

Exodus 20:23

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.

Analysis

Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.

The irony is thick—Israel will violate this within weeks (golden calf, Exodus 32). 'Make with me' (לֹא תַעֲשֵׂנִי אֶת, lo ta'asun itti) means 'alongside me'—no supplementary deities. The prohibition specifies precious metals (silver, gold)—costly idols are still abominations. Wealth doesn't sanctify idolatry; expensive idols are expensive abominations. The command guards the second commandment's spirit—no images of YHWH, no images of other gods. Aaron will claim the calf represents YHWH (Exodus 32:5), but God rejects this—any visual representation distorts Him. The New Testament applies this spiritually: greed is idolatry (Colossians 3:5); we cannot serve God and money (Matthew 6:24).

Historical Context

Gold and silver idols were common in the ancient Near East—Baal images, Asherah poles, household gods. Israel's temptation wasn't crude polytheism but syncretism—adding YHWH to pantheons or depicting Him via images.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Study Questions

1. Why does God specifically prohibit silver and gold idols—how does wealth not legitimize false worship?
2. How do Christians make 'gods of silver and gold' through materialism and greed today?

Interlinear Text

לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה לְאֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים כַּבְשָׂר כַּבְשָׂר לְאֱלֹהִים בְּאֶלְ�הִים
H3808 Ye shall not make H854 unto you gods H430 of silver H3701 unto you gods H430 of gold H2091

לֹא תַּעֲשֶׂה לְאֱלֹהִים כַּבְשָׂר לְכָמָן
H3808 Ye shall not make H0

Additional Cross-References

Ezekiel 20:39 (References God): As for you, O house of Israel, thus saith the Lord GOD; Go ye, serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto me: but pollute ye my holy name no more with your gifts, and with your idols.

2 Kings 17:33 (References God): They feared the LORD, and served their own gods, after the manner of the nations whom they carried away from thence.

Zephaniah 1:5 (Parallel theme): And them that worship the host of heaven upon the housetops; and them that worship and that swear by the LORD, and that swear by Malcham;

Revelation 22:15 (Parallel theme): For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

Exodus 32:31 (References God): And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

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