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## Hosea’s Christmas Tree

How does YHWH view Christmas trees?

There are countless pieces of evidence that false gods were worshipped under every ‘green tree.’ Searching ‘green tree’ in any online Bible will yield a multitude of examples.

There also exists archeological evidence of nations associating evergreens in the worship their gods.

Our Creator not only stated, but He commanded all in the faith to not worship him using the traditions and symbolisms that other nations used in the worship of their gods.

### Deuteronomy 12:30-31

Take care that you be not ensnared to follow them, after they have been destroyed before you, and that you do not inquire about their gods, saying, ‘**How did these nations serve their gods?—that I also may do the same.**’ **You shall not worship the Lord (YHWH) your God in that way**, for every abominable thing that the Lord (YHWH) hates they have done for their gods, for they even burn their sons and their daughters in the fire to their gods.

However, sometimes that is simply not convincing enough to some as evidence that we should not associate things such as Christmas trees in the worship of YHWH.

One verse that is often raised in defense is found in Hosea 14:8

### Hosea 14:8

I (YHWH) am like an **evergreen cypress**; from me comes your fruit.

In such a defense, it is understood that “Christmas trees cannot be bad to associate in our worship, YHWH is likened unto such a tree.”

It certainly sounds reasonable on the surface. But there might be more to consider.

It is easy to get caught up in the trap thinking we can worship God in any way we choose. God’s people have been known to make that mistake over and over again.

The best example of this mentality is in the event of the golden calf.

Yes, believe it or not, the Christmas tree can be compared to the event of the golden calf.

How many realize that the intent of the Israelites was not to worship a false god with the golden calf, but associate the calf with the worship of Yahweh our God?

In the story of the golden calf, once again, God's people start doing things and worshipping God their own way.

God does not appreciate His people worshipping Him in any way that they choose.

There is a protocol that He has defined for us...a way to worship Him...and the ways not to worship Him.

He is the one being worshipped, not us.

We need to understand how we are to worship or not worship Him. We should not want to mess that up.

But that is what God's people do all too often, and the golden calf is perhaps the most classic example of us trying to worship God in our own way, and not His way.

It all starts in Exodus 32. Here we find that Moses has gone up to the mountain, but after some time, the Israelites begin to panic. For they fear that Moses has died.

### **Exodus 32:1**

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

Moses was much more than simply a leader to them. Moses was their only mediator between God and man. Moses spoke to God on their behalf, and God spoke to the Israelites through Moses. Moses was the mediator between God and man...this head role is now reserved for Yeshua alone, and only Yeshua now functions as Moses. (1 Timothy 2:5)(1 Corinthians 11:3)

However, during the time of the exodus, Moses was the mediator. Here is their perceived problem...they feared that they lost Moses...they believed they needed to replace their mediator. They were afraid that they were not going to be able to communicate with Yahweh any longer, because their mediator, Moses, is missing, or perhaps even dead.

Since they were in Egypt they happened to learn a thing or two about the Egyptian tradition of interacting with gods...in their understanding, you require a physical medium to facilitate such divine interaction. They needed a mediator between them and God... We know that this is what they are thinking, because they instructed to Aaron:

"make us gods who shall go before us."

And then what do we see at their reason for saying this?

“As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

So, in their mind, Yahweh, through Moses, brought them out of Egypt. Yet, Moses is now missing, and in their mind - that's a big problem...and big problems require urgent solutions. So, their solution was to make us “gods”.

But how would “gods” replace Moses and how would “gods” be a good thing in their mind? Have they already forgotten who brought them out of Egypt and have they forgotten who just spoke to them down at the mountain, before they became afraid and asked Moses to go up to get the commandments for them?

In the English, this certainly sounds bad. However, the word here, for “gods” in Hebrew, is *Elohim*. Elohim is the Hebrew word also translated as the one true God or it could also be translated as gods. So nearly any time you see the word “God” in your English translations, the Hebrew word is in fact *Elohim*, despite the fact that Elohim is plural. Elohim can refer to false gods, or the one true God. The context determines the correct understanding. So, we need to figure out if the Israelites were attempting to make a physical image “God” as a mediator to reach God...or were they trying to make “gods” as in false gods?

The Israelites, as a solution to replace the perhaps dead Moses, or to replace their mediator with God, decided that they need to “make God” ...or really, create that interface they believed they needed to have so they could talk with God...to replace Moses, who they feared was dead. So often, we have been taught that the Israelites were making a false god. But in the English, it says they wanted to make *gods*, not God. Clearly, they only made one God, despite the fact that they used the plural form of El, which is Elohim. That suggests that they meant they wanted to make the one True God, Elohim, not false gods, otherwise they would have just made multiple gods, just like the English translation suggests.

