

Seven Sins of Idolatry

1. Turning means into ends

2. Substituting things for people

3. Placing our imagination above God's revelation

4. Reducing our view of God's transcendence

5. Putting humans in control

6. Fashioning God in a popular style

7. Displacing Christ in our worship

10 Commandments

Exodus 20:1-21
#2 Don't Fake God

Introduction

"You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them....."

Identifying Idolatry

The word for "idol" is literally a carving or chiselled form, and would later include castings.

Q.1 Does the second commandment suggest that God is anti-art; iconoclastic? What passages from Scripture would you choose to make a case to dispute this claim?

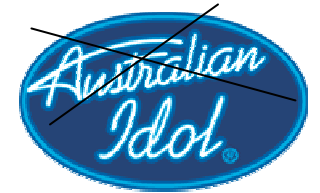
Like the 1st commandment, the second insists that Israel shall not seek after alternatives to the Living God. However, as Thomas Watson, a Puritan preacher, once said, "In the first commandment worshipping a false God is forbidden. In this, however, the second commandment, **worshipping the true God in a false manner is forbidden.**"

Consider what rationale lies behind the commandment by reading Deuteronomy 4:10-20:

*12 Then the LORD spoke to you out of the fire. You heard the sound of words but saw **no form**; there was **only a voice**.*

*15 You saw **no form** of any kind the day the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the fire. Therefore watch yourselves very carefully,*

10 Ways
2 Live



16 so that you do not become **corrupt and make for yourselves an idol, an image of any shape, whether formed like a man or a woman.....,**
 19 **And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars-- all the heavenly array-- do not be enticed into bowing down to them and worshipping things the LORD your God has apportioned to all the nations under heaven.**
 39 **Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the LORD is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other.**
 40 **Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time.**

Q.2 How does this passage of scripture help you to understand the prohibition against worshipping idols?

Q.3 In what sense would we then understand the statement that God is a “jealous God” (Exod. 20:5)?

Q.4 “Visiting” or punishing (Exod. 20:5) is used of God’s actions against Egypt. How would it apply to Israel according to this commandment?



Worshipping Yahweh the wrong way

READ Exodus 32:1-6



While Moses was away up Mt. Sinai receiving the 10 commandments, his long delay in returning caused concern. The people below hassled his right-hand man Aaron to give them an alternative spiritual leadership so they didn’t have to wait any longer. A golden calf was cast as the new means of contact with God. Like

Egyptian gods, it represented power; a place where God might hover; a representation of Yahweh, completely inadequate though it was. They did not for a minute think a calf was God; but they did think the calf an adequate representation of God. Herein lay their sin. The subsequent indulgent behaviour (vs. 6) was symptomatic of the ease with which they adopted a pagan symbol for worshipping Yahweh. Syncretism and Sensualism still ruled their society. By imagining that they could adequately worship the living God via the image of a created thing they break the second commandment.

The idol was totally insufficient. It could not express God's character; His living, saving, loving, holy nature. Nothing created could adequately mediate God. People need some tangible way to "see" God and worship Him. But what form could ever be sufficient. How could anyone/anything truly represent this God?

Exact Representation

The apparent scandal of the New Testament is that Jesus of Nazareth demonstrated the power and authority of God as if He was God in human form. They thought this both incredible, absurd and blasphemous; a contravention of God’s commands and purpose.

READ John 1:1-14 with this in mind

READ Hebrews 1:1-3

READ the Nicene Creed

Q.5 How do you understand the place of Jesus Christ in our worship of the one true God?