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The Icon FAQ

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1. What is an Icon?

An Icon is an image (usually two dimensional) of Christ, the Saints, Angels, important Biblical events, parables, or events in the history of the Church.

St. Gregory the Dialogist (Pope of Rome ca. 590-604), spoke of Icons as being Scripture to the illiterate:

"For what writing presents to readers, this a picture presents to the unlearned who behold, since in it even the ignorant see what they ought to follow; in it the illiterate read" ([Epistle to Bishop Serenus of Marseilles](#), *NPNF* 2, Vol. XIII, p. 53).

To those who would suggest that this is no longer relevant in our enlightened age, let them consider the rather large functional illiteracy rate we have, and the fact that even the most literate societies always have a sizable illiterate segment... their young children.

Icons also lift up our minds from earthly things to the heavenly. St. John of Damascus wrote, "we are led by perceptible Icons to the contemplation of the divine and spiritual" (*PG* 94:1261a). And by keeping their memory before us through the Icons, we are also inspired to imitate the holiness of those therein depicted. St. Gregory of Nyssa (ca 330-395) spoke of how he could not pass an Icon of Abraham sacrificing Isaac "without tears" (*PG* 46:572). Commenting on this, it was noted at the Seventh Œcumenical Synod, "If to such a Doctor the picture was helpful and drew forth tears, how much more in the case of the ignorant and simple will it bring compunction and benefit" (*NPNF*2, Vol 14, p. 539).

For Further Reading:

- [The Functions of Icons](#), by Dr. Constantine Cavarinos. Ch. 3 from *Orthodox Iconography*.
- [A Discourse in Iconography](#), by St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco

2. Do Orthodox Christians pray to Icons?

Christians pray *in the presence of* Icons (just as Israelites prayed in the presence of Icons in the Temple), but we do not pray *to* the image.

3. Do Icons work miracles?

To put this question in proper perspective, let's consider a few other questions: Did the Ark of the Covenant work miracles (e.g. Joshua 3:15ff; 1st Samuel 4-6; 2nd Samuel 11-12)? Did the Bronze Serpent heal those bitten by snakes (Numbers 21:9)? Did the Prophet Elisha's bones raise a man from the dead (2nd Kings 13:21)? Did St. Peter's shadow heal the sick (Acts 5:15)? Did aprons and handkerchiefs that had touched St. Paul heal the sick and cast out evil spirits (Acts 19:12)?

The answer to these questions are, Yes, in a manner of speaking. Nevertheless, to be precise, it was God who chose to work miracles through these things. In the case of the Ark and the Bronze serpent, we have images used to work miracles. God worked a miracle through the relics of the Prophet Elisha, through the shadow of a Saint, and through things that had merely touched a Saint. Why? Because God honors those who honor Him (1st Samuel 2:30), and thus takes delight in working miracles through his Saints, even by these indirect means. The fact that God can sanctify material things should come as no surprise to those familiar with Scripture. For example, not only was the Altar of the Temple holy, but anything that touched it was holy as

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well (Exodus 29:37). To reject the truth that God works through material things is to fall into Gnosticism.

So yes, loosely speaking, Icons can work miracles—but to be precise, it is God who works miracles through Icons, because He honors those who have honored Him.

