

Second COMMANDMENT: “YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF A CARVED IMAGE—

LESSON 2 a

(Lesson 2 is in 2 parts [a & b])

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—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; 5you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.

READ: Exodus 20:4-6

1 INTRODUCTION:

Of all the commandments many believe that the second is the least relevant today.

1. So why do we need a lesson on "Graven Images"?
2. I was surprised to learn that out of the 10 commandments the one repeated most in the Bible was the second.

A. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT SETTLES THE WHO OF WORSHIP. - WE ARE TO WORSHIP JEHOVAH - I AM - AND HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE HIM.

The second deals with the HOW of worship.

1. Once we decide who to worship the next logical question is how do you worship Him?
2. Most of the religious world says that only the first commandment is important today.
3. They say, "It is important to know who to worship but once you decide on God it doesn't matter how.
4. But the truth is that God is very particular about how He is worshiped.
5. Partly because your worship reflects your IMAGE of God and how well you know Him and His nature.
6. And God is concerned about our IMAGE of Him.

DISCUSSION:

LET'S LOOK AT OUR READING... Exo.20:4-6 and see what God is saying.

What is being prohibited Here?

1. It is not art, or a sculpture or a painting or even religious art.

In some churches they have cut off the little crosses on communion trays because that is an image.

Some have taken the steeples off of church buildings because it is an image.

I have known some that would not have a religious picture in the house because that is breaking the 2nd commandment.

That is not what this commandment is teaching.

God even instructed that in His tabernacle and temple images to be constructed.

What was there on each side of the mercy seat? - Cherubim.

In the temple there were carvings of palm trees, flowers, and angels.

God has never said that it is wrong to have religious art, only that it is wrong to worship it.

The 2nd commandment is not just prohibiting worshipping idols.

Because that has already been dealt with in the first commandment.

God has already said, "You are not to have other Gods."

If we obey the first commandment, we do not worship idols or other gods!

The second commandment is dealing with How does this ONE GOD want to be worshiped.

He is saying, "I am forbidding you to have images that represent me to aid your worship."

1. He does not want aids brought in beyond what He has appointed. _

The first commandment that Israel broke was the second commandment.

They broke it before God put it in writing. (Exo.32:1-5).

Some people say that they were worshipping the bull gods of Egypt.

No they were not -- The word LORD in vrs. 5 is "Yaweh" the "I Am".

They were not only trading for a new god they were practicing the pagan way of worshipping the true God.

They wanted a physical symbol to represent God.

1. Just like the Egyptians and their symbols.

And the Canaanites had their symbols.

We want a symbol for our God.

So, they made a golden calf.

1. And Aaron said, "We are going to worship tomorrow and we are going to have a feast to honor the Lord before this calf."

This broke both the first and second commandment, and you can read on to see how displeased God was.

They were not only attempting to substitute some new god for "Yaweh" but they were attempting to represent Jehovah God of Israel with some tangible matter.

And God says, "I don't want it." WHY?

The problem obviously is that there is no rightness adequate to represent God.

You cannot make material what is spiritual.

You cannot make temporal what is eternal.

What is there in all the universe that is right enough to represent God?

God is Spirit - Jn.4:24.

1. We usually use this verse to say that we have to worship the right way and somehow we get into accapella music and the Lord's supper, etc. These are all true!

But that is not all that Jesus is talking about.

Remember the woman at the well was talking about the Jews saying they had to go down to Jerusalem to worship and my people say you have to go to Mt. Gerizim.

Which is right - where does God stay?

And Jesus said, "You have the wrong nature of God for God is Spirit!"

People are always trying to put God in boxes made of little images and saying:

Stay there God.

But God is Spirit and you have to understand that if you are going to worship Him.

1. God is spiritual and cannot be made of a material thing.

Why do we do that?

1. Why do some think that spiritual worship needs material things to help it?

It is because some like the advantage of a localized God.

They like a God that stays in the church house.

That way they know where He is and can make sure to look different when they go to see Him.

They want a God that is down on their level because it is easier to manipulate Him and use Him whenever the need Him.

That's what Israel wanted!

Let me quickly tell you the story of 1 Sam.4.

1. Samuel was a young man and Eli was the priest.
His sons were wicked boys and they were perverting the sacrifices.
And having adulterous relationships with women in the tabernacle.
God was displeased and He rises up the Philistines and 4,000 Israelites were killed.
They say, "What is the problem, we are Gods people!"
We even have God's box in the tabernacle where we put Him.
What if we went and got the box, the Ark of the Covenant and took Him into battle with us.
So they did and the Philistines took courage lest they become slaves to the Hebrews and 30,000
Israelites died in that battle.
And the Philistines took the Ark.
All this time God was saying to His people I am not material.
You cannot box me up and use me when you need me and then leave me.
God said - I do not want any images.

CONCLUSION:

This command is still relevant and is still violated in the religious world today.

1. I realize that golden calves are no longer used in our time.
But millions of religious people go into their buildings and still have the Icons.
They still have their crucifix.
They still have their representations and you have to bow down before them before you can
worship right.
Because that is where God is.
And when you confront people about it they say.
Oh, no those are not God they are just our aids for worshipping God!
That is exactly what God is prohibiting - I don't want you to build a material aid and say that's where I
am.
I am disturbed about what I call a return to Priestism.
This is practiced among a lot of our religious groups where they have a special group we call preachers,
the staff, or whatever you want to call them. Clergy - Laity.
They are considered God's representatives.
If you are going to do anything, talk about God, or know God you have to go through them.
I refuse to be your priest - Because we are a fellowship of priest.
I will be your spokesman but not your priest.
Some have returned to the worship of nature.
They did not make little golden suns and moons.
They claim they can worship the Lord better there than with His church.
Two of the most beautiful things I enjoy are the beautiful sunsets and sunrises.
But we must not worship them.
We must look past and worship the one that made them.

But if we are not careful we will worship the material rather than the spiritual.
WE WILL CONTINUE THIS THOUGHT NEXT LESSON

CLOSING:

1. You do not need to make an image of God!

What you need to do is be made into the image of God.

You don't need to shape God at all. – But, you do need to let God shape you, and fashion you into His image.

Your image of God is determining what you are becoming and if the image is not Jesus Christ you are not getting closer to Him.

That's why Jesus came.