inspired, bigotry, racism, and discrimination,' at the following link, www.cultorchristian.com/egwbigorty.html."

The following is just a few quotes from the Seventh-day Adventist "prophet" from the above link. "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance. You are the children of God. He has adopted you, and he desires you to form characters here that will give you entrance into the heavenly family. Remembering this, you will be able to bear the trials which you meet here. In heaven, there will be no color line, for all will be as white as Christ himself. Let us thank God that we can be members of the royal family." And your reference there is, "The Gospel Herald, March 1, 1901, 'Trust in God,' from paragraph 20, from a 'Talk given by Mrs. E. G. White to the church for the colored in Vicksburg, Sabbath day, March 16, 1901.'" So she's apparently preaching to, as this mentions here, colored people, you know, African-Americans, and gave this message.

Here's another quote, "But there is an objection to the marriage of the white race with the black. All should consider that they have no right to entail upon their offspring that which will place them at a disadvantage. They have no right to give them as a birthright a condition which would subject them to a life of humiliation. The children of these mixed marriages have a feeling of bitterness toward the parents who have given them this lifelong inheritance. For this reason, if there were no other, there should be no intermarriage between the white and the colored race." That's from Manuscript 7, 1896, coming from "Selected Messages," book 2, page 343, paragraph 2, page 344, paragraph 0.

Here's another quote, "In reply to inquiries regarding the advisability of intermarriage between Christian young people of the white and black races, I would say that in my

earlier experience this question was brought before me and the light given me of the Lord was that this step should not be taken for it is sure to create controversy and confusion. I have always had the same counsel to give, no encouragement to marriages of this character should be given among our people. Let the colored brother enter into marriage with a colored sister who is worthy, one who loves God and keep his commandments. Let the white sister who contemplates uniting in marriage with the colored brother refuse to take this step, for the Lord is not leading in this direction."

"Time is too precious to be lost in controversy that will arise over this matter. Let not questions of this kind be permitted to call our ministers from their work. The taking of such a step will create confusion and hindrance. It will not be for the advancement of the work or for the glory of God." Letter 36, 1912, "Selected Messages," book 2, page 344, paragraphs 1-2.

Alright, continuing on to the next page: what does the Bible say to those who would denounce interracial marriage like Ellen White did? "And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married, for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow, and Aaron looked upon Miriam and, behold, she was leprous." That's from the Bible, Numbers 12:1 and verses 9 through 10.

"I have already written that the colored people should not urge that they be placed on an equality with white people." That's coming from Letter 202, 1903, page 2. In parenthesis, "To J. E. White and wife, September 11, 1903. "That's from "Manuscript Releases," volume 4, page 23, paragraph 2.

"Many whom God would use as his instruments have been disqualified at their birth by the previous wrong habits of their parents." That's from the Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, volume 2, page 1005.

"The colored people should not urge that they be placed on an equality with white people. The relation of the two races have been a matter hard to deal with, and I fear that it will ever remain a most perplexing problem."

"I know that if we attempt to meet the ideas and preferences of some of the colored people, we shall find our way blocked completely. The work of proclaiming the truth for this time is not to be hindered by an effort to adjust the position of the Negro race. Should we attempt to do this, we should find that barriers like mountains would be raised to hinder the work that God desires to have done. If we move quietly and judiciously, laboring in the way that God has marked out, both white and colored people will be benefited by our labors." This is coming from "Testimonies of the Church," volume 9, page 214, paragraph 3, page 215, paragraph 0.

"Every species of animal which God had created were preserved in the ark. The confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation, were destroyed

by the flood. Since the flood, there has been amalgamation of man and beast, as may be seen in the almost endless varieties of species of animals and in certain races of men." That's coming from the Seventh-day Adventist "Spiritual Gifts," volume 3, page 75, paragraph two.

