

Exodus 20:4-6 And no re-invented "God" either!



At first reading the first two Words (or “Commandments”) appear very similar. But they are tackling two different things: the First Commandment says that we are not to worship any false gods, while the Second Commandment says that we are not to worship the *true* God *falsely*. **God’s people are prohibited from worshipping their own perceptions or inventions of him.**

“To begin with, the second word speaks to us *about the true God*. He is not the God of our making or imagination, or even of our own discovery. Rather, he is the God who reveals himself to us not only in his world but *in his word*. He takes the initiative to speak to his people and reveal the truth about who he is, who we are, why the world exists, and how sin has corrupted it. It would be inconsistent with the nature of God, who speaks and takes initiative, to leave it to his people to dream up (or adopt from unbelieving nations) how to worship him.”

“Yahweh is righteous and just. He will not sweep sin, indeed *hatred* of him, under the rug (and to make a carved image is to hate God). Yet, to worship him as he has revealed is to love him.”

“Our God is not opposed to images. Indeed, he made us *in* his image, and sent his Son as his image — and he would have his people *be* and *look to* the images of his making, not turn ourselves upside down and make our own.”

“Though not under the old covenant today, the instinct of the second commandment might lead us to ask, as churches, How central has our desire become to make our corporate worship gatherings to be *comfortable* to nonbelievers, and to ourselves? Do our beliefs and practices not also, in a holy sense, make us, and our world, *uncomfortable*? Would unbelievers among us reasonably say, “Instead of making me want to become more like them, it looks very much as if they want to become more like me”?

The second commandment also might lead us to ask, Who sets the orienting terms of *my life* as an act of worship? Is it God, through his word, or how much is it (perhaps almost imperceptibly) the world around me? How much am I inclined to try to make my own meaning (by borrowing it from the world) rather than embracing *being made* in God’s image, and seeking to live in the high calling of being his, and looking to Jesus, his perfect image?

In other words, the second commandment forces us to ask, again and again, How central is the *word* of God in my life and in our worship?”

David Mathis (Desiring God Ministries)

- So how free are we to create images (2D or 3D) of Jesus?
- And how free are we to decide how to worship God, individually or collectively?
- Which Commandment does this transgress?

“It is a dreadful truth that the state of ‘having to depend solely on God’ is what we all dread most. And of course that just shows how very much, how almost exclusively, we have been depending on things. That trouble goes so far back in our lives and is now so deeply ingrained, we will not turn to Him as long as He leaves us anything else to turn to.”

(C S Lewis)