

# Visual Arts & The Church

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The relationship of visual arts  
to Scripture and the Church

# Three Needs

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**Encourage & Equip** Christian Artists

**Educate** the Church

**Engage** Academia, Intelligentsia and the Arts



# A question posed by Francis Schaeffer

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*Shouldn't a Christian focus his gaze steadily on 'Religious Things' alone and forget about arts and culture?*

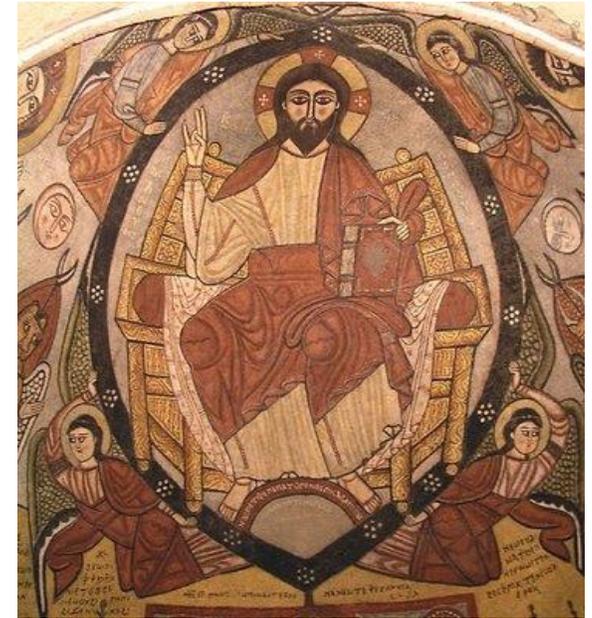
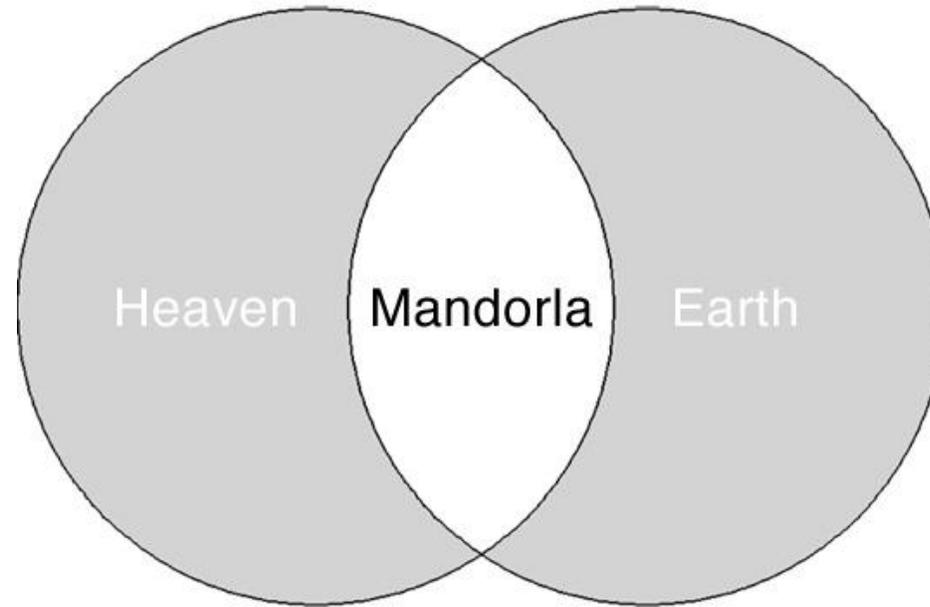


# Dualism

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Is there a separation between the sacred and the secular?

