

COMMANDMENT #2: NO IMAGES

Written by David Feddes

Read Exodus 32:1-20

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything. □ Exodus 20:4



Moses had been up on the mountain more than a month, and the Israelites were tired of waiting. They wanted to get going. Why trust an invisible God who has his own timing and plans, when you can manufacture a new version of God that will suit your agenda? There's nothing handier than a god you can see and control and push along ahead of you.

Still, people may be reluctant to make their own version of God. They prefer an authority figure to do it for them. A pastor or priest or professor can produce a new version of God with that extra touch of professional quality. So the Israelites wanted Aaron to make their idol for them. Aaron was the chief priest. If Aaron made a new image of God, it would surely be praiseworthy. So Aaron took an offering and gave them what they wanted.

Once the people had their golden calf, they didn't say, "Now we have a new god to replace the one that rescued us from Egypt." No, they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt
." Aaron announced "a festival
to the LORD

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"! They didn't want to dispense entirely with the mighty God of their past; not at all! They just wanted to re-imagine him as one who would follow their agenda rather than setting their agenda for them. But then Moses came back in the power of the Lord, and the party was over.

PRAYER--Lord, keep us from trying to make you visible and controllable through images. May we never imagine you to be anything but what you reveal yourself to be in Scripture and in Jesus. Amen.