

INTRODUCTION

1689.22.1 the acceptable way of worshipping the true God, is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imagination and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures.

That theological statement is from this church's constitution and official confession of faith, the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689. It is a Puritan-era statement of what theologians call "the regulative principle."

It is relatively easy to understand the idea that we, who worship the one true and living God through Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, should not do anything in worship that our Lord commands us not to do. The second commandment directly prohibits us bowing down to statues in worship, and we have little trouble understanding and accepting that.

Relatively harder to understand is the idea that, in worship, we should do only what He commands, and nothing else. The several places in the Bible where the implications of the second commandment are expressed show us that the words of the second commandment prohibit a most egregious form of corrupt worship, but the commandment also prohibits all more subtle corruptions of God's worship.

Last time, we took a look at the history of King Jeroboam, and how he corrupted the worship of God for Israel. Today, we take a second pass through that scripture, to get more firmly in our mind what things Jeroboam was doing, in addition to setting up the golden calves, that were not as direct a violation of the commandment, yet still were wicked corruptions of worship. Then we'll consider those things Jeroboam did in general terms, taking them as indications of the presence of corrupt worship, so we can avoid them ourselves and guard against their being introduced into our lives and our congregation.

TEXT

Exodus 20:4-6

1 Kings 12:26-33

BODY

I. Exactly What Jeroboam Did

- A. Said in his heart (26) that if the congregation worshiped as God commanded, they would not stay with him
- B. Took counsel (28) about what to do
- C. Made two golden calves (28)
 1. quoting scripture to authorize something that the scripture actually did not authorize - 1 Kings 12:28b records Jeroboam actually quoting a Bible verse
 - a) Exodus 32:4b ...These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.
 - b) 1 Kings 12:28b ...behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.
 - c) of course, in context, that Bible verse records that saying and do that was very wicked, and God brought judgment on Israel for that sin
 - d) but, taken out of context, and quoted to ignorant people who do not know the Bible, it seems to give legitimacy to what Jeroboam is doing
 2. said they represented God
 3. set them up
 4. made the people sin in going before them
- D. Told the people it was too much for them to go up to Jerusalem to worship at the temple (28)
- E. Made a house of high places (31) for them to go instead of to God's temple
- F. Made people priests who were not Levites (31)
- G. Altered God's holiday (32)
 1. 32 "in the eighth month on the fifteenth day of the month"
 2. see Leviticus 23:39 "of the seventh month"
 3. to something he had devised in his own heart (33)
 4. that was the invention of man rather than the will of God
 5. similar to what God had ordained
 6. to rival or replace it
- H. Offered sacrifices on the altar himself (32), which he had not right to do

II. Indications of Corrupt Worship Not In Obedience to the Second Commandment

- A. People seem to be thinking about religion in terms of man's glory rather than God's glory
 1. leaders seem to be seeking their own glory
 - a) they dress in some flamboyant style and they do their hair in some striking fashion
 - b) they seem to be putting on a show; they treat a worship service as a tv show or theatrical production
 2. worshipers do not dress, speak, or act modestly, but seem to be putting on a personal show of how stylish they are or how cool they are or how religious they are
 3. people seem to be concerned that if religion is kept pure, the congregation will be small instead of large
- B. Leaders seek counsel about worship from men rather than God
 1. decisions for the church are being made on carnal principles from the world, rather than spiritual truth from the Bible
 - a) expedience rather than obedience
- C. Worship leaders give people something to do in worship that God has not commanded in the Bible
 1. fragments of scripture are used out of context to justify doing things that God has not commanded
 - a) e.g. Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.
 - (1) the first half of this verse is excerpted (KJV)
 - (2) what the word "vision" really means here is ignored
 - (3) the speaker's own definition of "vision" is used
 - (4) then the man or woman tells what his "vision" is for the church
 - b) it is surprisingly common for pastors to do this
 2. something is put up front for people to look at in worship
 3. Old Covenant ordinances are brought in to New Covenant worship
 4. New Covenant ordinances are perverted
 - a) baptize unbelieving babies
 - b) sprinkle someone with water and call that baptism
 5. worldly entertainment is substituted for preaching
 - a) show a movie and watch it
 - b) put on a play and watch it

- D. Leaders say that what God has commanded is not best, not necessary
 - 1. making the worshipers' ease or preference the deciding factor in worship, rather than God's will
 - 2. e.g. the choir or praise band will sing for you
 - 3. e.g. response to the gospel
 - a) Jesus said Matthew 16:24 ...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.
 - b) His apostles preached that Jesus Christ died on the cross for our sins; that sinners should believe in Jesus Christ, and repent, turning from their sins to serve God, and so be forgiven their sins and have eternal life
 - c) but in a corrupt worship, the preacher will offer some easier response
 - (1) walk down front
 - (2) repeat this prayer
 - (3) ask Jesus into your heart
- E. Gathering for worship on the Lord's Day is de-emphasized
 - 1. sometimes it is cancelled
 - 2. alternatives are offered
 - 3. worshipers often choose something else to do
- F. Unqualified people are placed in office
 - 1. those not known to be sound in the faith, able to teach
 - 2. those not known to be of good character
 - 3. those known not to be of good character
 - a) those who act wicked themselves
 - b) those who pander to wickedness in the culture
 - 4. those who are not men
- G. Man-made holidays are observed religiously
 - 1. Mother's Day
 - 2. Father's Day
 - 3. Veteran's Day
 - 4. Reformation Day
 - 5. Easter
 - 6. Christmas
- H. Pastors perform functions not within their purview
 - 1. acting as if apostles
 - 2. acting as if prophets
 - 3. acting as if CEOs or entrepreneurs