*And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*



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*The Arts and the sciences do have a place in the Christian life- they are not peripheral. For a Christian, redeemed by the work of Christ and living within the norms of Scripture and under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, the Lordship of Christ should include an interest in the arts. A Christian should use these arts to the Glory of God, not just as tracts, mind you, but as things of beauty to the praise of God. An artwork can be a doxology in itself.*

*- Francis Schaeffer*

# But does scripture actually say anything about the arts?

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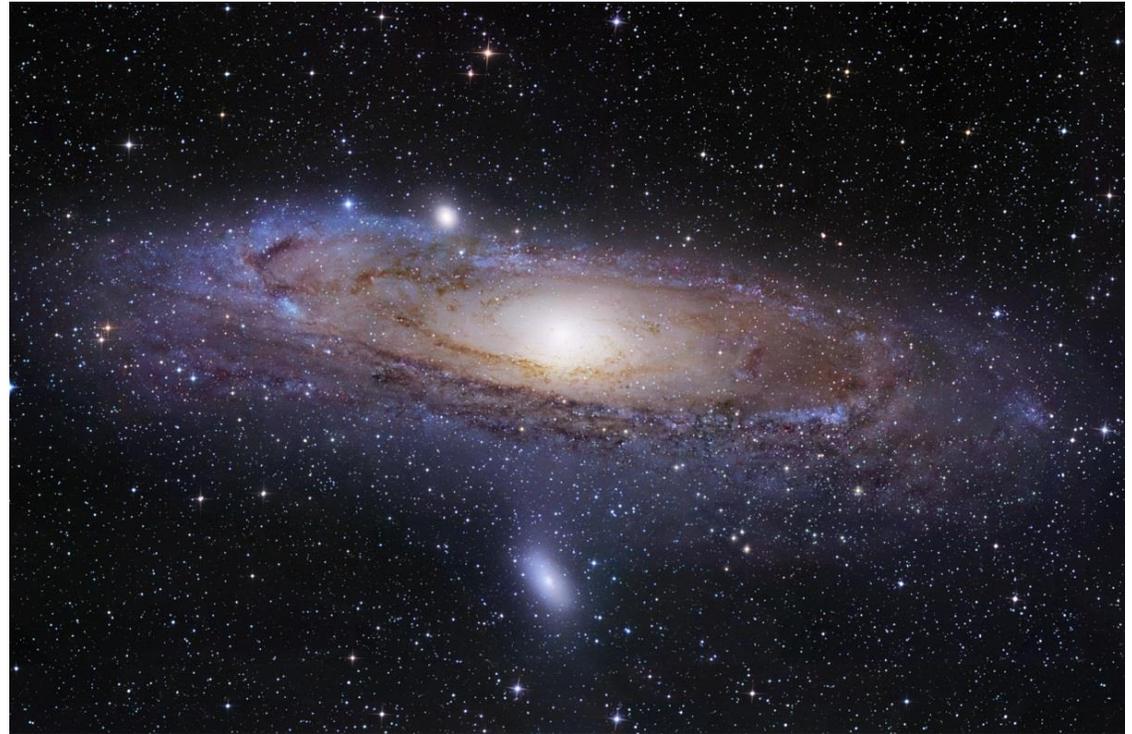
# Visual Arts & Scripture

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**What does the Bible actually say about the Visual Arts?**

*In the beginning God created...  
(Gen 1:1a)*

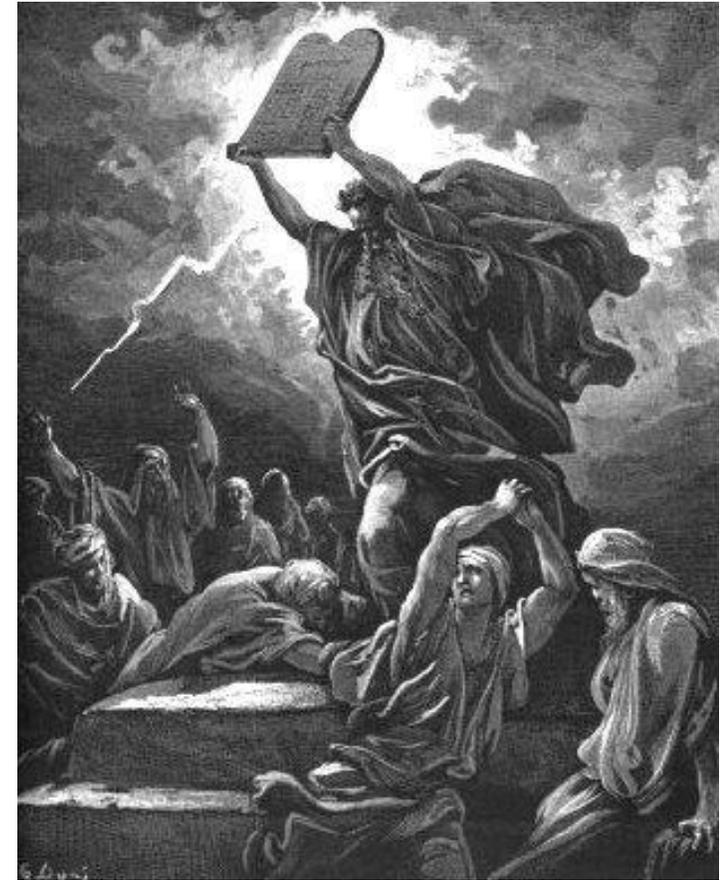
- What are the first two things we learn about God scripturally?
- How should that shape our thinking?



