

WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH

SHORTER CATECHISM

LESSON (Q3LES4) # 29 - THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE.....

1. **Prayer**
2. **Bible reading: Deuteronomy 4: 14 - 24**
3. **Review:** At our last meeting, we covered the first commandment, which is ***Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*** It is covered in SC questions 45 through 48. God requires of us in this commandment that we know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God, and that we worship and glorify him accordingly. We learned that God forbids the denying, or not worshiping and glorifying of him as the only true God, and our God. Also, that he gets very irritated if we give that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone. Finally, we learned that God sees all things, and that he takes notice of and is much displeased with, the sin of us having any other god but Him.
4. **Introduction:** This week we will look at the second commandment. The second commandment is covered in questions 49 through 52 of the SC. This is a fun commandment with a lot to study. Therefore, it will take us a couple of weeks to complete it. This week we will take a general look at the commandment, then study the first two questions.

5. **Questions:**

Question 49: Which is the second commandment?

Answer: The second commandment is, *thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: 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.*

Question 50: What is required in the second commandment?

Answer: The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.

Question 51: What is forbidden in the second commandment?

Answer: The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.

Question 52: What are the reasons annexed to the second commandment?

Answer: The reasons annexed to the second commandment are, God's sovereignty over us, his propriety in us, and the zeal he hath to his own worship.

6. The LC and the SC.

- a. The LC and the SC are consistent in their approach to discussion of this question.
- b. Both the LC and the SC cover the second commandment in four questions. These are q 49 – 52 in the SC, and q107 – 110 in the LC. The four questions are basically the same. (Which is the second commandment, what is required, what is forbidden, and what are the reasons annexed to)
- c. Parts of WCF chapter 21, **Of Religious Worship, and the Sabbath Day.**

7. How does the worship required in this commandment differ from that required in the first commandment?

- a. TV says: *The worship required in the first commandment hath a respect unto the object of worship, whereby we are bound to worship the true God, and none else: The worship required in the second commandment hath a respect unto the means of worship, whereby we are bound to worship God according to the way and means of his own appointment, and no other.* It is also worth noting that **the first commandment is a positive commandment, telling us what we should do. The second commandment is a negative commandment, telling us what we should not do.**

8. Understanding the Second Commandment.

- a. How do we get from worshiping images to receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word? When I first read SC q50, this was the first thing I thought of. Further in my study, I found that TV asks the identical question (SCQ50q8). Let's look at what the second commandment requires.
- b. The first part of this commandment tells us what we should not do. (*"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them....."*). It is telling us how not to worship God. TV makes two points.
- That God requires to be worshiped by some means (remember rules for study in LC q99, number 4 *"That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded: so where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included; and where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included."*)
 - That it is a sin to worship God by graven images
- c. The second part of this commandment tells us something about God, and could very well be interpreted as a threat. (*"for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;"*) God appears to be directly telling us that those that worship gods other than Him, and that hate him, will suffer his wrath for their sins to three and four generations.

Consequently, by the 8 rules of study, it is a sin to worship God by means which he hath not appointed.

- d. The final part answers the main question. (*"and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, **and keep my commandments**"*). TV adds this final point:
- That therefore it is a duty to worship God by the means which he hath appointed, which being his ordinances, they must be received, observed, and kept pure and entire. (1 Tim 6:13 – 14 - ⁽¹³⁾ ***I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Jesus Christ, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; ⁽¹⁴⁾ That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ."***)
- e. Chapter 21, paragraph 1 of the WCF states: "The light of nature showeth that there is a God, who hath lordship and sovereignty over all, is good, and doth good unto all, and is therefore to be feared, loved, praised, called upon, trusted in, and served with all the heart, and with all the soul, and with all the might. But

the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by Himself, and so limited by His own revealed will, that He may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, or the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representation, or any other way not prescribed in the holy Scriptures. (**Deut 12:32** ***“What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.”***)

and

Chapter 21, paragraph 2 of the WCF says: *“Religious worship is to be given to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and to Him alone; not to angels, saints, or any other creature: and since the fall, not without a Mediator; nor in the mediation of any other but of Christ alone.”* (**Rev 19:10** ***“And I fell at his feet to worship him. And he said unto me, See thou do it not: I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren that have testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”***)

9. What does God require in the second commandment?

a. The SC (q50) and the LC (q108) are consistent in their answer to this question. The LC of course, adds “the duties” to the question, and expands the answer in a manner similar to the first commandment answers.

- The SC answers the question: *“What is required in the second commandment?”* with the following: *“The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.”*
- The LC answers the question: *“What are the duties required in the second commandment.”* with the following: *“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 and 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.*

b. What does it mean to us to “receive God’s worship and ordinances”?

TV says: The receiving God’s ordinances implieth, an approving of them with the mind, and embracement of them with the will. I would add that receiving should include an understanding of these ordinances.

- c. What does it mean to “observe” God’s worship and ordinances?

TV says: “The observing God’s ordinances, implieth a doing what is required in them, a making use of them, and attending upon God in them.