Now, that may not be enough to prove the point for you, but there is much more to consider. Most already know that the Israelites chose to make a calf. In fact, they seemingly entertained no debate or discussion about it.... it simply seemed to be the understood form that Yahweh should take. But why did they choose a calf?

#### **Exodus 32:2-4**

So Aaron said to them, “Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.” So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf.

If the Israelites were trying to make Yahweh in a physical form, as a mediator to replace Moses, it was certainly no accident that the Israelites chose a calf. Why? Why did they choose a calf to represent Yahweh? In Scripture, God is often likened to an ox, even in the context of the Exodus. For example:

#### **Numbers 24:8**

“God brings him out of Egypt; He has strength like a wild ox;

Just like Hosea 14:8 likens YHWH to an evergreen tree, Numbers 24:8 likens YHWH to an ox.

Why though was YHWH likened unto an ox?

They knew this because they spoke and wrote ancient pictograph Hebrew.

Do you recall the Hebrew Word translated as God in English Bibles? It is the Hebrew word Elohim. There are two Hebrew words commonly translated as God, *el* and *elo'ah*.

When reading the Bible it is better to have an Ancient Hebrew perception of God rather than our modern western view. The word *el* was originally written with two pictographic letters, one being an ox head and the other a shepherd staff. The ox represented strength and the staff of the shepherd represented authority.

First, the Ancient Hebrews saw God as the strong one of authority. The shepherd staff was also understood as a staff on the shoulders, a yoke. Secondly, the Ancient Hebrews saw God as the ox in the yoke. When plowing a field two oxen were placed in a yoke, one was older and more experienced and the other the younger and less experienced and the younger would learn from the older.

The Hebrews saw God as the older experienced ox and they as the younger who learns from him. The plural form of *elo'ah* is *elohiym* and is also often translated as God. While English plurals only identify quantity, as in more than one, the Hebrew plural can identify quantity as well as quality.

Something that is of great size or stature can be written in the plural form and in this case, God, as the great strength and authority is frequently written in the plural form *elohim*. The two letters in these Hebrew words are the ox head representing strength and the shepherd staff representing authority. Combined they mean "the strong authority" as well as "the ox with a staff" ...the yoke is understood as a staff on the shoulders. If you are interested you can learn more at the Ancient Hebrew Research Center - *Ancient-Hebrew.org*. So, the choosing of a calf to represent God was clearly intentional.

There is a logical reason that they did not choose a rabbit, or a fish, or anything else. Elohim in the Hebrew gives us the word picture of the "Ox" and "authority". And guess what, they said they were going to make Elohim:

*"make us "Elohim" who shall go before us."*

Remember, Elohim is the same Hebrew word that is translated as "God" in Scripture. And Elohim as a word picture fits their interest in making a calf perfectly. Thus, they were not interested in making 'gods' so to speak...they were interested in making God, or Yahweh! Not so much as they literally thought that they were making God, but they were continuing in the Egyptian tradition and practice of making an image of god so you could connect and speak to Him... Which of course, is what Moses was, but they feared that he was dead. After the golden calf is presented, Israel says something very interesting...

#### **Exodus 32:4**

*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 gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"*

In the English, it seems they are presenting the golden calf as “gods”. But that doesn’t make any sense – it’s *singular*. In reality, he is saying to Israel, here is your Elohim, or if you will, here is your god who brought you out of Egypt, meaning the one true God. Now clearly, in most English translations, the usage of ‘gods’ does not make any sense for multiple reasons.... Israel already declared Yahweh to be their only God. Why would Israel suddenly believe that a different god took them out of Egypt? That would make no sense whatsoever. In addition, only one God took them out of Egypt...and the Israelites knew this...so why do English translators use the plural form gods, as in false gods, when that would make no sense? Aaron is only presenting one golden calf, not golden *calves*. Meaning singular, not plural.

Meaning this, and this is important to understand, the Israelites clearly never intended on making gods, but instead making a representation of God, as evidenced by the one (singular) god they made in the form of a calf...which happens to be the exact same word picture that the pictograph of Elohim represents in Hebrew. And then they say that this “golden calf” brought them out of Egypt. Clearly they know this is not literally the case, as Yahweh brought them out of Egypt.

So why do English translations say gods, and not God? Because of the nature of the Hebrew word Elohim. Elohim can mean the plural form of false gods, or the one True God. This would mean that the Israelites believed that they produced an image of Yahweh as the calf. They believed they created the image of the one true God who took them out of Egypt. This should make MUCH more sense because the ancient Hebrew pictograph of Elohim is an Ox with authority.

