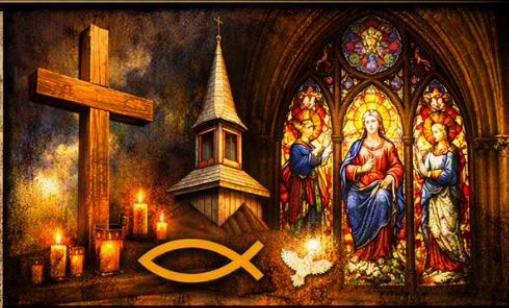


**YAHWEH NEVER ASKED FOR SYMBOLS
WE MADE THEM**



Israel turned objects into identity

*But Yahweh Elohim never
commanded symbols*



Christianity turned symbols into worship

*But Yahweh Elohim never
commanded symbols.*

*Identity comes from **covenant obedience** — not from symbols*



A Publication of
The Old Paths Restoration Ministry

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When Symbols Become Worship

Why Yahweh Defines Worship

by Obedience, Not Imagery

INTRODUCTION: THE SHIFT FROM COVENANT TO SYMBOL

When you walk into almost any house of worship today, or when you look at the jewelry people wear around their necks, or the bumper stickers on their cars, you are surrounded by physical symbols.

In modern Judaism and among Messianic believers, you see the six-pointed star, the stylized menorah on synagogue walls, the decorative hand known as the Hamsa, and ornate metal cases housing mezuzot. In modern Christianity, you see the cross, the fish emblem, church steeples reaching into the sky, painted icons, saintly statues, halos framing the heads of their saints, and decorated trees brought inside during winter celebrations.

Most believers go their entire lives assuming these items were ordained by the Creator Himself. They assume that wearing a cross, hanging a hexagram, or placing a physical mark on a building is an act of devotion that honors their “God”.

But when we open the Scriptures and examine historical records without bias, a very different picture emerges. Yahweh never commanded His people to create visual identity marks, emblems, or symbolic visual aids for personal worship. In fact, He explicitly warned against it.

Across human history, there is a consistent pattern: when human beings fail to rely strictly on the Word of Yahweh, they naturally reach out for physical objects. They take physical events from Scripture, or tools that belonged exclusively to the Levitical Temple, and re-engineer them into badges of identity. Even more frequently, they look at the surrounding pagan nations, take their religious symbols and solstice customs, apply new biblical titles to them, and call it holy. This is primarily evident in the Christian religions, but Judaism also does not escape it’s trappings.

In this teaching we are going to look closely at what Yahweh actually commanded regarding worship, how functional tools differ from invented symbols, where these popular emblems originated historically, and how visual symbols repeatedly act as the gateway into idolatry. The ultimate goal of this teaching is simple: to call Yahweh’s people back to the purity of worship defined in His Word—where active obedience replaces manufactured imagery.

THE FOUNDATIONAL COMMANDS — OBEDIENCE VS. REPRESENTATION

To understand why visual symbols are problematic in worship, we have to go back to the foundational instructions given in the Torah. Yahweh made it unmistakably clear that covenant relationship with Him is built on hearing and doing His voice, not on creating physical representations.

Let us look first at the Second Commandment in Exodus 20:4–5:

"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 or serve them; for I Yahweh your Elohim am a jealous Elohim..."

Notice the opening phrasing: *"You shall not make for yourself."* This instruction directly targets human invention. Yahweh forbids the manufacture of physical objects that act as visual stand-ins for faith or devotion in our worship.

When Israel stood at the base of Mount Sinai, Yahweh took deliberate care to ensure they saw no physical form. Moses reminds the assembly of this exact detail in Deuteronomy 4:15–16:

"Therefore watch yourselves very carefully. Since you saw no form on the day that Yahweh spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, beware lest you act corruptly and make a carved image for yourselves, in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female..."

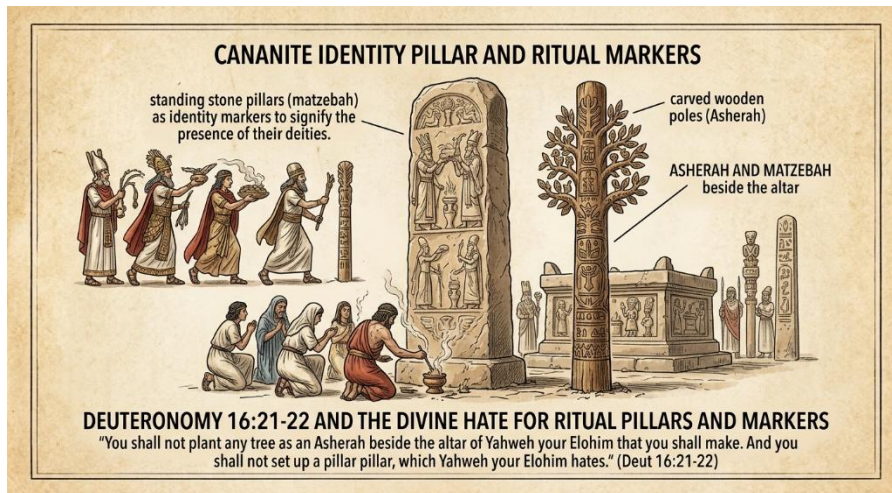
Yahweh intentionally revealed Himself through His spoken words, not through a visible emblem. Why? Because the moment human beings attach their faith to a visual shape, the shape becomes the object of focus.

Furthermore, Yahweh anticipated that Israel would be tempted to look at the religious practices of the surrounding nations and adopt their physical markers. In Deuteronomy 12:30–31, He gives a strict warning against syncretism—the blending of pagan practices with His truth:

"Take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire after their elohim, saying, 'How did these nations serve their elohim?—that I may do likewise.' You shall not worship Yahweh your Elohim in that way."

And in Deuteronomy 16:21–22, Yahweh directly addresses identity pillars and ritual markers:

"You shall not plant any tree as an Asherah beside the altar of Yahweh your Elohim that you shall make. And you shall not set up a pillar, which Yahweh your Elohim hates."



The Canaanites used carved wooden poles (Asherah) and standing stone pillars (matzebah) as identity markers to signify the presence of their deities. Yahweh did not tell Israel to sanitize those standing pillars or dedicate them to Him. He stated plainly

that He hated them.

When King Saul attempted to substitute an outward religious performance for direct obedience, the Prophet Samuel delivered a foundational principle that governs all biblical worship. In 1 Samuel 15:22, he declared:

"Has Yahweh as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of Yahweh? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams."

Yahweh never asked His covenant people to design visual symbols to showcase their piety. He gave them His laws, His Sabbath, and His covenant words to obey.

COMMANDED TOOLS VS. INVENTED SYMBOLS

At this point, a reasonable question arises: Did Yahweh not command certain physical items in the Tanakh?

Yes, He did. But there is an enormous biblical difference between a **functionally commanded tool** and an **invented identity symbol**.

When Yahweh commanded an object in Scripture, it served a specific, practical function tied directly to obedience or sanctuary service. It was never designed to be a personal badge of set apartness, a decorative amulet, or an emblem worn to identify oneself to the culture.

Let us contrast what Yahweh actually commanded against what men later invented.

Commanded Tools (Action and Function)

- **Tzitzit (Tassels):** In Numbers 15:38–39, Yahweh commanded Israel to put tassels on the corners of their daily four-cornered garments with a thread of blue. What was their purpose? Yahweh explicitly states: *"And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of Yahweh, to do them."* The tzitzit were not a symbol representing Yahweh's physical appearance, nor were they a badge of personal righteousness. They were a behavioral prompt—a practical visual reminder for the individual wearing them to keep the commandments throughout the day. But Yahweh did not command a specialized, white-and-blue wool prayer shawl (*tallit*), nor did He command a daily head covering (*kippah* or *yarmulke*).

The large prayer shawl developed historically when European clothing styles changed and everyday garments no longer featured four distinct corners. To continue fulfilling the commandment of tzitzit, religious leaders designed a specialized, dedicated garment specifically to hold the tassels. Likewise, the kippah developed out of post-biblical rabbinic customs in Babylon and medieval Europe, where covering the head became associated with reverence before Elohim and distinction from Gentiles. While there is nothing inherently sinful about wearing a hat, turning a post-biblical cultural custom into a mandatory mark of religious righteousness adds human rules to the Torah.

- **The Shofar (Ram's Horn):** In Leviticus 23:24, the shofar is commanded for the Day of Trumpets (*Yom Teruah*). The shofar is a sound-producing tool used to call assemblies, warn of danger, and announce Yahweh's appointed times. It is an instrument of action, not a static icon meant to be hung on a wall or worn as jewelry.
- **The Temple Menorah:** In Exodus 25:31–40, Yahweh gave detailed specifications for a seven-branched golden lampstand. However, this item was commanded **exclusively** for the internal illumination of the Tabernacle and later the Jerusalem Temple. It was serviced strictly by the Levites inside the set apart Place. Yahweh never commanded common Israelites to fashion mini-menorahs for their living rooms, wear them as lapel pins, or use them as a national crest. We actually own a Menorah, but we do not display it or use it in worship. We use it when necessary as a teaching historical tool when discussing it's usage in the ancient temple worship and the worship under the eventual reign of Messiah when the temple worship will be restored.

- **The Mezuzah (The Written Word):** Deuteronomy 6:9 commands: *"You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."* The instruction centers on the written words of the Torah—specifically the Shema—placed at the entrance of the home so that all who enter are reminded of Yahweh's Torah law. The focus was the scriptural commandment itself, not an elaborate decorative housing. We own a Mezuzah case but ironically we never attached it to our doorposts, as we will see the commandment was not to attach a small case with the scripture within it to our homes at all.

Invented Symbols (Badges and Traditions)

In contrast to these functional scriptural instructions, both historical Judaism and Christianity created a vast catalog of visual items that appear nowhere in the Torah, Prophets, or even in the New Testament writings.

A few examples:

- The Star of David (Hexagram)
- The Latin Cross and Crucifix
- The Ichthys Fish emblem
- The Chi-Rho monogram
- Solar Halos in religious art
- Decorative Hamsa hands
- Rosary beads and prayer counters
- Daily head coverings like the Kippah/Yarmulke treated as divine law
- The stylized Christian church steeple
- The evergreen tree decorated during winter holidays
- Stained glass windows

None of these items and others that we shall see in this teaching, were ever commanded by Yahweh. They are post-biblical inventions, adapted from surrounding cultures, or created by human tradition to serve as visual badges of religious identity.