4. Do Orthodox Christians Worship Icons? What's the difference between "worship" and "veneration"?

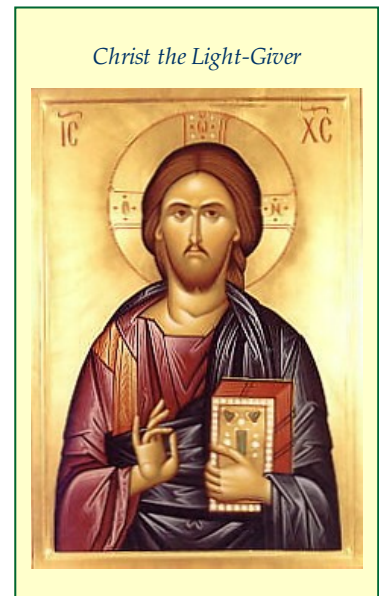
Orthodox Christians do not worship Icons in the sense that the word "worship" is commonly used in modern English. In older translations (and in some more recent translations in which the translators insist on using this word in its original sense), one finds the word "worship" used to translate the Greek word *proskyneo* (literally, "to bow"). Nevertheless, one must understand that the older use of "worship" in English was much broader than it is generally used today, and was often used to refer simply to the act of honoring, venerating, or reverencing. For example, in the old book of common prayer, one of the wedding vows was "with my body I thee worship," but this was never intended to imply that the bride would worship her husband in the sense in which "worship" is commonly used now.

(For more on the use of the English word "worship" as it relates to Icons, see: ["Worship"?](#))

Orthodox Christians do *venerate* Icons, which is to say, we pay respect to them because they are holy objects, and because we reverence what the Icons depict. We do not worship Icons any more than Americans worship the American flag. Saluting the flag is not exactly the same type of veneration as we pay to Icons, but it is indeed a type of veneration. And just as we do not venerate wood and paint, but rather the persons depicted in the Icon, patriotic Americans do not venerate cloth and dye, but rather the country which the flag represents.

This was the reasoning of the Seventh Œcumenical Synod, which decreed in its *Oros* the following:

"Since this is the case, following the royal path and the teaching divinely inspired by our holy Fathers and the Tradition of the catholic Church—for we know that it is inspired by the Holy Spirit who lives in it—we decide in all correctness and after a thorough examination that, just as the holy and vivifying Cross, similarly the holy and precious Icons painted with colors, made with little stones or with any other matter serving this purpose (*epitadeios*), should be placed in the holy churches of God, on vases and sacred vestments, on walls and boards, in houses and on roads, whether these are Icons of our Lord God and Savior, Jesus Christ, or of our spotless Sovereign Lady, the holy Mother of God, or of the holy angels and of holy and venerable men. For each time that we see their representation in an image, each time, while gazing upon them, we are made to remember the prototypes, we grow to love them more, and we are more induced to worship them by kissing them and by witnessing our veneration (*proskenesin*), not the true adoration (*latreian*) which, according to our faith, is proper only to the one divine nature, but in the same way as we venerate the image of the precious and vivifying cross, the holy Gospel and other sacred objects which we honor with incense and candles according to the pious custom of our forefathers. For the honor rendered to the image goes to its prototype, and the person who venerates an Icon venerates the person represented in it. Indeed, such is the teaching of our holy Fathers and the Tradition of the holy catholic Church which propagated the Gospel from one end of the earth to the other."



The Jews understand the difference between veneration and worship (adoration). A pious Jew kisses the Mezuzah on his door post, he kisses his prayer shawl before putting it on, he kisses the tallit, before he binds them to his forehead, and arm. He kisses the Torah before he reads it in the Synagogue. No doubt, Christ did likewise, when reading the Scriptures in the Synagogue.

The Early Christians also understood this distinction as well. In the Martyrdom of Polycarp (who was St. John the Apostle's disciple, and whose Martyrdom was recorded by the faithful of his Church, who were eyewitnesses of all that it recounts), we are told of how some sought to have the Roman magistrate keep the Christians from retrieving the body of the Holy Martyr

"lest,' so it was said, 'they should abandon the crucified one and begin to worship this man'—this being done at the instigation and urgent entreaty of the Jews, who also watched when we were about to take it from the fire, not knowing that it will be impossible for us either to forsake at any time the Christ who suffered for the salvation of the whole world of those that are saved—suffered though faultless for sinners—nor to worship any other. For Him, being the Son of God, we adore, but the martyrs as disciples and imitators of the Lord we cherish as they deserve for their matchless affection towards their own King and Teacher.... The centurion therefore, seeing the opposition raised on the part of the Jews, set him in the midst and burnt him after their custom. And so we afterwards took up his bones which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place; where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together, as we are able, in gladness and joy, and to celebrate the birth-day [i.e. the anniversary] of his martyrdom for the commemoration of those that have already fought in the contest, and for the training and preparation of those that shall do so hereafter" (The Martyrdom of Polycarp 17:2-3; 18:1-3).

