

NO IMAGES – Worship the Right Way!

The Second Commandment - Exodus 20:4-6

- I. This commandment naturally flows from the First Commandment and specifically targets our deep and ingrained propensity to make and worship idols; even idols we may claim represent the True God. The specificity of the Second Commandment to target such an automatic sinful and idolatrous response to our worship as corrupt humans is, perhaps, what makes this commandment so difficult for us to 1.) acknowledge its plain and clear prohibition and 2.) devise very elaborate explanations on its limitations over our lives of worship.
- A. *Who among us is without sin?*
 - 1. *What is our most deeply rooted sinful disposition?*
 - a. *How does that corrupt our understanding of the Second Commandment?*
 - B. A major problem that God’s People, as a corporate body, have always had is syncretism. We want the One True God of the Bible, **and** other false god’s even if we form them as images to represent the One True God. But this is impossible. This is why biblical adultery and idolatry are reflections in a divided mirror of our fallen spiritual promiscuity.
 - C. Due to our fallen nature, we are, at the core of our sinful being, ‘glory robbers’. Thus, we seek all manner of self-deceiving and self-justifying ways to take away glory, praise, reverence, affection, and service from God to, instead, give it to created things which, then, become idols.
 - D. “Take heed of the idolatry of image-worship. Our nature is prone to this sin as dry wood to take fire; and, indeed, what need of so many words in the commandment: ‘Thou shalt not make any graven image, or the likeness of anything in heaven, earth, water,’ sun, moon, stars, male, female, fish; ‘Thou shalt not bow down to them.’ I say, what need of so many words, but to show how subject we are to this sin of false worship? It concerns us, therefore, to resist this sin. Where the tide is apt to run with greater force, there we had need to make the banks higher and stronger. The plague of idolatry is very infectious. ‘They were mingled among the heathen, and served their idols.’ **Psa 106: 35, 36.** It is my advice to you, to avoid all occasions of this sin.” – Thomas Watson
- II. Demonstration
- A. *What blessings do we gain from worshipping, adoring, venerating, and serving God according to His revealed will?*
 - B. *What offense is committed against God when we do not worship Him as He commands?*
 - 1. *How does that negatively impact us and our communion with God?*
- III. God defines (pre- and pro-scribes), as well as enables, our means and manner of worship as the gracious service (liturgy) by which we commune/approach Him and fellowship with others within His ideal (re-) creation. Furthermore, God reveals Himself as He wills; through His Word that accompanies His redemptive acts in history. In our evaluation of the Second Commandment, it will help us to keep in mind the *instructional* characteristic of Torah. This is in keeping with what John Calvin, and other Reformers, considered the ‘third and principal use’ of the law as “*an instrument to learn God’s will. The law doesn’t just show us our sin so we might be drawn to Christ; it shows us how to live as those who belong to Christ.*”
- A. This redemptive-historical Self-revelation of God as recorded in Scripture finds its culmination in the Person and work of Jesus.
 - 1. There is an intimate relationship between the divine Word incarnate and the divine Word “inscripturate” (Goldsworthy).
 - a. We are only to approach God through His Word and by His Spirit.

- i. Hearing, *not* seeing, is believing.
2. We base our understanding on the authority of Scripture which serves as our starting point. The Bible, alone, will define ‘worship’ and idolatry; not Aristotelian arguments or philosophical presuppositions. Thus, Scripture, the Word, is our epistemological starting point; our basis for knowing.

B. The Golden Calf (*Exodus 32:7-10; 21-29; Leviticus 26:1; Deuteronomy 16:21-22; Psalm 97:6-7*) – Forming God into our own image is the same as making God into an image of any other created being or object. Notice parallels with Aaron’s golden calf and the humility of Christ in the crucifix which characteristically arouses certain feelings in the observer. In their attempts to visibly represent God, they actually fail to represent God’s divine glory. Christ is not still hanging on the Cross. He is Risen in glory!

C. Profane Fire (*Exodus 30:7-10; Leviticus 10:1-3; cf. Numbers 3:2-4; Jeremiah 7:30-31*) – adding to our worship of God that which is not proscribed, not to mention that which is expressly forbidden, is dangerous to us because it dishonors God and violates His express commands by engaging in that which He forbids.