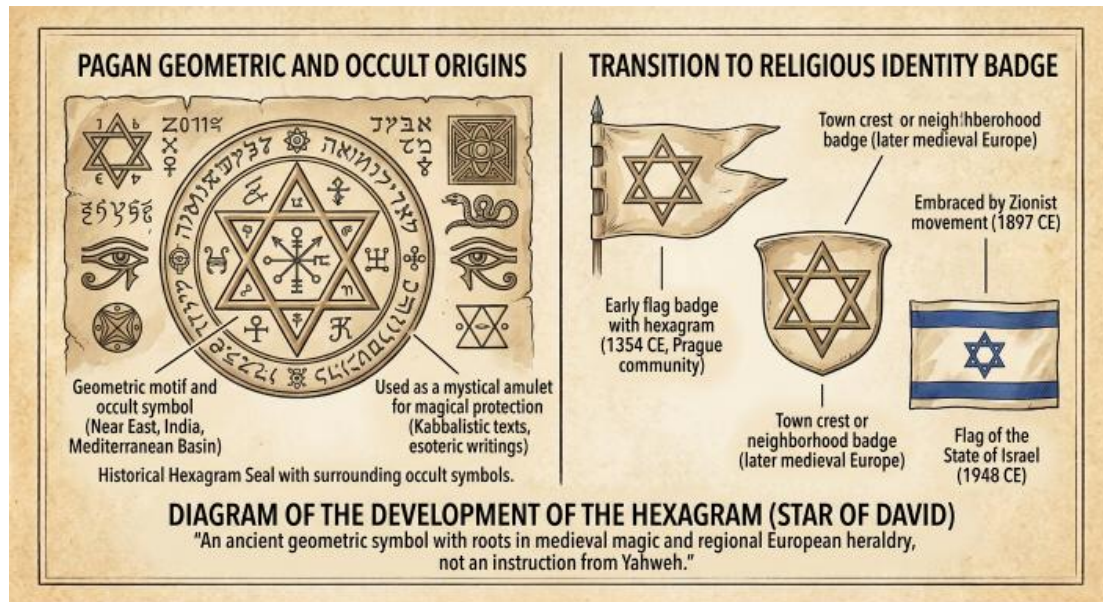
JEWISH SYMBOLS — HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND ANALYSIS

Let us examine the specific historical origins of the primary symbols used within Jewish tradition today.

The Star of David (Magen David)

The six-pointed hexagram—composed of two overlapping equilateral triangles—is universally recognized today as the premier emblem of Judaism and the Jewish people. It flies on the national flag of the State of Israel.

Yet, if you search the Hebrew Scriptures, and from what we have researched, not even the Mishnah, or the Babylonian Talmud, you will find zero mention of the Star of David. It is completely absent from biblical or extra biblical antiquity.



Historically, the six-pointed star was used across the ancient Near East, India, and the Mediterranean basin as a geometric motif and occult symbol. In medieval times, it appeared in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic esoteric writings as the "Seal of Solomon" or the "Shield of David." It was used in Kabbalistic texts as a mystical amulet believed to offer magical protection against evil spirits.

It was not until 1354 CE that King Charles IV of Bohemia granted the Jewish community of Prague the privilege of having their own flag, upon which they placed the hexagram. Over the next several centuries, Jewish communities across Europe adopted the emblem as a town crest or neighborhood badge—similar to how Christian churches used the cross. It was officially embraced by the Zionist movement in 1897 and eventually incorporated into the Israeli flag in 1948.

The historical reality is clear: the six-pointed star is an ancient geometric symbol with roots in medieval magic and regional European heraldry, not an instruction from Yahweh.

The Menorah Used as a Personal Identity Badge

As established, Yahweh commanded the seven-branched golden menorah strictly as sanctuary furniture for the Temple in Jerusalem.

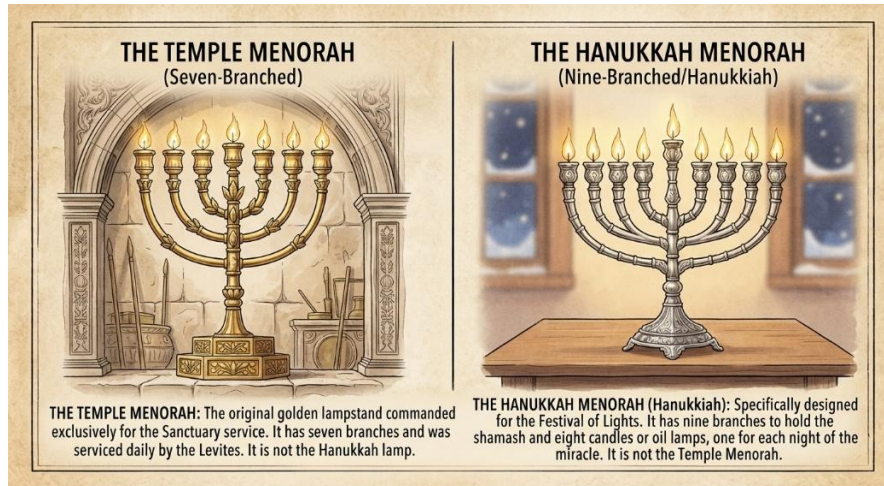
After the destruction of the Second Temple by Roman legions under Titus in 70 CE, the physical menorah was looted and carried to Rome—an event famously carved into the stone of the Arch of Titus. Following the Temple's destruction, ancient rabbinic tradition in



the Talmud (*Bava Kamma 97a*) actually warned against reproducing exact copies of Temple vessels, including the seven-branched menorah. However, over the subsequent centuries, as the Jewish people were dispersed throughout the Roman

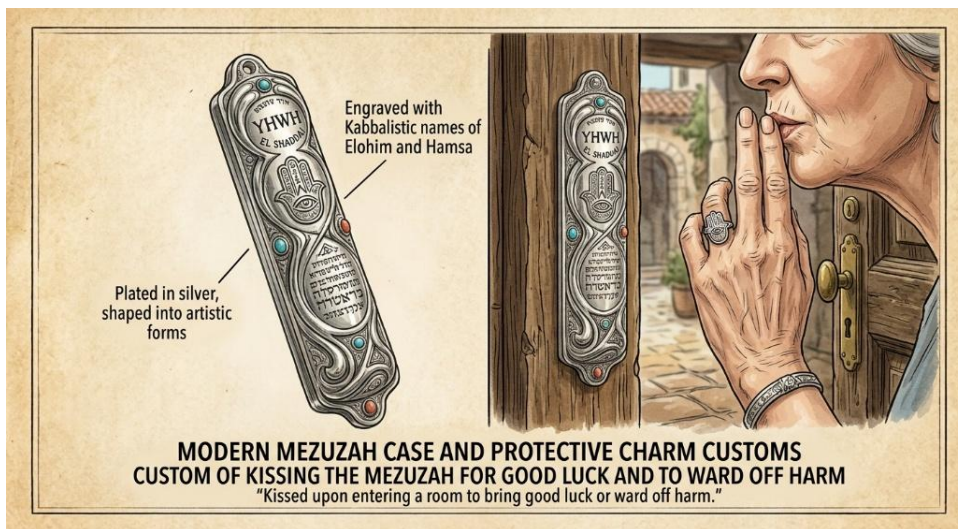
Empire, the image of the seven-branched menorah began appearing on mosaic floors in synagogues, on burial catacombs, and on ancient coins.

While the menorah has a legitimate scriptural origin as a Temple tool, taking a restricted piece of sanctuary furniture—which Yahweh set apart solely for priest-led Temple service—and turning its visual outline into a common badge of identity alters the explicit boundaries Yahweh established in Exodus.



Decorative Mezuzah Cases and Amulets

Deuteronomy 6:9 commands writing the words of Yahweh on the doorposts of the home. The focus of the command is textual and educational: Yahweh's law is to govern the household.



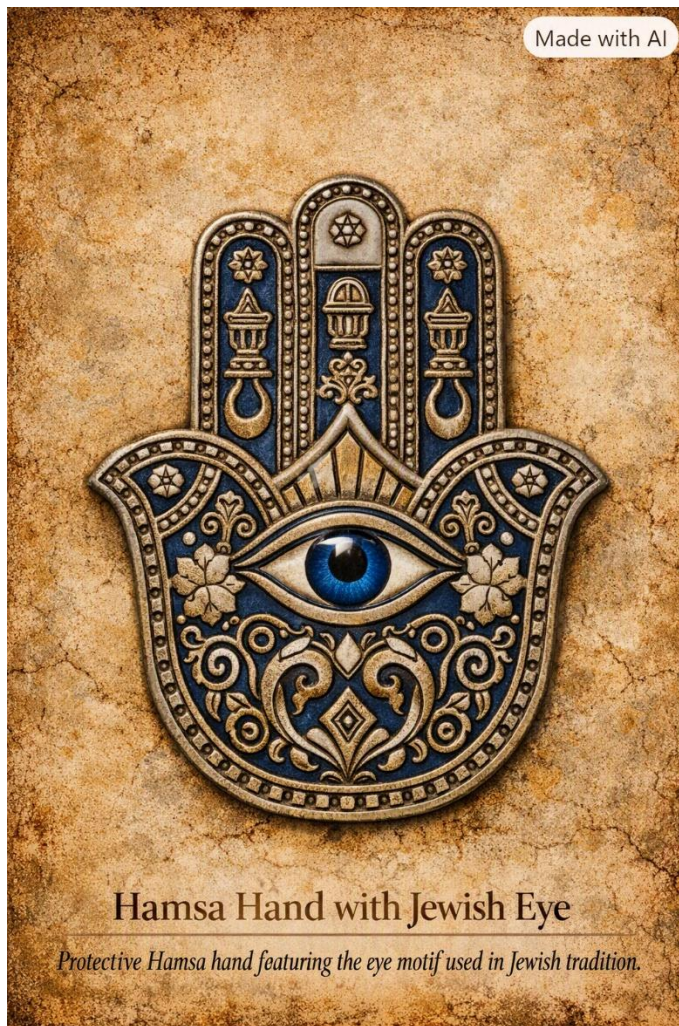
Over time, this straightforward practice evolved into a manufacturing industry centered on the outer case. Although made in many different designs and materials, many modern mezuzah cases are frequently plated in silver, shaped into artistic forms, and

engraved with Kabbalistic names of Elohim or protective symbols like the Hamsa. In many circles, the case itself is treated as a superstitious protective charm—kissed upon entering a room to bring good luck or ward off harm.

