

## The School of Biblical Law

### Covenant and Law

#### Lesson Sixteen: “The Covenant Model and Commandment Two”

The second commandment forbids man to make graven images. Commandment two answers to the second section of the covenant model, which is hierarchy. Because man was invited to work for God in the original creation mandate and in the context of covenant, man is expected to be faithful to God serving only Him and only serving God in the manner that He designs.

1. Hierarchy defines the yoke of service; and because man is yoked with God in the task of dominion, man is forbidden yoke with or worship any other aspect of creation.
2. God, man, and creation have a God -ordained order or arrangement.
  - Man may not invert that order by making it to be creation, man, and God.
  - Man may not elevate the created order or worship the creation.

If two entities are in a yoke, one will be leading the team.

- The leader sets the purpose, direction, and the pace.
- God is forbidding man to take the lead in the yoking through the creation of idols and the manipulation of the idols in an attempt to control God or determine man’s destiny.
- Whereas the first commandment opposes yoking with any other god, the second commandment forbids self-willed worship.

3. An example of the use of an image in an attempt to dominate God may be found in Numbers 21:4-10.

Israel was complaining about God’s provision of the manna and, as a result of their rebellion, God sent snakes that bit them and brought death.

- The story reminds the reader of the Garden when Eve was dissatisfied with God’s provisions and was (metaphorically) bitten by the snake.
- Death was the result of the snake’s bite in both occurrences.
- Moses interceded on behalf of Israel.
- God told Moses to create an image of a brazen serpent, put it on a pole, and have the people look upon it.

Jesus interpreted the event in John 3:14-16.

- Jesus was the one like the brazen serpent who was lifted up on the pole (the cross).
- Jesus bore the curse of the serpent’s bite.

4. The brazen serpent reappears in Israel’s history during the days of Hezekiah (II Kings 18:4).
  - The serpent was ordained during Moses’ day.
  - “He (Hezekiah) removed the high places, and broke the images, and cut down the groves, and broke in pieces the brazen serpent that Moses had made; for in those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it. He called it Nehushtan.”
  - The nation was trying to use the object to appropriate the same healing power that was available to the people under Moses’ direction.
5. Commandment Two makes a distinction between a legitimate and an illegitimate image.
  - Legitimate Image – One which communicates who God is or what God has done.
  - Illegitimate Image – One through which the worshipper assumes he can appropriate power and manipulate God.

The use of idolatry evokes the jealousy of God. “You shall not bow down yourself to them nor serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me” (Ex. 20:5).