

Ten Commandments (Part 13)
(The Second Commandment – Part 2)

Exodus 20:4-6

I. A Comprehensive Prohibition Stated (v. 4)

-פסל: graven image; something crafted by a tool (Leviticus 19:4; 26:1; Deuteronomy 27:15; Psalm 97:7)

-תמונה: likeness, form, image

-The 2nd Commandment doesn't categorically prohibit representational art, photos, sculpture, or jewelry; only cultic images (1 Samuel 7:12; Exodus 31:1-11; 1 Kings 6, 7; Isaiah 61:10).

II. The Comprehensive Prohibition Qualified (v. 5a)

-Image worship is utterly foolish (Isaiah 44:9-20). It dishonors God by failing to recognize His sovereignty (1 Samuel 4); by failing to recognize His majesty (Exodus 32:4; 1 Kings 12:28); and by failing to recognize His love (Deuteronomy 5:29; 6:24).

-Image worship is wrong because God is Spirit. Since He is invisible and non-material, He shouldn't be represented by visible, physical images (John 4:24; Luke 24:39; 1 Timothy 6:16; Deuteronomy 4:15-20). This is true, but one-sided.

1) This understanding of the 2nd Commandment overlooks and downplays Scripture passages that describe God as appearing or being seen (Genesis 18:1; 32:30; Exodus 24:11; Numbers 12:6-8; John 14:9; Colossians 1:15; 2 Corinthians 3:17, 18; 1 Corinthians 13:12; Matthew 5:8; 1 John 3:2; John 17:24).

2) This understanding of the 2nd Commandment lends itself to a dualistic view of man, in which the spiritual stands nearer to God than the physical.

3) It is incorrect to search for the significance of God's spirituality in His non-physicality alone (Isaiah 31:3).

-John 4:24: God is spirit, which means that He imparts new power. God must be worshiped in spirit and truth—that is, in fellowship with the life-giving power which Jesus imparts, and in fellowship with the truth which Jesus proclaims.

Practical Lessons

1) Is your religion/worship all about appearance?

2) Does your religion/worship have nothing to do with appearance?