# The Second Commandment

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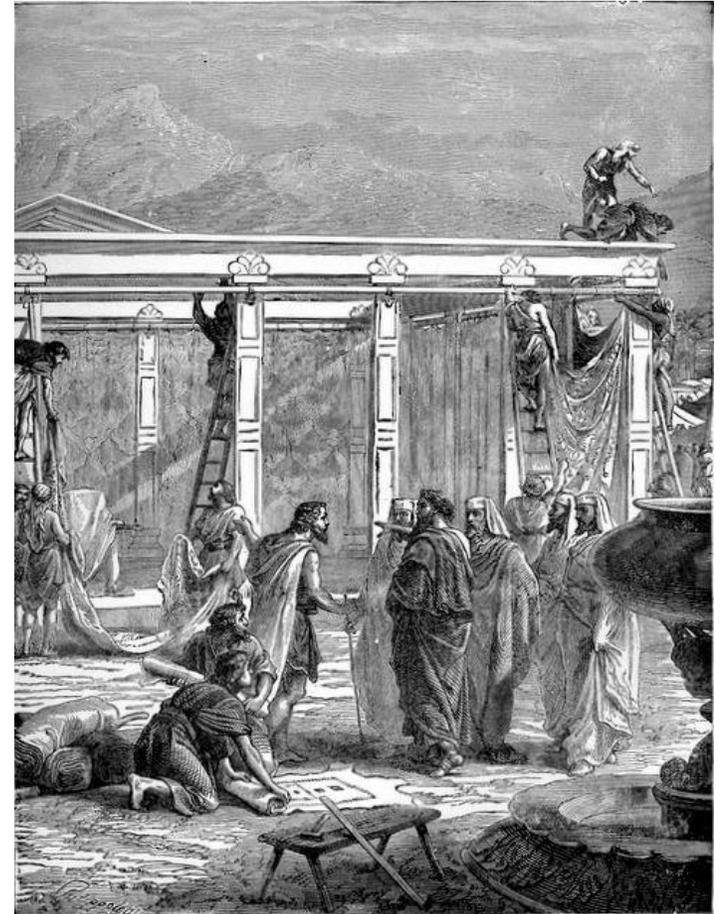
*You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God... (Exodus 20:4-5a)*



# The Tabernacle

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*According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it.  
(Exodus 25:9)*



# Examples from the Tabernacle

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## In the Holy of Holies

*And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work you shall make them at the two ends of the mercy seat. (Exodus 25:18)*



THE ARK AND MERCY SEAT.

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## Outside the Holy of Holies

*You shall also make a lampstand of pure gold; the lampstand shall be of hammered work. Its shaft, its branches, its bowls, its ornamental knobs, and flowers shall be of one piece. And six branches shall come out of its sides: three branches of the lampstand out of one side, and three branches of the lampstand out of the other side. Three bowls shall be made like almond blossoms on one branch, with an ornamental knob and a flower, and three bowls made like almond blossoms on the other branch, with an ornamental knob and a flower—and so for the six branches that come out of the lampstand.  
(Exodus 25:31-33)*



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*And upon its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue and purple and scarlet yarn, all around its hem, and bells of gold between them all around: a golden bell and a pomegranate, upon the hem of the robe all around. (Exodus 28:33)*