IV. We will proceed with a breakdown of the Second Commandment according to Thomas Watson who provides us with comprehensively helpful way of studying it as “*an instrument to learn God’s will [of] how to live as those who belong to Christ.*” Below, unless otherwise indicated or when a Scriptural reference is made, are quotations and excerpts taken from Thomas Watson’s The Ten Commandments.

1. ***You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth***

A. Isaiah 40:18

- i. This question does not expect an answer; because, “it is as absurd as it is impious to think that an image modeled...upon some creature could be an acceptable likeness to the Creator.”

B. “In the first commandment worshipping a false god is forbidden; in this, worshipping the true God in a false manner.” –Watson

C. “But the very wording of the commandment rules out...a limiting exposition. God says quite categorically, ‘Thou shalt not make **any** likeness of **any** thing’ for use in worship. This categorical statement rules out not simply pictures and statues which depict God as an animal, but also the use of pictures and statues which depict him as the highest created thing we know – a human. It also rules out the use of pictures and statues of Jesus Christ as a man, although Jesus himself was and remains man; for all pictures and statues are necessarily made after the ‘likeness’ of ideal manhood as we conceive it, and therefore come under the ban which the commandment imposes. Images dishonor God, for they obscure his glory. The heart of objection to pictures and images is that they inevitably conceal most, if not all, of the truth about the personal nature and character of the divine Being whom they represent. We cannot know [God] unless he speaks and tells us about himself. But in fact he has spoken. He has spoken to and through his prophets and apostles, and he has spoken in the words and deeds of his own Son. Through this revelation, which is made available to us in holy Scripture, we may form a true notion of God; without it we never can. Thus it appears that the positive force of the second commandment is that it compels us to take our thoughts of God from his own holy Word, and from no other source whatsoever. The mind that takes up with images is a mind that has not yet learned to love and attend to God’s Word.” -Packer

D. John 4:24

- i. God can’t be seen; because, He is spirit.

- ii. “In *Deuteronomy 4*, Moses reminds the people that at Sinai, though they saw tokens of God’s presence, they saw no visible representation of God Himself, but only heard his word, and he exhorts them to continue to live...live with God’s own word ringing in their ears to direct them and no supposed image of God before their eyes to distract them. The point is clear. God did not show them a visible symbol of himself, but spoke to them; therefore they are not now to seek visible symbols of God, but simply to obey his Word. To make an image of God is to take one’s thoughts of him from a human source, rather than from God himself; and this is precisely what is wrong with image-making. Just as [the second commandment] forbids us to manufacture molten images of God, so it forbids us to dream up mental images of him. Imagining God in our heads can be just as real a break of the second commandment as imagining him by the works of our hands. It needs to be said with the greatest possible emphasis that those who hold themselves free to think of God *as they like* are breaking the second commandment [and, thus, making God in their own image]. ...the extent to which the image fails to tell the truth about God [is] the extent to which you will fail to worship God in truth.” – Packer
- a. EXAMPLE: The character Ricky Bobby, played by Will Farrell, in the movie Talladega Nights, asserts that he likes to pray to the ‘baby Jesus’ before dinner.
- iii. “There are two forms or species of idolatry. One is, when another beside the true God is professedly worshiped, or, when that is worshiped for God which is no God. The first is the more apparent and gross form of idolatry, and belongs properly to [the] first commandment. The other form of idolatry is when we do not professedly worship another God, but err in the kind of worship we render unto him, or when the true God is worshiped in, a manner different from that which he has prescribed in the second commandment, and in various other portions of his word. This species of idolatry is more subtle and refined, and is condemned in the second commandment. Those who worship God in statues and images, are idolaters, notwithstanding they deny that they worship any other being beside the true God; for they imagine God to be such an one as will be worshiped in images, and so change the will of God, which being done, God himself no longer remains the same. This is the objection of those, who grant, indeed, that images and statues of God and the saints are not to be worshipped, but maintain that they should be tolerated in the churches of Christians, as books to the laity, and for other causes, if only they be not worshipped. We must, however, maintain the opposite, which is, that images and likenesses of God, or of the saints, are not to be tolerated in Christian churches, but abolished and removed from the sight of men, whether they be worshipped, or not. In this sense, now, we grant that images and pictures are books for the laity; viz., that they partly teach and signify what is not true of God, and partly because by reverencing the thing signified, and the place, when they stand in the church and elsewhere, they easily lead some to superstition and teach the people idolatry, as experience abundantly testifies. We also deny the consequence of the above syllogism, because, although images might teach the unlearned, yet it does not follow from this, that they should be retained in the churches as books that are useful; for God will have his people taught, not by dumb images, but by the lively preaching of his word. Neither does faith come from the sight of images, but by the hearing of the word of God.” - Ursinus
- a. For example, the ancient Israelites or First Century Jews had no greater accessibility to books. Instead of images, they committed the once spoken Word now written to memory and through oral

