

## The Decalogue

(Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:1-21)

There are several identifiable law codes—collections of laws—in the Torah. The *Decalogue* (*Ten Commandments*) is the most basic. It is the first such code (Exodus 20:1-17) and is repeated in Deuteronomy 5:1-21.

These ten *apodictic* laws are divided into **two groups**. The **first four** deal with the people's **relationship with God**. The **last six** address the **relationship of people to one another**.

Compare the two statements of the decalogue below. What do the changes in the later version indicate? Why is it that these differences should *not* be seen as a theological problem? What value do they have?

Words or phrases found in only one text, with no parallel in the other, are in **boldface** type. Words or phrases which differ between the two versions but are directly parallel to words or phrases in the other text are in *italics*.

|         | Exodus 20:1-17  | Deuteronomy 5:1-21  |
|---------|---|---|
| Setting | 20:1 <b>Then God spoke all these words:</b>   | 5:1-5 <b>Moses convened all Israel and said to them: Hear, O Israel, the statues and ordinances that I am addressing to you today; you shall learn them and observe them diligently. The LORD our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. Not with our ancestors did the LORD make this covenant, ut with us, who are all of us here alive today. The LORD spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the fire. (At that time I was standing between the LORD and you to declare to you the words of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain.) And he said:</b> |
| 1.      | 20:2-3 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.   | 5:6-7 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me.  |
| 2.      | 20:4-6 You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and <b>the</b> fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments. | 5:8-10 You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.  |

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| 3.  | 20:7 You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.   | 5:11 You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.   |
| 4.  | <p>20:8-11 <i>Remember</i> the sabbath day, and keep it holy.</p> <p>Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns.</p> <p><b>For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.</b></p> | <p>5:12-15 <i>Observe</i> the sabbath day, and keep it holy, <b>as the LORD your God commanded you.</b></p> <p>Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, <b>or your ox, or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you.</b></p> <p><b>Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.</b></p> |
| 5.  | 20:12 Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be <i>long</i> in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.  | 5:16 Honor your father and your mother, <b>as the LORD your God commanded you</b> , so that your days may be <i>prolonged</i> <b>and that it may go well with you</b> in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.  |
| 6.  | 20:13 You shall not kill.  | 5:17 You shall not kill.   |
| 7.  | 20:14 You shall not commit adultery.   | 5:18 Neither shall you commit adultery.  |
| 8.  | 20:15 You shall not steal.   | 5:19 Neither shall you steal.  |
| 9.  | 20:16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.  | 5:20 Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbor.   |
| 10. | 20:17 You shall not covet your neighbor's <i>house</i> ; you shall not covet your neighbor's <i>wife</i> , or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.   | 5:21 Neither shall you covet your neighbor's <i>wife</i> . Neither shall you desire your neighbor's <i>house</i> , <b>or field</b> , or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.   |