

Abomination

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Barney considered himself a good Southern Baptist. Barney was a gentleman that I worked with several years ago. Barney considered himself a good friend of his preacher. In fact, Barney was such a good friend of the preacher's that he used to go fishing with him quite often. And one time Barney stuck a lot of beer cans under the preacher's car seat so that the other parishioners would find them someday. This gives you an indication of some of Barney's orneriness.

One day Barney walked into my office (he and I had had discussions about religion at times, but in a casual way), and he was eating raw oysters. I do not think there is anything more nauseating to me than having somebody come up and slurp a raw oyster down their throat. Then Barney turned to me and he says, "Would you like one? I have plenty here, I just bought a bushel. Would you like a raw oyster?" And I said, "Well, Barney, you know, God says that it's an abomination to eat shellfish." And Barney said, and this floored me, "Well, God said it's an abomination. But He did not say you could not eat it." That reasoning just floored me; silenced me. I did not say another word because I realized it was not going to do a bit of good.

Well, that got me to thinking about the word abomination and how so many of us really do not understand the deeper meanings of abomination. We assume that it means it is something that is disgusting or there is something that God does not like or that we should not do. But I thought, well, it will be interesting to get into the words that are used for abomination and see exactly what the word abomination has been translated from and what are some of the underlying meanings to the word abomination.

Let me start with the secular meaning. *Webster's Dictionary* defines it this way. This is the word abomination or abominating. Number one, an abominating; great hatred and disgust; loathing. Number two, anything hateful and disgusting. Synonyms for abomination are loathing, abhorrence,

anathema, evil, hatred, repugnant, disgusting. And we can all agree with those definitions of those synonyms. I think that the word abomination does mean that.

Now let us look at the biblically based meaning of that. I got a nice neat definition from the *New Webster's Dictionary of the Bible* and it defines the word abomination this way: "something that excites disgust and hatred." The term is applied to heathen gods, idolatry, and various pagan practices." So, in a general way, yes, we can look at that as a general rule, the word abomination does mean this throughout the Bible.

Let us take a closer look and take a look in the Old Covenant at the five Hebrew words that are translated into the word abomination. It would help you if you have a pen and paper to write these Hebrew words down so that you can glance at them as I mention them so you can tell the difference in meaning between them.

The first three I am going to go rapidly through because they hardly appear in the Bible at all. The first word is *zaam*. It is translated into the word abomination one time. It means to be indignant; to account abominable; the object of the warmest resentment; to foam at the mouth with rage, is an extended meaning. The only place that that word is translated abomination is in Micah 6:10.

Going on to the next word. Number two is a *baash*. It is translated to the word abomination one time and it means "to cause to be abhorred." After Saul attacked the Philistines, the Philistines said that the Israelites were an abomination to them, to give you an idea of the text there. The only place that that word is translated abomination is in I Samuel 13:4.

Then the third word is *piggul* (and I am butchering these Hebrew pronunciations, but they are also spelled about six different ways in different references). So *piggul* has been translated abomination four times. It relates to impurity and uncleanness. For example, sacrificial flesh that has been left too long. And that example is found in Leviticus 7:18 (and then just real quick with the other three scriptures that have that word for the word abomination). Leviticus 19:7, Isaiah 65:4, and Ezekiel 4:14.

I wanted to just breeze over those because they hardly appear in the Bible at all. And they are not really the point of the sermon. I just wanted to give you an idea of some of the other words translated into abomination.

Now, the fourth word is used more often. It is the word *shiqquts* (that is one of the spellings for it). It is used about 36 times in the Old Testament and it often means "to be abominable." So if you are writing this down in your notes circle, the word be or to be. It often means to be abominable, unclean, primarily used of idolatry and of things that may not be touched, eaten, or worshipped. And it can refer to idols and to customs derived from idolatry. So the word that I was referring to when I told Barney that it was an abomination to eat shellfish is this word *shiqquts*.

If you turn would with me to II Kings 23, verse 13 we will see an interesting translation here of the word abomination from actually two different Hebrew words.

II Kings 23:13 Then the king defiled the high places that were east of Jerusalem, which were on the south of the Mount of Corruption, which Solomon king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth the abomination of the Sidonians, for Chemosh the abomination of the Moabites, and for Milcom the abomination of the people of Ammon.