- d. What is meant by “keeping pure and entire” as related to God’s worship and ordinances?

TV says: “The keeping pure and entire God’s ordinances implieth a doing what in us lieth to preserve the ordinances from corruption, not suffering any thing to be added to them, or taken away from them. **(Matt 5:18 “For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.”)**

10. What does God forbid in this commandment?

- a. To say that the answers provided to question 51 of the SC is consistent with that provided by the LC question 109 is like saying you understand a book by reading a short book review. Let’s look at the two questions and answers:

- b. The SC asks: *“What is forbidden in the second commandment?”* It answers: *The second commandment forbiddeth the worshiping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.”*

- c. The LC asks: *“What are the sins forbidden in the second commandment?”* It answers: *“The sins forbidden in the second commandment are, all devising, counseling, commanding, using and any wise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself; tolerating a false religion; the making any representation of God, of all or any 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 worshipping 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, through 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.”*

- d. Let’s look at what is covered by the two answers:

1. Shorter Catechism:

- Worshipping of God by images.
- Any other thing not appointed in his Word.

2. Larger Catechism:

- All devising, counseling, commanding, using, and any wise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself. **(Deut 12:30)**
- Tolerating a false religion. **(Deut 13: 6 – 12)**
- The making of any representations 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. **(Rom 1: 21 – 25)**
TV asks: Why may we not make use of images in our worship of God? Because God has absolutely forbidden it; Because images are not a teal help, bit a hindrance of devotion, they tending to lessen God in our esteem; who, being the living God, and superlatively excellent, and infinitely removed above all his creatures, cannot, without great reflection of dishonor upon him, be represented by a dead image.
- All worshipping of it, or God in it or by it. **(Dan 3:18) ?????**
- The making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them. **(Exodus 32:8)**
- All superstitious devices. **(Acts 17: 22 – 23)**
- 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. **(Mal 1: 12 - 14)**
- Simony, (Anyone know what this is? From my trusty New Webster's 20th Century dictionary: "*from Simon Magus, who wished to purchase the gift of the Holy Ghost*] *the act of buying or selling ecclesiastical preferment, ecclesiastical pardons, or other things regarded as sacred or spiritual.*") **(Acts 8:18 – 19)**
- Sacrilege, (Anyone for this one? 1] the crime of appropriating to oneself, or to secular use, what is consecrated to God or religion; as robbery of a church is sacrilege; 2] the intentional desecration or disrespectful treatment of persons, places, things or ideas held sacred.) **(Rom 2:22)**
- All neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed. **(Acts 13:44 - 46)**

11. Reasons annexed.

- a. The SC and the LC are again consistent in the answer to this question, although the LC has much more verbiage, and puts it more into perspective. The answer to LC q110 says, "*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 generations 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 unto divers generations; and esteeming the observers of it such as love him and keep his commandments, and promising mercy to them unto many generations."

- b. What is God doing when he says these words "I the Lord thy God".

Exerting his sovereignty and propriety over us.

- c. How can God claim sovereignty over us? He created us and all things. TV says: "The force of this first reason is, because God is the great sovereign King over us, and hath the sole or only authority to make laws for the way of his worship, therefore we ought, by virtue of our allegiance, as we are his subjects, to observe his laws and ordinances, and to worship him no other way than he hath appointed in his Word. (Rev. 15:3 – 4 ⁽³⁾***And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvelous are thy worked, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints*** ⁽⁴⁾***Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.***")

- d. What is propriety?

- The quality of being proper, fitting, or suitable; fitness – nope not that one.
- Private property
- In the use intended here, God is our proprietor, which is the person who has a legal title or exclusive right to some property, an owner.

- e. How does God claim propriety in us. God, as our creator and King, has ownership of us. TV says: "that because we belong unto the Lord, therefore we ought to keep close unto him and his appointments, and take heed especially of idolatry and superstition, which do alienate the heart from him."(Psalm 95: 6 – 7 ⁽⁶⁾***O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.*** ⁽⁷⁾***For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if we will hear his voice.***")

- f. What is meant by the zeal God has to his own worship?

- God is the God, and demands and deserves our worship
- God is offended when we worship anyone but him

TV says: "The zeal which God hath to his own worship, is his jealousy, whereby, out of love to his own worship and institutions, he is highly offended with those that turn aside from them unto their own inventions."

- g. God shows this in this commandment with the words: *"I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto three and four generations of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."*
- h. How can God punish children for the sins of their parents?
- God will not punish those children which do not follow in the ways of their parents. **(Ezek. 18: 14, 17)**
 - If God does visit the iniquity of the father upon their children, it is because they too are guilty of iniquity. **(Ezek. 18: 25) This whole chapter relates.**

12. Summary

- a. While the first commandment deals with the object of worship, the second commandment is concerned with the method of worship. It not only forbids the worship of idols, but requires the worship of God in accordance with his ordinances. God has every right to demand this of His subjects, as he is their creator and King, and as such, has sovereignty and propriety over them. He is a jealous God, and will punish them that do not worship Him as he requires.