For Further Reading:

- For a discussion of the Hebrew words (and to some extent, the Greek words) relevant to this discussion, see [this excerpt from the *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*](#).
- [Is Venerating Icons Idolatry?](#), by Timothy Cople

5. Doesn't the 2nd Commandment forbid Icons?

The issue with respect to the 2nd commandment is what does the word translated "graven images" mean? If it simply means carved images, then the images in the temple would be in violation of this Commandment. Our best guide, however, to what Hebrew words mean, is what they meant to Hebrews—and when the Hebrews translated the Bible into Greek, they translated this word simply as "*eidoloi*", i.e. "idols." Furthermore the Hebrew word *pesel* is never used in reference to any of the images in the temple. So clearly the reference here is to pagan images rather than images in general.

Let's look at the Scriptural passage in question more closely:

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image (i.e. idol), or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor shalt thou serve (worship) them..." (Exodus 20:4-5a).

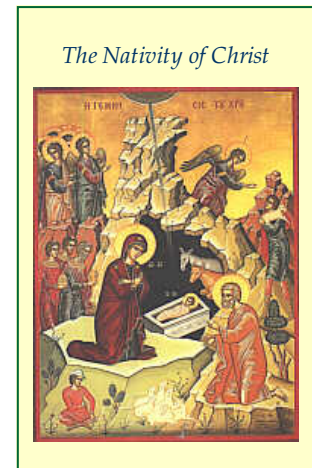
Now, if we take this as a reference to images of any kind, then clearly the cherubim in the Temple violate this command. If we limit this as applying only to idols, no contradiction exists. Furthermore, if this applies to all images—then even the picture on a driver's license violates it, and is an idol. So either every Protestant with a driver's license is an idolater, or Icons are not idols.

Leaving aside, for the moment, the meaning of "graven images" lets simply look at what this text actually says about them. You shall not make x, you shall not bow to x, you shall not worship x. If x = image, then the Temple itself violates this Commandment. If x = idol and not all images, then this verse contradicts neither the Icons in the Temple, nor Orthodox Icons.

6. Doesn't Deuteronomy 4:14-19 forbid any images of God? How then can you have Icons of Christ?

This passage instructs the Jews not to make a (false) image of God, because they had not seen God, however, as Christians, we believe that God became Incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, and so we may depict that "which we have seen with our eyes" (1st John 1:1). As St. John of Damascus said:

"Of old, God the incorporeal and uncircumscribed was never depicted. Now, however, when God is seen clothed in flesh, and conversing with men, I make an image of the God whom I see. I do not worship matter, I worship the God of matter, who became matter for my sake, and deigned to inhabit matter, who worked out my salvation through matter. I will not cease from honouring that matter which works my salvation. I venerate it, though not as God. How could God be born out of lifeless things? And if God's



body is God by union, it is immutable. The nature of God remains the same as before, the flesh created in time is quickened by, a logical and reasoning soul."

For Further Reading:

- [Presumptuous Propositions](#), by Timothy Copple and Patrick Barnes.

7. But considering the violent opposition which Jews had to images how could the early Christians have accepted Icons?

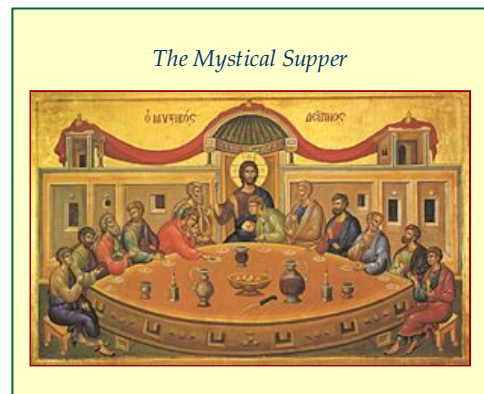
Not only does one find Iconography throughout Christian Catacombs, but they are also found in Jewish catacombs of the same period. We also have the well preserved Jewish Icons of Dura-Europos, which were in a city destroyed by the Persians in the mid 3rd century (which of course puts a limit on how recent these Icons could have been made).

