

The Nature of Idolatry

We saw in our discussion of Isaiah 6 (chap. 2) that Psalm 115:4-8 (=135:15-18) was an important passage to understand why Isaiah refers to Israel as people who have ears but cannot hear and eyes but cannot see. The relevant portion of the psalm asserts:

- 4 Their idols are silver and gold, The work of man's hands.
- 5 They have mouths, but they cannot speak; They have eyes, but they cannot see;
- 6 They have ears, but they cannot hear; They have noses, but they cannot smell;
- 7 They have hands, but they cannot feel; They have feet, but they cannot walk; They cannot make a sound with their throat.
- 8 Those who make them will become like them, Everyone who trusts in them (Ps 115:4-8)

The conclusion about those who make and worship idols is one of the most explicit keys to understanding the nature of idolatry and what happens to people who commit themselves to worshipping and loving their idols: *“Those who make them [the idols] will become like them [the idols], everyone who trusts in them”* (v. 8) ...

In discussing the second commandment about idolatry, the Hellenistic Jewish philosopher Philo (first century A.D.) discusses the abuse of this commandment by humanity...

Elsewhere he explains that idol makers manufacture their idols in a manner “to promote the seductiveness” and “delusion” of the idols. In particular, “their fine workmanship . . . may enthrall the spectators and so beguile the two leading senses, sight and hearing—sight through lifeless shapes of beauty, hearing through the charm of poetry and music—and thus make the soul unsteady and unsettled and seize it for their prey” (Special Laws 1.28-29).

(We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry by G. K. Beale, Downers Grove, Illinois: IVP Academic, Kindle, 2008, Page 191 & 192 of 525; Text Modified)