

Discipleship:
An
Introduction to
Systematic Theology and
Apologetics

The Doctrines of Redemption: The Law

The Heights Church March 12, 2017

The Law – The Ten Commandments # 2 (Review)

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. 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, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

(Exodus 20:4-6)

- **The second Commandment sets Israel apart from all the other nations they will encounter.**
- **The logic behind the Second Commandment is that God is spirit and cannot be correctly represented by anything physical.**

The Law – The Ten Commandments # 2

- **If God was physical:**

1. **He would not be truly transcendent*.**
2. **There could not be both a physical creation and God's omnipresence in his full entirety at every point in the universe.**
3. **If God is not the omnipresent, *Ex nihilo* creator of the observable physical universe, then God can not uphold the Creation and it (the Creation) would collapse.**

***transcendence** refers to the aspect of God's nature and power which is wholly independent of the material universe, beyond all physical laws. This is contrasted with immanence, where God is said to be fully present in the physical world and thus accessible to creatures in various ways.

The Law – The Ten Commandments # 2

"You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you **preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you. (Nehemiah 9:6)**

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, **through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and **he upholds the universe by the word of his power**. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, (Hebrews 1:1-3)**

The Law – The Ten Commandments # 2 – Second Council of Nicea 787

- It was determined that "As the sacred and life-giving cross is everywhere set up as a symbol, so also should the images of Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the holy angels, as well as those of the saints and other pious and holy men be embodied in the manufacture of sacred vessels, tapestries, vestments, etc., and exhibited on the walls of churches, in the homes, and in all conspicuous places, by the roadside and everywhere, to be revered by all who might see them. For the more they are contemplated, the more they move to fervent memory of their prototypes. Therefore, it is proper to accord to them a fervent and reverent adoration, not, however, the veritable worship which, according to our faith, belongs to the Divine Being alone — for the honor accorded to the image passes over to its prototype, and whoever venerate the image venerate in it the reality of what is there represented."
- The council also decreed that every altar should contain a relic, which remains the case in modern Catholic and Orthodox regulations (Canon VII).

The Law – The Ten Commandments # 2 – Second Council of Nicea 787

- Proof of the lawfulness of the veneration of icons was drawn from Exodus 25:19; Numbers 7:89; Hebrews 9:5.; Ezekiel 41:18, and Genesis 31:34, but especially from a series of passages of the Church Fathers; the authority of the latter was decisive.

Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. (Exodus 25:19)

And when Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with the LORD, he heard the voice speaking to him from above the mercy seat that was on the ark of the testimony, from between the two cherubim; and it spoke to him. (Numbers 7:89)

The Law – The Ten Commandments # 2 – Second Council of Nicea 787

Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. (Hebrews 9:5)

It was carved of cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. Every cherub had two faces: It was carved of cherubim and palm trees, a palm tree between cherub and cherub. Every cherub had two faces: (Ezekiel 41:18)

Now Rachel had taken the household gods and put them in the camel's saddle and sat on them. Laban felt all about the tent, but did not find them. (Genesis 31:34)

The Law – The Ten Commandments # 2 – Second Council of Nicea 787

- **Veneration** is the act of honoring a saint, a person who has been identified as having a high degree of sanctity or holiness.
- "We carry about these clean and holy bones, O king, because we attest in due form our love of those marvelous men to whom they belong: and because we would bring ourselves to remember their wrestlings and lovely conversation, to rouse up ourselves to the like zeal; and because we would catch some vision of the rest and felicity wherein they now live, and thus, as we call them blessed, and provoke one another to emulate them, strive to follow their footsteps: because, moreover, we find thereby that the thought of death, which is right profitable, lends wings of zeal to our religious exercises; and lastly, because **we derive sanctification from their touch.**" —St. John Damascene, *The Precious Pearl: The Lives of Sts. Barlaam and Joseph*, p. 248