

Does the term, “Iconoclastic” describe you?

While reading a document during one of my studies I came across the word, “Iconoclast”. As soon as I read it, I immediately approached a dictionary to find out what it means (because this word is too big for my vocabulary). What I discovered was very interesting to me:

Iconoclast is defined as:

1. A breaker or destroyer of images, esp. those set up for religious veneration.
2. A person who attacks cherished beliefs, traditional institutions, etc., as being based on error or superstition.

Note: Literally from the Greek roots of this word, it means image breaker: eikon [image] klastes [breaker]

Based upon this definition I ask, “Does the term, “Iconoclastic” describe you?”

Consider the following brief study of Hezekiah and our duty as Christians:

We have all had concern and been stirred in our hearts by those who bow down to anyone or anything other than the God of heaven and earth. In our own minds we can see when the word of God is being set aside for the traditions of man, but what do we do in those situations? Are we like Hezekiah, who when he sought to restore the dwelling place of God (the temple) for worship, destroyed all of the idols and images that surrounded his land. The Bible says of him, “He did right in the sight of the LORD, according to all that his father David had done. He removed the high places and broke down the {sacred} pillars and cut down the Asherah. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan” (II Ki 18:3-4).



I pray for the day when we, as the people of God (sons and daughters of spiritual Israel), will tear down all of our personal idols to give God His proper place. What

high places have been established with which the Lord would not be pleased? What a day it will be when we can cut and break down those "sacred" pillars (beliefs and traditions of men) so that the church can honestly be the pillar and support of the truth. Are we doing what is right in the sight of the Lord? What false practices do we have that need to cease before we can truly worship God in spirit and truth today (burning incense to a false god was mentioned in this text)? In 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, we read, "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses. {We are} destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and {we are} taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ..." While most radical iconoclasts were looked upon negatively for their destruction of important documents, statues and pieces of art, in a spiritual sense we are using the power of God to remove evil in order to lead all people to the obedience of Jesus Christ our Lord.

How many people in the Bible were iconoclasts (review the definition again)? If you are interested in discovering the truth on this matter, read the following passages carefully:

John 2:13-17

- 13 The Passover of the Jews was near, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.
- 14 And He found in the temple those who were selling oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers seated {at their tables}
- 15 And He made a scourge of cords, and drove {them} all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen; and He poured out the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables;
- 16 and to those who were selling the doves He said, "Take these things away; stop making My Father's house a place of business."
- 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "ZEAL FOR YOUR HOUSE WILL CONSUME ME."

John 4:20-24

- 20 "Our fathers worshiped in this mountain, and you {people} say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."
- 21 Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.
- 22 "You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.
- 23 "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.
- 24 "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Matt 15:1-9

- 1 Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said,
- 2 "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."
- 3 And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"
- 4 "For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.'
- 5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to {his} father or mother, 'Whatever I have that would help you has been given {to God}' "
- 6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And {by this} you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.
- 7 "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:
- 8 "THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.
- 9 "BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN."

Rom 1:21-25

- 21 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
- 22 Professing to be wise, they became fools,

- 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.
- 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.
- 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

2 Cor 6:16-18

- 16 ...what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.
- 17 "Therefore, COME OUT FROM THEIR MIDST AND BE SEPARATE," says the Lord. "AND DO NOT TOUCH WHAT IS UNCLEAN; and I will welcome you.
- 18 "And I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me," says the Lord Almighty.

Acts 17:16, 22-27

- 16 Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, his spirit was being provoked within him as he was observing the city full of idols...
- 22 So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects.
- 23 "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you.
- 24 "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands;
- 25 nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all {people} life and breath and all things;
- 26 and He made from one {man} every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined {their} appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,
- 27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us...

1Thes 1:8-10

- 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything.
- 9 For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,
- 10 and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, {that is} Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come.

I Jn 5:21

- 21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols.

Rev 9:20

- 20 The rest of mankind, who were not killed by these plagues, did not repent of the works of their hands, so as not to worship demons, and the idols of gold and of silver and of brass and of stone and of wood, which can neither see nor hear nor walk...

I believe it goes without saying, but nevertheless, I will say that false idols, traditions of men, self-made religion (Col. 2:23) and other such superstitions were not tolerated by our Lord and His apostles as they have instructed us in the word. We too need to take a stand. This is not an invitation to run to the nearest Catholic church in order to tear down the statues of Mary and Joseph, but I believe a good place to start is in your own heart.

Are you iconoclastic in the way that you ought to be? Are you willing to reexamine those "cherished beliefs" (see definition again) that you have as you seek to serve the Lord in truth? If you find error in those beliefs, are you willing to change

(transform your minds) to do what is right (that which is good and acceptable and perfect according to the will of God)? I pray and hope so.