

The School of Biblical Law

Covenant and Law

Lesson Seventeen: "The Covenant Model and Commandment Two, Part 2"

The images, which are forbidden in Commandment Two, are those artifacts that are carved, graven, molded, or by any other means created by man in an attempt to take control or to exercise power over God. Because the second commandment answers to section two of the covenant model, the hierarchy between man and God is defined in which God is the sovereign and man is God's appointed representative. Man yokes with God, follows God's leading, works for God, and answers to God. Man may not attempt to usurp control of the yoke through manipulation of idols.

Commandments 1-5 Covenant Model Commandments 6-10

No other gods Transcendence

No graven images Hierarchy

1. Psalm 19:1-4 says, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day to day utters speech and night to night shews knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out though all the earth and their words to the end of the world."
 - God tells His story visually and symbolically.
 - Man hears God's story visually and symbolically.
2. There are times in the scripture where God commanded man to create images and even to use those images in worship.
 - Tabernacle of Moses had images of angels on the veil and on the Ark of the Covenant.
 - God put His spirit on Bezaleel to work skillfully with gold, silver, brass, cutting stones and carving timber in order that he, as a great craftsman, could build the Tabernacle (Ex. 31:1-11).
 - The Temple of Solomon also had crafted images, such as the twelve oxen under the huge water basin called the molten sea (I Kings 7:25).

Images may be legitimate or illegitimate.

- Legitimate images communicate who God is or what He has done. They may be used to tell a redemptive truth, remind man of a historical event, or testify to some aspect of the Creator or the creation.
- An illegitimate image is one through which the worshipper assumes he can appropriate power by contact with and manipulation of the artifact.

Worshipping through the use of idols is similar to the usage of an amulet in which the worshipper assumes that both the God and the man are under the bondage of the ritual and that man can impose his will upon God by manipulating the artifact of worship for the implementation of power. (Example: The sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, took the Ark onto the battle field in I Sam. 4).

3. Building graven images demonstrates mankind's ignorance about the following:
 - The person of God as unboundaried, sovereign, independent, and altogether just and holy.
 - Man's person as limited, finite, dependent, and morally depraved.
4. To build an image to produce the sense of security from a God who is nearby or at hand is an affront to God's person and promises.
 - God's covenant and his covenantal promises provide the foundation for security.
 - Substituting ritual for faith is a denial of covenant.

The idolatrous mindset arises from the need to control or manipulate the power of God for personal benefit. God has given a covenant; and if the hierarchy will believe that He is who He says He is and He will do what he says He will do, that man or woman will please God and receive His blessings without violating Commandment Two.