To see our field trip to the Seventh-day Adventist General conference in San Antonio, Texas where 70,000 Seventh-day Adventists from around the world gathered to exalt Ellen G. White and their depiction of Jesus as some sort of Norwegian white man just like the Mormons do despite what Isaiah 53:2 says. The proof of this is in our video called "Seventh-day Adventists glorify Ellen G. White and a white Jesus in San Antonio SDA conference," of course, that was held in 2015, at the following link

www.youtube.com/watch?v=d1fUnuRwvm8.

God's position on images from the Old Testament.

Nearly everyone familiar with the Bible should be familiar with this passage of the 10 Commandments from Exodus 20:3-5, "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them." That's coming from the New King James Version throughout, unless otherwise noted.

Then underneath here we have a quote from the Roman Catholic Douay-Rheims version of their Bible that I'm not going to read all that here. We got the main context from Exodus 20:3 through 5 but you can freeze-frame it and read their version of it.

In other words, God is saying that one of the reasons he did not want to be seen was that he felt the people might think that they should make any idol or icon. Notice that he also said no image of any male or female. See also Isaiah 44:9, "Those who make an image, all of them are useless, And their precious things shall not profit; They are their own witnesses; They neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed."

This prohibition against idols was not limited to idols of foreign gods. God is also quite displeased with images that are supposed to direct worship to him as this passage from Exodus 32:7-8 shows, "And the LORD said to Moses, 'Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a molded calf, and worshiped it and sacrificed to it, and said, 'This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt!'"

The Bible shows that God did not want His people to bow down before images that humans made, "You shall not make idols for yourselves; neither a carved image nor a sacred pillar shall you rear up for yourselves; nor shall you set up an engraved stone in your land, to bow down to it; for I am the Lord your God." That's coming from Leviticus 26:1.

The children of Israel were apparently not even allowed the possession of icons as Joshua 7:13 seems to show, "Sanctify yourselves for tomorrow, because thus says the LORD

God of Israel: 'There is an accursed thing in your midst, O Israel; you cannot stand before your enemies until you take away the accursed thing from among you.'

Thus all forms of idols and icons were prohibited by God in the Old Testament. Also notice that God says those with idols are like idols in that they have eyes but do not see and ears but do not hear, "The idols of the nations are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; They have ears, but they do not hear; Nor is there any breath in their mouths. Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them." Psalm 135:15-18.

Furthermore, notice that in the future God will get rid of all idols, "The LORD alone will be exalted in that day, But the idols He shall utterly abolish," Isaiah 2:17-18. "Thus says the Lord GOD: 'I will also destroy the idols, And cause the images to cease," Ezekiel 30:13.

God's position on idols as shown in the New Testament.

Idols were discussed by many New Testament writers. Jesus taught, "But I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam...to eat things sacrificed to idols," Revelation 2:14. "Nevertheless, I have a few things against you, because you allow...My servants to...eat things sacrificed to idols," Revelation 2:20.

Jesus also taught, "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth," John 4:24, which, of course, wouldn't include icons or images, and the truth is that God does not want to be represented by things made by man, and the truth is that since no one knows what Jesus, or God the Father for that matter, looks like, all iconic representations of God are not Spirit and are not true. This is part of why all idols and icons are wrong.

Notice something from the Book of Acts, verse 28 in Acts 17 and starting, "For we are also His offspring. Therefore, since we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man's devising. Being therefore the offspring of God, we must not suppose the divinity to be like unto gold, or silver, or stone, the graving of art, and device of man. And God indeed having winked at the times of this ignorance, now declareth unto men, that all should every where do penance." Acts 17:29-30, from the Douay-Rheims.

Now keep in mind, the Douay-Rheims is a Roman Catholic version of the Bible. Yes, I show the Roman Catholic Douay-Rheims version of the Bible as an interesting contrast in how even the Roman Catholics themselves are hypocritical and don't follow their own translation. Even in this translation here, there's a perversion of the text where they say do penance but that's not correct, that's been added to the Bible, thus they have cursed themselves under the condemnation found in Revelation 22 about adding to the word of God. It shouldn't be "penance," it should be "repentance." But anyway, this is all just to show that even in a Roman Catholic translation of the Bible they violate their own Scriptures with all their statues, their carvings, their candles, their paintings and all the

rest of it that they do in their idolatry, and of course, in Eastern Orthodoxy with all their icons, it ends up being the same thing.

