

Ten Commandments

Feast of Tabernacles

Michael Heiss—September 30, 2010

Before we actually start, commenting on what Fred mentioned earlier about the Jubilee year and the first year of Christ's ministry. I just commented to him that in doing my own study and reading Edersheim's *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, the chronology shows that the first year of Jesus' ministry would either be the sabbatical year, that is the seventh year of the final forty-ninth year cycle, or the beginning of the Jubilee year. And that is why if you read in the Gospel, vast crowds were following Him, because they weren't working—they weren't plying their trade in towns, they weren't working the fields—they had time on their hands.

So it was most interesting. It's either the Jubilee year or it's the year just before. I haven't fully nailed that down yet, but probably it was the Jubilee year. I always noticed, I always wondered why is it so many people could follow Him. Where did these people come from, why weren't they working. Well, if it's the sabbatical year or the Jubilee year, we know why they weren't working. There were no jobs then. God said relax, the land will grow of itself and you'll have twice in that sixth year to carry you over two more years. So that I thought was interesting.

This morning we're going to be looking at the Ten Commandments, not from the point of view of how to keep them. We're not going into great depth, but I want to try to give you an overflow or an overview of how they're structured. They are structured in a way that you don't think about it when you look at them. It's very, very different.

To start with, for me, I like movies. One of the best Biblical movies I ever saw, of course, was Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*. What you may not know about that movie, two things which I thought were humorous. First of all, he wanted to get it straight. He wanted to get it as accurate as he could. These directors and producers are not exactly religious people. They are very secular. So he brought in the complements of the rabbis, the priests, and the ministers to see how he should have the movie setup, what the scenes should be like, what the costumes should be, what the dialogue should be, the plot. And he's throwing up his hands, because he couldn't get one of them to agree with the other.

So finally he said, 'Gentlemen, thank you, but no thanks.' And according to the story I read, he said, 'I've got to get this right.' So if all else fails, follow directions—right? He got out the book of Exodus and he read the first twenty chapters, and he

based the movie on what he understood in those first twenty chapters to be. Furthermore, you may recall in those days seeing in schools and libraries replicas or plaques of the Ten Commandments everywhere. What you may not realize and what I didn't realize is, that was a promotion by Cecil B. DeMille. He had them made by the hundreds or thousands and sent them all over the country as a promotion for his movie. And it worked. It was a very, very good movie.

We're now going to look at the Ten Commandments. But before we go to Exo. 20, we're going to look at three Scriptures where the term 'Ten Commandments' is used. The most important that we're really going to zero in on is:

Deuteronomy 4:12: "And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the voice of the words, but saw no likeness, only a voice. And He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, *even* the Ten Commandments. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone" (vs 12-13).

We're going to look at that verse a little more closely, but now turn over just a few pages to Deuteronomy 10:4: "And He wrote on the tablets, according to the first writing... [If you recall, Moses went up once, came down from the mountain, his temper got the better of him because he saw what was going on with the golden calf, he smashed them. So this refers to the second time.] ...And He wrote on the tablets, according to the first writing, the Ten Commandments which the LORD spoke to you in the mountain out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly." Just note that that's there.

Then the third Scripture is going to be Exodus 34:28, just to show you where the term *the Ten Commandments* is used. "And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote upon the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments."

So here we have the Ten Commandments. But now let's look more closely in Deuteronomy 4:13: "And He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, *even* the Ten Commandments. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone." In this verse we have a little two-letter Hebrew word which is 'et.' In reality it is the first and last letter of the Hebrew language—Aleph, Tav. And it has two significant meanings.

- 1) the direct object

Think of the first verse in the Bible. (Hebrew words) ‘In the beginning created God ‘et’ the heavens, ‘et’ the earth.’ That’s the sign of the direct object and it’s always there.

- 2) the A-Z, or in Greek the alpha and the omega, the totality of it all

So God is saying He created the totality of the heavens and the totality of the earth. Back in Deuteronomy 4:13, it says He declared to you ‘et’ His covenant, the totality of the covenant. God held nothing back from Israel. That’s the first thing.

Then we go next which says, ‘which He commanded you to perform.’ Now this is not a bad translation, but this is the word from the Hebrew ‘asah’—which is *to make, to do, to celebrate, to observe*—and it’s found several different places.

