



**Lecture # 8 Part 2**

**The Ten Commandments, The Laws Governing Man's  
Duty to God (Part 2): Commandment Two Concerns The  
Worship of God—Never Make Nor Worship False Gods,  
Exodus 20:4-6**

**Exodus 20:4-6 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup>“You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

<sup>5</sup>You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,

<sup>6</sup>but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

**William Barclay** has an excellent statement on idolatry. **Note carefully what he says:**

*“[Idolatry] began because men found it difficult to worship a god they could not see. So they said to themselves, ‘We will make something which will represent the god and that will make it easier to think of the god.’ In the first instance the idol was never meant to be the god; it was meant only to stand for the god”*

*“We can perhaps understand it, if we think of it this way. Suppose we have a friend whom we have not seen for a very long time, and suppose we sit down to write a letter to that friend, and suppose we find the letter hard to write, because we have been separated for so long. In such a situation it might well help if we took a photograph of the friend and put it where we could see it, and wrote, as it were, looking at the photograph. The photograph would bring our friend nearer to our mind. At first that is what an idol was meant to do.”*

*“The trouble was that men began to worship the idol instead of the god it stood for; men began to worship the symbol instead of the reality it was supposed to represent. It is not really difficult to see how idolatry began, and it is not really so silly as it looks. For all that, we may well be saying, ‘I am not likely to do a thing like that.’ But perhaps we are more likely to do it than we think.”*

*“Take a very small thing first of all. Quite a lot of people carry some kind of lucky mascot, some kind of charm. Some carry a lucky penny or a lucky sign of the zodiac, or, for instance, if they go on a journey, they take a St. Christopher sign to avoid accidents. That is really idolatry, for it is believing that in some way the carrying of a little bit of metal or plastic can have an effect on their lives.”*

*“But there is something much more serious than that. The real essence of idolatry is that a man worships a thing instead of God.”*

*“There is no doubt at all that there is a great deal of that today. People assess their success in life by the number of things which they possess. We think a man a*



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*success if he has a big motor car, or an elaborate television set or record-player, or if he can go every year for a Continental holiday.”*

*“This is obviously wrong.”*

**Arthur W. Pink** gives a thought-provoking statement on idolatry that is well worth quoting:

*“This commandment strikes against a desire, or should we say a disease, which is deeply rooted in the human heart, namely, to bring in some aids to the worship of God, beyond those which He has appointed—material aids, things which can be perceived by the senses. Nor is the reason for this difficult to find: God is incorporeal, invisible, and can be realized only by a spiritual principle, and since that principle is dead in fallen man, he naturally seeks that which accords with his carnality. But how different is it with those who have been quickened by the Holy Spirit. No one who truly knows God as a living reality needs any images to aid his devotions; none who enjoys daily communion with Christ requires any pictures of Him to help him to pray and adore, for he conceives of Him by faith and not by fancy.”*

Now, having said this, the commandment **does not forbid artistic talent**, that is, the making of sculptures, pictures, statues, and crucifixes for the purpose of the fine arts.

**The commandment strikes against making and using images and idols.....**

- a. for the purpose of worship
- b. for the purpose of controlling our lives and looking after us

This steals our hearts away from the only living and true God.

**Thought 1.** **Adrian Rogers** has an excellent illustration dealing with making an image or likeness of God for the purpose of worship and prayer:

*“Idolatry is wrong because it gives a distorted or false picture of God. An idol is a material thing, and no idol can represent the invisible, spiritual God. Jesus said in [John 4:24](#), ‘God is a Spirit.’ I know the King James Version includes the indefinite article, but the literal translation is, ‘God is spirit.’ That is, spirit is His very essence.*

*“No wonder, then, that Jesus went on to say, ‘They that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.’ What material thing could possibly represent spirit? God is a circle whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere. God is spirit. There is nowhere where God is not, and no material thing can represent Him.”*

*“There’s nothing you can compare God to or with. There’s nothing that says, ‘This is what God is totally like.’ God Himself asked, ‘To whom then will ye liken me, or shall I be equal?’ ([Isaiah 40:25](#)). We can say one man*



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*is like another man, one chair is like another chair, one piano like another piano, and so on. But there's only one God. You can't compare Him to anything or anyone...."*

*"Suppose a woman walks into a room and finds her husband embracing another woman. He sees his wife out of the corner of his eye and says, 'Now wait a minute, honey. Don't get the wrong idea here. Let me tell you what I was doing. This woman is so beautiful, she reminded me of you. I was really just thinking of you when I was embracing her.'"*

*"There's not a woman in America who would buy that, including my wife, Joyce! And God doesn't buy it either when we worship something else and say, 'Now, Lord, wait a minute. Don't get the wrong idea here. I was only worshiping this thing because it reminds me of You. I'm really worshiping You.'"*

*"No, you really aren't. That's what the Second Commandment is all about."*

**Thought 2.** There is only one true image of God, only one *image* that is acceptable to God.

1) Jesus Christ is the visible image of the invisible God.

