



Defending Your Faith

Expository Apologetics

“Always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you.”

PROVIDENCE REFORMED

BAPTIST CHURCH



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

A Puritan Catechism

44 Q. Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, “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. You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, Yahweh 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, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. (Exodus 20:4-6)



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

A Puritan Catechism

45 Q. What is required in the second commandment?

45 A. The second commandment requires the receiving, observing ([Deut. 32:46; Matt. 28:20](#)), and keeping pure and entire all such religious worship and ordinances as God has appointed in his Word ([Deut. 12:32](#)).

46 Q. What is forbidden in the second commandment?

46 A. The second commandment forbids the worshipping of God by images, ([Deut. 4:15-16](#)) or any other way not appointed in his Word ([Col. 2:18](#)).



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 108. What are the duties required in the second commandment?

A. The duties required in the second commandment are, the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in his Word; particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ; the reading, preaching, and hearing of the Word; the administration and receiving of the sacraments; church government and discipline; the ministry and maintenance thereof; religious fasting; swearing by the name of God, and vowing unto him: as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship; and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.

Deut. 32:46-47; Matt. 28:20; Acts 2:42; 1 Tim. 6:13-14; Phil. 4:6; Eph. 5:20; Deut. 17:18-19; Acts 15:21; 2 Tim. 4:2; Jas. 1:21-22; Acts 10:33; Matt. 28:19; 1 Cor. 11:23-30; Matt. 18:15-17; Matt. 16:19; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; 1 Cor. 12:28; Eph. 4:11-12; 1 Tim. 5:17-18; 1 Cor. 9:7-15; Joel 2:12-13; 1 Cor. 7:5; Deut. 6:13; Isa. 19:21; Ps. 76:11; Acts 17:16-17; Ps. 16:4; Deut. 7:5; Isa. 30:22.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 109. What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?

A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counselling, commanding, using, and anywise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; tolerating a false religion; the making any representation of God, of all, or of any of the three Persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever; all worshiping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them; all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretence whatsoever; simony; sacrilege; all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 109. References: Num. 15:39; Deut. 13:6-8; Hos. 5:11; Mic. 6:16; 1 Kings 11:33; 1 Kings 12: 33; Deut. 12:30-32; Deut. 13:6-12; Zech. 13:2-3; Rev. 2:2, 14-15, 20; Rev. 17:12, 16-17; Deut. 4:15-19; Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:21-23, 25; Dan. 3:18; Gal. 4:8; Ex. 32:5; Ex. 32:8; 1 Kings 18:26, 28; Isa. 65:11; Acts 17:22; Col. 2:21-23; Mal. 1:7-8, 14; Deut. 4:2; Ps. 106:39; Matt. 15:9; 1 Pet. 1:18; Jer. 44:17; Isa. 65:3-5; Gal. 1:13-14; 1 Sam. 13:11-12; 1 Sam. 15:21; Acts 8:18; Rom. 2:22; Mal. 3:8; Ex. 4:24-26; Matt. 22:5; Mal. 1:7, 13; Matt. 23:13; Acts 13:44-45; 1 Thess. 2:15-16.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Westminster Larger Catechism

Q. 110. What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it?

A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment, the more to enforce it, contained in these words, For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments; are, besides God's sovereignty over us, and propriety in us, his fervent zeal for his own worship, and his revengeful indignation against all false worship, as being a spiritual whoredom; accounting the breakers of this commandment such as hate him, and threatening to punish them into divers generations; and esteeming the observers of it such as love him and keep his commandments, and promising mercy to them unto many generations.

Ex. 20:5-6; Ps. 45:11; Rev. 15:3-4; Ex. 34:13-14; 1 Cor. 10:20-22; Jer. 7:18-20; Ezek. 16:26-27; Deut. 32:16-20; Hos. 2:2-4; Deut. 5:29.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Arguments against images of God, including Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

First, God is Spirit (John 4:24). As such, He is invisible, that is, He does not consist of created matter and cannot be limited or confined to a spatial location.