Often Josephus' views on Iconography are erroneously taken as the standard Jewish view on the subject, but this is clearly not the case. The specific text usually cited is the one referring to a riot which took place when the Romans placed an imperial eagle on the gate of the Temple.

This story is not so open and shut as some would like to think. These were zealots. Josephus, who was also a rebel, though one who switched sides and later aided the Romans, records these events.

Josephus records that the Romans mounted an eagle over the entrance to the Temple, which the people tore down as sacrilegious—but was it images of beasts *per se* that were at issue, or was it Roman eagles on the Entrance to the Temple that were the issue. Josephus' views were so extreme on this subject that he thought the statues of animals in connection with the Brazen Sea in Solomon's Temple were a sin (*Antiquities* VIII,7,5).

The over all attitude of Jews towards religious art was not nearly so Iconoclastic. The Palestinian Talmud records (in Abodah Zarah 48d) "In the days of Rabbi Jochanan men began to paint pictures on the walls, and he did not hinder them" and "In the days of Rabbi Abbun men began to make designs on mosaics, and he did not hinder them."



Also, the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan repeats the command against idols, but then says "but a stone column carved with images and likenesses you may make upon the premises of your sanctuaries, but not to worship them."

Also, Jewish holy books have been illustrated as far back as we have them. They contain illustrations of Biblical scenes, much like those found at the Synagogue of Dura Europos (and like the Church found near by) which was buried in the mid 3rd century when the Persians destroyed that city (See "The excavations at Dura-Europos conducted by Yale University and the French Academy of Inscriptions and Letters," Final Report VII, Part I, The Synagogue, by Carl H. Kraeling).

It is note worthy that the earliest Icons of the Catacombs were mostly Old Testament scenes, and Icons of Christ. The dominance of Old Testament scenes shows that this was not a Pagan practices Christianized by converts, but a Jewish practice, adopted by the Christians.

To see the images found in the Synagogue of Dura Europos, click on the following links:

- <http://www.library.yale.edu/exhibition/judaica/jcsml.2.html>
- <http://www.pitt.edu/~tokerism/0040/images2/213.jpg>

8. If Icons are so important, why do we not find them in the Scriptures?

Ah, but we *do* find them in the Scriptures—plenty of them! Consider how prevalent they were in the Tabernacle and then later in the Temple. There were images of cherubim:

- On the Ark—Ex. 25:18
- On the Curtains of the Tabernacle—Ex. 26:1
- On the Veil of the Holy of Holies—Ex. 26:31
- Two huge Cherubim in the Sanctuary—1st Kings 6:23
- On the Walls—1st Kings 6:29
- On the Doors—1st Kings 6:32
- And on the furnishings—1st Kings 7:29,36

In short, there were Icons everywhere you turned.

9. Why were there only Icons of Cherubim, and not of Saints?

The Temple was an image of Heaven, as St. Paul makes clear:

"[the priests who serve in the Temple in Jerusalem] serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount" (Hebrews 8:5; cf. Exodus 25:40).