When the visual container and the physical ritual eclipse the actual duty of reading and living out the commandments written inside, the item transitions from a scriptural instruction to be applied to the doorposts, into a functional amulet.

The Hamsa (Hand of Miriam)

The Hamsa is an emblem shaped like an open palm, often featuring an eye placed in the center of the hand. It is widely worn as jewelry and hung in homes throughout the Middle East and North Africa by both Jewish and Muslim populations. Historically, the Hamsa originated centuries before Judaism adopted it. It was used in ancient Phoenician, Carthaginian, and Mesopotamian cultures as an apotropaic charm—a superstitious tool designed to ward off the "evil eye" (*ayin hara*) and bring fertility. In Islamic culture, it became known as the "Hand of Fatima," and in Jewish folk tradition, it was re-labeled the "Hand of Miriam."



Yahweh explicitly forbids superstitious charms, divination, and reliance on physical amulets for protection in Deuteronomy 18:10–11:

"There shall not be found among you anyone who... practices divination or tells fortunes or interprets omens, or a sorcerer or a charmer..."

To wear or display a ancient pagan protection hand while claiming covenant loyalty to Yahweh is a direct violation of His Word.

CHRISTIAN SYMBOLS — HISTORICAL ORIGINS AND SYNCRETISM

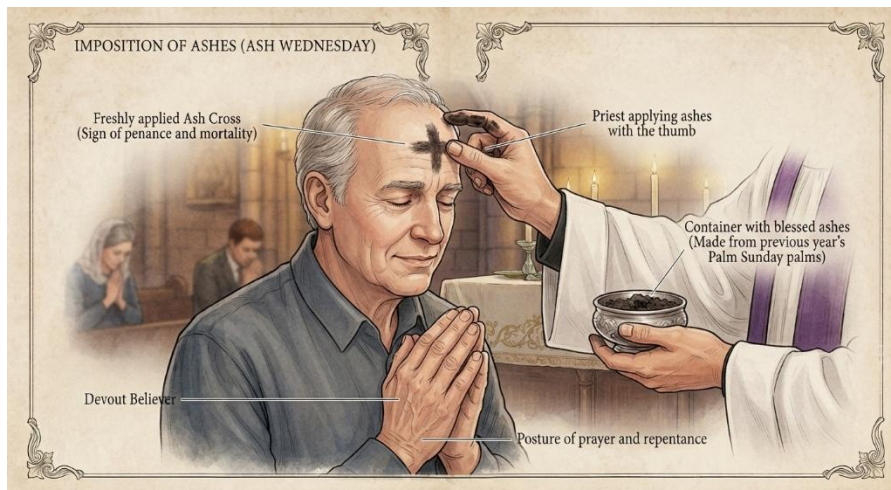
When we examine the history of Christian iconography, we find an identical pattern of taking surrounding cultural symbols, stripping away their original names, and assigning them biblical meanings.



The Cross and Crucifix

Beyond any doubt the most commonly known symbol of Christianity is the Cross. But was it always such an identifying marker among those of the Christian religion? Does it have any connection at all with the Hebrew Scriptures, the Word of Yahweh?

Does He command such an object to be used in worship, or is it pure idolatry when compared with His Torah instruction concerning such objects?



To the modern Christian, the cross is the ultimate symbol of their faith. It sits atop church buildings, hangs in sanctuaries, and is worn around millions of necks, tattooed on the skin, and using ashes it is smeared on the foreheads.

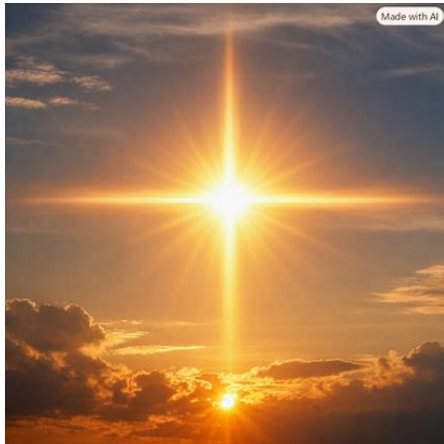
However, historical records confirm that even the earliest followers of Jesus in the first century did not use the cross as a visual emblem. To the first-century mind, the Roman cross (*crux*) was an instrument of terrifying state-sponsored torture and shame. It was an object of horror, not an item to be fashioned into gold jewelry or displayed on walls.



Long before the Roman Empire utilized the cross for executions, cross-shaped symbols were used extensively throughout ancient pagan religions:

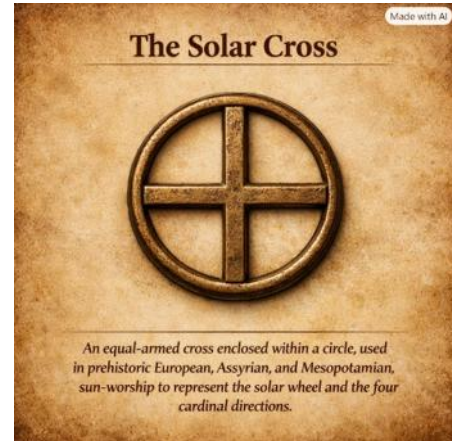
- **The Tau Cross:** Named after the Phoenician and Greek letter *Tau*, this T-shaped emblem was used in ancient Near Eastern religions, including the worship of the Babylonian deity Tammuz.
- **The Ankh:** The ancient Egyptian cross featuring a loop at the top, representing sun energy, eternal life, and fertility.
- **The Solar Cross:** This symbol is a clear example of the cross being used in sun worship and the four seasons of the year and the four cardinal directions that we know today as North, South, East and West.

It was not until the 4th century CE—under the reign of Roman Emperor Constantine—that



the cross began its rapid ascension as an official imperial and church emblem.

Constantine, a lifelong devotee of *Sol Invictus* (the Unconquered Sun) who converted to Christianity on his

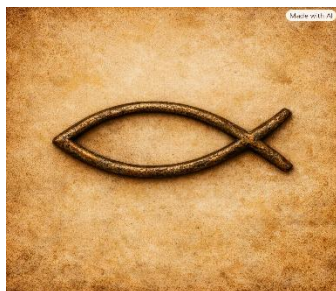


deathbed, claimed to have seen a vision of a cross over the sun before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 CE. Could the depiction above left side, be what Constantine saw? This writer has seen such a cross shaped light rays in the sun, maybe you have also.

The Ichthys (Fish Symbol)

The outline of a simple fish—commonly called the "Jesus Fish"—is frequently seen today on automobiles and business logos. In the 2nd century CE, Greek-speaking Christians created a code-word using the Greek word for fish, *ICHTHYS* (ΙΧΘΥΣ):

- **I** = *Iesous* (Jesus)
- **X** = *Christos* (Christ)
- **Θ** = *Theou* (God's)
- **Υ** = *Yios* (Son)
- **Σ** = *Soter* (Savior)



While this code served as a clever secret password during periods of Roman persecution, the visual icon itself possessed deep roots in pagan antiquity. Across the ancient Mediterranean, the fish shape was associated with pagan fertility goddesses, including the Syrian goddess Atargatis, the Roman goddess Venus, and the fish-god Dagon of the Philistines (mentioned in 1 Samuel 5).

Taking a visual shape steeped in ancient Mediterranean fertility cults and making it an emblem of Christian idolatry mirrors the exact syncretism Yahweh condemned in Deuteronomy 12.

Steeples — Pagan Pillars Adopted Into Christian Symbolism

Most Christians see a steeple as harmless architecture — a pretty point on a church. But steeples carry **ancient symbolic meanings** that stand in direct conflict with Torah. They are one of the clearest examples of how religious traditions adopt the symbols of the



nations and then forget where they came from.

Steeples as Ancient Fertility Pillars

Long before Christianity existed, cultures across the Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Rome built **tall upright pillars** as part of fertility worship. These structures symbolized:

- male sexual power
- generative force
- virility of the gods
- the union of heaven and earth through sexual potency

These pillars were often connected to the worship of **Baal, Asherah**, and other fertility deities. They were not neutral architecture — they were **ritual objects**.

Torah's stance is explicit and severe:

"You shall not set up a pillar, which Yahweh your Elohim hates." Deut. 16:22

A church steeple — visually and symbolically — mirrors the very structures Torah condemns.

Steeples as Solar Pointers

The second meaning is equally ancient and equally problematic.

Steeples were historically designed to **point toward the sun**, symbolizing:

- connection to the sky deity
- aspiration toward the heavens
- alignment with solar worship

- the rising sun as divine presence

This comes from **heliolatry** — sun worship — where tall spires were built to honor the sun deity. Later Christian architecture absorbed this symbolism, especially in Europe, where steeples were intentionally aligned with:

- sunrise
- solstice light
- solar orientation of cathedrals

Torah forbids adopting symbols tied to the worship of heavenly bodies:

“Beware lest you lift up your eyes to heaven... and be drawn away to worship them.” Deut. 4:19

A steeple pointing heavenward is not a Torah symbol — it is a **solar symbol** inherited from pagan architecture.

How Steeples Became “Christian”

Steeple entered Christian architecture **centuries after** their apostles, during the blending of:

- Roman imperial architecture
- Germanic sky-god symbolism
- Medieval solar iconography
- European fertility pillar traditions

Over time, the church forgot the origins and simply treated steeples as “holy” or “traditional.” But tradition does not erase origin.

Steeple show how easily **uncommanded symbols** become normalized in religion — even when their roots contradict Torah.