tradition. ‘Faith comes by *hearing*...’ (*Romans 10:13-15*). We must affirm the uniqueness and historical particularity of the Incarnation.

- b. “ ‘What profiteth the graven image, the molten image, and a teacher of lies.’ *Hab 2: 18*. Is an image a layman’s book? Then see what lessons this book teaches. It teaches lies; it represents God in a visible shape, who is invisible. For...to make use of an image to put them in mind of God, is as if a woman should say she keeps company with another man to put her in mind of her husband. If it be not lawful to make the image of God the Father, yet may we not make an image of Christ, who took upon him the nature of man? No! It is Christ’s Godhead, united to his manhood, that makes him to be Christ; therefore to picture his manhood, when we cannot picture his Godhead, is a sin, because we make him to be but half Christ — we separate what God has joined, we leave out that which is the chief thing which makes him to be Christ. But how shall we conceive of God aright, if we may not make any image or resemblance of him? We must conceive of God spiritually. In his attributes — his holiness, justice, goodness — which are the beams by which his divine nature shines forth. We must conceive of him as he is in Christ. Christ is the ‘Image of the invisible God’ as in the wax we see the print of the seal. *Col 1: 15*. Set the eyes of your faith on Christ-God-man. ‘He that has seen me, has seen the Father.’ *John 14: 9*.”

* - See the relevant excursus at the end of this outline regarding the ‘scandal of historical particularity’ in relation to Eastern Orthodoxy’s use of icons and the heresy of Nestorianism.

2. ***You shall not bow down to them or serve them***

- a. “To worship God by an image, is both absurd and unlawful. It is absurd and irrational; for, ‘the workman is better than the work,’ ‘He who has builded the house has more honour than the house.’ *Heb 3: 3*. If the workman be better than the work, and none bow to the workman, how absurd, then, is it to bow to the work of his hands! Is it not an absurd thing to bow down to the king’s picture, when the king himself is present? It is more so to bow down to an image of God, when God himself is everywhere present. It is unlawful to worship God by an image; for it is against the homily of the church, which runs thus: ‘The images of God, our Saviour, the Virgin Mary, are of all others the most dangerous; therefore the greatest care ought to be had that they stand not in temples and churches.’ So that image-worship is contrary to our own homilies, and affronts the authority of the Church of England. Image-worship is expressly against the letter of Scripture. ‘Ye shall make no graven image, neither shall ye set up any image of stone to bow down unto it.’ *Lev 26: 1*. ‘Neither shalt thou set up any image; which the Lord thy God hateth.’ *Deut 16: 22*. ‘Confounded be all they that serve graven images.’ *Psa 97: 7*. Do we think to please God by doing that which is contrary to his mind, and that which he has expressly forbidden?”
- b. Three **False** Assertions for the Defense of Images in Worship
- i.* *Images are tools of instruction for the illiterate (previously addressed by Watson: * - may revisit under ‘the scandal of historical particularity’ excursus at the end of this outline)*
- A. No. God’s Word, read and spoken, is His means of instructing His People. Jews have always memorized Scripture and relayed redemptive-historical events through story.
- ii.* *Images were used in the tabernacle and temple.*

A. These images were not to be worshipped in anyway. Temple images were reflective of Eden prior to the Fall where God, man and creation communed in an un-hindered manner. The tabernacle and temple were meeting places of God where His presence manifested; NOT images or replications of God to be worshipped. Additionally, other images created at the explicit command of the LORD served a specific means of mercifully delivering and communicating with His People and were never to be used apart from such commands or to be worshipped themselves. When such images began to be objects of worship, they were destroyed.