CONCLUSION

Brothers and sisters, corrupt kinds of worship have been in the world ever since Cain brought a sacrifice that was not acceptable to God. It will be in the world until our Lord Jesus comes back and sets everything right. Worship may be corrupt in the biggest mega-churches led by the most famous celebrity preachers. It may be corrupt in many churches all around us. Of course it is corrupt in the antichrist Roman Catholic system. But in this congregation, let us watch out for any indications that worship is being corrupted, and reform ourselves however necessary. Let us pray for God's help and keep worship pure, that what we do may be in keeping with God's commandments, and not for our glory, but for His.

Roel - Call to Worship and Opening Prayer - Psalm 119:105-112

Stephen - Scripture Reading - Psalm 19

Jeremiah - Congregational Prayer

Rita - Prelude

Rita - Trinity 533 "What a Friend We Have in Jesus" - Alex lead

Rita - Trinity 263 "The Heav'ns Declare Thy Glory, Lord" - Andrew lead

Angie - Trinity 421 "Rock of Ages" (First Tune)

JRY: When you move outside of what is ordained in scripture, how do you regulate things in that area?

Jeff Riddle “Reformed Worship, Holy Days, and Holidays” Dec 11, 2011

There is only one biblically-mandated holy day for New Covenant believers, and that is the Lord’s Day, the first day of the week, or the Christian sabbath.

The Christian calendar developed after the time of the apostles, and created confusion in the churches

After 312, many pagan customs were transformed into Christian holidays

pragmatic...practical...teach the masses of the people

also visual art---missionaries...Jesus film

What is the ordained means for the proclamation...instruction?

Art and drama were very popular in the ancient world...the Lord could have said...drama troops...statues...but He said to go preach...faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God

subject to corruption...added to Bible scenes...saints...people didn’t know the difference between St. Sebastian and Stephen...legendary events in the life of Mary

With the Protestant Reformation came a purification of worship...not just of justification...but of worship...this included returning to the Lord’s Day as the focus of worship

Calvin: Christians ought to shun the observance of days...

Second Helvetic Confession ch. 24

1645 Directory for Publick Worship touching days and places for public worship

We should follow in the tradition of the mature Reformation, and hold to The Lord’s Day as the only scripturally-approved holy day

We can in families celebrate cultural holidays, as long as we do so in good conscience

The fool says in his heart, "There is no god."

to make it convenient for you, we'll have services on Saturday night

these innovations came from his own rebellious, corrupt heart

he changes the place of God's appointment

he changes the personnel of God's appointment

he changes the time of God's appointment

we only have license to do what He has ordained in a worship service; that is the

essence of what it means to be Reformed

the spirit of Jeroboam is...alive and well in churches throughout America

self promotion and the fear of losing people

It will not happen on our watch, because self-promotion and fear of losing people

always lead to corruption of worship.

God has promised to bless the means that He has ordained.

simple, dignified, reverent

that cater to God, not to the world

III. Indications That Worship Is Being Corrupted

A. People leading seem to be seeking their own glory

1. they dress in some flamboyant style
2. they do their hair in some striking fashion
3. they seem to be putting on a show

B. Decisions for the church are being made on carnal principles from the world, rather than spiritual truth from the Bible

1. expediency rather than obedience

C. People are led to do things in worship that are not what our Lord ordained in the scriptures

1. possibly even quoting scripture to justify it - e.g. Proverbs 29:18 Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.
 - a) then a man or woman tells what his "vision" is for the church
2. scriptural
 - a) prayer with thanksgiving
 - b) reading and preaching and teaching and hearing the scriptures, the Word of God
 - c) speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord

- d) baptism and the Lord's supper
- 3. unscriptural
 - a) baptize unbelieving babies
 - b) sprinkle someone with water and call that baptism
 - c) show a movie and watch it
 - d) put on a play and watch it
- D. hold
 - 1. the choir or praise band will sing for you
- E. hold
- F. People are put in office unbiblically
 - 1. women are pastors
 - 2. unbiblical spiritual offices are established
- G. Man-made holidays are observed religiously
 - 1. Mother's Day
 - 2. Father's Day
 - 3. Veteran's Day
 - 4. Reformation Day
 - 5. Easter
 - 6. Christmas
- H. Pastors are performing functions not within their purview
 - 1. acting as if apostles
 - 2. acting as if prophets
 - 3. acting as if CEOs