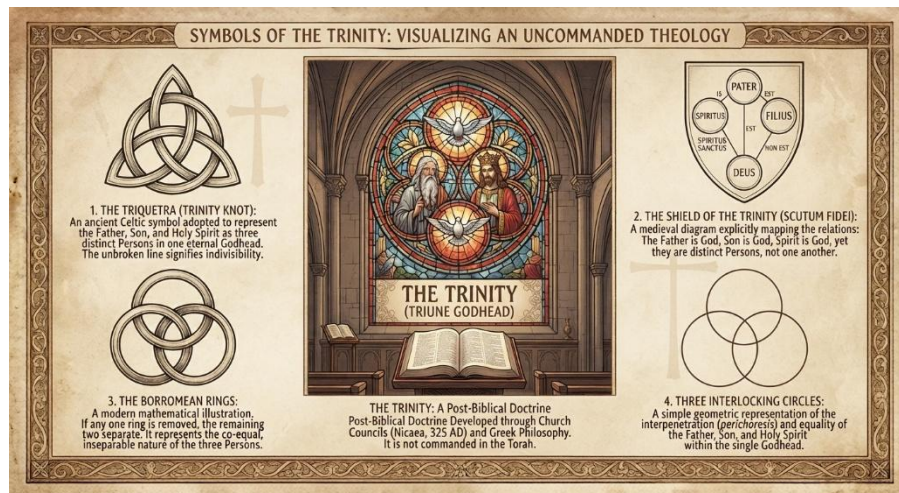
Steeple are a perfect case study:

- They began as **pagan fertility pillars**.
- They evolved into **solar spires** pointing to the sun deity.
- They were adopted into **Christian architecture** as identity markers.
- Today they are seen as “holy,” though Torah forbids their symbolic roots.

Steeple demonstrate how religion drifts when it replaces **commanded obedience** with **borrowed symbols**.

Steeple are not biblical. They come from fertility worship and sun symbolism. When Christianity adopted them, it adopted the symbols of the nations — the very thing Torah warns Israel never to do.

Trinity symbols:



The Triquetra (Trinity Knot):

- **Description:** An ancient Celtic symbol, pre-dating Christianity, consisting of three interwoven arcs. In a Christian context, the three points are often said to represent the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, while the continuous, unbroken line signifies their eternal and indivisible nature.
- **Usage:** It is widely used in Christian art, jewelry, and architecture as a concise representation of the tri-unity.

The Shield of the Trinity (Scutum Fidei):

- **Description:** A classic diagrammatic shield shape found in medieval Western Christianity. It consists of four central points (labeled "Pater" - Father, "Filius" - Son, "Spiritus Sanctus" - Holy Spirit, and "Deus" - God) connected by lines. The lines connecting the Persons to "Deus" are labeled "EST" (is), while the lines connecting the Persons to each other are labeled "NON EST" (is not).
- **Usage:** This is the most precise theological definition in visual form, explicitly mapping out the relationships: The Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, yet they are distinct Persons and not one another.

The Borromean Rings:

- **Description:** A set of three rings arranged so that if any one of the rings is removed, the remaining two will fall apart. They are not linked in pairs (like a standard chain), but are all mutually interdependent.
- **Usage:** In modern theology, this has become a powerful illustration of the Trinity, emphasizing that while the three Persons are distinct, they are co-equal and inseparable; the removal of one would negate the existence of the triune Godhead.

The Fleur-de-Lis:

- **Description:** A stylized lily or iris, long associated with French royalty and purity. While primarily a royal emblem, it was also adopted in Christian art to symbolize the Trinity, with its three petals representing the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit bound by the central band.

Three Interlocking Circles:

- **Description:** A simple geometric pattern of three circles, where each overlaps with the other two.
- **Usage:** This is a fundamental representation of the interpenetration (*perichoresis*) and equality of the three Persons, often found in stained glass and church art.

Including these symbols in this teaching demonstrates that the Trinity is not only a post-biblical theological construction but also required the creation of a parallel system of uncommanded visual symbols to sustain belief in it. We believe we should agree with the Hebrew Scriptures: **Isaiah 45:5**: *"I am Yahweh, and there is no other; besides Me there is no Elohim."*

The Evergreen Tree and Winter Solstice Rites

Perhaps no symbol illustrates the process of "christianizing" pagan customs more clearly than the evergreen tree.

Long before the supposed birthdate of Christ, ancient European peoples—including the Romans during the feast of Saturnalia, the Scandinavian Norse, and the Druids of Britain—brought evergreen boughs indoors during the dark days of the Winter Solstice (late December). Because evergreen trees remained green while all other vegetation appeared dead, they were viewed as powerful symbols of life, fertility, and the eventual rebirth of the sun god which was repurposed as the birth of the son of god by Christianity.

In Jeremiah 10:2–4, Yahweh explicitly warned Israel against adopting forest-greenery rituals from the surrounding nations:

"Thus says Yahweh: 'Learn not the way of the nations, nor be dismayed at the signs of the heavens because the nations are dismayed at them, for the customs of the peoples are vanity. A tree from the forest is cut down and worked with an axe by the hands of a craftsman. They decorate it with silver and gold; they fasten it with hammer and nails so that it cannot move.'"

Cutting trees, bringing them inside, and plating them with gold and silver was a standard custom of pagan solstice worship.



During the Middle Ages in Western Europe, the church absorbed these local winter solstice customs. In 16th-century Germany, the practice was formalized as the "Christmas Tree." To make the pagan custom acceptable to believers, leaders assigned new theological meanings to every part of the tree:

- The evergreen nature was re-interpreted to represent eternal life in Christ.
- The triangular shape of the fir tree was used to explain the Trinity.
- Candles were added to represent Christ as the "Light of the World."
- Red glass ornaments (which replaced red apples originally used in medieval plays) were re-interpreted as the fruit of the garden of Eden or the blood of Christ. But they may also have been representative of the sun.
- The star placed on top was re-labeled the Star of Bethlehem.

Despite these layered biblical explanations, the root of the practice remains unchanged: it is an uncommanded, adopted pagan custom that Yahweh explicitly told His people not to learn or practice.

The Hanukkah Bush — When Israel Borrows the Nations' Symbols

Before addressing the Hanukkah bush, we must state the foundational fact:

Hanukkah is not commanded by Yahweh Elohim in the Torah. It is a **post-biblical national holiday**, created during the Maccabean period to commemorate military victory and the rededication of the Temple.

It is not listed among:

- Passover and Unleavened Bread
- Shavuot/Pentecost
- Yom Teruah/Feast of Trumpet, Shofar
- Yom Kippur/Day of Atonement
- Sukkot/Feast of Booths or Tabernacles
- Shemini Atzeret/the Last Great Day or the eight day of the Feast
- The weekly 7th day Shabbath

Hanukkah is a **Jewish cultural celebration**, not a covenant festival.

This matters because symbols attached to Hanukkah are **not rooted in Yahweh's commands**, but in **later tradition** — which makes the Hanukkah bush even more relevant to this teaching.

A Modern Symbol: The Hanukkah Bush

In recent generations, especially in North America, some Jewish families have adopted a new holiday symbol: the **Hanukkah bush** — a decorated evergreen tree used during Hanukkah.

It often resembles a Christmas tree, but decorated with:

- blue and white ornaments,
- Stars of David,
- menorah-themed decorations,
- or Jewish cultural motifs.

This practice is **not ancient, not traditional, and not rooted in Torah**. It is a modern example of Israel borrowing symbols from surrounding nations.

Origins: Assimilation, Not Revelation



The Hanukkah bush emerged in the **late 19th century** and grew more common in the **mid-20th century**, especially among Jews living in predominantly Christian societies.

Its rise is tied to:

- assimilation pressure,
- children wanting what their peers have,
- treating the tree as a “secular winter symbol,”
- blending Hanukkah with American holiday aesthetics.

In other words, the symbol did not arise from Yahweh’s commands — it arose from **cultural influence**.

This mirrors the biblical pattern: Israel repeatedly adopted the symbols of the nations around them, even when Yahweh Elohim had not commanded them.

Jewish and Rabbinic Responses

Reactions vary:

- **Orthodox Judaism** generally rejects the Hanukkah bush as assimilationist.
- **Reform and liberal Conservative Judaism** often treat it as harmless cultural expression.
- **Secular Jews** may use it simply as festive decoration.

- **Non Rabbinic Karaite Jews** Traditional Karaite Judaism rejects Hanukkah because it is not commanded in the Torah; Karaites strictly adhere to the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) as the sole supreme authority for religious law and do not recognize post-biblical historical holidays and therefore would not accept the Hanukkah bush either.

But regardless of interpretation, the restorationist point remains:

It is a symbol created by tradition, not by Torah.

The Hanukkah bush is a perfect modern example of the broader truth this teaching exposes: **Israel creates symbols. Christianity creates symbols. Both borrow from surrounding cultures. Neither pattern reflects the commands of Yahweh Elohim.**

Just as Christianity adopted:

- the cross,
- the steeple,
- the monstrance,
- communion bread and wine as ritual objects,
- the dove logo,
- the fish symbol,
- The Christmas tree,

modern Judaism has adopted:

- the Star of David as a national emblem,
- the menorah as an identity symbol,
- the mezuzah as a protective object,
- and now, in some circles, **the Hanukkah bush** — a symbol borrowed from Christmas culture.

None of these symbols define covenant faithfulness. None were commanded by Yahweh Elohim. None make Israel *kodesh* — set apart.

The Restorationist Conclusion

The Hanukkah bush is not the problem. It is simply **another example** of a deeper issue:

Human beings continually create symbols to express identity, even when Yahweh Elohim never commanded them.

This teaching purpose is to call people back to the simplicity of Torah:

- **No borrowed symbols.**
- **No invented rituals.**
- **No cultural substitutes.**
- **Only obedience.**

Because Yahweh Elohim never defined His people by symbols — He defined them by covenant faithfulness.

Halos (Nimbuses) in Religious Art

In medieval paintings, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox artists depicted Jesus, Mary, angels, and saints with glowing circular disks of light behind their heads, known as halos or nimbuses.



Where did this visual tradition originate? It did not come from the Hebrew text or even the Greek Apostolic writings.

Centuries before the common era, Persian, Hellenistic Greek, and Roman artists used the radiant halo to depict sun deities. Roman coins struck during the reigns of emperors like Sol Invictus and Apollo show the solar disk radiating light from behind the emperor's head.



When Christianity became the state religion of Rome, imperial court artists adapted this solar iconography and applied it to biblical figures to signal divinity and spiritual status. And so the Halos are depictions of the sun's rays or even the halo that sometimes appears around the sun when the atmospheric conditions produce such a phenomenon.