1). Reference **2 Kings 18:4**

B. Furthermore, these images were types of Jesus in Whom the fullness of God, humanity and creation dwell; because, He is the true and perfect temple.

iii. *'Veneration' of created things including departed saints and images of God or departed saints is different from 'adoration' that is reserved for God alone. - Exodus 20:5*

A. **Matthew 4:9-10 (cf. Acts 10:25; Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9)**

1) proskunevw **proskuneô**; from 4314 and **kuneô** (to kiss); to do reverence to : **worship**; fall down and **worship**, kneel, bow low, fall at another's feet

a) Thus, we are not to '**worship**', 'do reverence to', 'kneel', 'bow low to' or prostrate ourselves before created things, such as images

o This is exactly what Satan was asking of Jesus, and to 'fall down' (v. 9a) to Satan in such a manner would have been to Jesus' demise as if Satan had 'beat him down.'

2) latreuvw **latreuô**; from **latris** (a hired servant); to serve, worship

a) Thus, we are not to '**serve**' or '**adore**' (from the Latin) created things such as images; even images of God.

B. **Galatians 4:8 (cf. verse 3** which is derived from the same root – 'slave' or 'servant' 1401)

1) douleuvw **douleuô**; from 1401 ; to be a slave, to serve: '**to venerate**' (from the Latin)

C. "The Bible not only does not recognize such a distinction, it denies it, both lexicographically (both latria [adore] and dulia [venerate] trace back to biblical usages and both terms refer to divine worship) as well as by direct assertion. Paul refers to the idolatry that marked the pagan past of the Galatians as "service" [or veneration] in Galatians 4:8 ("However at that time, when you did not know God, you were slaves ["served," root term being douleuo, leading to dulia in Latin] to those which by nature are no gods")." - James White

D. Admittedly, there is no practical or visible difference in veneration of statues or images when compared to acts of adoration reportedly reserved for God, alone.

1) Those engaged in such practices and even those who are aware of a presumed difference between veneration and adoration, still are unable to differentiate between the two.

a) How can such confusion be conducive to proper worship?

b. **1 Samuel 4:3-11** - We cannot confine God or magically/superstitiously manipulate Him simply by equating Him with an image and using it as a good luck charm. This denies God's freedom and sovereignty.

- i. “Now it is plain that [the use of images] cannot be satisfactorily explained on the basis of the image being a symbolic copy of the Deity, so that after all the latter would be but all the more worshipped through the image. [However, the reality is that the image] would be much more apt to give rise to selfish satisfaction. While not easily described in its true inwardness, we may perhaps define it by subsumption under the category of magic. Magic is that paganistic reversal of the process of religion, in which man, instead of letting himself be used by God for the divine purpose, drags down his god to the level of a tool, which he uses for his own selfish purpose. Magic is full of superstition, and, after a fashion, full of the quasi-supernatural, but it is void of true religion. Because it lacks the element of objective divine self-communication from above, it must needs create for itself material means of compulsion that will bring the deity to do its bidding. The image is not the symbol; it acts as the rival and substitute of the god. Thus the sensual representation of Jehovah by becoming mixed up with magic leads straightway to polytheism. The first commandment enjoins the having of one God; the second strikes at the chief source of danger for the observance of this. Even in double-faced meaning of the word ‘idolatry’ this connection of the two things still reflects itself; it means partly the worship of other gods, partly the worship of images. These facts are sure. The transition from the second to the third [commandment] is a natural one, for we are here still in the sphere of magic. This time [with the third commandment] it is word-magic that is forbidden.” – Vos
- ii. “Avoid superstition, which...is bringing any ceremony, fancy, or innovation into God’s worship, which he never appointed. It is provoking God, because it reflects much upon his honour, as if he were not wise enough to appoint the manner of his own worship. He hates all strange fire to be offered in his temple. *Lev 10: 1*. A ceremony may in time lead to a crucifix. They who contend for the cross in baptism, why not have the oil, salt, and cream as well, the one being as ancient as the other? They who are for altar-worship, and will bow to the east, may in time bow to the Host. Take heed of all occasions of idolatry, for idolatry is devil-worship. *Psalm 106: 37*. If you search through the whole Bible, there is not one sin that God has more followed with plagues than idolatry. The Jews have a saying, that in every evil that befalls them...an ounce of the golden calf in it. Hell is a place for idolaters. ‘For without are idolaters.’ *Rev 22: 15*. Senesius calls the devil a rejoicer at idols, because the image-worshippers help to fill hell.”