We may just look, for example, in Genesis 1:16: “And God *had* made two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night; and *God had made* the stars *also*.”

Also my favorite Ezra 6:19: “And the children of the captivity **kept** the Passover...” They did, they performed, they observed; all that meaning. So we learn that ‘He commanded you to *perform* the Ten Commandments.’ But here’s the interesting thing: *command* and *commandments*, they are not the same words. They are not even the same root letters of the words, a little different.

The word ‘command’ is correct. That is command. God did command, ‘tsav’ or ‘metseveh.’ When the Jew says he’s going to do a commandment it’s ‘metseveh’ or plural ‘mitsvot’. But the Ten Commandments, that’s not ‘mitsvot,’ that is ‘devarim’ or the word ‘dbr’. And if you look in many margins, *King James* or the *Oxford*, or the *American Standard Version*, *Revised Standard Version*, you’ll see in the margin, either center or on the side the word ‘lit.’ Stands for *literally* and then word, because that’s what it means: sayings, declarations, proclamations, but it’s not commands because the first commandment, for example, is not a command. ***These are declarations from God.*** No, I don’t mean they’re the ten suggestions. I don’t mean God is saying, ‘Hey, boys and girls, look, I’ve got some good ideas here for you, got ten of them. If you think you have the time and you care to look at them, you just might find that they’re helpful.’ *No! No! No! Nothing like that!*

But the word is ‘dbar.’ I want to show you two or three times where that word is used. First, remember Exodus 20:1: “And God spoke all these words...”—‘dvrim,’ the same word in the plural. I want to specifically have you go to Genesis 37. You will recall this is a chapter where Joseph has his dream. Being a naive 17-year-old, he’s telling

everybody about his dreams, he’s excited about them. I guess I would be, too. Genesis 37:9: “And he dreamed still another dream, and told it to his brothers. And he said, ‘Behold, I have dreamed another dream. And behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars bowed down to me.’ And he told it to his father and to his brothers.... [His father Jacob knew what this meant; there was no question what it meant.] ...And his father rebuked him and said to him, ‘What is this dream that you have dreamed? Shall I, and your mother, and your brothers indeed come to bow ourselves to the earth before you?’ And his brothers were jealous of him. But his father was mindful of **the saying**” (vs 9-11). Of the ‘e dbr’—*the Word!* This is not a command. It means words. How many times have you read, ‘And behold, **the Word** of the Lord came.’ That’s the same word. The reason these are declarations from God, they include commands, but they’re declarations from Him.

Now we’re going to move over to Exodus 20 and we’ll take our time, a little bit of time anyway, pointing out these Ten Commandments. But first, why two tablets instead of one? Wouldn’t it be easier to have one? Couldn’t God have written a little smaller? Didn’t He have the ability to do so? *Of course, He did!* Couldn’t Moses have written a little smaller? The second time God says, ‘Look, Moses, I’ll speak, you write.’ The second time Moses wrote them. *Yes, He could have, but this is the division!* This is the structure.

You have five on one, five on the second, because the first five are *vertical* in application. The second five are *horizontal*. What does that mean?

1. *From God to man* or *from adult to child*. The relationship is up to down.
2. In the second five the relationship is not from up to down, but horizontal—*person to person!*

And that is why. ***The power of the second five rests on the authority of the first five.*** So we’re going to see parallels:

- One to six
- Two to seven
- Three to eight
- Four to nine
- Five to ten

And there is a significance in this. The fifth one: *Honor your father and your mother*. Dad and mom, true, not God, but think a minute. God is Creator. Didn’t dad and mom create babies? I like movies and I still remember a little line from Doctor Zhivago, toward the end of the movie where the general was trying to find Doctor Zhivago, his brother. The one who was his wife and kids and

finds the girl, the big dam, and she's explaining about father and mother, and she says, 'She was big, I was small.' So big/small. So that's why 'honor your father and mother' is on the first side, the first tablet.

Declaration: Exodus 20:2: "I *am* the LORD your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." This is saying, 'I am the God of life. I AM—the (Hebrew). *I AM the Creator God.*' Talk about power! Talk about a declaration! He says, 'I am the God of life. You are not allowed to kill anybody or execute anybody except I give you authority.'