Stained Glass — Sunlight Turned into Symbol

Stained glass windows are among the most admired features of Christian architecture, yet their beauty hides a deeper symbolism. They were designed to **capture sunlight**, refract it into color, and fill the sanctuary with radiant light — a practice rooted not in Torah, but in **solar mysticism**.



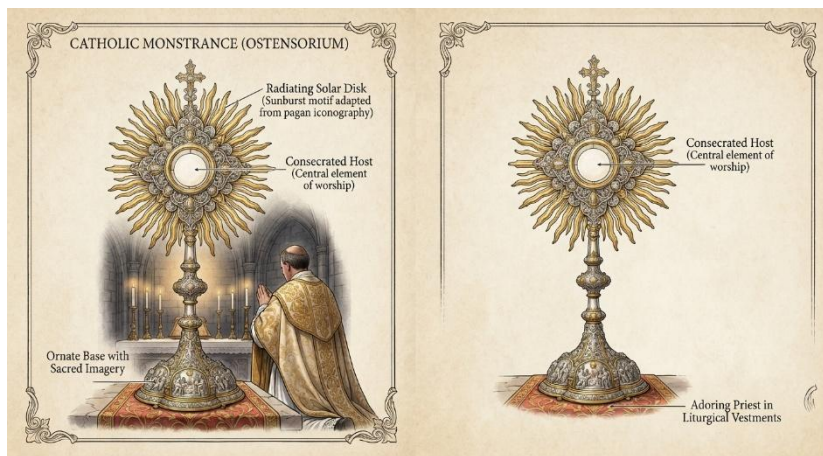
In medieval theology, sunlight streaming through colored glass was seen as **divine illumination**, a way to make the building itself glow with “holy light.” But Torah never commands worship through light or color. It commands obedience, not atmosphere.

The light of the sun is creation’s servant, not a symbol of set apartness. When sunlight becomes the medium of worship, the building itself becomes a solar temple.

Stained glass turns the **sun’s rays into spiritual experience**, replacing the simplicity of Torah’s worship with aesthetic emotion — beautiful, but uncommanded.

The Monstrance: The large, ornate, sunburst-shaped receptacle used in Roman Catholic worship to display the consecrated Eucharistic host (the communion wafer) during adoration.

The Lunette or Luna: The crescent-shaped glass holder inside the center of the monstrance that securely holds the wafer. **Solar Iconography:** The striking visual resemblance to an ancient



sunburst or solar disk is not coincidental; historians and art scholars note that it heavily mirrors the traditional golden rays of *Sol Invictus*, (the Unconquered Sun) and ancient pagan sun worship motifs, adapted into Catholic liturgy during the medieval period to signify divine light and the presence of Christ.

Bread, Wine, and the Symbols We Created

The Torah Pattern: Passover and Unleavened Bread

In the Torah, bread and wine are never treated as ritual objects or sacred symbols. They are food within a commanded festival — nothing more, nothing less.

- Matzah is eaten for seven days as a sign of haste and deliverance.
- Wine is a normal part of celebration, never a symbol of blood.
- No object is lifted, adored, displayed, or transformed.
- No ritual is commanded around the bread or the wine.
- No priest treats them as sacred items.

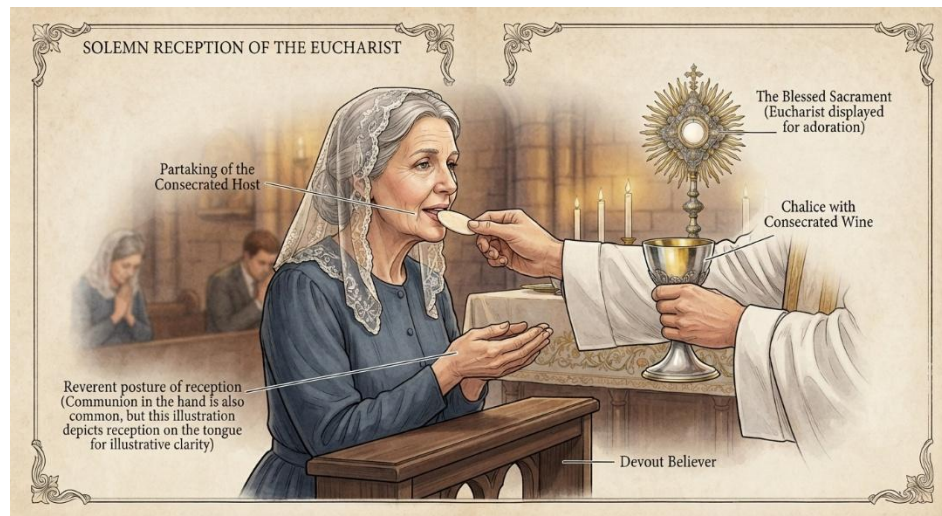
Yahweh Elohim defines the festival by obedience, not by symbolic objects.

The meaning comes from doing what He commanded — not from assigning spiritual symbolism to the food.

Catholic Symbolism: The Monstrance and the Eucharistic Host

Catholic tradition transforms bread and wine into ritual symbols:

- The host is elevated, displayed, and adored.
- The monstrance becomes a sacred object designed to hold and present the host.
- The bread is believed to become the body of Christ.
- The wine is believed to become His blood.
- The ritual centers on objects, not on a commanded festival.



This is not the Torah pattern. It is a symbolic system created by tradition, not by Yahweh Elohim.

Protestant Symbolism: Communion Bread and the Cup

Protestant Christianity rejects the Catholic transformation, but keeps the symbols:

- The bread becomes a symbol of Christ's body.
- The cup becomes a symbol of His blood.
- The ritual becomes a memorial ceremony, repeated often throughout the year.
- The objects are treated with reverence, blessing, and ritual significance.

Again — this is not the Torah pattern. It is a symbolic reinterpretation, not a commanded festival.

The Core Restorationist Point

Both Catholic and Protestant branches of Christianity created symbols out of bread and wine — either by transforming them (Catholic) or by memorializing them (Protestant).

But Yahweh Elohim never commanded:

- symbolic bread,
- symbolic wine,
- ritual objects,
- or ceremonies built around them.

He commanded Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread — a festival of deliverance, not a ritual of symbolic body and blood.

The bread and wine were never symbols. They were never sacred objects. They were never identity markers. They were simply part of a set-apart festival defined by obedience.

Bread and wine are one of the clearest examples of how tradition replaces obedience, and how symbols replace the simplicity of Yahweh's commands.

But that being said, similar traditions have infiltrated Judaism as well that are not in Yahweh's Torah instructions. These were added Torah being practiced by certain sects of Judaism and also in Messianic/Hebrew Roots groups.

The Challah Cover and Kiddush Cup: Domestic Traditions

While the Torah commands the observance of the weekly Sabbath, it never commands the use of specialized decorative objects, nor does it institute a formal blessing over wine (*Kiddush*) or



specific braided loaves (*Challah*) for the Sabbath meal. Yet, in modern Jewish practice, the Sabbath table is defined by a distinct set of physical artifacts:

- **The Challah Cover:** An ornate, often embroidered cloth used to cover the bread before the meal. While

developed through later rabbinic customs, the elaborate velvet or silk cover has become a standard badge of domestic religious identity and a centerpiece of household display.

- **The Kiddush Cup:** A specialized, highly decorated silver or metal goblet used for ritual drinking during Sabbath and festival meals. While Scripture records general thanksgiving, it never instituted a specific sacred vessel required for the home.

Over the centuries, these domestic items evolved from everyday practices into cultural and religious identity markers. Just as ancient temple items were re-engineered, dining traditions were wrapped in uncommanded visual and artistic customs, turning domestic tableware into permanent symbols of modern religious life.

The Heavens — Created Lights, Not Spiritual Symbols

Torah gives the **sun, moon, and stars** a clear purpose: they are **created lights**, servants of creation, marking days, seasons, and appointed times. They are never given to Israel as **symbols of worship**, identity, or spiritual meaning.



“Beware lest you lift up your eyes to heaven... and be drawn away to worship them.” (*Deut. 4:19*)

Yet throughout history — Ancient Israel and even in modern Christianity — these heavenly bodies quietly slip into religious symbolism.

They became symbols of worship among many religions.

☀ The Sun

Used in Christian tradition through:

- Birth of the Sun deities near the winter solstice
- sunrise services
- Sunday as the “Lord’s Day” and very possibly “Baal’s day”
- radiant halos in art
- steeples pointing heavenward
- stained-glass designed to catch sunlight

Torah’s concern: The sun is a **servant**, not a symbol. When it becomes part of worship aesthetics, it drifts toward the very idolatrous practices Torah warns against.

🌙 The Moon

Used in modern spirituality through:

- fascination with blood moons and eclipses by prophetic ministries and their followers
- prophetic speculation about lunar events
- mystical symbolism in jewelry and art

Torah's concern: The moon marks **months and moedim**, not mystical meaning. Turning it into a spiritual sign replaces obedience with cosmic sentiment.

☀️ The Stars

Used today through:

- astrology-style prophecy
- obsession with eclipses, alignments, and “signs in the heavens”
- star imagery in religious art and logos

Torah's concern: Stars are **signs for seasons**, not fate. When they become spiritual indicators, fascination becomes a form of reverence.

Even days of the week are named after heathen deities and several days are named after the Sun, Moon and a planet which were also worshiped as deities. Can you figure out which ones?

Praying Hands and Gestures: From Ancient Posture to Superstitious Artifact

The physical posture of prayer has similarly undergone a transformation from an active bodily stance into a static, commercialized symbol.



In the Hebrew Scriptures, true prayer and supplication involved physical actions directed straight to Yahweh: lifting up hands toward heaven, kneeling, or bowing face down on the earth. There was no prescribed hand geometry or standardized mudra required to make a prayer effective.

However, in medieval Catholic tradition, the practice of pressing two open palms together with fingers pointing upward was popularized—partly adapted from mediaeval customs where a vassal placed his hands inside those of his lord to pledge allegiance and vassalage.

Over time, these "praying hands" were extracted from the posture of prayer and turned into a visual icon. Some believe the two hands with fingers pointing upward has a connection with sun worship.