3. ***for I the Lord your God am a jealous God,***

- a. “The first reason why Israel must not worship graven images is, because the Lord is a jealous God. ‘The Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.’ *Exod 34: 14*. Jealousy is taken,
 - 1. In a good sense, as God is jealous for his people.
 - 2. In a bad sense, as he is jealous of his people.”

4. ***Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation***

- a. “Here is the second reason against image-worship. There is a twofold visiting.
 - i. There is God’s visiting in mercy. ‘God will surely visit you:’ that is, he will bring you into the land of Canaan, the type of heaven. *Gen 50: 25*. Thus God has visited us with the sunbeams of his favour; he has made us swim in a sea of mercy. This is a happy visitation.
 - ii. There is God’s visiting in anger. ‘Shall I not visit for these things?’ that is, God’s visiting with the rod. *Jer 5: 9*. ‘What will ye do in the day of visitation?’ that is, in the day when God shall visit with his judgements. *Isa 10: 3*. Thus God’s visiting is taken

in this commandment, ‘visiting iniquity,’ that is, punishing iniquity. Observe here three things.

1. That sin makes God visit.
2. One special sin for which God’s visits, is idolatry and image-worship.
3. Idolatrous persons are enemies not to their own souls only, but to their children.”

5. ***of those who hate me***

- a. “Another reason against image-worship is, that it is hating God. Image-worship is a pretended love to God, but God interprets it as hating him. ‘She that loves another man, hates her own husband.’ Idolaters are said to go a whoring from God. **Exod 34: 15**. How can they love God? I shall show that image-worshippers hate God, whatever love they pretend.”

6. ***but showing steadfast love to the thousands***

- a. “What are the properties of God’s mercy [“steadfast love”]?
 - a. It is free and spontaneous, powerful, superabundant and abiding.
- b. In how many ways is God said to show mercy?
 - b. We are all living monuments of his mercy...in lengthening out our gospel-liberties, in preventing many evils from invading us, delivering us, in restraining us from sin, in guiding and directing us, in correcting us, in sanctifying us, in hearing our prayers, in saving us, and in pardoning us.
 - i. How may I know that my sins are pardoned?
 1. Where God removes the guilt, he breaks the power of sin. ‘He will have compassion: he will subdue our iniquities.’ **Mic 7: 19 [Romans 6]**. With pardoning love God gives subduing grace.
 - 1 Let us not despair. Hope in God’s mercies. Labour to know that God’s mercy is for you.”

7. ***of those who love me***

- a. “God’s mercy [steadfast love] is for them that love him. Love is a grace that shines and sparkles in his eye, as the precious stone upon Aaron’s breastplate. Love is a holy expansion or enlargement of soul, by which it is carried with delight after God, as the chief good.
 - ii. How must our love to God be characterised?
 1. Love to God must be pure and genuine. He must be loved chiefly for himself
 2. Love to God must be with all the heart.
 3. Love to God must be flaming.
 - iii. How may we know whether we love God?
 1. He who loves God desires his presence.
 2. He who loves God, does not love sin.
 3. He who loves God is not much in love with anything else. His love is very cool to worldly things.
 4. He who loves God cannot live without him. Things we love we cannot be without.
 5. He who loves God will be at any pains to get him.
 6. He who loves God, prefers him before estate and life.
 7. He who loves God loves his favourites, the saints.
 8. If we love God we cannot but be fearful of dishonouring him, as the more a child loves his father the more he is afraid to displease him, and we weep and mourn when we have offended him.
 - a. Let us be lovers of God.
 - iv. What are the incentives to provoke and inflame our love to God?
 1. God’s benefits bestowed on us.
 2. Love to God would make duties of religion facile and pleasant.

