

Obelisks, Temples And Towers In Religion

Among the ancient nations, not only were statues of gods and goddesses in human form made but many objects that had a hidden mystic meaning were part of heathen worship.

One example of this is the ancient obelisks.

The historian Diodorus spoke of an obelisk that was erected by Queen Semiramis in Babylon. [*Encyclopaedia of Religions* volume 3, page 264]

The Christian Bible mentions obelisk-type image nine feet in breadth and ninety feet high.

Daniel 3:1-7 [NIV] *“King Nebuchadnezzar made an image of gold, ninety feet high and nine feet wide, and set it up on the plain of Dura in the province of Babylon. He then summoned the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials to come to the dedication of the image he had set up. So the satraps, prefects, governors, advisers, treasurers, judges, magistrates and all the other provincial officials assembled for the dedication of the image that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up, and they stood before it. Then the herald loudly proclaimed, ‘This is what you are commanded to do, O peoples, nations and men of every language: As soon as you hear the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp, pipes and all kinds of music, you must fall down and worship the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. Whoever does not fall down and worship will immediately be thrown into a blazing furnace.’ Therefore, as soon as they heard the sound of the horn, flute, zither, lyre, harp and all kinds of music, all the peoples, nations and men of every language fell down and worshipped the image of gold that King Nebuchadnezzar had set up.”*

It is ancient Egypt, an early stronghold of mystic religion, that the use of the obelisk is best known.

Many of the obelisks are still in Egypt, though some have been removed to other nations.

One is in Central Park in New York, another is on the Embankment in London (U.K.) and others were transported to Rome.

Originally, the obelisk was associated with sun-worship, a symbol of “*Baal*”, which is the title of Nimrod.

The ancients having rejected the knowledge of the True Creator seeing that the sun gave life to plants and hence to all humans, looked on the sun as a god, the great life-giver.

To them, the obelisk also had a sexual significance.

Realising that through sexual union life was produced, the phallus, the male organ of reproduction, was considered, along with the sun, a symbol of life.

These were the beliefs represented by the obelisk. [*Ancient Pagan and Modern Christian Symbolism* – Inman, page 99]

In the Christian Bible the word “*images*” is translated from several different Hebrew words.

One of these is “*matstsêbâh*” meaning a standing image or pillar that is obelisks. [**1 Kings 14:23; 2 Kings 18:4; 2 Kings 23:14; Jeremiah 43:13; Micah 5:13**]

Another Hebrew word is “*chammân*” meaning a sun-pillar, images dedicated to the sun or obelisks. [**Isaiah 17:8; Isaiah 27:9**]

In order for the obelisks to carry out their intended symbolism, they were placed upright, erect. Thus they pointed up towards the sun.

Bearing this in mind, it is interesting to notice that when divine judgement was pronounced against this false worship, these images were cast down.

Isaiah 27:9 [NIV] *“By this, then, will Jacob’s guilt be atoned for, and this will be the full fruitage of the removal of his sin: When he makes all the altar stones to be like chalk stones crushed to pieces, no Asherah poles or incense altars will be left standing.”*

When the Israelites mixed heathen worship to their religion in the days of Ezekiel, they erected an image in the entry of the temple. [Ezekiel 8:5]

This image was probably an obelisk as they were given over to phallic cults. [‘Scofield Reference Bible’ page 847]

Placing an obelisk at the entrance of a heathen temple was, apparently, not an uncommon practice at the time.

One stood at the entrance of the temple of Tum, another in front of the temple of Hathor. [‘Encyclopaedia of Religions’ volume 3, page 33].

Interesting enough, there is also an obelisk at the entrance of St. Peter’s in Rome.

This obelisk is not a mere copy of an Egyptian obelisk, it is the very same obelisk that stood in Egypt in ancient times.

Caligula, in 37-41AD, the obelisk now in the Vatican brought from Heliopolis, Egypt, to his circus on Vatican hill, where now stands St. Peter’s. [‘Harpers Bible Dictionary’ page 500]

Heliopolis is the Greek name of Bethshemesh, which was the centre of Egyptian sun-worship.

Jeremiah 43:13 [King James] *“He shall break also the images of Beth-shemesh, that is in the land of Egypt; and the houses of the gods of the Egyptians shall he burn with fire.”*

The standing obelisks in the temple of the sun god.