Before Christ came in the flesh and triumphed over death by His Resurrection, the Saints of the Old Testament were not in the presence of God in Heaven, but were in Sheol (often translated as "the grave", and translated as "hades" in Greek). Before Christ's Resurrection, Sheol was the destiny of both the just and the unjust (Genesis 37:35; Isaiah 38:10), though their lot there was by no means the same. As we see in Christ's parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31; cf. Enoch 22:8-15 [although the book of Enoch is not included in the Canon of Holy Scripture, it is a venerable part of Holy Tradition and is quoted in the Epistle of St. Jude, as well as in many of the writings of the holy fathers]) there was a gulf that separated the just from the unjust, and while the righteous were in a state of blessedness, the wicked were (and are) in a state of torment—the righteous awaited their deliverance through Christ's Resurrection, while the wicked fearfully awaited their judgment. Thus under the old covenant, prayers were said only for the departed, because they were not yet in heaven to intercede on our behalves. For as St. Paul said to the Hebrews when speaking of the Old Testament Saints, "And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us" (Hebrews 11:39-40). In Hebrews 12, St. Paul goes on to contrast the nature of the Old Covenant (12:18ff) with that of the New (12:22ff)—and among the distinctions he makes, he says that in the New Covenant we "are come unto... the spirits of just men *made perfect* (12:22-23). As both the Scriptures and the rest of Holy Tradition tell us, while Christ's body lay in the tomb, His Spirit descended into Sheol and proclaimed liberty to the captives (Ephesians 4:8-10; 1st Peter 3:19, 4:6; cf. Matthew 27:52-53). And these Saints that have triumphed over this world, now reign with Christ in Glory (2nd Timothy 2:12), and continually offer up prayers for us before the Lord (Revelation 5:8; the Martyrdom of St. Ignatius, Ch. 7 [St. Ignatius was one of the disciples of the Apostle John, and was made Bishop of Antioch by him]).



Thus, while in the Old Covenant, the Temple imaged heaven with only the attending Cherubim, in the New Covenant, our Temples image heaven with the great cloud of witnesses that now reside in glory there.

10. OK, granted that there are Icons of sorts in Scripture, but where were the Israelites told that they should venerate them?

The Scriptures do command the Israelites to bow before the Ark, which had two prominent images of cherubim on it. In Psalms 99:5, it commands: "bow before the footstool of His feet..." We should note first of all that the word for "bow" here, is the same word used in Exodus 20:5, when we are told to not bow to idols.

And what is the "footstool of His feet"? In 1st Chronicles 28:2, David uses this phrase in reference to the Ark of the Covenant. In Psalm 99 [98 in the Septuagint], it begins by speaking of the Lord who "dwells between the Cherubim" (99:1), and it ends with a call to "bow to His holy hill"—which makes it even clearer that in context, this is speaking of the Ark of the Covenant. This phrase occurs again in Psalm 132:7, where it is preceded by the statement "We will go into His tabernacles..." and is followed by the statement "Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest; Thou and the Ark of Thy strength."

Interestingly, this phrase is applied to the Cross in the services of the Church, and the connection is not accidental—because on the Ark, between the Cherubim was the Mercy Seat, upon which the sacrificial blood was sprinkled for the sins of the people (Exodus 25:22, Leviticus 16:15).

11. But what about the Bronze Serpent? Wasn't it destroyed precisely because the people began venerating it?

If you look at the passage in question (2nd Kings 18:4), you will see that the Bronze Serpent was not destroyed simply because people honored it, but because they had made it into a serpent God, called "Nehushtan."

12. Weren't there Iconoclasts in the Church, long before Protestants came along?

It is important to keep in mind, when considering the question of Icons (and thus also Iconoclasm), that there are two separate questions that are often confused:

- 1). **Is it permissible to make or to have Icons?**
- 2). **Is it permissible to venerate them?**

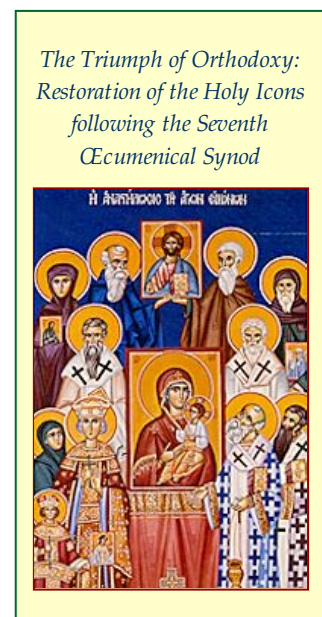
It is clear from the Old Testament that the answer to both questions is, Yes. While Protestants, however, object to the veneration of Icons, they typically do not object to the making or possession of images. If they did, they would not have illustrated Gospel tracts, TV's, or pictures... but aside from the Amish, one would be hard pressed to find another group of Protestants that consistently eschews images. Protestants do typically object to the veneration of images, but interestingly the arguments and evidence that they use almost always argues against any images of any kind, if the logic of their line of argumentation were consistently followed.

