

Moses: The Ten Commandments

Scripture Text: Exodus 20:1-17

The Ten Commandments/Decalogue

- The basis for the Law of Moses
- These form the *Preamble*, followed by *Judgments & Inaugurated* in Ch. 24
- Literally the “Ten Words”
- 8 negative, 2 positive
- 2 divisions: #1-4 – vertically (Man to God) & #5-10 – horizontally (Man to Man)

1. No Other Gods – Ex. 20:3

- All commands were literally two(ish) word phrases: ‘no other gods’
- Israelites were just called out of a world where multiple gods were served
- Matthew 6:33 – God is to be first in our lives
- “Before Me” – literally ‘Before My Face’ or “In My Presence’

2. No Graven Image – Ex. 20:4

- Not only could they have no other god they could not make another god/idol/image
- Since God is first in our lives (Matthew 6:33), why would we want to worship anything else?
- People create statues to Buddha, Shiva, etc. still today!

3. Don’t Take Name in Vain – Ex. 20:7

- God’s name was used in oaths. To use in vain could be making a false oath.
- Jewish people would not even speak God’s name when reading but would substitute: Heaven, Adonai (My Lord). In Bibles, Lord = YHWH (they wouldn’t even write the whole name)
- Final application: don’t swear (“Oh My God”)

4. Remember the Sabbath – Ex. 20:8

- Formal rule for resting
- Conditioned for this: (1) God rested after 6 days of Creation (Gen. 1); (2) When they are collecting Manna and Quail they were to gather twice on the 6th for a day of rest (Ex. 16)
- 1st positive command

- Only command not binding in New Testament

5. Honor Parents – Ex. 20:12

- This idea is conveyed in Ephesians 6:1ff
- Solomon instructs his son: Proverbs 1:8
- When we honor our father and mother, we will have prolonged life (Ex.) and it is right (Eph.)
- 2nd positive command

6. Don't Kill – Ex. 20:13

- Literally: Not Kill. 'Thou shalt not' is the translation
- Better word: Murder. God instructed his people to kill enemies on occasion (see: Joshua) but God was not breaking one of His Commands in doing this

7. Don't Commit Adultery – Ex. 20:14

- Leviticus 20:10 gives the punishment for breaking this law
- Within the marriage or having a relationship with someone who is married
- Jesus is questioned on this in Matthew 19

8. Don't Steal – Ex. 20:15

- Should be plain and simple: if it is not yours, do not take it (possessions, persons, etc.)

9. Don't Bear False Witness – Ex. 20:16

- This command deals with people in court and people standing up for one another.
- At the trial of Jesus, they could not even pay two people to agree to bear false witness against Jesus [later they agree]
(Matthew 26:59-61)

10. Don't Covet – Ex. 20:17

- This one attacks down to the heart of Israel
- They cannot covet (defined: yearn to possess or have [something]) anything!
- God is very specific in His Commands!

“I AM THE LORD”

- I = Idolatry
- A = Adultery
- M = Murder
- T = Take (steal)
- H = Honor (parents)
- E = Envy (covet)
- L = Lie
- O = One (Only ONE to worship)
- R = Rest
- D = Disrespect (using Name in Vain)

1. God’s commands are specific and binding
2. God’s commands teach us how to treat both God and our fellow man
3. 9 out of 10 commands are carried over into the New Testament

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