

Exodus 34:17

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.

Analysis

The command against 'molten gods' (אֱלֹהֵי מַסֵּכָה, elohei masekah) directly addresses the golden calf incident (32:4). Cast metal idols represent human craftsmanship claiming divine status—the ultimate hubris. This prohibition recalls the second commandment and emphasizes that God cannot be represented by human art. All idolatry reduces the infinite to the finite, the spiritual to the material.

Historical Context

Molten (cast metal) idols were common in ancient Near Eastern religion. The golden calf was likely modeled after Egyptian Apis bull worship or Canaanite Baal imagery.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

James 2:17 — Faith and works

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. What modern 'molten gods' (things we create and then serve) tempt contemporary believers?
2. How do you guard against reducing God to your own mental images or preferences?

Interlinear Text

אֱלֹהִים	מִמֶּלֶךְ	לֹא	תַעֲשֶׂה	לָךְ
gods	thee no molten	H3808	Thou shalt make	H0
H430	H4541		H6213	

Additional Cross-References

Leviticus 19:4 (References God): Turn ye not unto idols, nor make to yourselves molten gods: I am the LORD your God.

Exodus 32:8 (References God): They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.