The Iconoclasts, who are often cited by Protestants as supporting their position on this question, in fact actually argue against Protestants. On the one hand, the Iconoclasts anathematized all those who "venture to represent...with material colours..." Christ or the Saints—something almost all Protestants do themselves. On the other hand, they also anathematized all those who "shall not confess the holy ever-virgin Mary, truly and properly the Mother of God, to be higher than every creature whether visible or invisible, and does not with sincere faith seek her intercessions as one having confidence in her access to our God since she bare Him..." and they also anathematized anyone who "denies the profit of the invocation of the Saints..." (NPNF2, Vol. 14, p. 545f). So as a matter of fact, Protestants find themselves under more of the Iconoclast's anathemas than do the Orthodox.

Protestants might wish to take solace that at least Iconoclasts opposed the veneration of images, but veneration was never an issue per se with the Iconoclasts. They only opposed venerating Icons, because they opposed Icons. They were not opposed to venerating holy things—the Iconoclasts venerated the Cross, and made no bones about it (Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974, p. 110).

Protestants also cite some other fathers and early writers of the Church to support their position. Most of these quotations simply denounce idolatry, and have nothing to do with Icons. In those few cases in which the quotes could plausibly be interpreted as condemning Icons (some of which are arguably later Iconoclastic interpolations) a consistent interpretation would require that no images be made... because again, the objection found in these texts is to the making of and possession of images. None of these texts even addresses the question of veneration.

The Canon of the Synod of Elvira is often cited in support of an Iconoclast position. In its 36th Canon, the



council decreed: "It is ordained that Pictures are not to be in churches, so that that which is worshipped and adored shall not be painted on walls." Even Protestant scholars concede that the meaning of this canon is not as clear as Protestant apologists often suggest. For one, it is unclear what was the occasion for this canon, and it is not clear what it was trying to prevent, a fact even Protestant scholars acknowledge:

"...no great weight can be attached to this [canon 36 of the council of Elvira], the exact bearing of the canon being unknown" [Edward James Martin, *A History of the Iconoclastic Controversy* (London: Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, 1930), p. 19, fn 4].

Because of the wording of this canon, it is almost certainly not a blanket ban on images. What is not clear is what it is banning, and more particularly to what end. Plausible interpretations range from this being merely a ban on images in Church, to a precautionary measure to protect Icons from the Pagans (since the canon was composed during a time of persecution, this is certainly possible). In any case, the fact of the matter is that Icons were in use in Spanish Churches before this Synod, and they continued to be used after this Synod, without any further evidence of controversy. Furthermore, this Synod was of a purely local character, and was never affirmed on an Ecumenical level.

3) How do you know that the Iconoclasts were not the ones who preserved the more ancient Christian view of Icons?

For one thing, Iconoclasm would have thrived in Islamic dominated territory... but it didn't. The first outbreak of Iconoclasm began in Moslem territory, though this was not Christians destroying images, but Moslems destroying Christian images (Pelikan, p. 105). There is also reason to think that Moslem influence inspired the Iconoclastic Emperors (for one, all of them were from parts of the Empire in which Moslems had made inroads), but the fact of the matter is that the only part of the Church in which Iconoclasm took hold was in those areas in which the Iconoclast Emperors could impose their heresy upon the people. In all areas of the Church beyond the reach of Byzantine arms, the Church opposed the Iconoclasts and broke communion with them. One of the most vocal opponents of the Iconoclasts was St. John of Damascus, who lived under Moslem rule, and suffered persecution as a result. If the Iconoclast view were really the traditional view, we should have expected to see this opinion dominate the Christians living under Moslem rule. At the very least, we would expect some Iconoclasts to speak out from among these Christians, but in fact, the opposite was true—there were no Iconoclastic voices heard from Moslem dominated lands, despite the obvious advantages such Christians would have had with their Moslem rulers.