The following verses concern Paul and his writings on this subject. "Now while Paul waited for them in Athens, his spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols. Then Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, 'God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshipped with men's hands,'" that can include statutes, icons, and graven images and so forth, "'as though He needed anything.' Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man and birds and four footed animals and creeping things." That's from Romans 1:22-23. "But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is an idolater," 1 Corinthians 5:11. "Neither idolators will inherit the kingdom of God," that's an abbreviated section there from 1 Corinthians 6:9-10. "And do not become idolaters as were some of them. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry," 1 Corinthians 10:7 and 14. "And what agreement has the temple of God have with idols?" 2 Corinthians 6:16. "Now the works of the flesh are evident...idolatry," Galatians 5:19 and 20. "For this you know that no idolater has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God," Ephesians 5:5. "Therefore put to death covetousness, which is idolatry," Colossians 3:5. "You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God," that's what you're supposed to do, 1 Thessalonians 1:9.

Paul is clear, true Christians do not have idols, there are to be none in a church, idolatry is a work of the flesh, and Christians are to turn from idols to God. Statues like the Roman Catholic statue, all their pictures of Mary and all the rest of it that they do, the icons of Mary that the Eastern Orthodox do, and the rest of these graven images and so forth, that's just pure idolatry. That's all it is and these idolaters that worship these things or venerate them as they say, that's just their excuse to get away with their idolatry. That's basically the bottom line.

Alright, let's go back to the video.

Steve. So it's interesting that a lot of modern pictures of Jesus, he looks kind of Norwegian or British or maybe German or just kind of northern European. Actually, Jesus was Jewish. Now some of the early icons of Jesus kind of resemble statues and pictures or statues of the god Apollo. Now Apollo was, you know, useful, very handsome god and probably somebody who had seen all these pagan idols would probably want to paint Jesus and just like that little girl at the beginning, you know, they wanted to say that here's this handsome young guy. And later on, icons of Jesus looked different, they looked more maybe serious or more sad, and some have speculated that they may have looked a little bit more like statues of Zeus a little bit, more maybe majestic and not really playful or anything. So it's kind of like people kind of make Jesus in their own image, whatever picture it is, and....

Larry. That goes back to the analogy I was saying of Moses on Mount Sinai. They make a calf. So they're going to make God into whatever image they want to make him into, so,

anyway, I interrupted you there but I just wanted to get that point out. I was agreeing with you.

Steve. So it's kind of dangerous when people start making an image and say, "I'm going to make this however I want it to look."

Now anyway, we brought up reasons why you shouldn't venerate images, we brought up Eastern Orthodox answers to that, and I know you didn't think too much of those answers. Let me bring up a different kind of, I think a different kind of answer. This is an Eastern Orthodox answer and this was given by someone named St. Hilarion Troitsky, 1886-1929, and what he says is, "Today we ever more frequently run up against this kind of reasoning, 'We read such and such in holy Scripture. The Church teaches differently. So the Church is wrong.' All kinds of sectarians monotonously chant in this manner ad nauseum." So it's ad nauseum that we are saying they are against Scripture, but anyway. "There are even those who echo these ideas while calling themselves Christians, that is, they have adapted incomprehensible arrogance in their attitude toward the Church, placing themselves far above her." No, actually we've placed Scripture above her. "Holding the point of view described above regarding the sources of doctrine, it is not easy to respond properly. Let us consider, for example, the issue of the veneration of icons. A sectarian points out the prohibition of images in the Old Testament, cf. Exodus 20:4, or the words of Christ about spiritual worship, cf. John 4:23. For him, icons are a contradiction. Do we respond by saying that the veneration of icons is based on tradition? But tradition is to be accepted only when it does not contradict Scripture.

