

*Evening Worship October 9, 2016*  
*"The Great Sin, Which Too Many People Commit"*  
*Exodus 20:4-6*

**"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or 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;<sup>5</sup> you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,<sup>6</sup> but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. (Exodus 20:4-6 NKJ)**

I. *Don't make, don't bow down to, or serve any image or likeness of anything ... Why?*

1. *Things, people, animals are not God, nor do images of them accurately portray God –*

*When Aaron formed the golden calf He thought He was worshipping the True and Living God –*

**And Aaron said to them, "Break off the golden earrings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me."<sup>3</sup> "So all the people broke off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them to Aaron."<sup>4</sup> And he received the gold from their hand, and he fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a **molded calf**. Then they said, "This is your god, O Israel, **that brought you out of the land of Egypt!**"<sup>5</sup> So when Aaron saw it, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made a proclamation and said, "**Tomorrow is a feast to the LORD.**" (Exodus 32:2-5 NKJ)**

A. *He probably imagined in the gold, God's value*

B. *He probably imagined in the calf, God's strength*

*However God's value far exceeds that of gold; and His strength is far greater than that of any animal!*

*Now people will argue, yes pastor I agree, Aaron's calf did not give God glory, it diminished Him, it portray Him as less than what He IS; but Mel Gibson's Passion of Christ does glorify God, it presents Jesus accurately, it is faithful to Scripture ...*

2. *Are some images okay, while others are not?*

**"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or 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; (Exodus 20:4 NKJ)**

A. *For instance, what about image of Christ, He was a man and we portray Him as a man?*

B. *Jesus was not ONLY a MAN but He is God, deserving our worship!*

*There are things we need to see and know about Christ –*

**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:14 NKJ)**

*Do we see these things in Jim Caviezel? The man who portrayed Christ in Mel Gibson's Passion?*

*Maybe if we changed John 1:14 -*

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, as he was 6'2", handsome with dark hair and a sparkle in his eyes. (UNJohn 1:14 New King Jim Version)*

*How can any man, other than Jesus Christ Himself, show us the glory of the ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER? Even the last supper painted by Leonardo da Vinci does not show us the glory of the ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER! That part which is most important is MISSING, Jesus is God and we cannot accurately draw, paint, sculpt or act out and film THAT DIVINE nature, which was "beheld" by the early Christians.*

*Our art does not glorify Him but must by necessity diminish Him!*

II. *Some might say, yes I have an image of Jesus, I know it doesn't fully represent Who He is and I will not worship that picture –*

**"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything :4**

*We are commanded not to make the image in the first place!*

*If it is somehow about Jesus, should not it be part of our worship?*

*What is worship? It is ascribing WORTH to Someone, or something!*

*Jesus is WORTHY –*

saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain To receive power and riches and wisdom, And strength and honor and glory and blessing!" (Revelation 5:12 NKJ)

*Some things recognize and acknowledge God's worth and we call them worship! Other things diminish or distort God's image and these things we call sin! However much a picture of Christ may seem to honor Christ, it does not, because it does not fully show His glory as the only begotten of the Father, and all we do should be to God's glory – Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 10:31 NKJ)*

### *III. How do we show love, devotion and commitment to God and Christ if not by pictures? Images? Statues?*

**<sup>5</sup> you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, <sup>6</sup> but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. (Exodus 20:4-6 NKJ)**

*I am sure the Israelites thought they made the golden calf, because they loved God ...*

*Yet, God specifically tells us we do not show love for Him by making images but rather by keeping His commandments - **but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.** (Exodus 20:4-6 NKJ)*

**"If you love Me, keep My commandments. (John 14:15 NKJ)**

*Nowhere in all of Scripture does God or Christ say -*

**"If you love Me, keep a picture of me in your wallet, on your wall, hanging from your rear view mirror or keep a statue of me on your dashboard or in your garden.**

*Rather images are connected to hating God –*

**<sup>5</sup> you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me**

*How is having, making, or keeping a picture or statue of Jesus equivalent to hating Him? It is hate in the form that these things do NOT accurately picture God or Christ and therefore they by necessity diminish His glory! It is counting God SMALLER than He is in a sense*

*despising Him! It is hate because God has revealed Himself in His Word and has commanded us to obey it!*

*When I was in Dallas City our Church worked with a man who was an ex-Mormon. He had put together a track which on the front asked the question "Are Mormons Christians?" Inside it compared quotes from the Book of Mormon to the Bible and showed how the two disagreed. The Mormons at the Nauvoo IL Festival had an answer to our track. They made a sign, "Are Mormons Christians?" It said on one side. On the other it said YES – over a picture of Christ. Did that picture make them true Christians? No!*

### *IV. Consider the punishment –*

**For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me**

*This is a sin that will impact children and children's children ... How are we to teach children?*

**"And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. <sup>7</sup> "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. (Deuteronomy 6:6-7 NKJ)**

*Is there anything in the Bible about children NEEDING pictures of Jesus to learn about Jesus? Or pictures of God, to learn about God? The parent who has a picture but does not worship it may have a child who will.*

*"Whenever I have a chance to show Roman Catholics the interior of Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, I ask them what's missing. "Do you notice anything strange about this sanctuary?" I ask. "Yes," they invariably reply, "there's no crucifix! Why not? Where is it?"*

*My standard answer is that the cross is in our message. Every week we preach that Jesus Christ was crucified for sinners. This is something that we announce from the Scriptures, but it is not something that we hang on our walls. There is an important Biblical and theological reason for this: A visual representation of Christ on the cross can easily become an object of worship and thus violate the second commandment." Philip Graham Ryken*

*Arnold Brevick*