

The Supremacy of Jesus Christ: *Study Guide*

Part I: "It's Not Enough"

This study guide is designed for both individual and small group studies, but can be used however you see fit to deepen your understanding of scripture and of the Savior that it reveals to us.

Two profitable uses of this guide might be:

- 1) Watch "It's Not Enough – An Animation" as a small group and then discuss some of the included images and study questions.**
- 2) Watch the animation as a small group and then individually work through one section of the study guide each day until you meet together again.**

Ultimately, my prayer is that this study guide would function as a scriptural "arm" to swing the "sword" of the animation's imagery and music in the most effective way. I hope that after you've walked through the following pages, your understanding of Christ and His supremacy over idols will be deepened.

In Him,

Christopher Powers

I. Idol



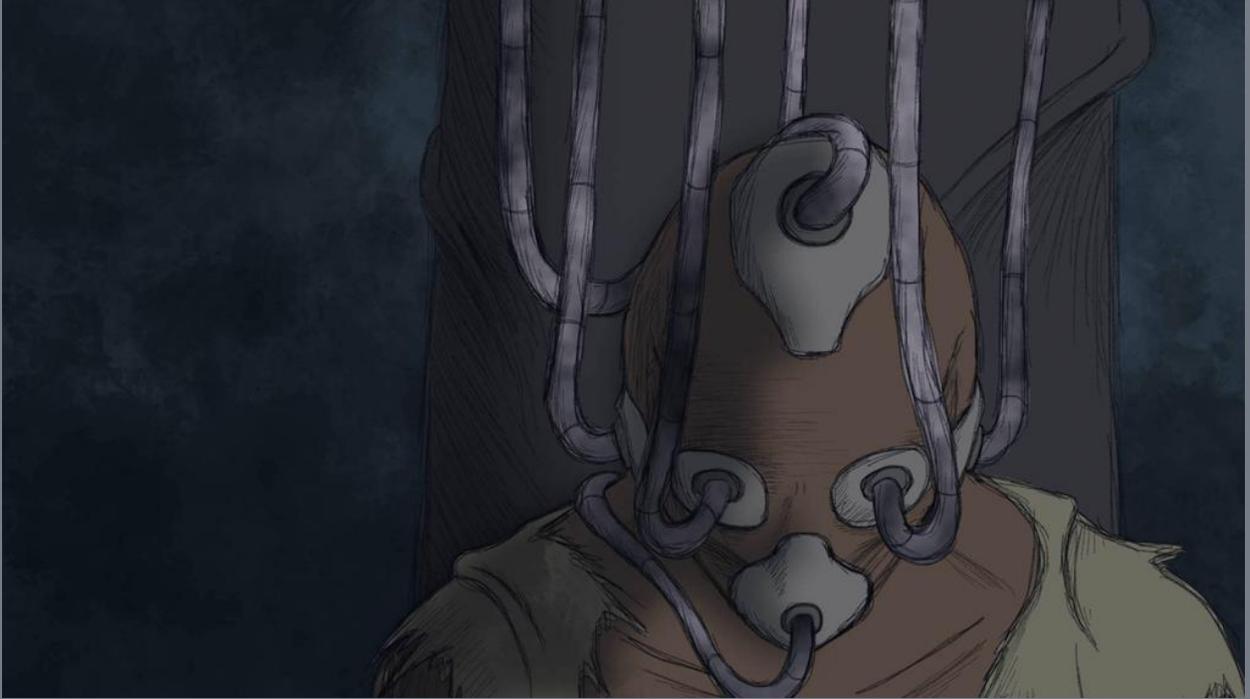
Read: Proverbs 7:11-23

Consider: In the Bible, idolatry is often compared to adultery. Just like adultery is unfaithfulness to a spouse, so too idolatry is unfaithfulness to God Himself. After reading Proverbs 7:11-23, think over the questions below.

Questions:

1. How are some elements of the adulteress represented in Proverbs reflected in the above image?
2. Why might this idol be gold? Why does it have light rays around its head? Why do you think its smiling?
3. What are some of the adulteress' strategies?
4. Where have you seen these same elements in other idols in your culture?
5. In this Proverb, the adulteress tempts the young man by promising him pleasure, how might those empty promises be represented in this image?