God's Invisibility means that all of His spiritual Being and essence will never be able to be seen by us in all of its fullness, yet God still shows Himself to us through visible, created things.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Rom. 1:20 For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,

Col. 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.

1 Tim. 1:17 Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

Heb. 11:27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Though God does have an essential form, His form is not seen because it is not physical (Deut. 4:15; John 1:18; 5:37; 6:46; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 4:12, 20).

God is present in His creation in a spiritual manner.

Job 33:4 The Spirit of God has made me, and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

Once glorified, we will not be limited by our mere physical senses and perceptions and are promised that we will see God.

Job 19:26 And after my skin is destroyed, this I know, that in my flesh I shall see God.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Once glorified, we will not be limited by our mere physical senses and perceptions and are promised that we will see God.

Psalm 17:15 As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

Matthew 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

1 John 3:2 Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Rev. 22:4 They shall see His face, and His name shall be on their foreheads.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

God does not have a physical body.

God is not made of any kind of matter.

God is not merely energy.

God's Being is not even exactly like our spirits, for ours are created things that apparently are able to exist only in one place in one time.

God is eternal, omnipresent, and invisible (Psa. 90:1-2; 139:7-12; Rom. 1:20; Col. 1:15-16; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27).



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Arguments against images of God, including Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Second, because we have not seen God, any image we create of Him is by definition a false image and a violation of the Second Commandment.

Deut. 4:15 “So keep your souls very carefully, since you did not see any form on the day Yahweh spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire, 16 lest you act corruptly and make a graven image for yourselves in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, 17 the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the sky, 18 the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water below the earth, 19 and lest you lift up your eyes to heaven and see the sun and the moon and the stars, all the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship them and serve them, those which Yahweh your God has apportioned for all the peoples under the whole heaven.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Arguments against images of God, including Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Third, these same verses apply to Jesus and to the Holy Spirit, because we have not seen them either.

The Holy Spirit is described as coming and going like the wind and cannot be seen (John 3:8). And even when He is present at the baptism of Jesus, He did not look like a dove! He descended (hovered above Him) like a dove. This is similar to the description of the Spirit of God at creation, where “the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters.” (Gen. 1:2).

Jesus Himself tells us that we are blessed if we have believed, having not seen Him. We wait for our faith to be sight.

John 20:29 Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are those who did not see, and yet believed.”



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Faith itself is what gives substance to what we cannot see.

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

NKJV - Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

2 Cor. 5:7 for we walk by faith, not by sight –



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Arguments against images of God, including Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Fourth, there are some that rely upon visions of Jesus to tell us what He looks like. However, trusting a vision then works against the doctrine of Sola Scriptura, and the doctrine of the sufficiency and perspicuity of Scripture.

The Second London Baptist Confession begins: The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

The Confession continues: Although the light of nature and the works of creation and providence manifest the goodness, wisdom, and power of God so much that man is left without any excuse, they are not sufficient to provide that knowledge of God and His will which is necessary for salvation.

Therefore it pleased the Lord at sundry times and in divers manners to reveal himself, and to declare that his will unto his church; and afterward for the better preserving and propagating of the truth, and for the more sure establishment and comfort of the church against the corruption of the flesh, and the malice of Satan, and of the world, to commit the same wholly to writing; Therefore the Holy Scriptures are most necessary, those former ways by which God revealed His will unto His people having now ceased.

2 Timothy 3:15-17; Isaiah 8:20; Luke 16:29, 31; Ephesians 2:20; Romans 1:19-21; Romans 2:14, 15; Psalms 19:1-3; Hebrews 1:1; Proverbs 22:19-21; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 1:19, 20



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Because we understand that the Word of God cannot contradict itself, because God cannot contradict Himself, then a test of these visions easily proves that we cannot know if anyone has actually seen Jesus. How do we know this? All the images would be the same if people were seeing the real Jesus!

These visions serve to cause people to depend upon their thoughts and feelings instead of the clear teachings of the Word of God, putting personal experience above Scripture.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Arguments against images of God, including Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Fifth, Jesus Himself warns us that many will claim to be Him, and will deceive and lead many astray.