### Colossians 1:13-15 (NASB)

<sup>13</sup> **"For He [God] rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,**  
<sup>14</sup> **in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**  
<sup>15</sup> **He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation."**

2) Jesus Christ is the express image, the exact representation, of God's person.

### Hebrews 1:1-3 (NASB)

<sup>1</sup> **"God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,**  
<sup>2</sup> **in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.**  
<sup>3</sup> **And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high."**

3) Jesus Christ is the very form, the very nature, of God.

### Philippians 2:6 (NASB)

<sup>6</sup> **"Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped."**



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- 4) Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

### Colossians 2:9-10 (NASB)

<sup>9</sup> “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,  
<sup>10</sup> and in Him you have been made complete, and He is the head over all rule and authority.”

- 5) Jesus Christ is the image to whom we are to be conformed.

### Romans 8:29 (NASB)

<sup>29</sup> “For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined *to become conformed to the image of His Son* [likeness, NIV], [molded into the image, AMP] so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren”

- 6) Jesus Christ is the image to which we shall be gloriously and eternally made (transformed).

### 1 John 3:2 (NASB)

<sup>2</sup> “Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is.”

- 7) Jesus Christ is the very nature and revelation of God Himself.

### John 14:7-10 (NASB)

<sup>7</sup> “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.’

<sup>8</sup> Philip said to Him, ‘Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.’

<sup>9</sup> Jesus said to him, ‘Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

<sup>10</sup> ‘Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.’”

2. This commandment prohibits the *worship* of any false god whatsoever, prohibits the worship of anything other than God Himself ([Exodus 20:5](#)).

### Exodus 20:5 (NASB)

<sup>5</sup> “You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me”



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- a. This strikes a death blow against one of the most common ideas and claims of people: **that all religions worship the same god**, that no matter what we may call god and no matter what religion we follow, we all worship the same *supreme being*.

Remember the first commandment: there are no other gods; there is only one true and living God ([Exodus 20:5](#)). Therefore, if we create a god within our own minds—if we worship something else, some other so-called god, if we treat something else as a god—we misrepresent the truth. No matter how large our religion may become, even if billions of people followed, our worship would be a lie. It would be wrong; it would be sinful behavior. Our idea of God would be inaccurate, incomplete, and false. And false worship is a gross insult to the *only* living and true God, to the *only* Sovereign Lord and Majesty of the universe.

1. It is wrong to worship things in the sky such as the sun, moon, and stars; wrong to trust and use the zodiac and other so-called *fortune-tellers* to guide one's life.
2. It is wrong to worship things in the earth such as man, cows, elephants, and other animals.
3. It is wrong to worship things in the water such as fish, crocodiles, and so-called sea creatures.
4. It is wrong to worship false messiahs and saviors.
5. It is wrong to engage in the false worship of anything.

Simply stated, it is wrong to worship the image of God created by man's imagination, wrong to picture what we think God is like and wrong to worship our image of God. God has revealed Himself, revealed exactly who He is and what He is like, in the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Holy Scripture. It is the Lord God revealed by Jesus Christ and the Holy Scripture that we are to picture and worship. We are to worship the **LORD God of revelation**—the LORD God **revealed by Jesus Christ**—worship Him and Him alone.

- b. This commandment also strikes a death blow against what was mentioned earlier, that of using images of heavenly beings for worship and prayer ([Exodus 20:5](#)).

[Exodus 20:5 \(NASB\)](#)

<sup>5</sup>“**You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me**”

God does not accept any worship that comes to Him through an idol. God is Spirit, not physical and material. God is invisible, not visible to the naked eye. Therefore, to worship an image of God is to misrepresent God, and misrepresentation of God is a lie, is sinful behavior. It is a gross insult to the Sovereign Lord of the universe.



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1. It is wrong to worship any physical or visible image of God, wrong to worship any idol or anything else upon earth, even wrong to worship an invisible image of God created within the imagination of man.
2. It is even wrong to worship religious rituals; our worship and passion should be only for God Himself.

### Isaiah 40:25 (NASB)

<sup>25</sup> “To whom then will you liken Me That I would be *his* equal?” says the Holy One.”

God is Spirit. He has no physical form that can be seen with the human eye. Therefore, God is not to be worshipped through physical, visible objects. When God is worshipped in some visible form, the glory of the invisible God is degraded. **Why?**

Because God is Spirit, omnipotent and omnipresent Spirit, the all-powerful and all-knowing Sovereign of the Universe, the Creator of all things that are in heaven and earth, both visible and invisible. God cannot be bottled up; His glory cannot be formed and sculpted into any image whatsoever. No imagination of man can picture God. Man’s thoughts, descriptions, and images of God are totally incomplete and inadequate. As Spirit, He is out beyond the universe, surrounding and embracing the universe. No planet or star—no heavenly body—extends out beyond God’s presence and knowledge.