# The Temple

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*Then David gave his son Solomon the plans for the vestibule, its houses, its treasuries, its upper chambers, its inner chambers, and the place of the mercy seat; and the plans for all that he had by the Spirit, of the courts of the house of the Lord, of all the chambers all around, of the treasuries for the dedicated things..."All this," said David, "the LORD made me understand in writing, by His hand upon me, all the works of these plans." (1 Chronicles 28:11-12 & 19)*



# Examples from the Temple

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*The larger room he paneled with cypress which he overlaid with fine gold, and he carved palm trees and chainwork on it on it. And he decorated the house with precious stones for beauty, and the gold was gold from Paraim. He also overlaid the house- the beams and doorposts, its walls and doors- with gold; and he carved cherubim on the walls. (2 Chronicles 3:5-7)*

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*And he made the Most Holy Place. Its length was according to the width of the house, twenty cubits, and its width twenty cubits. He overlaid it with six hundred talents of fine gold. (2 Chronicles 3:8)*

*In the Most Holy Place he made two cherubim, fashioned by carving, and overlaid them with gold... The wings of these cherubim spanned twenty cubits (30 ft.) overall. They stood on their feet, and they faced inward. (2 Chronicles 3:10 & 13)*



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*Also he made in front of the temple two pillars thirty five cubits high, and the capital that was on the top of each of them was five cubits. He made wreaths of chainwork, as in the inner sanctuary, and put them on top of the pillars; and made one hundred pomegranates, and put them on top of the wreaths of chainwork.*

*(2 Chronicles 3:15-16)*



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*Moreover he made  
a bronze altar:  
twenty cubits was  
its length, twenty  
cubits was its width  
and ten cubits was  
its height.  
(2 Chronicles 4:1)*



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*Then he made the Sea of cast bronze, ten cubits from one brim to the other; it was completely round. Its height was five cubits, and a line of thirty cubits measured its circumference. And under it was the likeness of oxen encircling it all around, ten to a cubit, all the way around the Sea. The oxen were cast in two rows, when it was cast. It stood on twelve oxen: three looking toward the north, three looking toward the west, three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east; the Sea was set upon them, all their back parts pointed inward. It was a handbreadth thick; and its brim was shaped like the brim of a cup, like a lily blossom. It contained three thousand baths.*

*(2 Chronicles 4:2-5)*



# Secular Art

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*Moreover the king had a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with pure gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round at the back; there were armrests on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the armrests. Twelve lions stood there, one on each side of the six steps; nothing like this had been made for any other kingdom. ( 1 Kings 10:18-20)*



# Brazen Serpent

**Numbers 21:**  
Method of salvation

**2 Kings 18:**  
Object of false worship

**John 3:**  
Metaphor for Christ



# Memorial Art

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God commanded for stones to be set up, whitewashed, and the law written on them when the Israelites crossed the Jordan into the Promised land.

(Deuteronomy 27 & Joshua 8)

“Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen, and called its name Ebenezer, saying, ‘Thus far the Lord has helped us.’”

(1 Samuel 7:12)



# Performance Art

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- Ezekiel performs acts, including 430 days without speaking, symbolizing the Siege of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 4 & 5)
- Performance symbolizing the Exile, explanation is given, if asked (Ezekiel 12)
- The Cross? Is there a more profound voluntary example of acted out love?



# Imagio Deo

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## Created in the Image of God (Genesis 1:26)

- What does that mean?
- Morale, eternal, creative?

## Sources of Knowledge about God

- Special Revelation
- General Revelation

## God's Blessing on Artistic Work

*Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: "See, I have called by name Bezaleel... And I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship." (Exodus 31:1-2)*

# Culture & Theology

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- 1) Art is a Cultural Bellwether
- 2) Art is Philosophy thought visually
- 3) Artists as spiritual leaders

*“They [artists] are the spiritual teachers of the world.”*

*- Michael T. H. Sadler (Translator of Wassily Kandinsky's 'Concerning the Spiritual in Art')*

# The Church's Abdication of the Arts

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Unscriptural Bias against images

Dualistic approach to faith

Not understanding the importance of art in culture.

- Don't disperse the smoke and ignore the fire.

# Evangelism?

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Areopagus (Mars Hill)

Engage Culture (Cultural Mandate)

Culture Maker vs. Cultural Warrior

Art allows people to think differently if just for a moment