So first we have 'I am the God of life, I am the God of all power.' Then we have the sixth commandment: "You shall not murder" (v 13). Doesn't say don't kill. It doesn't say do not execute. It says 'You shall not murder.' You don't kill somebody for no reason. There better be a good reason for it.

We know early on in Genesis 9:6, God says: "Whoever sheds man's blood, his blood shall be shed by man." God is giving the authority to rulers on earth to execute criminals.

Now, let's take a couple of good examples of this. We're going to go to 1-Kings 1, talk about execution here. This tells you about Adonijah who jumped the gun to try to be king and then Zadok the priest, and Bathsheba got together and reminded David that Solomon was supposed to be king. That is certainly true.

Now we find in 1-Kings 1:49—this is to be the meal, the celebration by Adonijah: "And all those who were invited by Adonijah trembled and arose and left, each to his way. And Adonijah was afraid because of Solomon, and arose and went and caught hold of the horns of the altar" (vs 49-50). You've got to realize what that meant, to *grab the horns of the altar*. This was considered sanctuary. If you could picture it, you're underneath also, hanging onto the horns, in which case the blood would normally be on those horns. This is kind of a physical salvation.

The Catholic Church in the Middle Ages picked up on this greatly, and you had the church as sanctuary. So if the sheriff was coming after you, you know the infamous Sheriff of Nottingham, in days of Robin Hood, but if the authorities were after you, but you could make it into that church, unless you were a convicted murderer or something like that, they had to stop. They couldn't invade the church. Well, this is the same thing. This is the origin of that.

"And it was told to Solomon, saying, 'Behold, Adonijah fears King Solomon, for, lo, he

has caught hold of the horns of the altar, saying, "Let King Solomon swear to me today that he will not kill his servant with the sword." And Solomon said, 'If he proves himself *to be* a son of virtue, not a hair of his head shall fall to the earth, but if wickedness shall be found in him, then he shall die'" (vs 51-52).

What was Solomon to do? Solomon understood that. So he said, 'Okay, be good citizens, go to your home; don't mess with me.' That's not the end of the story, but at least for our purpose today it shows you that Solomon recognized this. He did not execute Adonijah; however, he did execute someone.

This is the same incident, the same feast, 1-King 2:28: "And the report came to Joab. For Joab had turned after Adonijah, though he did not turn after Absalom. And Joab fled to the tabernacle of the LORD, and caught hold of the horns of the altar. And it was told King Solomon that Joab had fled to the tabernacle of the LORD, and behold, *he was* by the altar. And Solomon sent Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, saying, 'Go fall upon him'" (vs 28-29). In other words, kill him. Why? *Joab was a murderer*. You can read the rest of the story what he did to Amasa, what he did to Abner by deceit and trickery, and God had declared no murderer should seek sanctuary 'at My tabernacle.'

But this was according to God's authority. So unless you have authority from God, 'thou shalt not murder,' because God is the God of life. So there is the connection between the first commandment and the sixth^[transcriber's correction] commandment, the first being a declaration.

Now let's go back to Exodus 20:3 and pick up the second commandment: "You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourselves any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth. You shall not bow yourself down to them, nor serve them, for I, the LORD your God am a jealous God..." (vs 3-5). This is an exclusive relationship.

Well, what does seven say—one to six, two to seven? Verse 14: "You shall not commit adultery." *An exclusive relationship!*

1. The first one was exclusively God to man and back.
2. The second is horizontally but it's exclusive—man to his wife and back.

It was further elevated by Paul who said, 'with jealousy I have espoused you to one husband'; the marriage supper between the Lamb and the Church. But as you see, *it's an exclusive relationship*. We can wax eloquent on exclusive relationships. So that is the second set.

Now we're going to go to three which says: "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain" (v 7). In other words,

- don't take from God His name
- don't take and use it in profanity
- don't use it lightly
 - ✓ you are stealing from Him.
 - ✓ you're taking from Him His prize possession.

There are many Scriptures that talk about His name, how important God's name is. So here God is saying, 'Don't take the name of the Lord your God in vain.'