"References, for example, to the cherubim on the curtain of the Old Testament temple are not very convincing. Thus the dispute continues without end and to no avail because the missionaries themselves adopt the sectarian perspective and that perspective by its very essence leads only to a battle of words but not to the truth. In contrast, drawing from the idea of the Church, we do not even need to argue on the basis of Scripture for us, our faith in the Church is enough." So what he's just said here is if the Church contradicts Scripture, it doesn't matter, just go with the Church.

Larry. Well, you see that was frightening what he just said, "our faith in the Church is enough." You know, when we look at things, it's the Scripture and Christ is where our faith is, not in some man-made organization like these guys. But go ahead.

Steve. Right. So to reiterate we're not saying take your faith out of the Orthodox church and put your faith in an Evangelical church, not at all, we're saying take your faith out of whatever church you're in, put your faith in God, not in any church.

Alright, so anyway, finishing off his quote, "The foolishness of disputes from the Scripture was recognized long ago by Tertullian." Now this is where he's telling a lie here, but anyway, "who said that such arguments could only make your stomach and brain ill or cause you to lose your voice, falling finally into rabid fury from the blasphemies of heretics," in "Prescription Against Heretics," chapter 17. "He asserts that it is not worth appealing to Scripture since victory is either unlikely or completely

impossible." Well, at least he admits that. "But a person of the Church can boldly reiterate these words since to him it is quite the same to be taught by Scripture and by the Catholic Church." Now this is in "The Confession of Dositheus," from "Holy Scripture and the Church." And this is quoted in <http://classicalchristianity.com/category/iconography>.

By the way, he totally messed up the meaning of Tertullian. Tertullian's quote refers to Gnostics who do not receive all of the Scriptures and have their own Scriptures. Nothing about icons.

So probably after giving this quote earlier in his career, Tertullian went on to give probably over 100 scriptural proofs which Hilarion Troitsky totally ignored. If Tertullian never argued Scripture, where did he get these hundred proofs?

So anyway, let's just set the record straight and let's just say what Tertullian really said. Okay, so here's the quote of Tertullian and this in "Prescription Against Heretics," chapter 17, page 251 in the anti-Nicene fathers. Anyway, "Now this heresy of yours does not receive certain Scriptures, and whichever of them it does receive, it perverts by means of additions and diminutions for the accomplishment of its own purpose, and as such it does receive, it receives not in their entirety, but even when it does receive up to a certain point as entire, it nevertheless perverts even those by the contrivances of diverse interpretations. Truth is just as much opposed by adulteration of its meaning as it is by corruption of its text. Their main presumptions must needs refuse to acknowledge the writings where they are refuted. They rely on those which they have falsely put together, and which they have selected because of their ambiguity. The most skilled in the Scriptures, you will make no progress when everything at which you maintain is denied on the other side, and whatever you deny is by them maintained. As for yourself, indeed, you will lose nothing but your breath and gain nothing but vexation from their blasphemy." So Tertullian is talking to Gnostics to say they corrupt Scripture, they have their own Scripture, but even when they use the correct Scripture, they adulterate its meaning and change its meaning. That's what Tertullian said, not to argue with Scripture because he argued in hundreds of places. Okay?

So anyway, I was talking in an email exchange to a Greek Orthodox person and he was saying that you should follow icons and believe in venerated icons because Luke said so. And I said, "Luke? Where did Luke say so? I mean, you can read through the book of Luke, you can read through all of Acts which Luke also wrote, I don't see anything." And he said, "Ah, Luke was the first iconographer. It's an unwritten tradition." I was like, "Hmm, how do you argue against that, it's an unwritten tradition?"

Larry. Make up anything you want.

Steve. If Luke said that Jesus was a Martian and it's an unwritten tradition, how can you prove me wrong? You can say anything you want. Well, it turns out that this Greek Orthodox guy didn't make this stuff up out of thin air. This idea of an unwritten tradition goes back to that important defender of icons, John of Damascus, and they consider John

of Damascus one of the greatest theologians, probably not the greatest but one of the greatest, and John of Damascus said, he said it was unwritten tradition.

