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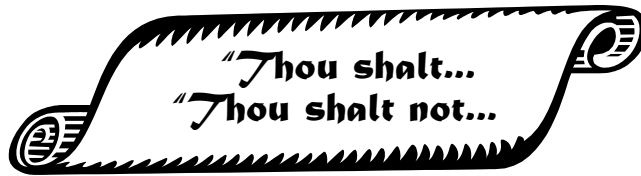
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INTRODUCTION

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS— NECESSARY LAWS TO GOVERN MAN AND SOCIETY

Exodus 20:1-26

The most important document ever written is *the Ten Commandments*. The influence of the Ten Commandments upon nations and societies could never be measured; indeed the importance of the Ten Commandments can never be overstressed. For this reason, the Ten Commandments need to be looked at as a whole before they are studied in detail. This book outlines and discusses each commandment separately for those who wish to study, preach, or teach a series on the Ten Commandments. For those who wish to preach or teach just two or perhaps three messages on the Ten Commandments, the following overall outline is given as an aid.

<p>1. The basis of the 10 com.</p> <p>a. God's existence: "And God"</p> <p>b. God's Word: "God spoke," (v.1)</p> <p>c. God's name: The LORD</p> <p>d. God's relationship with man: "Your God"</p> <p>e. God's salvation, deliverance, & redemption</p> <p>2. Com. 1 concerns God's being: Have no other gods whatsoever</p> <p>3. Com. 2 concerns God's worship: Do not make, worship, or serve any other god whatsoever</p>	<p>A. The Ten Commandments (Part 1): The Laws Governing Man's Duty to God, Ex.20:1-11</p> <p>And God spake all these words, saying,</p> <p>2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.</p> <p>3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.</p> <p>4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any</p>	<p>thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:</p> <p>5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;</p> <p>6 And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.</p> <p>7 Thou shalt not</p>	<p>a. The commandment forbids the making of any idols: Things in heaven, earth, or water</p> <p>b. The reasons</p> <p>1) God is a jealous God</p> <p>2) The influence & result of idolatry are passed down from fathers to children</p> <p>3) The influence of loving & obeying God lasts for a thousand generations</p> <p>4. Com. 3 concerns God's</p>
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<p>name: Do not misuse the LORD's name</p> <p>a. He is the LORD your God</p> <p>b. He will hold you accountable</p> <p>5. Com. 4 concerns God's day: Keep the Sabbath day holy</p> <p>a. The commandment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Work for six days 2) Rest & worship on the seventh day <p>b. The reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Because the 7th day is the LORD's: No work whatsoever is to be done on the Sabbath, not by anyone 2) Because the LORD created the universe in six days, & then rested on the seventh day 3) Because the LORD blessed the seventh day & made it holy <p>1. Com. 5 concerns man's parents: Honor your father & mother</p> <p>a. Helps a person to live longer</p> <p>b. Helps a person to inherit the promised land</p> <p>2. Com. 6 concerns</p>	<p>take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.</p> <p>8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.</p> <p>9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:</p> <p>10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:</p> <p>11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.</p> <p>B. The Ten Commandments (Part 2): The Law Governing Man's Duty to Others, Ex.20:12-17</p> <p>12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.</p> <p>13 Thou shalt not</p>	<p>kill.</p> <p>14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.</p> <p>15 Thou shalt not steal.</p> <p>16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.</p> <p>17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.</p> <p>C. The Purposes for the Ten Commandments: Why God Gave the Ten Commandments to the World, Ex.20:18-26</p> <p>18 And all the people saw the thunders, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.</p> <p>19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.</p> <p>20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before</p>	<p><i>man's life</i></p> <p>3. Com. 7 concerns man's family: Forbids adultery</p> <p>4. Com. 8 concerns man's property</p> <p>5. Com. 9 concerns man's word: Forbids lying or speaking falsely against anyone</p> <p>6. Com. 10 concerns man's desires & security: Forbids coveting anything that belongs to your neighbor—his house, wife, servant, workers, animals, or anything else</p> <p>1. To reveal the glorious majesty & holiness of God: Showing that a great barrier—a great gulf—exists between man and God</p> <p>2. To reveal man's need for a mediator, for a person who can approach God on behalf of man</p> <p>3. To test man</p> <p>a. To see if man will walk in the fear & reverence of God</p> <p>b. To see if man will truly obey God & not sin</p>
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<p>c. To see if man will trust the mediator appointed by God</p> <p>4. To teach that God alone is the LORD: He alone has truly revealed Himself, has spoken to man from heaven</p> <p>5. To teach how God alone is to be approached & worshipped</p> <p>a. No idolatry: No gods whatsoever are to be made or worshipped</p> <p>b. No pageantry: 1) The altar of wor-</p>	<p>your faces, that ye sin not.</p> <p>21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.</p> <p>22 And the LORD said unto Moses, Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven.</p> <p>23 Ye shall not make with me gods of silver, neither shall ye make unto you gods of gold.</p> <p>24 An altar of earth thou shalt make unto me, and</p>	<p>shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt offerings, and thy peace offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen: in all places where I record my name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee.</p> <p>25 And if thou wilt make me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stone: for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted it.</p> <p>26 Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto mine altar, that thy nakedness be not discovered thereon.</p>	<p>ship was to be of earth: A non-showy, non-costly material provided (created) by God alone</p> <p>2) The altar of worship was to be made of natural, undressed stones: A material provided by God, not defiled & polluted by man</p> <p>c. No unrefined behavior: The altar was not to have steps that would expose a person's nakedness (symbolized self-righteousness, man ascending up to God)</p>
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1. The Ten Commandments have influenced the world and the civil laws of nations more than any other document ever devised. Any nation that is being formed or has been newly formed—who will use the Ten Commandments as the basis for its laws—will grow into one of the most blessed societies upon earth: a just, orderly, compassionate, and law-abiding society, a society that is strong, strong in growth and development. Maxie Dunnam says this:

“I doubt if any document has influenced Western culture to the degree that the Ten Commandments have. In Western civilization, they have a position of inescapable significance....The civil law of many lands has rootage in this covenant law of God given at Sinai.”¹

2. The Ten Commandments spell out the duty of God’s people: *obedience*. God has always demanded only one thing of believers: *obedience*. Both Old and New Testament believers are given the same charge: obey God. Norman L. Geisler says this:

“Duty follows deliverance. Complete redemption involved more than getting Israel out of Egypt. It also involved getting ‘Egypt’ (i.e., the world) out of them. Not unlike believers of today, the Israelites often lusted for the things of

¹ Maxie Dunnam. *Mastering The Old Testament, Volume 2: Exodus*. (Dallas, TX: Word Publishing, 1987), p.247.

Egypt (16:3) instead of fulfilling their duty. Their duty was to follow God's law in order to receive God's blessing."²

3. The Ten Commandments have been given as a condition for receiving the blessings of God (Ex.19:5-6). The Israelites had to obey God in order to receive the blessings and promises of God. What was to be Israel's response in the coming centuries? Failure. The rest of the Old Testament is primarily...

- a record of Israel's gross disobedience to God.
- a record of the prophets' denunciation of Israel's sin.
- a record of the warning of coming judgment upon all the disobedient of this earth, upon both the Jew and the Gentile.
- a record of a people failing to become what God wanted them to become.
- a record of a people failing to do what God wanted them to do.

(The idea for the above statements has been gleaned from F.B. Huey, Jr., Exodus.³)

4. The Ten Commandments are called by several names throughout the Bible.

a. In the Old Testament the Ten Commandments are referred to as...

- The *Ten Commandments* or *Ten Words* (the literal translation of the Hebrew) or the *Decalogue* (the literal Greek term for the Ten Commandments).

“And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments” (Ex.34:28).

“And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments [ten words, decalogue]; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone” (Dt.4:13).

“And he wrote on the tables, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me” (Dt.10:4).

- The *Words of the covenant*.

“And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments” (Ex.34:28).

- The *Words spoken by the LORD* (Jehovah, Yahweh)

“And God spake all these words, saying...” (Ex.20:1).