Matthew 24:4 And Jesus answered and said to them, “See to it that no one deceives you. 5 For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Arguments against images of God, including Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Sixth, if these pictures are really Jesus, then we should be moved to worship. But the Second Command tells us explicitly not to use images in worship.

And if we see a picture that is really Jesus and we are not moved to worship, then we don't really believe it is Jesus, or we are guilty of failing to worship Him because of Who He is.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Arguments against images of God, including Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Seventh, no image of God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit, can ever display their divine nature, and therefore, if not an outright false image, it is an incomplete image and thus detracts from His glory.

We are commanded to “Ascribe to Yahweh the glory of His name.”
(Psa. 29:2)



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

John Calvin on the Second Commandment:

“We believe it wrong that God should be represented by a visible appearance, because he himself has forbidden it [Ex. 20:4] and it cannot be done without some defacing of his glory. From this it is clear that every statue man erects, or every image he paints to represent God, simply displeases God as something dishonorable to his majesty.”

As in the first commandment the Lord declares that he is one, and that besides him no gods must be either worshipped or imagined, so he here more plainly declares what his nature is, and what the kind of worship with which he is to be honoured, in order that we may not presume to form any carnal idea of him. The purport of the commandment, therefore, is, that he will not have his legitimate worship profaned by superstitious rites. Wherefore, in general, he calls us entirely away from the carnal frivolous observances which our stupid minds are wont to devise after forming some gross idea of the divine nature, while, at the same time, he instructs us in the worship which is legitimate, namely, spiritual worship of his own appointment. The grossest vice here prohibited is external idolatry.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

John Calvin on the Second Commandment (cont'd):

This commandment consists of two parts. The former curbs the licentious daring which would subject the incomprehensible God to our senses, or represent him under any visible shape. The latter forbids the worship of images on any religious ground. There is, moreover, a brief enumeration of all the forms by which the Deity was usually represented by heathen and superstitious nations. By "any thing which is in heaven above" is meant the sun, the moon, and the stars, perhaps also birds, as in Deuteronomy, where the meaning is explained, there is mention of birds as well as stars, (Deu 4: 15). I would not have made this observation, had I not seen that some absurdly apply it to the angels. The other particulars I pass, as requiring no explanation. We have already shown clearly enough that every visible shape of Deity which man devises is diametrically opposed to the divine nature; and, therefore, that the moment idols appear, true religion is corrupted and adulterated.



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Matthew Henry on the Second Commandment:

“We are here forbidden to worship even the true God by images. ‘I am the Lord Jehovah, and thy God, am a jealous God, especially in things of this nature.’ This intimates the care he has of his own institutions, his hatred of idolatry and all false worship, his displeasure against idolaters, and that he resents every thing in his worship that looks like, or leads to, idolatry. Jealousy is quicksighted. Idolatry being spiritual adultery, as it is very often represented in scripture, the displeasure of God against it is fitly called jealousy. If God is jealous herein, we should be so, afraid of offering any worship to God otherwise than as he has appointed in his word.”



Lesson 12 – The Second Commandment

Isaiah 40:15 **To whom then will you liken God?** Or what likeness will you compare with Him? 19 As for the graven images, a craftsman casts it, A goldsmith plates it with gold, And a silversmith fashions chains of silver. 20 He who is too impoverished to make such a contribution Chooses a tree that does not rot; He seeks out for himself a wise craftsman To prepare a graven image that will not be shaken. 1 Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been declared to you from the beginning? Have you not understood from the foundations of the earth? 22 It is He who inhabits above the circle of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers; It is He who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to inhabit. 23 It is He who reduces rulers to nothing, Who makes the judges of the earth utterly formless. 24 Scarcely have they been planted; Scarcely have they been sown; Scarcely has their stem taken root in the earth, But He merely blows on them, and they wither, And the storm carries them away like stubble. 25 **“To whom then will you liken Me That I would be his equal?”** says the Holy One.