Today, stylized praying hands are cast in metal, stamped onto jewelry, framed on plaques, worn as amulets and used as emojis, as if the physical sketch of the hands carries intrinsic spiritual merit or protective power.

When a posture of humble human supplication is turned into a manufactured emblem or a good-luck charm, the focus shifts away from the living Elohim who hears prayer and onto a static piece of religious art.

Carved Images, relics and Statues: The Transition from Idol to Icon

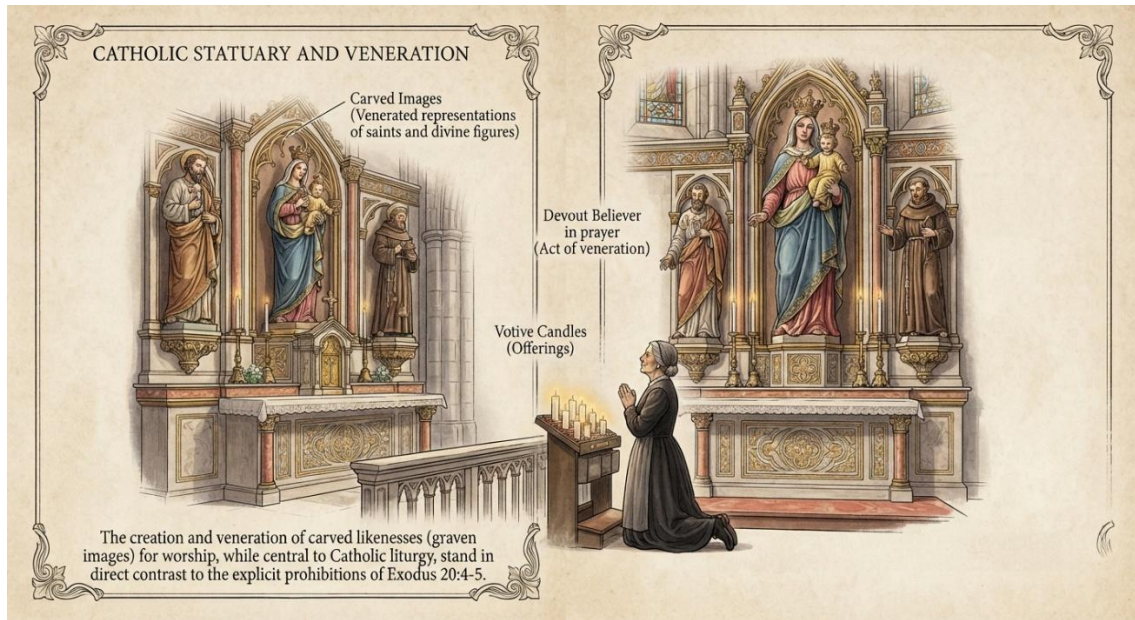
The inclusion of statues and carved likenesses strikes directly at the most explicit prohibition in the Torah regarding physical representations in worship. While modern Protestantism largely moved away from three-dimensional imagery, Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy integrated statuary into the core of their liturgical life.

- **The Direct Prohibition:** Exodus 20:4–5 is unambiguous: *"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... You shall not bow down to them nor serve them."*
- **Catholic Statuary and Veneration:** In Catholic practice, statues of Jesus, Mary, and various saints are placed in prominent positions within sanctuaries and homes or yard ornaments. While official theology distinguishes between *latria* (adoration due to the Most High Elohim alone) and *dulia* (veneration given to saints), critics and historians note that the physical act of kneeling, kissing, burning candles before, and processing through streets with carved figures mirrors ancient pagan devotional mechanics.



Catholic Saint Agatha and her relic being venerated. Venerate - to regard with reverential respect or with admiring deference; to honor (an icon, a relic, etc.) with a ritual act of devotion. Synonyms: revere, worship, adore. Origin: the word comes from the Latin verb *venerārī*, which can mean "to solicit the good will of," "to worship," "to pay homage to," and "to hold in awe."

- **The Bridge to Modern Symbols:** Statues represent the heavier, physical phase of uncommanded religious expression. As religious practices modernized, bulky stone and wood carvings were streamlined into portable medals, stained-glass portraits, and eventually digital icons and emojis—retaining the psychological function of visual attachment while changing form.



Examining statues exposes the core tension of this entire teaching: the human impulse to rely on physical, tangible anchors rather than an invisible, uncompromised relationship with Yahweh's direct instructions.

Angels as Symbols in Christianity

Christianity often turns **angels** into symbols far beyond anything found in Torah. In Scripture, angels are **messengers** — servants of Yahweh Elohim who carry out His will. They are never objects of devotion, identity, or fascination. They do not function as spiritual mascots, protectors, or sentimental figures. They are **Messengers, Not Personal**



Protectors: In the Tanakh, angels (*malakhim*) function strictly as divine messengers, executing specific instructions or carrying out judgments for Yahweh. They are never described as assigned "guardian angels" tasked with the continuous, individual protection of human beings. There is an **Absence of Patronage:** While Psalm 91:11 states that Yahweh will command His angels

concerning the righteous to guard them in all their ways, this describes direct intervention by divine agents under Yahweh's command—not the popular Christian concept of a permanent, personal guardian spirit or intermediary assigned to an individual soul.

There is a **Functional Distinction**: Unlike the developed angelology of later Christianity—which categorizes angels into distinct hierarchies (such as archangels, principalities, and personal guardians)—the Tanakh treats heavenly beings primarily as functional agents of Yahweh's will, whose identities are rarely even named (with occasional exceptions like Gabriel or Michael in late prophetic literature).

Yet in Christian tradition, angels frequently become **symbols**:

- **Guardian angel figurines** used as protective charms
- **Angel statues** placed in homes, churches, and cemeteries
- **Winged angel imagery** on jewelry, clothing, and décor
- **Cherub art** used as sentimental or romantic symbols
- **Angelic icons** treated as spiritual intermediaries
- **Angel-themed holidays, crafts, and children's stories** that reshape their biblical role

These symbols often reflect **infatuation**, sentimentality, or a desire for supernatural comfort — not the biblical function of angels. In many cases, angels become **identity markers** or **spiritual decorations**, filling the same symbolic role as crosses, doves, halos, or other Christian imagery.

In Torah and the Prophets, angels never serve as symbols of worship. They appear only when Yahweh sends them, and they never draw attention to themselves. When Christianity elevates angel imagery into symbolic or devotional objects, it repeats the same pattern seen throughout religious history: **turning created beings into symbols Yahweh never commanded.**

Modern Emojis: Emotional Symbols and Ancient Fertility Roots

In modern communication, emotional symbols—most notably the stylized heart shape (♥) and digital emojis—dominate our daily messaging, clothing, and religious greeting cards. Most people assume the geometric heart shape for example, represents the human anatomical heart or a pure expression of divine love.



Historically, however, the stylized heart shape has deep roots in antiquity that have nothing to do with biblical truth. The shape traces back to ancient fertility motifs, the seed pods of the silphium plant (used in ancient Greece and Rome as an aphrodisiac and birth control), and symbolic representations of sacred union in pagan Mediterranean cults. Over centuries of European folklore and heraldry, these secular, romantic, and fertility-based shapes were absorbed into popular culture and eventually retrofitted with Christian sentiments regarding "the heart of Jesus" or Christian love as is also revealed in the pagan Valentine's day narratives.

Furthermore, the explosion of modern digital emojis has created a vast, unconscious vocabulary of modern idolatries and human inventions. From stylized clover leaves and good-luck charms to hand gestures rooted in ancient pagan sign language, humanity constantly generates new visual shortcuts to express identity, emotion, and allegiance.

When Israel or anyone adopts these modern symbols without discernment, they participate in a continuous, modern extension of the very syncretism Yahweh warned them against: taking the customs, shapes, and emotional expressions of the surrounding secular culture and baptizing them with Christian or religious terminology.

There is an idea that gained traction largely from a psychological hypothesis put forward by a professor who suggested that the twin-lobed heart shape mirrors the rounded hemispheres of a woman's behind viewed from behind, pointing out that the symbol bears no physical resemblance to an actual anatomical human heart. Proponents of this theory connect it to ancient Greco-Roman fertility concepts and the heavy emphasis placed on bodily curves in classical art.

While the "female anatomy" theory offers an edgy explanation for why a symbol of "love and passion" doesn't look like a real blood-pumping organ, historians emphasize that there is no written paper trail from the Middle Ages proving that artists intended it to represent human curves. It remains one of several competing theories about an ancient shape whose exact origin is lost to history.

But there are also many icons and emojis used in our day. Our cell phones and computers gives us many options to choose from. These are also found to be available in sticker format. We have just about every emoji that one could possibly think of.

In our age, religion has shrunk down to icons on a screen. Crosses, stars, candles, hearts, doves, trees, and even sunrises are turned into **digital symbols of faith**. These emojis feel harmless, but they quietly **replace commanded obedience with visual identity and emotional spirituality**.

Below is a catalog of common emojis that people connect to **Christianity or Judaism**, with a short explanation and a warning where they depart from Torah. You might know of others.

Some examples of Explicit “religious” symbols

✝ Latin Cross, 🛤 Orthodox Cross, ☩ Jerusalem Cross, ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ ✚ etc.,

- **Depiction:** Central Christian identity; crucifixion, salvation, church tradition.
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - Not commanded by Yahweh; no cross symbol in Tanakh.

- Becomes a **logo of religion**, not a call to covenant obedience.
- Easily turns suffering and execution into a **brand**, not repentance.

Star of David, **Dotted six-pointed star**

- **Depiction:** Jewish identity, Israel, “Davidic” symbolism, mystical hexagram.
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - No command in Torah to use this shape as a covenant sign.
 - Medieval and mystical usage, not Mosaic.
 - When the star becomes the **center of identity**, Torah obedience becomes optional decoration.

Menorah

- **Depiction:** Temple menorah, Jewish holidays, “light of God.”
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - The menorah was **sent apart furniture**, commanded for Mishkan/Temple—not a general symbol. To be used only for Temple use and worship.
 - Turning it into an icon detaches it from its commanded context and set apartness.

Prayer beads

- **Depiction:** Rosary, meditative prayer, spiritual focus.
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - Torah does not command bead-based prayer systems.
 - Risks turning prayer into **ritual technique** instead of covenant conversation.