² Norman L. Geisler. *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), p.58.

³ F.B. Huey, Jr. *A Study Guide Commentary, Exodus*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1977), p.81.

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel” (Ex.34:27).

“These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me” (Dt.5:22).

“And I will write on the tables the words that were in the first tables which thou brakest, and thou shalt put them in the ark” (Dt.10:2)

- The *testimony of God*

“As the LORD commanded Moses, so Aaron laid it up before the Testimony, to be kept” (Ex.16:34).

“And thou shalt put into the ark the testimony which I shall give thee” (Ex.25:16).

- The *two tablets of stone*

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them” (Ex.24:12).

“And he gave unto Moses, when he had made an end of communing with him upon mount Sinai, two tables of testimony, tables of stone, written with the finger of God” (Ex.31:18).

“And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written. And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables” (Ex.32:15-16).

“And the LORD delivered unto me two tables of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly” (Dt.9:10).

“And I took the two tables, and cast them out of my two hands, and brake them before your eyes” (Dt.9:17).

b. In the New Testament the Ten Commandments are simply referred to as *commandments*:

“And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [there is] none good but one, [that is], God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not

steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and [thy] mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mt.19:17-19).

“Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;)” (Eph.6:2).

5. The Bible does not number the Ten Commandments; consequently, they are numbered differently by different commentators.

⇒ The verses concerning God and idols, verses 3-6, are combined as one commandment by some commentators (primarily Lutherans and Roman Catholics). When these are combined, the commandment concerning coveting (v.17) is usually split into two commandments. The first sentence of verse 17 is counted as the ninth commandment, and the rest of the verse is counted as the tenth commandment. The ninth and tenth commandments would then look like this:

9. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house.*

10. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

6. The Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament.

1. *Commandment 1 concerning God's being: have no other gods whatsoever (Acts 14:15; 1 Cor.10:14; 1 Jn.5:21).*
2. *Commandment 2 concerning God's worship: do not make, worship, nor serve any other god whatsoever (Acts 17:29; Ro.1:22-23; 1 Jn.5:21; 1 Cor. 10:7, 14).*
3. *Commandment 3 concerning God's name: do not misuse the LORD's name (Jas.5:12; Mt.5:33-37; 6:5-9).*
4. *Commandment 4 concerning God's day: keep the Sabbath day holy. This is not directly repeated anywhere in the New Testament, but Christ faithfully observed the Sabbath and New Testament believers faithfully kept the LORD's Day (Mk.1:21; 6:2; Lk.4:16; Acts 17:2; 18:4; Heb.10:25).*
5. *Commandment 5 concerning man's parents: honor your father and mother (Mt.19:18-19; Eph.6:1-4).*
6. *Commandment 6 concerning man's life: prohibits murder (1 Jn.3:15; Mt.5:21-22; 19:18-19).*
7. *Commandment 7 concerning man's family: forbids adultery (Mt.5:27-28; 19:18-19; 1 Cor.5:1-13; 6:9-20; Heb.13:4).*
8. *Commandment 8 concerning man's property: prohibits stealing (Mt.19:18-19; Eph.4:28; 2 Th.3:10-12; Jas.5:1-4).*
9. *Commandment 9 concerning man's word: forbids lying or speaking falsely against anyone (Mt.19:18-19; Col.3:9; Eph.4:25).*
10. *Commandment 10 concerning man's security: forbids coveting anything that belongs to your neighbor—his house, wife, servant, workers, animals, or anything else (Mt.19:18-19; Eph.5:3; Lk.12:15-21).*

7. The New Testament gives several summaries of the commandments.

“He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and [thy] mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mt.19:18-19; cp. Mk.10:18-19; Lk.18:18-19).

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Ro.13:8-10).

8. It is important to note the form of the Ten Commandments, just how they are written. Note these facts:

- a. The Ten Commandments are stated as *moral absolutes*. They absolutely must be kept. There is no equivocation and no condition attached to the commandments—no *ifs*, *ands*, or *buts*. The commandments are to be kept.
- b. The Ten Commandments are written in the second person singular, “*you*.” This means that the Ten Commandments apply to you, the individual, as well as to you, a community or society of people.
- c. The commandments fall into a natural division:
 - ⇒ The first four commandments concern *man’s relationship to God*.
 - ⇒ The next six commandments concern *man’s relationship to others*.