II. Idolater



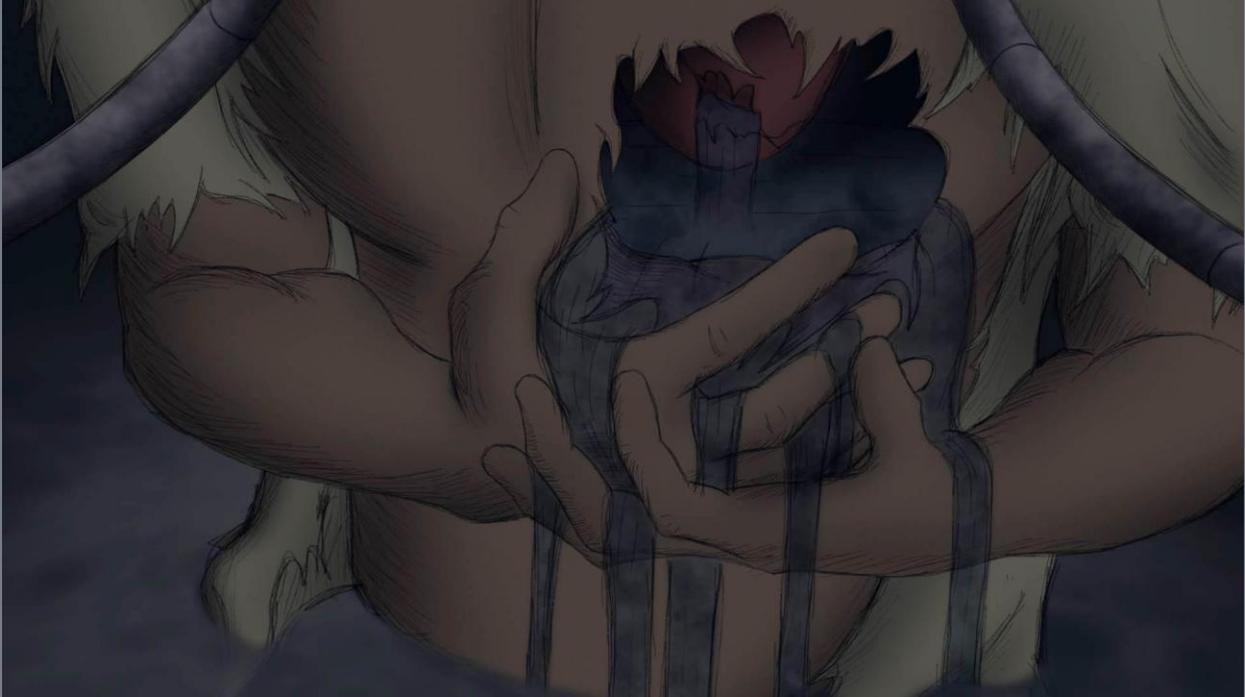
Read: Psalm 115:1-11

Consider: Theologian G.K. Beale makes the argument that "we become what we worship." Consider the implications of that idea as you read through Psalm 115:5-8 and answer these questions.

Questions:

1. How is this Psalm reflected in this image?
2. How has this man become like his idol?
3. How is this man *trusting* in the idol?
4. This Psalm is talking about actual physical idols. How might it also be true for heart idols?

III. Never Satisfied



Read: Ecclesiastes 2:1-11; 5:10

Consider: The author of Ecclesiastes spent his energy desperately seeking for the meaning and purpose of life. As you read these two passages, consider how they are reflected in this image.

Questions:

1. What "heart idols" are presented in 2:10-11? In 5:10?
2. Do these idols "deliver" on their promises of pleasure?
3. How are these verses presented in this picture?
4. Have you ever anticipated pleasure from something, only to feel, in the end, that you were "striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun" (2:11)?

IV. Bondage of the Will



Read: John 3:16-20

Consider: As you read this passage – especially verses 19-20 – pay close attention to words like "love" and "hate." These are "desire words," they display the longings and wants of the heart.

Questions:

1. In these verses, what is it that keeps people from coming to Jesus?
2. According to verse 20, why does the person "in the dark" hate the light? What does this tell us about what they want most?
3. According to these verses do our choices control our desires, or do our desires control our choices?
4. How are these verses represented in this image?
5. What is significant about how the anchor is attached to the man?
6. The 17th century philosopher, Blaise Pascal, once said, "All men seek happiness...This is the motive of every man, even those who hang themselves." Do you agree with him? How are Pascal's words reflected in John 3:19-20? In the image?

V. False Lovers, Hired Hands



Read: Jeremiah 30:12-14 & John 10:11-15

Consider: The human heart is looking to give itself wholly to something or someone. This is why we are so prone to idolatry. However, Jesus Christ is the only thing in all of reality that will never abandon the heart that has leaned on Him. Sooner or later every god except Jesus will leave us.