3. It is advantageous. There is nothing lost by love to God.
4. By loving God we know that he loves us.
- v. What means should be used to excite our love to God?
 1. Labour to know God aright.
 2. Make the Scriptures familiar to you. Augustine says that before his conversion he took no pleasure in Scripture, but afterwards it was his chief delight. The book of God discovers God to us, in his holiness, wisdom, veracity, and truth; it represents him as rich in mercy, and encircled with promises. Augustine calls the Scripture a golden epistle, or love-letter, sent from God to us. By reading this love-letter we become more enamoured with God.
 3. Meditate much upon God, and this will promote love to him.”

8. ***and keep my commandments.***

- a. “Love and obedience, like two sisters, must go hand and hand. ‘If ye love me, keep my commandments.’ **John 14: 15.**
- i. We should keep the commandments from faith. Our obedience ought ‘to spring from faith.’ It is called, therefore, ‘the obedience of faith.’ **Rom 16: 26[cf. Romans 1:5].** Abel, by faith, offered up a better sacrifice than Cain. **Heb 11: 4.** Faith is a vital principle, without which all our services are dead works. **Heb 6: 1.** It meliorates and sweetens obedience, and makes it come off with a better relish.
 1. But why must faith be mixed with obedience to the commandments?
 - a. Because faith eyes Christ in every duty, in whom both the person and offering are accepted.
- ii. Keeping the commandments must be uniform. We must make conscience of one commandment as well as of another.
 1. But who can keep all his commandments?
 - a. There is a fulfilling God’s commands, and a keeping of them. Though we cannot fulfill all, yet we may be said to keep them in an evangelical sense.
- iii. Keeping God’s commandments must be voluntary.
 1. Our willingness is more esteemed than our service. David counsels Solomon not only to serve God, but with a willing mind. **1 Chron 28: 9.** The will makes sin to be worse, and duty to be better. To obey willingly shows we do it with love; and this crowns all our services.
 2. There is that in the law-giver which may make us willing to obey the commandments, which is God’s indulgence to us.
 - a. God ...expects not perfect obedience, he requires sincerity only. Do but act from a principle of love, and aim at honouring God in your obedience, and it is accepted.
 - b. In the gospel a surety is admitted. The law would not favour us so far; but now God so indulges us, that what we cannot do of ourselves we may do by proxy. Jesus Christ is ‘a Surety of a better testament.’ **Heb 7: 22.** We fall short in everything, but God looks upon us in our Surety; and Christ having fulfilled all righteousness, it is as if we had fulfilled the law in our own persons.
 - c. God gives strength to do what he requires. The law called for obedience, but though it required brick, it gave no straw; but in the gospel, God, with his commands, gives power.
 3. There is that in God’s commandments which may make us willing. They are not burdensome.
 - a. A Christian, so far as he is regenerate, consents to God’s commands.
 - b. God’s commandments are sweetened with joy and peace.
 - c. God’s commandments are advantageous. They are preventive of evil; a curb-bit to check us from sin.

- d. God's commandments are ornamental. Salvianus. 'God's commandments do not burden us, but adorn us.' It is an honour to be employed in a king's service; and much more to be employed in his 'by whom kings reign.' To walk in God's commandments proves us to be wise.
 - e. The commands of God are infinitely better than the commands of sin, which are intolerable.
 - f. Willingness in obedience makes us resemble the angels.
4. How shall we keep God's commandments?
- a. Pray for the Spirit of God. We cannot do it in our strength. The Spirit must work in us both to will and to do. **Phil 2: 13**. When the loadstone draws, the iron moves; so, when God's Spirit draws, we run in the way of his commandments."

V. **Excursus** regarding The Scandal of Historical Particularity with an evaluation of Eastern Orthodoxy's use of Iconography.

The 'scandal of historical particularity' in the Incarnation of God in the Person of Jesus in Whom both human and divine natures exist in their totality is crucial for an argument against icons and other images of Jesus. Because Jesus, in His Person, is currently exalted at the Father's right hand, His human nature is glorified and not visible to us. Therefore, Jesus' divinity, much less the divine natures of the Persons of the Holy Spirit and God the Father, is something that remains unseen; because, God is spirit and cannot be visibly depicted accurately. Furthermore, the earlier redemptive-historical events of Jesus in His earthly ministry no longer accurately depict His current state of glory in His Person.