The first two words abomination here which refer to Ashtoreth and Chemosh actually are the word *shiqquts*, which means to be abominable in this sense. Now, if you look at the third word abomination in there, you will notice that it is referring to the *people* of Ammon. And that word there is the Hebrew word *toebah* and that often means "to do abominably." And it is interesting that for Milcom, the abomination of the people of Ammon, one of the things that Milcom was known for was sacrificing children.

So here, this word abomination was actually taken from a word that means "to *do* abominably" as well as "to *be* abominable." I thought that was an interesting tidbit there that there is three words abomination used, but they are from different Hebrew words.

That brings us to that fifth word, which is *toebah*, which is used more than 123 times in the Old Testament. And as I said, it often means to do abominably, primarily in things connected with idolatry, deed, or practice. So many of these words are directly associated with a idolatry. *Toebah* is often used of practices derived from idolatry. For example, when Ahaz king of Judah burned his son as an offering according to the abominable practices of the nations whom the Lord drove out. That is found in II Kings 16:3. So you see there that the word *toebah* and the word *shiqqut* very, very often are associated with the word idolatry.

Now, God's Word shows that many of man's actions are an abomination to Him. For example, directly named are idolatry, uncleanness, unjust weights and measures, incest, adultery, homosexuality, sodomy, lying, stealing, offerings to other gods, sacrifice of children, sorcery, the hiring of a prostitute, eating of unclean meat, and even the proud are an abomination to God. So the word abomination is used throughout the Bible and many of these cases are directly associated with idolatry.

Turn with me please to Proverbs 16. In verse 5, we will notice here what God has to say about the proud in heart. Abomination's constant association with idolatry indicates that pride constitutes idolatry in the human spirit.

Proverbs 16:5 Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though they join forces, none will go unpunished.

So we see here that with abomination's close association with idolatry, that pride is actually a form of idolatry. We are idolizing ourselves when we have pride of an undue nature. We can have pride in the right things. But to have pride in ourselves overly so is an abomination to God. An abomination is anything we place before God and it can even be how we think of ourselves.

Now, let us take a look at the New Testament quickly. If you will turn with me to Titus 1. I am going to breeze through this as well. The Greek equivalent of the Hebrew words for abomination and abominable is the word *pdelugma*. That is the Greek equivalent to the Greek words for abomination and abominable. It is from the root word *bedo*, which means "to stink," for an appropriate phrase or root meaning for the word abomination, to stink.

Now be *bgulum*, the extended word, primarily means "to detest, "to abhor," especially of idolatry. The Greek word is translated abomination or abominable eight times in the New Testament. And this is the primary word that is translated that way.

Titus 1:16 They profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work.

Here the word means loathsome, causing horror and disgust because of their hypocrisy. So here we see that hypocrisy is an abomination to God. Hypocrisy is another form of idolatry because again, the hypocrisy is putting up a front or putting up an idol of ourselves that is different than the way we really are. It is worshipping, again, an idol.

Please turn with me to Luke 16. I know I have you hopping around the Scriptures quite a bit. But I think this gives a good overview of the word abomination. In Luke 16, verse 15, we again have the fact that abomination's constant association with idolatry indicates that what is highly esteemed among men constitutes idolatry in the human heart.

Luke 16:14-15 Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He [Christ] said to them [the Pharisees], "You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

So there we see that the word abomination, which is extremely closely tied in with the word idolatry or the breaking of one of the Ten Commandments, of idolatry, is actually a form of idolatry. Whenever we put something before God, we make an idol of it, in a general sense. It can be ourselves, it could be our house, it could be someone else, it could be our position at work. We can idolize anything that we put before God and God says that anything that you idolize is an abomination to Him.

Now, if you will turn finally with me for a closing scripture, Revelation 21. We will see what the reward of those who are abominable or an abomination receive. Keep in mind that someone who commits abomination as a way of

life is abominable. And there are times where we all commit abomination and then we repent of it. But somebody that repeatedly commits an abomination is labeled as an abominable person. And this is what happens to an abominable person.

Revelation 21:8 But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

That is what the abominable and those who commit abomination as a way of life have to look forward to.