Questions:

1. In Jeremiah 30:12-14, God has "wounded" his people (ie, punished) because of their sin (verse 14). What is the response of the people's "lovers"?
2. What does this response reveal about the lovers?
3. In this picture, how would you describe the man's emotions? The idols? How is this dynamic reflected in the passage from Jeremiah?
4. In John 10:11-15, Jesus compares the Good Shepherd (Himself) to a "hired hand." How is the hired hand from John similar to the lovers from Jeremiah? How is the hired hand similar to the idol in this picture?
5. According to John 10:11-15, how is Jesus unlike the hired hand and the false lovers and the idol in these images?

VI. The Shame of Idolatry



Read: Ezekiel 16:35-40

Consider: In this passage, God's people are represented as an adulterous woman (remember that idolatry is considered "spiritual adultery" to God) and their idols, the false "gods" to whom they are looking for satisfaction, are represented as "lovers". As you read this graphic passage, consider what God is symbolically saying about idols and those who trust in them.

Questions:

1. In verse 37 God calls the false gods of His people "lovers," as you read the rest of this passage, does "lovers" seem like the right name for them? Why or why not?
2. Again in verse 37, God says that His people "took pleasure" with these false gods. Later in that verse he describes these gods as, "all those you loved and all those you hated." Can something we hate give us pleasure? Can you think of any examples? How would you describe the quality of such a pleasure?

(VI Continued)

3. How do the false gods treat their worshippers? How is that reflected in this image?
4. What are some words you would use to describe the idol worshipper in this image? The idol? Would you use any of these same words to describe the worshippers or their idols in the Ezekiel passage?
5. What are some words to describe the idol/worshipper relationship? Have you ever experienced this in your own heart?

Read (P.II): Psalm 16:4; Psalm 97:7 & Isaiah 47:9-11

Questions (P.II)

1. What are some common themes concerning idolatry in these passages?
2. How are the teachings of these passages reflected in this image or in the animation as a whole?

VII. Hear, That Your Soul May Live



Read: Isaiah 55:1-3; Isaiah 65:1-2 & John 6:35-40

Consider: As you read these three passages and consider what the heart of God is like toward those who are seeking satisfaction in other places and running after their own pursuits?

Questions:

1. How would you describe God's heart in these passages?
2. What do these verses present as the satisfaction that God offers His people?
3. How might the call of God in these verses be represented in this image?

Read (P.II): 2 Corinthians 3:16 – 4:18

Consider (P.II): Holy Spirit is represented as a dove in this image. The reason the Spirit comes into the picture here at the end of the animation is that, in scripture, the Holy Spirit always works to allow people to see Jesus as He truly is, that is, as the Son of God, Savior of the World and Satisfier of our souls. The man in this animation is blinded by his

(VII Continued)

idolatry, therefore the supernatural eye-opening of the Spirit is his only hope. See if you can piece this together as you read the passages above and answer these questions.

Questions (P.II)

1. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in chapter 3 verses 16-18?
2. How might the Spirit be at work in chapter 4 verse 6?
3. In chapter 4 verse 4, Paul says that the "god of this world" (ie, Satan) blinds the minds of unbelievers. What is he blinding them to? What would you say are some of Satan's tactics to blind people to this?
4. Can you think of a time when you felt this blindness?

Read (P.III): 1 Peter 2:24; Revelation 1:5 & Isaiah 55:7-9

Consider (P.III): Jesus' blood is visible on the cross because our idolatry is a sin that deserves damnation, and yet – even for this sin, even for a lifetime of turning from God and running after empty pleasures – Jesus Christ has taken the punishment. He has carried away the shame even of our spiritual (and physical) adultery if only we will turn and trust in Him. So, there is blood in this image to show that 1 Peter 2:24 and Revelation 1:5 enable God to say Isaiah 55:7-9 to sinners.

Questions (PIII):

1. Both the idol and Jesus call human beings to worship them. What are some differences between idols and Jesus in the verses we've read during this study?
2. What are some differences between the idol and Jesus in this image?
3. What do you think when you hear the phrase "The blood of Jesus" or something like it?
4. Why does the Bible talk about the "wounds" or "blood" of Jesus?
5. Why does Jesus' death matter for us? (see 2 Corinthians 5:21, John 3:16-18, 1 Peter 3:18, for some clarity)
6. Is Jesus – His life, death and resurrection – a beautiful concept to you? Why or why not?