

The image begins as a representation of the god, then becomes the channel to the god, then a place where the god manifests himself, at first occasionally, then frequently, and then permanently, and finally becomes the exclusive residence of the god. Now not all cultures go through this process, and some go through only one, or two, and perhaps three stages. But the tendency is always toward the final stage, when the god and his image become identified in the minds of the worshippers.

Now of course in some technologically-advanced cultures, idolatry appears in more sophisticated forms. The gods in such societies are likely to take the forms of possessions, or power, or pleasure, or beauty, or health, or security, or even an abstract concept like fate, or physical forces. Anything that God has created or that man creates may be used to obscure God, to dim Him from our consciousness, and draw us away from Him. And thus that thing becomes an idol.

Over a period of time those who worship other gods give their devotion and their adoration to humanly-created images of those gods. They make sacrifices for, and bring offerings to those images. They trust in the images for deliverance from calamities.

There's one major reason why God forbids idolatry and the worship of images. He knows that in the end human beings will bow down to and serve those images, rather than bow down to and serve Him. He knows that if men begin