Dove

- **Depiction:** Holy Spirit, peace, purity, “God’s presence.”
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - Torah never authorizes animals as **ongoing spiritual logos**.
 - Risks turning the Spirit into a **gentle aesthetic** instead of conviction.

 **Lamb Emoji Depiction:** Innocence, gentleness, sacrifice, the Christian “Lamb of God,” purity, pastoral peace.

Why people use it: Christians often use the lamb emoji to symbolize Jesus, sacrifice, redemption, or “gentle spirituality.” Jews may use it in Passover contexts, or simply as a pastoral symbol.

Where the Lamb Emoji Departs from Torah

- **Torah never turns the lamb into a symbol.** In Torah, a lamb is **an actual animal**, used in a specific commanded event — not a logo, not an identity marker, not a spiritual metaphor to be stylized or sentimentalized.
- **The lamb’s meaning is tied to obedience, not imagery.** The Passover lamb is about **doing what Yahweh commanded originally**: selecting, slaughtering, roasting, eating, applying blood. Turning it into a cute emoji strips away the weight of obedience and replaces it with **aesthetic spirituality**. It becomes an idolatrous symbol when using in it conjunction of another deity other than Yahweh.
- **Emojis turn sacrifice into sentiment.** The lamb emoji communicates *softness, gentleness, cuteness*. Torah’s lamb communicates **blood, death, and deliverance**. The emoji replaces covenant reality with emotional softness. Most of Christianity do not realize that the lamb could be almost a year old when used for Passover. A one-year-old lamb is pretty much a full grown animal, not some little infant, baby lammy!
- **It encourages symbolic religion instead of lived faith.** When people use  to represent “faith,” “Jesus,” or “Passover,” they often substitute **symbolic expression** for **actual obedience**. Torah warns repeatedly against replacing commanded acts with symbolic substitutes.

The lamb in Torah is not a symbol — it is a command. The lamb emoji is not dangerous, but it is deceptive: it turns obedience into imagery, and imagery into identity. Torah calls us to covenant action, not digital icons.

 **Fish Emoji Depiction:** Early Christian symbol (ichthys), “followers of Jesus,” evangelism (“fishers of men”), spiritual life, baptism.

Why people use it:

- Christians use the fish as a shorthand for **Jesus, faith, or Christian identity**—often as a logo on cars, posts, and profiles.
- Sometimes it’s used for “spiritual depth” or “living water” themes.

Where the Fish Emoji Departs from Torah

- **Torah never commands a fish symbol.** In Tanakh, fish are **creatures**, part of creation and dietary law—not covenant logos, not identity marks, not worship symbols.
- **The “ichthys” tradition is post-biblical.** The Christian fish symbol develops **after** Scripture, as a coded identity mark. It’s a human tradition, not a divine command—another case where **logo replaces obedience**.
- **It turns calling into branding.** “Fishers of men” in the New Testament and according to Christianity, is about **actual discipleship and teaching**, not graphic design. Using 🐟 as a brand for “evangelism” can reduce the call to **real, costly discipleship** into **digital self-labeling**.
- **It encourages symbolic belonging instead of covenant faithfulness.** When someone posts 🐟 to show “I’m a believer,” the danger is that **identity is claimed by symbol**, not by **Torah-shaped life**. Torah consistently warns against **visible marks** that pretend to stand in for inward obedience.

In Torah, fish are creatures, not covenants. Although the fish symbol can be linked to pagan worship, the fish emoji in and of itself is not evil, but it is a shortcut: it offers identity without obedience, belonging without repentance, and logo faith instead of covenant faithfulness.

🕯️ Candle, 🏠 Oil lamp

- **Depiction:** Prayer, vigil, Shabbat, spiritual atmosphere.
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - Shabbat lights are later tradition, not a Torah command.
 - Candles easily become **ritual mood** instead of obedience and rest.

🌈 Rainbow

- **Depiction:** Covenant with Noah, hope, divine promise.
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - The rainbow is **Yah’s sign**, not ours.
 - Humans were never commanded to adopt it as a religious logo; doing so shifts focus from **Yah’s action** to **our branding**.

🌅 Sunrise, 🏔️ Sunrise over mountains, ☁️ Sun behind cloud

- **Depiction:** Resurrection, new beginnings, spiritual awakening, “hope.”
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - Sun and sky are **created lights**, not symbols to be spiritualized.

- Torah warns against elevating heavenly bodies into **objects of reverence**.



Smiling Face with Halo A cartoon face with a glowing blue halo above it.

Depiction: “Innocence,” “purity,” “angelic,” “holy,” “saintly,” “good person.”

Anti-Torah Warning: Torah never portrays humans with halos. Halos come from **Greco-Roman solar iconography** (Sol Invictus, Helios) and later Christian art. Using 🙇 as a symbol of set apartness imports **pagan solar imagery** into digital spirituality — a soft form of syncretism.

💡 The Halo Substitute (Used by Christians)

Because there is no standalone halo emoji, people often use:

💡 **Sparkles** To imply Christian holiness, glory, resurrection, “anointing,” or divine presence.

Anti-Torah Warning: Torah never uses “glittering light” as a symbol of set apartness. To be Kodesh or set apart is defined by **separation and obedience**, not aesthetic glow. 💡 turns set apartness into **vibe**, not covenant.

☀ Solar Halos (Used in Christian art)

Some Christians use:

☀ **Bright Button** or ☀ **Glowing Star**

to mimic the radiant halo behind saints in medieval art.

Anti-Torah Warning: Torah forbids elevating heavenly bodies as spiritual symbols. Solar halos come from **sun-god iconography**, not Scripture.



Fire

- **Depiction:** Holy Spirit, Sinai, passion, revival.
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - Fire in Torah is often **judgment and set apartness**, not just emotional intensity.
 - Reducing it to “spiritual excitement” empties its fear-of-YHWH weight.

 **Angel Emoji Depiction:** A baby-faced figure with wings and halo, meant to represent innocence or divine purity.

Christian Usage: Commonly used to express goodness, protection, or heavenly approval. It turns angels into sentimental icons — miniature symbols of virtue or blessing detached from obedience. In posts and messages, it becomes shorthand for “holy” or “pure,” replacing covenant faithfulness with emotional imagery.

Torah Warning: Angels are messengers, not mascots. Scripture forbids invoking or representing other spiritual beings as identity markers. When angel imagery is used devotionally or symbolically, it mirrors the same pattern of creating uncommanded symbols — turning Yahweh’s servants into objects of fascination.

Christmas tree

- **Depiction:** Christian holiday, “Jesus’ birthday,” family warmth.
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - No tree festival commanded in Torah and not for a Messiah.
 - Easily replaces **appointed moedim** with human tradition and commercial culture.

Emotional and mystical icons

Hearts

- **Depiction:** Love, devotion, “loving God,” “heart for Jesus,” “heart for Israel.”
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - In Scripture, the **heart** is the decision center, not a decorative symbol.
 - Heart emojis can reduce love to **emotion without obedience**.

Folded hands

- **Depiction:** Prayer, worship, pleading, “spiritual humility.”
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - Torah defines prayer as **calling on Yahweh in truth**, not a gesture or icon.
 - Emoji prayer can become **performative spirituality** instead of genuine repentance.

👐 Heart hands, 🙌 Cupped hands, 🙌 Raised hands

- **Depiction:** Blessing, protection, “good vibes,” hamsa-style spiritual shielding.
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - Folk-religion hand symbols drift into **amulet territory**, which Torah forbids.
 - Protection belongs to Yahweh, not to icons or gestures.

👁️ Nazar amulet / “evil eye” charm

- **Depiction:** Protection from harm, warding off curses.
- **Anti-Torah warning:**
 - Torah forbids **magical protection objects**; trust is in Yahweh alone.
 - Using such symbols—even digitally—normalizes **superstitious religion**.

Torah gives us commandments, covenants, and appointed times— not logos, charms, or emotional icons. When faith is reduced to emojis, obedience is reduced to feelings, and feelings are easily turned into idols.

SCRIPTURAL CASE STUDIES — HOW SYMBOLS BECOME IDOLS

Why is Yahweh so strict regarding visual symbols? Because human history demonstrates an undeniable spiritual law: **Whatever physical item man creates to represent Elohim will eventually become an object of worship in place of Elohim.**

The Bible provides clear historical case studies showing how easily human beings transform signs, tools, and symbols into idols.

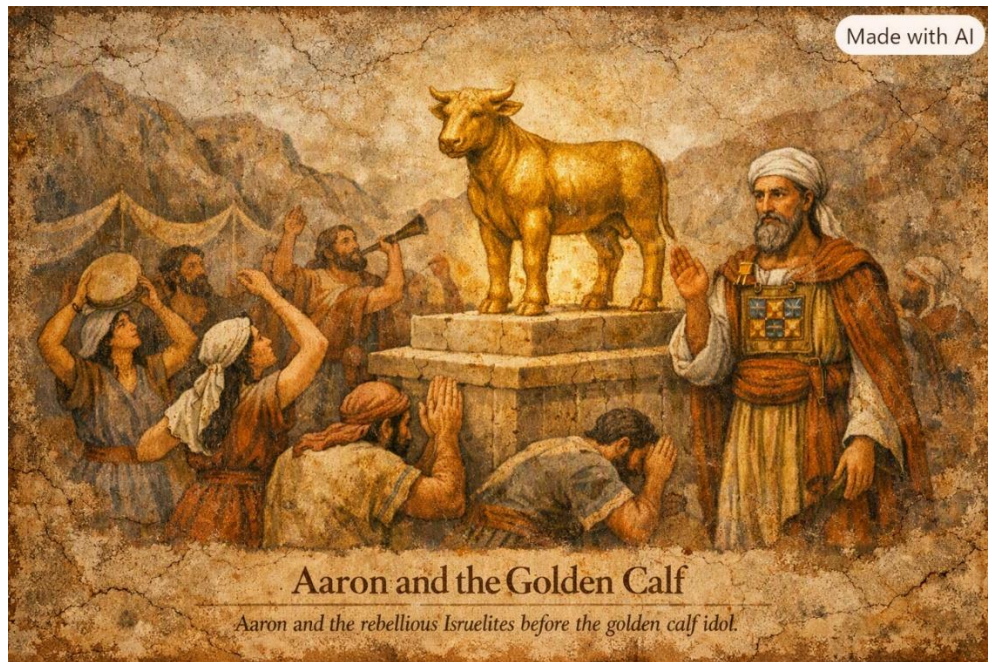
The Golden Calf (Exodus 32)

When Israel persuaded Aaron to make the Golden Calf at Mount Sinai while Moses was on the mountain, Aaron did not tell the people they were abandoning Yahweh to serve an Egyptian god.