9. Eight of the Ten Commandments are stated negatively, and two commandments are stated positively. Note that the eight negative commandments imply the positive and the two positive commandments imply the negative. The commandments even arouse the mind to immediately think of the opposite statement. This was obviously the very reason God stated the commandments so simply. A double focus or imprint is made upon the mind, both a negative and positive emphasis when the commandments are read.

- a. “You shall have no other gods before me” (Ex.20:3) implies that “you shall believe and follow the only living and true God, the LORD Himself.”
- b. “You shall not make for yourself [worship] any graven image [idol]” (Ex.20:4-6) implies that “you shall worship only the LORD, Him and Him alone.”
- c. “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain” (Ex.20:7) implies that “you shall always honor the name of the LORD your God.”
- d. “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy” (Ex.20:8-11) implies that “you shall not neglect nor abuse the Sabbath day.”
- e. “Honor you father and your mother” (Ex.20:12) implies that “you shall not mistreat your father and mother.”

- f. "You shall not kill" (Ex.20:13) implies that "you shall respect and reverence life."
- g. "You shall not commit adultery" (Ex.20:14) implies that "you shall be sexually moral and faithful."
- h. "You shall not steal" (Ex.20:15) implies that "you shall be honest."
- i. "You shall not bear false witness" (Ex.20:16) implies that "you shall tell the truth."
- j. "You shall not covet" (Ex.20:17) implies that "you shall be content with what you have."

10. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament tell us why God gave the Ten Commandments. There were at least nine purposes.

- a. The Ten Commandments were given to mark believers, to mark them as the true followers of God, as being God's holy and treasured people.

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Ex.19:5-6).

"He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them. Praise ye the LORD" (Ps.147:19-20).

"My brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen" (Ro.9:3^b-5).

- b. The Ten Commandments were given to mark believers as the priests, the true witnesses and servants of God upon earth.

"Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel" (Ex.19:5-6).

"But ye shall be named the Priests of the LORD: men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves" (Is.61:6).

"Ye also [all believers], as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Pt.2:5).

- c. The Ten Commandments were given to show man that he is sinful, that he is far short of God's glory, that he is not perfect.

"Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Ro.5:20).

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet" (Ro.7:7).

"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator" (Gal.3:19).

"Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (1 Tim.1:9-10).

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb.10:1).

"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one....Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Ro.3:10, 19-20).

- d. The Ten Commandments were given to show man that he can never be justified by the law, never be perfected by the law, never keep the law perfectly. In fact, he comes ever so short of keeping the law, ever so short of perfection.

"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Ro.3:20).

"For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb.10:1).

"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Ro.3:23).

- e. The Ten Commandments were given to show man that he needs a Savior, a Savior who can deliver him from the curse and penalty of the law.

“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal.3:10-13).

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father” (Gal.4:4-6; cp. Gal.1:4).

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Ro.3:20-22).

“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Ro.3:23-24).

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Ro.8:1-4).

“Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified” (Gal.2:16).

“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope [in Christ] did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Heb.7:19).

- f. The Ten Commandments were given to show man that he needs a mediator to approach God. God appointed Moses to be the mediator between Himself and Israel, but Moses was only a type of the promised *Mediator and Prophet*, the Lord Jesus Christ...
- who was to be *raised up* by God Himself
 - who was to be the very *Prophet* of God Himself
 - who was to be the *Savior and Messiah* of the world
 - who was to be the *High Priest* of God Himself

“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken; According to all that thou desiredst of the LORD thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of the LORD my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the LORD said unto me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak unto them all that I shall command him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him” (Dt.18:15-19).

“Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world” (Jn.6:14).

“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you” (Acts 3:19-22).

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:25-26).

- g. The Ten Commandments were given to be a guide (a schoolmaster or guardian), a guide who would lead people to Christ.

