

EXODUS 20 – THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: Part I.

I. I am The LORD your God. You shall have no other gods before me (1-3).

The Westminster Confession Of Faith:

There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a most pure spirit, invisible, without body, parts, or passions; immutable, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; working all things according to the counsel of His own immutable and most righteous will, for His own glory; most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him; and withal, most just, and terrible in His judgments, hating all sin, and who will by no means clear the guilty.

God has all life, glory, goodness, blessedness, in and of Himself; and is alone in and unto Himself all-sufficient, not standing in need of any creatures which He has made, nor deriving any glory from them, but only manifesting His own glory in, by, unto, and upon them. He is the alone fountain of all being, of whom, through whom, and to whom are all things; and has most sovereign dominion over them, to do by them, for them, or upon them whatsoever Himself pleases. In His sight all things are open and manifest, His knowledge is infinite, infallible, and independent upon the creature, so as nothing is to Him contingent, or uncertain. He is most holy in all His counsels, in all His works, and in all His commands. To Him is due from angels and men, and every other creature, whatsoever worship, service, or obedience He is pleased to require of them.

“The idea is that there are to be no other gods before the sight of the true God in our life. We don’t just add God to the life we already have. We must give Him all our life.”

II. You shall not make for yourself any carved image...you shall not bow down to them. (4-6).

[John 4:24](#) - *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.*

God is jealous in the sense that He has no rival.

Visiting the iniquity upon...fourth generation - this does not mean God punishes people directly for the sins of their ancestors. The important words are **of those who hate Me**. If the descendants love God, they will not have the iniquity of the fathers visited on them.

Isaiah 44:9-20 - Those who make an image, all of them are useless, and their *precious things shall not profit; they are their own witnesses; they neither see nor know, that they may be ashamed. Who would form a god or mold an image that profits him nothing? Surely all his companions would be ashamed; and the workmen, they are mere men. Let them all be gathered together, let them stand up; yet they shall fear, they shall be ashamed together. The blacksmith with the tongs works one in the coals, fashions it with hammers, and works it with the strength of his arms. Even so, he is hungry, and his strength fails; he drinks no water and is faint. The craftsman stretches out his rule, he marks one out with chalk; he fashions it with a plane, he marks it out with the compass, and makes it like the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man, that it may remain in the house. He cuts down cedars for himself, and takes the cypress and the oak; he secures it for himself among the trees of the forest. He plants a pine, and the rain nourishes it. Then it shall be for a man to burn, for he will take some of it and warm himself; yes, he kindles it and bakes bread; indeed he makes a god and worships it; he makes it a carved image, and falls down to it. He burns half of it in the fire; with this half he eats meat; he roasts a roast, and is satisfied. He even warms himself and says, "Ah! I am warm, I have seen the fire." And the rest of it he makes into a god, his carved image. He falls down before it and worships it, prays to it and says, "Deliver me, for you are my god!" They do not know nor understand; for He has shut their eyes, so that they cannot see, and their hearts, so that they cannot understand. And no one considers in his heart, nor is there knowledge nor understanding to say, "I have burned half of it in the fire, yes, I have also baked bread on its coals; I have roasted meat and eaten it; and shall I make the rest of it an abomination? Shall I fall down before a block of wood?" He feeds on ashes; a deceived heart has turned him aside; and he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, "Is there not a lie in my right hand?"*

III. The third commandment: **You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain (7).**

There are at least three ways this command is commonly disobeyed.

- *Profanity*: Using the name of God in blasphemy and cursing.
- *Frivolity*: Using the name of God in a superficial, unserious way.
- *Hypocrisy*: Claiming the name of God but acting in a way that disgraces Him.

Jeremiah 5:2 - *Though they say, 'As the LORD lives,' Surely they swear falsely.*

Matthew 5:33-37 - *“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.’ “But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; “nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. “Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. “But let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes,’ and your ‘No,’ ‘No.’ For whatever is more than these is from the evil one.*

IV. The fourth commandment: **Remember the Sabbath day (8-11).**

The command is to respect the seventh day (Saturday) as a day of rest (**you shall do no work**). This rest was for all of Israel – for the **son** and the **servant** and the **stranger** – even including **cattle**. **To keep it holy**: God commanded Israel – and all humanity – to make sure that there was *sacred time* in their life, *separated time* of rest.

In observant Jewish homes today, one cannot turn on a light, a stove, or a switch on the Sabbath. It is forbidden to drive a certain distance or to make a telephone call – all carefully regulated by traditions seeking to spell out the law exactly.

*“It’s as if God said, **Having too much to do isn’t an excuse from taking the rest you need – I created the universe and found time to rest from My work.**”*

Under the New Covenant, no one is under obligation to observe a Sabbath day:

Mark 2:27-28 - *And He said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. “Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath.”*

Colossians 2:16-17 - *So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.*

Hebrew 4:9-11 - *There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.*