- The character Ricky Bobby, played by Will Farrell, in the movie Talladega Nights, asserts that he likes to pray to the 'baby Jesus' before dinner.
- Furthermore, what damage does it do to the Person of Jesus as a result of the Incarnation, if we depict only His humanity and not His divinity which remains invisible?
 - Jesus, at His Incarnation, is the perfect representation of the Father Who is Invisible.
 - **Colossians 1:15-16** ("firstborn" of creation = "preeminent heir" of creation, not first of all creatures born/created); **2 Corinthians 4:4**; ***Hebrews 1:1-5**
- *Against Nestorianism.* - emphasizes the disunion between the human and divine natures of Jesus. Where Nestorianism holds that Christ had two loosely-united natures, divine and human, monophysitism holds that he had but a single nature, his human nature being absorbed into his divinity. Nestorian Christology *falsely* asserts that **there are two distinct persons**, divine and human, rather than a single divine person, Jesus Christ, with two natures, human and divine. Nestorianism is the error that Jesus is two distinct persons. No. Jesus is One Person with two complete natures: divine and human. The council of Ephesus was convened in 431 AD to address the issue and pronounced that Jesus is One Person in two distinct and inseparable natures: divine and human.
 - Eastern Orthodox Incorrect Use of the Incarnation Analogy
 - *"It's an amazing leap of logic from the premise (God has revealed himself once for all in his Son) to the conclusion (we may now make images of God). Yet the Orthodox do not seem to notice that they have leaped at all. They barely attempt to explain how to get from the premise to the conclusion. To them, the conclusion is obvious. And when they do attempt an explanation, they stumble into Nestorianism. This is almost inevitable. The only alternative is Monophysitism, of which they have an even greater horror. Yet one or the other error awaits them. To say that the Incarnation legitimizes*

icons is either to say that God's nature changed when he became a man and thus is now depictable. Or it is to say that God became depictable as a man but remained undepictable as God. Their analogy of the Incarnation only allows for the conclusion that Christ's humanity is depictable. The divinity doesn't fit that analogy; it just piggybacks in. The Orthodox conclude that since the humanity is depictable, and the divinity is indissolubly united to the humanity, the whole person must be depictable. The Orthodox do not fix their eyes on a Jesus who has both authored and perfected the faith, who has sat down at the right hand of God the Father. They do not look by faith upon an exalted Christ. He is humiliated again and again. They fix their eyes on a Christ who again and again takes a mortal body, who again and again walks this earth. But when Christ walked this earth, he said, "It is to your advantage that I go away" that he might send the Holy Spirit (Jn 16:7). Now we no longer worship as Thomas did, by falling at the feet of a Christ who walks this earth. Now we worship in Spirit and in truth as Christ promised. This is the significance of Christ's Ascension and Session. We no longer need elaborate physical surroundings such as were in the temple at Jerusalem and are at any Eastern Orthodox church. The simple elements of bread and wine are sufficient to provide us with a window on Christ. Orthodox icons deny the reality of the Resurrection and the Ascension. If the Incarnation implies a right and duty to make icons of Christ, the Resurrection and Ascension rescind that right and duty. At the Incarnation, God took on a body such as we know and understand. We can draw it. Who can draw the body Christ has now? To be sure, it is the same body. But it doesn't look the same. Paul speaks of the difference between the "earthy" and the "heavenly" body as the difference between a grain of wheat and the stalk that grows from it. He does so to emphasize that we do not know with what kind of body we will be resurrected. This much we know: "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly" (1 Cor 15:35-49). It is the heavenly body that Christ has now. Again, John says, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him just as he is" (1 Jn 3:2). Even if we know what Christ looked like once, we don't know what he looks like now. An icon is a denial of that truth, a re-humiliation of Christ. Christ is the one in whom the apostles beheld the glory of God (Jn 1:14). Christ is the one who while visible on this earth was nevertheless still "in the bosom of the Father" (Jn 1:18) so that when men looked at him they saw heavenly realities. Christ is the one in whom men saw both him and his Father. "He who has seen me has seen the Father," Christ declared (Jn 14:8). The Orthodox have taken the true image of God and attributed his properties to an idol" (William J. Baldwin, June 6, 1995).