

The School of Biblical Law

Covenant and Law

Lesson Eighteen: “The Covenant Model and Commandment Two, Part 3”

Images may not be used by man in an attempt to usurp control of the yoke of service. Man, works for God as God’s appointed representative, but God controls the direction of the yoke. Manipulation of idols is man’s attempt to have power on demand, provisions by extraction, or protection by command.

Commandments 1-5	Covenant Model	Commandments 6-10
No other gods	Transcendence	
No graven images	Hierarchy	

1. 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.
2. One attempt to take a legitimate image and turn it into an idol occurred with the brazen serpent made by Moses. (Num. 21:4-10). (Recall Lesson 16 for more details.)
 - The serpent was lifted on a pole; and those who looked upon it, were healed and lived.
 - Jesus interpreted Moses’ serpent as a foretelling of Christ being lifted on the cross (Jn.3:14-16).
 - The image was later used as a idol and had to be destroyed in Hezekiah’s day (II Kings 18:4).

Another trespass of this commandment occurred during the days of Eli the priest (I Sam.4).

- Hophni and Phinehas took the Ark of the Covenant onto the battlefield in an attempt to use God’s power to destroy the Philistines.
- The battle was lost; 30,000 died in the battle; the Ark was captured; Phinehas’ wife went into labor and gave birth to a son named Ichabod; and Eli died of a broken neck because of a fall.

At a time when Moses was in the Mountain of the Lord, the Israelites became weary waiting for his return and entreated Aaron to build a golden calf for them that would “go before” them (Ex. 32).

- Aaron finished the calf, built an altar before it, and told the people, “Tomorrow is a feast before the Lord (Yahweh).”
- Israel attempted to worship their God after the idolatrous worship patterns of Egypt.

Gideon built an ephod, the garment of the priest, out of gold and Israel “whored after it” (Jud.8).

Micah built an idol and hired his own priest in an attempt to secure blessing (Jud.17). Then Micah said, “Now I know that the Lord (Yahweh) will be good to me. I have a Levite for my priest (Jud. 17:13 – GW).

Jeremiah rebuked Israel for declaring “the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord (Jer. 7:4). Jeremiah called these proclamation lying words as they produced a false reality that any structure or ritual could guarantee the power and presence of God.

The person who builds an idol seeks to control God or manipulate the power of God for his own personal benefit rather than living by faith and trusting in the faithfulness of God. All acts of idol making eventually go beyond attempts to worship Yahweh by means of an image and become worship of a false god, who is fashioned out of the vain imaginations of man. Breaking commandment two results in also breaking commandment one.