Likewise, number eight, v 15: "You shall not steal." So you're not to take God's name away from Him and use it for your own purposes. Likewise, don't take the possessions of others away from them and use it for your own purposes.

As we go through the last two you will find that there's nothing about love here. There's nothing about financing. There's nothing about any other aspects of government. These are, in concept, the basics for a society, a civilization, an entity, a group. If these five principles with two applications each are properly followed, you'll have a law abiding, peaceful, prosperous society. Now the others are important—clean and unclean meats should be important. Absolutely. they should be important. 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your might.' Absolutely, it's very important; and all the other things that God says. ***This is a blueprint for a well regulated society.***

Now, we've got to go back to the Sabbath, number four, v 8: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work" (vs 8-9). Your stuff, your things. Then we come to four and then to nine, v 16: "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

After WWI there was a concerted effort led by the Soviets to establish a five-day week. It didn't work! Why seven? It's ridiculous! Thirty, okay, I can understand twenty-nine or thirty days, the moon going around the sun. That's logical—360 or 365. Well, that's logical, the earth revolving around the sun. There are certain logics to these numbers. Seven? Where does that fit in? *Well, it doesn't, except God declared it so in Gen. 2!* That we know.

The Soviets, being atheists, wanted no God and they understood something. It's amazing what they understood. They understood that if you could do away with the seven-day week, you could do away with the moral authority of God. There would be no God, because when you keep the Sabbath, you're bearing testimony that this is the day of

creation. You're acknowledging God as Creator. Even if you misuse it on a Sunday, which, of course, the Catholic and Protestant world has done, you do acknowledge God as the Author of creation. When you keep any other day, or don't even keep a seven-day week, you are bearing false witness. You are denying the God of creation. It's a little tenuous, but the thread is there and this is the concept of it.

Now, we come to the fifth, v 12: "Honor your father and your mother so that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God gives you" And v 17: "You shall not covet..." Now 'honor your father and your mother' doesn't necessarily mean doing everything dad and mom always say, depending on how old you are. Some fathers and mothers really don't deserve the honor very much, I understand that. But in basic, you're never to forget the fact that mom and dad are mom and dad, no matter how much they may not deserve to be mom and dad.

The coveting comes from the fact that you will find, and this is true, how many times in courts—and this goes throughout history—do you find older kids going into court trying to get dad's, trying to get mom's possessions. Mom's incapable, dad's incapable, 'I just can't wait for them to die, so we can get their possessions,' whatever it is. So therefore, you cannot honor your father and your mother if you covet their possessions, if you covet what they have. This word *covet*, does not simply mean desire. This goes beyond that. This goes to the type of *crazed obsession*. You know the saying a man is so jealous of his wife, she's going to go with someone else. 'If I can't have her, no one will have her,' and he kills her, this type of thing. That's the meaning of this word *covet*. It's an obsession that says, 'If I can't have this house, I'll blow it up, I'll destroy it.' That's the concept of 'Thou shalt not covet.'

This is basically the structure of the Ten Commandments as God gave them. We can go into all kinds of illustrations of how they are to be obeyed. That's not my purpose this morning. So here you have God's *ten declarations*—five dealing with God to man from authority above below. And five from person-to-person, from human-to-human.

Without those declarations, go through history and you will find no civilization, no country, no state—be it a city-state or a big state—survived. You must have this as the foundation for survival. And that is basically what I wanted to bring concerning the Ten Commandments. Do your own study on them and you will find many, many applications. I'm sure you will. But this is the fundamental aspect of them.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Deuteronomy 4:12-13
- 2) Deuteronomy 10:4
- 3) Exodus 34:28
- 4) Deuteronomy 4:13
- 5) Genesis 1:16
- 6) Ezra 6:19
- 7) Exodus 20:1
- 8) Genesis 37:9-11
- 9) Exodus 20:1-2, 13
- 10) Genesis 9:6
- 11) 1-Kings 1:49-52
- 12) 1-Kings 2:28-29
- 13) Exodus 20:3-5, 14, 7, 15, 8-9, 16, 12, 17

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Genesis 2

Also referenced: Book:

The Life & Times of Jesus the Messiah by Alfred
Edersheim

MH:lp

Transcribed: 11-02-10

Formatted: 8-31-11