These four things are the root causes of problems, affecting individuals, families, and even nations! (Altars, Pillars, Asherah Poles, and Idols).

> Deuteronomy 7:5-6 (NIV)
>
> This is what you are to do to them: Tear down their altars, smash their sacred stones, cut down their Asherah poles, and burn their idols in the fire.
>
> For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his own, his treasured possession.

You may wonder: What are these things, and why are they so important? How do they impact our lives and spiritual well-being?

1. Altars

Theological Insight:

In the Bible, altars are sacred places where sacrifices are offered to God. The concept of sacrifice is deeply woven into the fabric of biblical theology. In the Old Testament, altars were central to the worship of Yahweh. The sacrifices symbolized atonement, devotion, and covenantal relationship with God.

However, altars dedicated to false gods—idolatrous altars—are condemned. These altars represent a distortion of true worship, leading people away from the living God.

Scripture:

In the Old Testament, God repeatedly commanded the Israelites to destroy the altars of the pagan nations. These altars often stood in high places, a practice common among the Canaanites and other surrounding nations. Deuteronomy 12:2-3 (NIV) says:

> You must demolish completely all the places on the high mountains, on the hills, and under every spreading tree, where the nations you are dispossessing worship their gods.

The purpose of breaking down these altars was to prevent the Israelites from being influenced by idolatry. Exodus 23:24 (NIV) adds:

> Do not bow down before their gods or worship them or follow their practices. You must demolish them and break their sacred stones to pieces.

Theological Significance:

Altars represent places where worship occurs, and in the case of idolatrous altars, they serve as gateways to spiritual defilement. God’s command to destroy these altars was to ensure that His people would not be tempted to worship false gods, which would lead them into spiritual bondage.

2. Pillars

Theological Insight:

Pillars in the Bible often symbolize strength, foundation, or

support. In many pagan temples, pillars were used as part of the architectural structure to honor false gods. In the Old Testament, Asherah poles were sometimes erected beside pillars in these temples, further strengthening the connection between idolatry and false worship.

Scripture:

In 1 Kings 7:21 (NIV), Solomon built two large bronze pillars at the entrance to the Temple of the Lord, named Jakin and Boaz, which symbolized God’s strength and sovereignty.

“He set up the pillars at the portico of the temple. The pillar to the south he named Jakin and the one to the north Boaz.” These pillars were meant to emphasize God’s divine strength.

Theological Significance:

The destruction of pagan pillars, like altars, was a form of purging the land of any worship not aligned with the true God. 2 Corinthians 10:4 (NIV) reminds us that the spiritual battle we face is not fought with physical weapons but with divine power to demolish strongholds:

> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds.

Pillars, therefore, represent not only physical structures but spiritual strongholds. In prayer, we demolish these strongholds that seek to elevate false beliefs above the knowledge of God.

3. Asherah Poles

Theological Insight:

The Asherah poles were sacred trees or wooden objects used in pagan worship, often associated with the fertility goddess Asherah. These poles were believed to embody the goddesses of fertility and were used in ritualistic worship, typically in the context of immoral acts. The Israelites were forbidden from engaging in such practices because they led to spiritual corruption.

Scripture:

In Exodus 34:13 (NIV), God commands Israel to break down the Asherah poles:

> Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones, and cut down their Asherah poles.

In Deuteronomy 16:21-22 (NIV), the Lord further prohibits the practice of setting up any sacred pole or idol:

> Do not set up any wooden Asherah pole beside the altar you build to the Lord your God, and do not erect a sacred stone, for these the Lord your God hates.

Theological Significance:

Asherah poles represent the worship of false gods, leading people to trust in created things rather than the Creator. The Bible

teaches us that idols are nothing but lies that distort our understanding of God’s power. Romans 1:25 (NIV) speaks of those who “exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.”

To remove Asherah poles, both physically and spiritually, is to reject the false gods of our time—be they materialism, pleasure, or any idol that steals our devotion from the true God.

4. Idols

Theological Insight:

Idolatry is the worship of something other than the one true God. An idol can be a physical object, but it can also be anything that takes the place of God in our hearts, such as money, power, or even relationships. 1 John 5:21 (NIV) warns:

> Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.

In the Bible, idols often represent false promises, deceiving people into believing that they can find fulfillment and happiness apart from God. The worship of idols results in spiritual blindness and death.

Scripture:

In Isaiah 44:9-10 (NIV), God speaks against the futility of idol worship:

> All who make idols are nothing, and the things they treasure are worthless. Those who would speak up for them are blind; they are ignorant, to their own shame.

Theological Significance:

The burning of idols symbolizes the destruction of false hopes and desires that can never fulfill or save us. Only God can satisfy our deepest needs. Romans 1:23 (NIV) explains:

>

> They exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

Burning idols is a physical act of declaring that we no longer serve the things of this world, but we serve the living God.

Prayer as a Weapon Against These Forces

Theological Insight:

While we may no longer live in a world where physical altars and idols are common, we still face spiritual strongholds and idols in our lives. Prayer is the weapon God has given us to break these altars and strongholds down. The Bible tells us in 2 Corinthians 10:4-5 (NIV):

> The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take

> captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Through prayer, we can destroy the spiritual altars, pillars, and idols in our lives, just as God instructed the Israelites to do in the Old Testament.

Scripture:

Matthew 17:20 (NIV) reminds us that faith in God can move mountains:

> He replied, ‘Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.

With faith, we can overcome every obstacle and spiritual attack, and by the name of Jesus, we can bring down every stronghold.

By tearing down the altars, demolishing the pillars, cutting down

the Asherah poles, and burning the idols in our lives, we cleanse our hearts and homes from spiritual defilement. As we do so, we make room for God’s presence, peace, and blessings to fill our lives. May we walk in obedience to His commands and experience His power to transform and heal us.

May the Lord bless you abundantly.

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