So, they were simply creating what they already understood about God, in an effort relieve their concerns about losing Moses as their mediator...they in fact, created an image of their understanding of Yahweh to worship and connect with Him, as their new mediator. They were so worried that they lost Moses, which was their mediator to connect with Yahweh...that they believed they had to replace Moses with an object to be the new mediator between Israel and God. So all of these things clearly tell us that they were intending to worship Yahweh through the calf.

Still don’t believe it, despite all of the evidence?

Do you still believe that the Israelites were trying to worship false gods, instead of worshipping Yahweh in their own way? There is still one more thing that solidifies this understanding...and this is quite huge... In the Hebrew, we are told that Aaron actually dedicates a feast to Yahweh.

### **Exodus 32:5-6**

[When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD \(Yahweh\).” And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play.](#)

Aaron declares that the feast is for Yahweh...and then he offer gifts to Him. Unfortunately, this is the way of Cain mentality to the extreme... You might be thinking, in my Bible it says LORD, not Yahweh. Anytime that we see Lord in all capital letters in English Bibles, we know that it is intentionally replacing the Tetragrammaton YHWH, or as we pronounce it, Yahweh.

Anyone can look into any Hebrew concordance and see for themselves that Aaron literally dedicated the feast to Yahweh, the God that took them out of Egypt This proves without a doubt that the Israelites were simply trying to replace Moses and connect to Yahweh in a different way. The Israelites were not

trying to make “gods” so to speak, but “God” - Elohim. They chose a calf for Yahweh because He is Elohim. This is what is important to understand, because this is what they did. They chose to invent their own feast, their own holiday, to Yahweh instead of the feasts outlined in Leviticus 23. They chose to worship God their own way, instead of God’s way. They sincerely thought that they were doing the right thing. They thought it was ok to make up their own holiday for Yahweh and worship Him however they chose.

But clearly, despite the fact that the Israelites were sincerely attempting to worship God, even dedicating the day to Him, giving gifts to him, God did not see it that way. They were worshipping God through the pagan practice of using things to worship God, and declaring and putting into effect a false holiday. They even made offerings to Yahweh...they really thought that Yahweh would accept their worship, just like Cain did.

Likewise, if we use Hosea 14:18 as a reason to bring an evergreen into our home, just because YHWH is likened unto a cypress tree, why would have the Israelites been in error in making a calf just because YHWH is likened unto an ox?

That is the main issue of the problem at hand.

Because the Israelites decided to do things their own way, instead of God’s way, they made themselves out to be their own gods. Though they fully and sincerely wanted to follow Yahweh, they followed themselves and their own heart instead.

This is exactly what we do with Christmas and Easter...we take the ways of man, ways and days of false gods, and then offer them all up to God and expect Him to smile, while we please ourselves in the process.

Now we realize that might sound harsh, and many will not want to hear it, but we know it is the truth.

When we do these things our way instead of His way, then who, in our mind, is God at that point?

Do you see the problem from God’s perspective?

We can still be claiming to be worshipping the one true God, but if we abandon His way and do it our own way, we are actually worshipping false gods in the process...sadly, we are worshipping ourselves...bowing down to ourselves, and following ourselves...We’re following our own instructions instead of His. How does He want us to worship Him?

#### **John 4:23-24**

*But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”*

How does He *not* want us to worship Him?

#### **Deuteronomy 12:4**

*You must NOT worship the LORD (Yahweh) your God in THEIR way.*

What ways should we *not* learn?

## **Jeremiah 10:2**

“Learn not the way of the nations...

So, in summary, here is the main point.

YHWH, through pictograph, and Numbers 24:8, also associated himself as a bull or a calf.

This led up to the Israelites setting up the golden calf as a representation of YHWH, and a day dedicated to Him and worship of Him.

If someone is using Hosea 14:8 to justify setting up an evergreen tree in their home because it represents an image of YHWH, and dedicating a day to Him, then there no difference in application as with event of the golden calf.

## **Hosea 14:8**

I (YHWH) am like an **evergreen cypress**; from me comes your fruit.

Hosea 14:8 is used as justification to bring an image of YHWH into your house, to be associated with worship. The Israelites did the same in creating an image of YHWH as a golden calf, and dedicating the day as a feast unto YHWH.

To set up a piece of wood in your house as an image and representation of your God for a time of worship is the definition of an idol.

The person using Hosea 14:8 in this way are in a more dangerous place than those that simply say it is just a tree and they have no idea where the practice came from.

We pray that this was all worth your consideration.

We hope that this teaching has blessed you, and remember, continue to test everything.

Shalom

*For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at [www.testeverything.net](http://www.testeverything.net)*

**Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.**

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