

# High Places In The Bible

- High Places • Idolatry • Syncretism • Repentance What are the “high places” that can remain in our faith?

## **Understanding High Places**

- Biblical high places were centers of pagan worship. The Teaching uses them as a picture of entrenched customs and loyalties. The question is not only what Israel tolerated - but what we may still tolerate.

## **An Ordered System**

- The Teaching builds on the idea of the “world” as an ordered system. Its practices can shape affection, habit, and loyalty. Idolatry begins in the heart before it appears in outward worship.

## **The Disney Illustration**

- Disney World is used as an analogy for a carefully curated environment. Memory, emotion, comfort, and nostalgia can create powerful attachment. The speaker explicitly says he enjoys Disney; the illustration is about sentimentality, not a blanket condemnation.

## Defining Syncretism

- Syncretism = fusing distinct beliefs or worship practices. Israel worshiped Yahovah while also adopting practices associated with surrounding gods. The Teaching warns against divided loyalty.

## **A Provocative Messiah Question**

- The speaker contrasts a “Greek Jesus” portrayal with Hebrew Yeshua. His concern is a portrayal of Messiah detached from Torah and the Hebrew biblical context. He asks whether holding contradictory portrayals together becomes syncretism. This is the Teaching’s theological framing.

## **Grace and the Heart**

- The speaker says he would not accuse uninformed Christians of intentionally worshiping an idol. He emphasizes that Yahovah knows the heart. The challenge is directed especially toward what a person does after recognizing a conflict.

## No Other Gods

- Exodus 20:3-5
- Exclusive worship is foundational. The Teaching connects syncretism with the command to have no other gods. Yahovah is not to become merely one loyalty among several.

## **Jeroboam's Alternative Worship**

- 1 Kings 12:26-33
- Golden calves at Bethel and Dan. High-place shrines. Priests outside the prescribed order. Worship reshaped for convenience and political purpose.

## **Israel Builds Its Own High Places**

- 2 Kings 17:7-12
- 2 Kings 17 describes Israel adopting the statutes of surrounding nations. They built high places, pillars, and images. The Teaching emphasizes how inherited compromise became normalized.

## **When Foreign Practice Enters Worship**

- Jeremiah 7:30-31
- Jeremiah 7 describes abominations brought into Yahovah's house. The Teaching asks whether worldly worship patterns can similarly be imported into modern faith. The question is offered for self-examination.

## Sentimentality

- Rachel takes household idols when leaving. Matthew 24 warns not to go back for possessions when fleeing. The Teaching connects both with the human pull toward things we value and remember.

## **Asa: Reform, But...**

- 1 Kings 15:11-14
- Asa removes idols and is described as loyal to Yahovah. Yet the high places are not removed. The Teaching sees a sincere reform with a remaining anchor.

## **A Generational Pattern**

- Jehoshaphat follows Asa, yet the high places remain. Amaziah, Azariah/Uzziah, and Jotham repeat the pattern. Doing much that is right does not automatically remove every tolerated compromise.

## Why Did the High Places Remain?

- 2 Chronicles 20:33
- “The high places were not taken away.” 2 Chronicles connects this with hearts not yet fully directed to the God of their fathers. The Teaching makes this the central heart issue.

## Hezekiah: Tear Them Down

- 2 Kings 18:1-7
- Hezekiah removes the high places. He breaks pillars and cuts down the image. He even destroys the bronze serpent because people are burning incense to it.

# The Bronze Serpent Lesson

- Numbers 21 • 2 Kings 18
- The serpent once had a legitimate God-directed purpose. Later it became an object of religious devotion. The Teaching's application: history, memory, or original usefulness does not justify idolatry.

## **Incomplete Repentance**

- The repeated “but the high places were not removed” becomes a warning. A person can make real changes while still preserving one cherished attachment. The Teaching calls for deeper heart examination rather than outward reform alone.

## **What Are Your High Places?**

- What belief is hard to examine because it is familiar? What tradition is defended because of emotion or memory? What practice competes with complete devotion? The Teaching turns the question inward.

# Idolatry Still Matters

- 1 Corinthians 10:14 • 1 John 5:21
- “Flee from idolatry.” “Keep yourselves from idols.” The New Covenant writings preserve the warning.

## **Unlearning Takes Time**

- The speaker describes his own continued process of unlearning. Do not become overwhelmed by everything that may need re-examination. One day, one week, one Bible study at a time.

## **Humility With Family**

- Participants discuss difficult changes involving inherited holidays. The speaker recommends humility and love rather than judgment. Personal testimony and family applications should not be turned into additional biblical commands.

## **Awake and Walk Carefully**

- Ephesians 5:13-16
- A participant connects the Teaching with Ephesians 5. Bring what is hidden into the light. Live carefully and wisely as understanding grows.

## **Tearing Down the High Places**

- Search Scripture. Ask Yahovah for a clean heart. Identify what competes with wholehearted devotion. Respond with repentance, humility, patience, and love.