

## The 2<sup>nd</sup> and Idolatry

### Do Roman Catholics adjust the 10 to fit their use of Images in Worship?

1A. Catholic view (cf. a Catholic apologetic: “Graven Images: Altering the Commandments?”)

Worshipping statues and giving them divine honor is worshipping other gods. What Protestants call the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment is just a case in point of worshipping other gods: “worshipping statues with divine honor is one way of worshipping other gods.”

A basic objection: “the Catholic Church is accused of altering the Commandments and covering up God's command forbidding graven images.”

The simple answer from the Catholic perspective is that what Protestants call the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment is God's *condemnation of the divine worship of statues*; to do *that* is wrong, but Catholics do not worship the statues (that would break the 1<sup>st</sup> command to have no other gods). This justifies the Catholic numbering (have no other gods and a case in point is worshipping statues) at the same time that it justifies the use of statues by Catholics since they are not objects of worship. Statues and images can be made and used (as the bronze serpent was used, Num. 21.8-9) but they are not to be worshipped. Thus, “A separate Commandment [the Protestant 2<sup>nd</sup> in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5] ... would be redundant.”

Accordingly, this redundancy shows the necessity of extending the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment up to the command regarding God's name and doing that supports the notion that the reference to images is simply to prohibit worshipping them.

1) As far as verse divisions go, what is the difference between the Catholic and Protestant numbering of Exodus 20.3-6?

<sup>3</sup> "You shall have no other gods before me. <sup>4</sup> "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>5</sup> You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>6</sup> but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

2) What is the point for Catholics of the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment on idolatry in relation to the use of statues and images in worship?

3) Specifically, what is the reformed reply regarding images and worship?

2A. Numbering the commandments

1B. Catholic numbering

How does Catholic theology arrive at 10 words (specifically)? Why begin with Ex. 34.28? Why end with the following texts:

**Exodus 20:17** <sup>17</sup> "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

**Deuteronomy 5:21** <sup>21</sup> "And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

2B. Evaluation of the Catholic numbering

1) What is the problem with this attempt to split Deuteronomy 5.21 into two commands?

2) How is the problem accentuated in Exodus 20.17, **You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's?**

3) When we work with the unity of Exodus 20.17 and Deuteronomy 5.2, what response should we give to the Catholic numbering in general and in particular?

3B. The matter of numbering is critical

What conclusions from a proper numbering surface that show highlight how critical the matter of numbering truly is?