We have almost 4,400 pages or so of writings by pre-Nicene Christians and totally absent is anything about veneration of icons. So they said the Bible has nothing of veneration of icons, the pre-Nicene writings have nothing about veneration of icons, right after the time of Nicaea with Athanasius, he has nothing about veneration of icons. So if you want to worship Christ like Athanasius and the early Christians, no icons.

As a test, John of Damascus claims he said that this was by Methodius who was a pre-Nicene writer. He lived maybe around 260 A.D. or so, we think, because he wrote up to like 312 A.D. So Methodius, according to John of Damascus, says, "So the images of his, God's angels, who are made of gold, the principalities and powers, we do them for the honor and glory of him." Now this is Methodius according to John of Damascus. And he goes on, "And one who speaks against either of them is not acquitted as if he had only spoken against clay, nor condemned for having despised gold, but for having been disrespectful towards the King and Lord himself. The images of God's angels, which are fashioned of gold, the principalities and powers, we make to his honor and glory." And this is supposedly from the "Discourse on the Resurrection," part two, page 369. This is a quote from John of Damascus, "Oration 2," on images, tome one, page 389.

Now here is the deal, the early Christians knew of other early Christian writers, they referenced their works, they mentioned them, church historians such as Eusebius and later Socrates and others, mention and even list early church writers. Okay, and they mentioned Methodius who wrote "The Ten Virgins," he wrote a "Discourse on the Resurrection," discourse on the resurrection, singular. They never mention a second discourse of the resurrection, okay? So we don't have anybody who ever heard of Methodius' second discourse on the resurrection except, of course, 350 or so years later. So in fact, when they do mention "Discourse of the Resurrection," they don't call it his first discourse of the resurrection, they just call it discourse of the resurrection. So I question John of Damascus' honesty here. I think he went overboard defending icons to come up with this.

But what did Methodius really say about images? He actually did speak about images but what he said was the opposite of what John of Damascus said. Here's what Methodius, what we have that he said on what's agreed by our understanding. "And those artificers who, to the destruction of men, make images in human form, not perceiving and knowing their own Maker, are blamed by the word which says in the Book of Wisdom, a book full of all virtue, 'his heart is ashes, his hope is more vile than earth, and his life of less value than clay; forasmuch as he knew not his Maker, and Him that inspired him an active soul, and breathed in a living spirit'; that is, God, the Maker of all men, therefore also according to the apostle, he will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." This from the "Banquet of the Ten Virgins," discourse two, chapter 7, page 316.

So Methodius is sometimes a little wordy but in the first part he had the blanket condemnation of all religious images in human form. He didn't split out to say, "Oh, the ones of Jesus are okay and other ones are not." He just said all of them were bad. I'll read part of this again. "Those artificers who, to the destruction of men, make images in human form," and so Methodius was against all of this and in ancient pre-Nicene times, there's no evidence that Methodius ever contradicted himself until this later guy, John of Damascus, said this, and that's where they get the idea, and that's the same guy who made up this unwritten tradition. So basically they have their tradition of venerating images that they claim goes back to Luke is actually based on a lie.

Larry. That's not the way to get to the truth of the matter, and it's research like you've done because there's not many people that would go back and look up this guy Methodius, however you say his name, yeah, or do this kind of research to find the fact of the matter. Now I did this kind of stuff when I was dealing with Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons in my numerous debates and research and stuff I've done but you know, church history, eh, not so much. So it's great that you're willing to dig through all this stuff to get to them because I've found when you're dealing with false prophets like Jehovah's Witnesses, Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists, they're always making claims or saying things and the only way to prove them wrong a lot of times is you've just got to do, you've got to go in there and do your research, you've got to do the homework to get to the base of the matter to find out what's really true and what's false, and that's what usually blows them apart is doing the research. But most people are too lazy to do that and so they get away with it and it's sort of like how Muslim imams in this day and age get a lot of converts by just saying things that aren't true to people because they know those people don't know what the real truth is.