Look carefully at what Aaron actually proclaimed in Exodus 32:4–5:

"And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, 'These are your elohim, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!' When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, 'Tomorrow shall be a feast to Yahweh.'"

Aaron attempted to use a physical, visual symbol—the calf, representing strength in Egyptian religion—to represent **Yahweh**. They were trying to worship the true Elohim through a manufactured image of a heathen elohim.



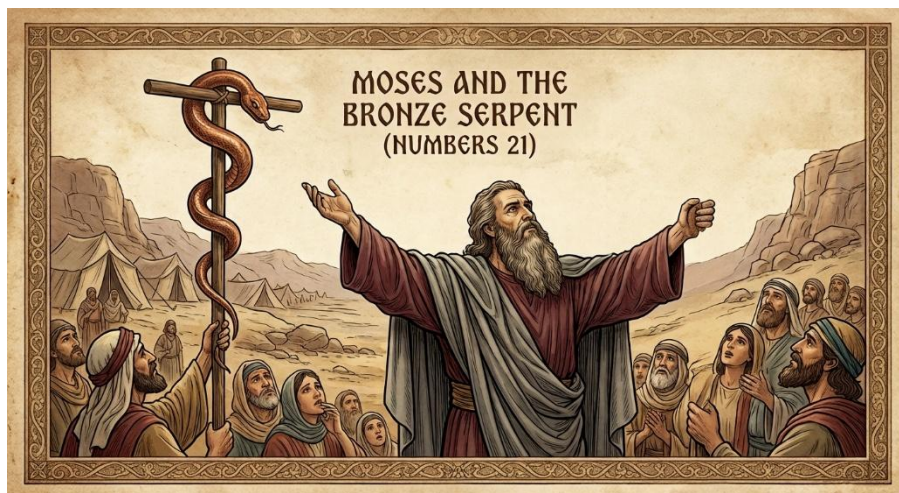
Yahweh viewed the physical calf image as treason, breaking the covenant and bringing swift judgment upon the camp.

The Bronze Serpent (Nehushtan)

An even more sobering example is found in the story of the bronze serpent.

In Numbers 21:8–9, Israel was wandering in the wilderness and complaining against their Elohim. Yahweh sent venomous snakes among them. When the people repented, Yahweh commanded Moses:

"Make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live. So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole..."



Notice that this bronze serpent was directly commanded by Yahweh for a specific, temporary crisis. It was a physical sign of deliverance pointing to Yahweh's mercy.

However, look at what the Israelites did with that exact object over the next seven centuries. Turn to 2 Kings 18:4, where the Scripture records the righteous reign of King Hezekiah:

"He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it (it was called Nehushtan)."

For over 700 years, Israel kept that bronze serpent. They built a tradition around it. They gave it a name—*Nehushtan*—and began burning incense to it. What started as a divine instrument of healing was transformed by human religion into a sacred idol.

King Hezekiah did not preserve it in a museum. He did not say, "This is a great piece of our religious history." He smashed it into pieces because it had become an object of idolatrous devotion, calling it *Nehushtan*—which literally means "nothing more than a piece of brass."

If Israel could take a physical tool **personally commanded by Yahweh** and turn it into an idol, how much easier is it for us to turn man-made symbols like crosses, stars, trees, and amulets into objects of devotion?

The Rainbow: From Creator's Covenant to Hijacked Sign

In biblical history, the rainbow holds a unique place. According to Genesis 9:13–17, Yahweh established the natural phenomenon of the rainbow in the clouds as a physical token of His covenant with Noah and all flesh, promising never again to destroy the earth by a global flood. It was never commanded as an idol, an amulet, or an object of worship; rather, it was a magnificent, sovereignly appointed sign in the heavens designed to turn humanity's eyes toward Creator faithfulness.



Over the centuries, Christianity adopted the rainbow motif into various church arts and children's literature as a generic symbol of "God's promises."

However, in contemporary Western culture, the rainbow has been entirely hijacked and repurposed by secular social movements to represent ideological agendas that stand diametrically opposed to Torah law.

This modern shift demonstrates a profound spiritual reality: when a creation or natural sign given by Elohim is divorced from its biblical context and turned into a standalone cultural banner, it becomes completely vulnerable to ideological redefinition. When people, who proudly display modern multi-colored rainbow flags or graphics often overlook how a divine sign of preservation has been subverted into a prominent badge of cultural defiance against the Creator's standard.

WHAT YAHWEH ACTUALLY COMMANDS

If Yahweh rejects manufactured symbols, visual badges, and adapted pagan traditions, what does He actually ask of His covenant people?

The Scriptures outline a clear framework for pure worship:

1. **Wholehearted Obedience:** Yahweh commands that His laws, statutes, and judgments be written on our hearts and demonstrated through our daily behavior (Deuteronomy 6:6–8). Living righteously, keeping the Shabbath, eating clean, and showing justice to our neighbor are the true indicators of covenant loyalty.
2. **Direct, Unmediated Prayer:** We are called to pray directly to Yahweh, without needing beads, statues, icons, or physical objects to carry our prayers.
3. **Personal and Communal Set Apartness:** Leviticus 11:44 states: *"For I am Yahweh your Elohim. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be set apart, for I am set apart."*

Being set apart in this instance means refusing to adopt the religious styles, solstice customs, and visual badges of the surrounding world.

4. **Commanded Action Over Symbolic Presence:** When Yahweh gave a physical direction—such as putting tzitzit on garments—the goal was never to display a badge of religious pride. The goal was to prompt active behavioral obedience to His commandments.

CONCLUSION: A CALL TO PURE WORSHIP

Brethren, the history of religious symbols exposes a profound truth: Yahweh never gave His people visual emblems to represent their faith—He gave them His Word to obey.

When human beings substitute visual symbols for active obedience, those symbols quickly become idols. And when those idols become our cultural identity, we end up defending traditions born from ancient paganism and medieval magic rather than standing on the pure Scriptures.

Both modern Christianity and modern Judaism have accumulated centuries of human additions. But true restoration requires us to have the courage of King Hezekiah—to examine what we hold dear, measure it against the Torah and Prophets, and discard everything that Yahweh never commanded.

It is vital to state clearly that the intention of this teaching is not to attack, mock, or condemn any individual's sincere personal devotion. Today, millions of people across both Christianity and Judaism wear these emblems, display these items in their homes, incorporate them into their places of worship, or observe these traditions with a sincere heart, having no idea of their pagan origins or their departure from Yahweh's explicit instructions. Sincerity, however, does not alter history, nor does it override the clear boundaries of the Torah.

Yahweh looks at the heart, but He also calls us out of ignorance into truth. Recognizing that a tradition has human or pagan roots is not a reason for discouragement; rather, it is an invitation to turn back. This is the very heart of *teshuvah*—a call to repentance, a turning away from uncommanded human inventions, and a joyful return to the uncompromised purity of Yahweh's Word, where obedience to the Creator always outweighs the comfort of tradition.

This writer at one time participated in or used many of the symbols spoken of in this teaching. There might very well be symbols that he is still using that is yet unaware of. We are convinced that there are many symbols that were not covered by this teaching. You, the reader might be thinking of some that were not mentioned.

Let us cast aside the man-made badges, the repurposed pagan symbols, and the visual shortcuts. Let us return to the pure, unadulterated worship defined by the Creator Himself: loving Yahweh with all our heart, soul, and strength, and walking in wholehearted obedience to His word.

A short Addendum: Not every image or graphic used in any particular teaching is a religious symbol. An example is that in Torah (**Exodus 23:13**) we are commanded not to let the names of other elohim come across our lips and yet the Prophets spoke the names of other elohim. **1st Samuel 7:4; 1st Kings 18:40; 2nd Kings 23:13; Jeremiah 19:5, 32:35; Hosea 2:8,13, 16–17; Isaiah 46:1; Zephaniah 1:4–5; Micah 1:7.** Were they disobeying Torah? We think not. They were not speaking of other elohim as if they were worshiping them or adoring them, they spoke their names so that Israel would know who they were talking about as a warning! Scripture critiques objects that become **markers of set apartness** and **worship**, but it does not forbid the use of **functional identifiers** such as seals, signatures, or marks of authorship or images used for teaching purposes.

We thought about even producing the images of the symbols and other depictions in this teaching, but since they are not being used in our personal worship or adoration but are being used as teaching aids to warn against the usage of such symbols, our examples of the prophets speaking the names of other elohim, gives us the justification to publish such images.



In much the same way, our ministry logo—a circle containing a shofar with the letters TOPRM—functions as a **publisher's mark**, not a spiritual emblem. It does not serve as a worship object, or a representation of Yahweh Elohim. It simply identifies the source of the teaching, much like a modern publisher's imprint. A functional mark as a logo, is not meant to be regarded as a religious worship symbol. A symbol becomes problematic only when it replaces obedience or becomes a marker of set apartness.

This distinction is important because the shofar itself appears in this teaching as an example of how objects can be turned into worship symbols. In Torah, the shofar is a **tool** used for assembly, warning, and proclamation. In later traditions, it often becomes a **symbol of spirituality or identity**. A logo that includes a shofar does not carry this symbolic function; it is not treated as sacred, nor does it define covenant identity.

Just as we own a Shofar that we use as commanded in Torah, this Ministry uses a small logo with a shofar on it, not as a symbol of worship or adoration, but as a symbol of blowing the warning shofar as a warning or proclamation that the hearer, or in this instance the reader, might find Teshuvah and return to Torah observance and the true worship of Yahweh the Most High Elohim. We felt it necessary to bring this out in the open so as not to be accused of being hypocritical. If you feel led to do so, let us know your thoughts so that we might have your advice to think upon as we were totally unaware of using it in any controversial way until we created this teaching! This is important to us, as we also want to be Torah observant and most definitely not be hypocritical.