“Wherefore the Ten Commandments were our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:24).

- h. The Ten Commandments were given to arouse people to seek both life and the promised land.

“Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do them, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you” (Dt.4:1-2).

“Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess” (Dt.5:32-33).

- i. The Ten Commandments were given to show man how to live a peaceful and productive life upon earth, how to be at peace with God and man and to live a life that overflows with the blessings of God. Note the commandments, how each...
- leads either to peace with God or peace with man
 - leads to a productive and fruitful life upon earth
 - Commandment 1: Never believe in false gods.*
 - Commandment 2: Never make nor worship false gods.*
 - Commandment 3: Never misuse God's name; never use vulgarity.*
 - Commandment 4: Keep the Sabbath day holy.*
 - Commandment 5: Honor your father and mother.*
 - Commandment 6: Never kill.*
 - Commandment 7: Never commit adultery or immorality.*
 - Commandment 8: Never steal.*
 - Commandment 9: Never lie or speak falsely against anyone.*
 - Commandment 10: Never covet anything that belongs to a neighbor—his house, wife, servant, workers, animals, or anything else.*

11. Scripture tells us several things that the Ten Commandments cannot and do not do.

- a. The law cannot save a person because no person can keep the law perfectly.

“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith” (Gal.3:11).

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin” (Ro.3:20).

- b. The law cannot make a person perfect.

“For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God” (Heb.7:19, cp. Heb.7:11-18).

- c. The law cannot justify a person from sin.

“Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses” (Acts 13:38-39).

“Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Ro.3:19-28).

- d. The law cannot make us righteous, cannot impute righteousness to man.

“Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference” (Ro.3:20-22).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain” (Gal.2:21).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).

- e. The law cannot give life to man.

“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law” (Gal.3:21).

12. Jesus Christ taught that the Ten Commandments are timeless and universal laws: they are given to all people of all nations for all time. Everyone is to keep the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are to underlie all civil laws of a nation.

What about Christian believers: Are we required to keep the Ten Commandments? Are we not saved by grace and not by law? Yes, we are saved by grace, but

the Ten Commandments are still binding upon us. Jesus Christ made this clear time and again.

- a. Jesus Christ declared that He came to fulfill the law not destroy (abolish) it.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Mt.5:17).

What does this mean? It means that Jesus Christ embraced the law, kept and fulfilled it. As such, He embodies the law and so much more. Therefore, the person who follows Jesus Christ embraces and keeps the Ten Commandments. For example, the person who follows Jesus Christ does not steal, kill, commit adultery, nor break any of the other commandments.

The person who follows Jesus Christ focuses upon Jesus Christ not upon the law. He looks to Christ, focuses upon Him, seeking to live a righteous and godly life just as Christ lived a righteous and godly life. By so doing, the believer keeps the law and fulfills it. In fact, when the believer follows Jesus Christ, he keeps the Ten Commandments and a whole lot more.

- b. Jesus Christ condensed the law into one simple statement:

“Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets” (Mt.7:12).

- c. Jesus Christ said that love is the basis of the law, that the law can be summarized in two commandments:

“Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Mt.22:35-40).

“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might” (Dt.6:5).

“Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD” (Lev.19:18).

- d. Jesus Christ enlarged upon the commandment to love our neighbors: He declared that His followers must love one another just as He loved them. How did Christ love us? Sacrificially, even to the point of dying for us.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all

[men] know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (Jn.13:34-35).

“This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (Jn.15:12-13).

“These things I command you, that ye love one another” (Jn.15:17).

“And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour” (Eph.5:2).

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” (1 Jn.3:16-18).

The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia says this:

“‘Thou shalt love’ is the first word and the last in the teaching of Our Lord. His teaching is positive rather than negative, and so simple that a child can understand it. For the Christian, the Decalogue [the Ten Commandments] is no longer the highest summary of human duty. He must ever read it with sincere respect as one of the great monuments of the love of God in the moral and religious education of mankind; but it has given place to the higher teaching of the Son of God.”⁴

- e. Jesus Christ declared that a person proves his love by obeying the commandments:

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (Jn.14:21).

“Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (Jn.14:23).

“For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous” (1 Jn.5:3).

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Rev.14:12).

13. The relationship of Jesus Christ to the law is of critical importance.
a. Jesus Christ obeyed the Ten Commandments; He never transgressed the Ten Commandments, not even once. He was without sin.

⁴ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopaedia*, Vol.V. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1939), p.2946-2947.

“For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Heb.2:10).

“For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb.4:15).

“And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him” (Heb.5:9).

“For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens” (Heb.7:26).

“For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore” (Heb.7:28).

“Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?” (Jn.8:46).

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

“But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Pt.1:19).

“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth” (1 Pt.2:22).

- b. Jesus Christ declared that He came to fulfill the Ten Commandments not to destroy them.

“Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Mt.5:17).

Christ said He was neither contradicting nor destroying the law nor was He standing against it. He was fulfilling and completing the law, embracing, keeping, and obeying the commandments with all His heart and life. There are several ways in which Jesus Christ fulfilled the law.

- ⇒ Before Christ, the law described how God wanted man to live. The law was the ideal, the words that told man what he was to do. But Christ fulfilled and completed the law; that is, God gave man more than just mere words to describe how He wants man to live. He gave man the Life, the Person who perfectly pictures and demonstrates the law before the world's very eyes. Jesus Christ is the Picture, the Living Example, the Pattern, the Demonstration of life as it is to be lived. He is the Perfect Picture of *God's Will and Word*, the Ideal Man, the Representative Man, the Pattern for all men.

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth” (Jn.1:14).

- ⇒ Before Christ, the law was only words and rules. It could only inject the idea of behavior into the mind of a person. It had no spirit, no life, no power to enable a person to do the law, not perfectly. But Christ fulfilled and completed the law. He was *Spirit and Life*, so He was able to put spirit and life to the words and rules of the law. He was able to live the life described by the words and rules. As such, He was able to inject both the idea and the power to behave into a person’s mind and life. It is now His life that sets the standard and the rule for the believer; it is His Spirit and life that give the believer power to obey.

“There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Ro.8:1-4).

- ⇒ Before Christ, the law stated only the rule and the principle of behavior. It did not explain the rule nor the spirit behind the rule. Neither did the law give the full meaning of the rule. The law always had to have an interpreter. But Christ fulfilled and completed the law. He explained the rule and the spirit behind the rule. He interpreted the law. He gave the law its real and full meaning.

“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith” (Gal.3:23-24).

- ⇒ Before Christ, the law demanded perfect righteousness; it demanded a perfect life. But man failed at certain points. Man just could not obey the law perfectly; he fell short of perfect righteousness. But Christ fulfilled and completed the law. He kept the law in *every detail*. He secured the *perfect righteousness* demanded by the law. He fulfilled all the requirements, all the types, and all the ceremonies of the law—perfectly. As such, He became the Perfect Man, the Ideal Man, the Representative Man for all

men. As the Ideal Man, He simply embraced all men; He embodied the righteousness that man must now have.

“For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him” (2 Cor.5:21).

⇒ Before Christ, the law demanded punishment for disobedience. If a man broke the law, he was to be punished. But Christ fulfilled and completed the law. In fact, He went to the furthest point possible in fulfilling the law. He paid the maximum price and showed the ultimate love. He bore the punishment of the law for every man’s disobedience; He took the punishment of the law upon Himself. As the Ideal Man, He not only embodies the righteousness that must cover all men, He also frees all men from the penalty of the law. And He makes them sons of God. (Cp. Ro.8:15-17; Gal.3:13-14; 4:1-7.)

“For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved” (Jn.3:17).

“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed” (1 Pt.2:24).

14. Jesus Christ expects us—all believers—to obey the Ten Commandments. He even expects believers to go beyond the Ten Commandments and do far more than just the rules laid down by the commandments. Note what He had to say about each of the commandments.

- a. **Commandment 1:** Jesus Christ declared that there is *only One LORD GOD* of the universe, and that we are to love Him with all our hearts, souls, and minds.

“Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second [is] like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Mt.22:35-40).

- b. **Commandment 2:** Jesus Christ declared that *God is Spirit* and that He must be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Consequently, all the images of gods, whether created by the hands of people or simply existing in the imaginations of people, are merely dead, helpless and false gods.

“God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth” (Jn.4:24).

- c. **Commandment 3:** Jesus Christ declared that man is not to swear.

“But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil” (Mt.5:34-37).

- d. **Commandment 4:** Jesus Christ faithfully worshipped on the Sabbath, and He declared that we are to worship the Lord our God and Him alone.

“Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve” (Mt.4:10).

“And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read” (Lk.4:16).

- e. **Commandment 5:** Jesus Christ declared that man is always to honor father and mother even above vows and offerings and that man is never to curse father and mother.

“For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, Whosoever shall say to [his] father or [his] mother, [It is] a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honour not his father or his mother, [he shall be free]. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition” (Mt.15:4-6).

Jesus Christ also declared that the fifth commandment governing the honor of parents must be obeyed. He insisted that a person had to honor his father and mother in order to inherit eternal life.

“And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? [there is] none good but one, [that is], God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother” (Mk.10:17-19).

- f. **Commandment 6:** Jesus Christ declared that the law governing murder goes much deeper than the act itself: it covers the deep-seated feelings of unjustified anger.

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Mt.5:21-22).

Jesus Christ also declared that the sixth commandment governing murder must be obeyed: “Do not kill.”

“Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother” (Mk.10:19).

- g. **Commandment 7:** Jesus Christ declared that the law governing adultery goes much deeper than the act itself: it covers the feelings of lust within the human heart.

“Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast [it] from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not [that] thy whole body should be cast into hell. It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (Mt.5:27-32).

Jesus Christ also declared that the seventh commandment must be obeyed: “Do not commit adultery.”

“Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother” (Mk.10:19).

- h. **Commandment 8:** Jesus Christ declared that the eighth commandment governing stealing must be obeyed: “Do not defraud.”

“Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother” (Mk.10:19).

- i. **Commandment 9:** Jesus Christ not only upheld the ninth commandment against bearing false witness, He enlarged it to include...

- evil thoughts
- blasphemy
- idle words

“Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy [against] the [Holy] Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men” (Mt.12:31).

“But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment” (Mt.12:36).

“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies” (Mt.15:19).

“Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother” (Mk.10:19).

- j. **Commandment 10:** Jesus Christ warned people against covetousness.

“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth” (Lk.12:15; cp. v.16-21).

15. The Ten Commandments are meant for all people of all generations. They are not just religious records or archives limited to a particular sect of people. God’s law has been placed in the heart, in the very conscience of every man, woman, and child—no matter what a person may claim. God has stamped a sense of morality deep into man’s innermost being. God’s Word declares this fact:

“([People] show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another)” (Ro.2:15).

How the Ten Commandments are Outlined and Discussed

The Ten Commandments are being outlined as the Scripture dictates. But remember, several of the Ten Commandments are forcefully stated in one brief sentence. Because our purpose is to give an overall discussion of the Ten Commandments, not to limit our discussion just to the brief statement of Scripture, additional outline points have been adopted and discussed for each of the commandments. This is being done to help us in studying and understanding the commandments.

The message of the Ten Commandments is desperately needed by our society, a society and world that is rapidly becoming lawless, immoral, perverted, and desensitized, losing all sense of conscience, all sense of right and wrong. Our purpose is to cover the full teaching of Scripture about each of the commandments. This is done with the conviction and hope that this study will be of far greater value to God's dear people as they study, preach, and teach His Holy Commandments. Some or all of the following outline points are discussed for each of the Ten Commandments.

- I. Who is to obey this commandment?**
- II. How long was this commandment to be in force?**
- III. What is forbidden by this commandment? or What is the charge of this commandment?**
- IV. What are the Biblical consequences of breaking this commandment?**
- V. What are the Biblical benefits of keeping this commandment?**
- VI. What is the teaching of Jesus Christ concerning this commandment?**
- VII. What is the decision demanded or required by this commandment?**