Steve. Right. There are cases I've seen where they say that Mohammed said in the Hadiths, and actually there is no recognized Hadith that says that. They made it up. So the Eastern Orthodox Church, you know, the guy I talked to, you know, initially I thought where did he make up this unwritten tradition? Well, he didn't make it up himself but he copied something that got made up and, you know, it's like I hope at the very minimum Eastern Orthodox who hear this and says, "Well, if the early church fathers in all the 1,097 things, doctrines and practices that they mentioned, didn't mention icons, then maybe it's not so bad if you don't worship icons. If the disciples when they were with Jesus, they didn't bring little pictures of Jesus, they just prayed to Jesus directly, then maybe it's not so bad if we don't bring pictures of Jesus to worship. And if there's no mention of venerating icons or venerating pictures of people anywhere in the New Testament or venerating pictures of people anywhere in the Old Testament, then maybe we don't have to venerate pictures of people and it's okay to worship sometimes without having these pictures of people in it."

Larry. Now it's amazing... Go ahead.

Steve. And I'm not down on all pictures, you know, but like we said if someone has a mural of Jesus, you know, that's okay but remember it's just a picture and don't venerate it.

Larry. Now what's amazing in my case, when I got born again through a supernatural act of the Holy Spirit where all of a sudden I was dead but then I was alive, and then as it says in Romans 8:1 through 17, you know, the Holy Spirit is within us and is in communion with our spirit, that we are the sons of God, that close communion with the Spirit and understanding what the word of God says, never did I ever, and even before that when I was a nominal Christian raised in a nominal atmosphere without, you know, just being blind to the truth for the most part but having a church background just like a lot of us who were born into something, you were born into a liberal church, I was in a nominal situation, but when I got actually supernaturally born again by the Spirit of God and I can suddenly read and understand the Scripture, I never imagined at all that I needed to look at an icon, or look at a statue, or bow down, or light a candle or anything, because I'm in direct communion with God all the time.

[hits microphone with hand] I'm sorry. I messed this up. I don't have any Italian blood but my hands think they're Italian. I just like to move them around all over the place.

But anyway, so when I'm looking at this from my own perspective of being a Christian, a born-again Christian, an Evangelical Christian, to me it's unimaginable that I need to go and look at a picture or an icon or bow down to a statue, because scripturally from the word of God, church history and you're an expert on that, it's not necessary at all, and to find out, you know, as we started this show, you can be damned by the Eastern Orthodox Church for not doing these things, it's just totally amazing to me because it's never even occurred to me to think of having to do that. I can pray to God wherever I am. I have a night job, I'm working 8 to 10 hours a night, and you know, I'm doing work and I'm praying and praising God all night long, you know, while I'm studying the Bible on SermonAudio or wherever it may be.

So this looking at icons or statues or relics or any of this stuff is just totally unnecessary, uncalled for, and really it has no place when it comes to authentic Christian worship and praise of God as we find in the Bible. So that's my take on it. Just when I think of it, it just takes me back to what I said before about there I am in an occultic situation, I've got both my mother and my grandmother who were actively in the occult as I now know now, unlike then, you know, this is demonic that they were doing, and I'm supposed to sit and stare at this picture on the wall like I'm going to get some healing as a result of staring at this picture, and that was all occultic back then. I didn't know it at the time but now I see how people who don't have the Spirit, they're not born again, they don't have the Holy Spirit of God communing with their spirit as Romans 8 makes it clear, so they think that they've got to do these externals, they've got to do this stuff like the Hindus and the Buddhists and all these other groups have to do, to try to have some kind of communion with God but that's no different than me as a four-year-old, five-year-old, sitting there staring at a picture on the wall. I mean, it's not what you find in the Scripture and it's certainly not a true born-again experience as we are so clearly taught about particularly in 1 Peter, when you read that. I mean, boy, do I relate to that. Titus, particularly chapter 3, verse 5 and so forth, this is a supernatural ongoing communion

with the Spirit of God in each true believer. So therefore you don't need icons. You don't need statues. You don't need relics. But anyway, go ahead, Steve, with your presentation.