Also, prior to the Iconoclastic controversy, we have extensive archeological evidence that Icons were used throughout the Church, and were this a departure from Apostolic Tradition we should expect to find a huge controversy on the subject from the very moment that Icons first came into use, which would have only intensified as their use became more common. We find, however, nothing of the sort. In fact, thirty years prior to the Iconoclastic controversy, the Quinisext council established a canon regarding what should be depicted in certain Icons, but hasn't the faintest hint of any controversy about Icons *per se*:

"In some of the paintings of the venerable Icons, a lamb is inscribed as being shown or pointed at by the Precursor's finger, which was taken to be a type of grace, suggesting beforehand through the law the true lamb to us Christ our God. Therefore, eagerly embracing the old types and shadows as symbols of the truth and preindications handed down to the Church, we prefer the grace, and accept it as the truth in fulfillment of the law. Since, therefore, that which is perfect even though it be but painted is imprinted in the faces of all, the Lamb who taketh away the sin of the world Christ our God, with respect to His human character, we decree that henceforth he shall be inscribed even in the Icons instead of the ancient lamb: through Him being enabled to comprehend the reason for the humiliation of the God Logos, and in memory of His life in the flesh and of His passion and of His soterial death being led by the hand, as it were, and of the redemption of the world which thence accrues" (Canon LXXXII of the Quinisext Council).

Aside from this, there are many other things about the Iconoclast which show the novelty of their heresy: they opposed monasticism, despite the fact that it had unquestionably been embraced by the Church for centuries, they were found of robbing monks, taking their land, and forcing them to marry, eat meat, and attend public spectacles (and those who resisted often *were* the public spectacles), contrary to well established monastic practice. Even Protestant historians are forced to concede that the holy men and women of the day were supporters of the veneration of Icons, and that the Iconoclasts were a rather immoral and ruthless lot.

"Much has been written, and truly written, of the superiority of the iconoclastic rulers; but when all has been said that can be, the fact still remains, that they were most of them but sorry Christians, and the justice of the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin's summing up of the matter will not be disputed by any impartial student. He says, "No one will deny that with rarest exceptions, all the religious earnestness, all which constituted the quickening power of a church, was ranged upon the other [i.e. the orthodox] side. Had the Iconoclasts triumphed, when their work showed itself at last in its true colours, it would have proved to be the triumph, not of faith in an invisible God, but of frivolous unbelief in an incarnate Saviour." (*Trench. Mediaeval History*, Chap. vii.) [The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church](#), trans H. R. Percival, in *NPNF2*, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace, (repr. Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1955), XIV, p. 575, cf. 547f.

One can only be an Iconoclast if they believe that the Church can cease to exist—contrary to the Scriptures—because there is no doubt that the Church rejected Iconoclasm and used Icons from at least as far back as its use of catacombs (which are full of Christian Icons). This is an option that thoughtful Evangelicals generally reject (see, for example, *A Biblical Guide to Orthodoxy and Heresy*, [Part Two: Guidelines for Doctrinal Discernment, in the Christian Research Journal](#), Fall 1990, p. 14, section 3, "The Orthodox Principle").

For a thorough history of the reception of the Seventh Ecumenical Synod, particularly the mistranslations of many of its decrees in the West, and the resulting misunderstanding of the council on the part of the Franks, see [The Seven Ecumenical Councils of the Undivided Church](#), trans H. R. Percival, in *NPNF2*, ed. P. Schaff and H. Wace, (repr. Grand Rapids MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1955), XIV, pp. 575-587.