The very same obelisk that once stood at the ancient temple which was the centre of Egyptian paganism, now stands before the mother church of Romanism! [‘Ancient Monuments of Rome’ Pignatorre, pages 175-177]

The Roman Catholic leaders have borrowed other ideas from paganism, building elaborate and expensive temple also became the custom. Worldly-minded church leaders thought they should build a temple of greater splendour than those of the old pagan Roman religion.

God directed his people under the rulership of Solomon and the request of King David to build a splendid temple in the Old Testament, and chose to put his presence there for a period of time.

But in the New Testament, it is clear that the Holy Spirit no longer dwells in temples made with human hands. [Acts 17:24]

Now, God dwells in His people, in His true Church, by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 3:16-17 [NIV] *“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple.”*

Understanding this grand truth, the early Church never spent their finances to build church buildings, but met in the homes of church members. [1 Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 2]

We do not have a record of a church building, as such, being built prior to 222-235AD. [*Halley's Bible Handbook*']

All the church offerings were spent on sending people to preach the gospel message, and support of widows and poor in the Church.

This is not to suggest it is wrong to have buildings where the fellowship of Christians can meet, from which the gospel message can be spread abroad, and the people taught the scriptures. A balanced use of funds for outreach and buildings.

Another reason the early Church did **not** erect church buildings was due to persecutions, this is happening again in various parts of the world today.

Because of these elaborate and expensive church buildings, in the minds of most humans the word "church" means a building.

The Biblical use of the word "church" refers to an assembly or group of people within whom is an active presence of the Holy Spirit.

The majority of these expensive buildings that have been erected over the centuries have featured a tower.

Each generation of church builders has copied the former generation, probably never questioning the origin of the idea.

Some of these towers have cost fortunes to build and to maintain, but have added no spiritual value.

Within scripture there is **no** New Testament instructions to build such towers.

May I suggest that the original idea is to be found in Babylon!

Genesis 11:1-4 [NIV] *"Now the whole world had one language and a common speech. As men moved eastward, they found a plain in Shinar and settled there. They said to each other, 'Come, let's make bricks and bake them thoroughly.' They used brick instead of stone, and bitumen for mortar. Then they said, 'Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves and not be scattered over the face of the whole earth.'"*

"To the heavens" is a figure of speech for a great height.

There is sufficient evidence to show this tower was connected with their religion of sun-worship. [*Ancient Cities and Temples* by Champdor, page 22]

The goddess Astarte [Semiramis] means "the woman who made towers." [*The Two Babylons* by Hislop, page 307]

The goddess Cybele [also identified with Semiramis] was known as the tower-bearing goddess.

The goddess Diana was represented with a tower-like crown on her head.

In the symbolism of the Catholic church, a tower is emblematic of the Virgin Mary! [*A Dictionary of Symbols* by Cirlot, page 326]

Does all of this tell us something?

As we know, some ancient towers were built for military purpose, for watch towers. But many of the towers that were built in the Babylonian Empire were exclusively religious towers connected with a temple.

In those days a stranger entering a Babylonian city would have no difficulty in locating its temple, for high above the houses its tower could be seen. [*The Cambridge Ancient History – Egypt and Babylonia*’ volume 1, page 533] Also [*The Catholic Encyclopaedia*’ volume 2, page 185, article ‘*Babylonia*’]

During the building of the original tower of Babel, a scattering of all the people involved took place. [**Genesis 11:5-9**]

It is certainly **not** impossible that as people migrated to various lands they took the idea of a “tower” with them.

Towers have been an established part of the religion of the Chinese. The “*pagoda*” is linked with the word “*goddess*.”

In the Hindu religion pagodas or towers focussed people’s attention to places of worship of various gods.

Mecca includes numerous towers called minarets, also the famous church of St. Sophia at Constantinople.

The use of towers is also carried out in Christendom both Catholic and Protestant, a tradition that is seldom questioned.

At the top of many church towers, a spire often points to the sky.

Several writers link the steeples and spires with the ancient obelisk. [*Sex Worship and Symbolism of Primitive Races*’ by Brown, page 38; *The Customs of Mankind*’ by Eichler, page 55]

All this shows the influence of our phallus-worshipping ancestors, that is still evident in church building today!