Steve. So you've kind of summed it all up, Larry, I think. If you're Eastern Orthodox, why don't you try worshipping without any icons like the early disciples did and early Christians did? You know, visit a good Bible believing church and you'll see a lot in common with many things in the Bible but you won't have the pictures. You say, "Well, yeah, it won't be so great without that." Yeah, you just kind of have God and you just go directly to him. You know, try that.

Larry. Amen. Amen. Amen. Go directly to God through his Son Jesus Christ and his name. In fact, that kind of reminds me of Acts 7. Every time I'm listening to the Bible on my cellphone at work and I'm in the book of Acts, for instance, and the stoning of Stephen. Remember who Stephen was praying to at his stoning in Acts 7?

Steve. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.

Larry. Amen. Amen. So he didn't need to, "Hey, while they're throwing rocks at me, I need a picture. Give me a picture. Give me a relic." No, he was praying straight to God. He didn't need this other stuff and as you said so clearly, there's no, you don't see any record of this in the Scripture, Old Testament, New Testament, you don't see it in church history before a certain time period, and in your own study of church history, in fact, I feel sorry for any false prophet that tries to use a lie in early church history against you. They don't realize what they're running into in a situation like that where they think they can get away with pulling a fast one by falsely claiming some church history facts.

Steve. My favorite is when they say, "Well the Greek has to mean this," and you can find some Greek speaking early Christian that says, "No, it doesn't." You know, think differently, you know.

Larry. Yes. So people have to be careful. I mean, just like there are used-car salesmen, there's the door-to-door salesman, they'll say a lot of things but it doesn't mean it's actually true, so you've got these religious charlatans doing the same thing and trying to sell you a bill of goods and hope that you just believe what they say and not be discerning, but the Scripture says that the Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians because they searched the Scriptures daily to find out what the things that were spoken of Paul were true or not. They searched the Scriptures to find out what somebody was saying was either true or false based on the word of God, and that's, of course... Go ahead.

Steve. Speaking of Greeks, we should all be Bereans too.

Larry. Exactly. Exactly.

Well, Steve, is that, are you through with your presentation? Does that wrap it up?

Steve. Yup.

Larry. Outstanding presentation. As usual, I'm always thoroughly impressed with your study of early church history and being able to dig through all of these old writings, you know. Some of us are built better for it than others, you know. When I start reading the early church fathers, it's like [yawn], I've got a hang in there, you know? But you, you make it through. You made it through all those Hadiths, and you made it through this stuff and, praise God, there are brothers like you out there that do this work to make it a little easier on all the rest of us, and it's not like we have to take your word for it either, you've got your websites, you've got the resources there, the internet now makes it easy to go beyond you, for instance, to find out if these things you said, yeah, and find out for yourself what you're saying is actually true. So that's the beauty of it all.

Alright, brother, well, God bless you. Thank you for that great presentation. I'm going to sign us off now. I want to thank the people that are watching our show for this. Stay tuned next time in this series when we continue on some other aspects of this particular subject. I'm Larry Wessels for Christians Answers, along with Steve Morrison, Director of Research for Christian Answers. I want to thank you for being with us. Just remember what Jesus said in John 14:6, he said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no man comes to the Father except through Me." And so that entails knowing what the word of God is. You can't just say Jesus and think you're okay. You've got to go to the word of God to find out who Jesus is, find out who God is, find out what God says. I mean, without the word of God, the biblical canon of Scripture, you know, people all over the street, the Mormon thinks Jesus is the spirit brother of the devil, you know, the Roman Catholic thinks Jesus is this wafer that you eat during communion, the Mass, as they take it, you know, the Muslims think Jesus is a prophet that was a Muslim that preceded the final prophet Mohammed, that is if you're Sunni, now there are other variations. But anyway, there are all these Jesuses out there but the only way to know who the true Jesus is is do like Steve was saying earlier in the broadcast, you've got to go and study the Bible, go hear Bible preaching, get the word of God and find out what that says about who Jesus is.

Okay, with that I want to thank you again. Join us again next time. God bless you all.

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