

- Therefore, many Catholics never learn that God considers worshipping statues of saints or even of Jesus Himself to be a sin.
- Catholics also hold that each tablet contained five commandments each
- d. Finally, most Protestant traditions see v.3 to be a commandment of its own.
 - Then the second commandment is the prohibition of worshipping images.
 - And the tenth command is all of v.17, as in the Jewish tradition.
 - Regarding the split of the commandments on the tablets, many Protestants see the first three laws on the first tablet & the remaining seven on the second tablet
 - The first three laws regulate our relationship with God.
 - The next seven regulate man's relationship with man.
- e. It is also possible that each tablet held a complete copy of the ten commandments.
 - The Bible tells us that the tablets were written on both sides, front and back.
 - Therefore, perhaps each tablet had all ten commandments.
 - In that case, Moses was given two identical tablets so that by the testimony of two witnesses, all sin will be confirmed.
 - The two tablets serve as two witnesses, so to speak, of man's sin.
 - We will follow the Protestant tradition in the course of examination of the tablets, so we will study the first commandment as v.3 alone.

Commandment #1... vs.3

- a. Israel is told to have no other gods before the Lord.
 - The term "before" was not intended to suggest we can have multiple gods so long as Jehovah is first among them.
 - The phrase means to have no gods apart from the Lord.
 - Israel was commanded to be monotheistic
 - God was appointing a single people, and in return He demanded they acknowledge Him as the only true living God.
 - Throughout their history, Israel has repeatedly violated this commandment.
 - They have worshipped pagan gods of various kinds.
 - They have even sacrificed children to these false gods.
 - The Lord says Israel played the harlot in prostituting themselves to many suitors, though the Lord was husband to Israel.

Hosea 4:12 *My people consult their wooden idol, and their diviner's wand informs them; For a spirit of harlotry has led them astray, And they have played the harlot, departing from their God.*

Commandment #2... vs. 4-6

- a. Israel was to make no image that could substitute for the Lord.
 - Notice in v.4 the prohibition is against making any idol in the likeness of anything in heaven, on earth or under earth or in the water.
 - That means Israel could not create idols to resemble God Himself or angels for the purpose of worship.
 - Neither could a likeness of any earthly creature or created thing be made for worship.
 - Images themselves are not wrong, since Israel was later commanded to create images of angels.
 - But these images were not to be worshipped

- b. Incorporating images in worship is related to the first commandment, because it is another form of idolatry.
- In the case of the first commandment, the issue was *Who a man worships*.
 - In the second commandment, the issue is *How a man worships*.
 - In v.5 the Lord adds that worshipping such things would invoke God's jealous anger.
 - The Lord knew that incorporating manmade objects in worship necessarily diminished the Creator.
 - And it opened the door to violating the first commandment by replacing the Lord altogether.

CHRISTIANS HAVE BEEN GIVEN SIMILAR PROHIBITIONS IN THE LAW OF CHRIST, ACCORDING TO CHRIST'S OWN TEACHING, BUT OUR STANDARDS REACH EVEN MORE DEMANDING LEVELS.

First. . . . we are told to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind and strength...Matt. 22:37-40

- The word "all" emphasizes the exclusive nature of our relationship with Christ.
 - If all our heart, soul, mind and strength is devoted to Christ, then there is nothing remaining for other gods.

Secondly. . . . we are told not to serve other masters, like money. Matt. 6:24

- And we are to guard ourselves from such things if they become idols, things that substitute for a dependence upon the Lord.
 - John repeats this command in the New Testament.
 - I John 5:21 *Little children, guard yourselves from idols.*
- a. It's possible to trivialize the concept of an idol by calling any distraction or temptation an "idol"
- It's true that many pleasures and worries of life can become stumbling blocks for Christians, as Jesus said. . . . Luke 21:34-35
 - But it's another thing altogether to be taken away by an idol.
- b. An idol is something that substitutes for the Lord in our life
- That's a serious matter.
 - Though many (all?) Christians fall prey to temptations and stumble at times in their walk with Christ, relatively few succumb to genuine idolatry
- c. We have one example in Paul's first letter to Timothy. . . . I Tim. 1:18 -20
- They rejected keeping the faith and suffered shipwreck.
 - They committed idolatry, as evidenced in their blaspheming.
- d. So the first commandment of the OT Law has a clear parallel in the Law of Christ for Christians.
- The bigger challenge for most Christians, however, is the second commandment.

- c. According to the Law of Moses, men could never pray to a statue, even a statue of the Lord.
- Even paintings of Jesus would be outlawed by the Law of Moses for the same reason
 - But as we determined, the Christian is not under this Law.
 - But what does the Law of Christ say on the matter of graven images?
- d. The Law of Christ declares that we are not to rely on the physical – even physical locations - to focus our worship of the Lord... John 4:19-23
- The greater Law of Christ takes the second commandment regarding images and broadens the requirement to move worship entirely into the spiritual realm
 - The Old Law prohibited graven images, and then it stipulated the days and places and even the manner of worship for the OT saint.
 - The Law of Christ says that worship requires nothing more than the Spirit and the Truth.
 - And in this way, worship becomes a daily activity and ever-present expression of every believer’s heart.
 - Days, places and even the form of worship make little difference in the age of the Spirit.
 - This is why Paul wrote...Colossians 2:16-17
- e. But when we regress back to placing form of worship above spirit and truth, we are moving in the direction of incorporating graven images into worship.
- We might not erect statutes in our sanctuaries or put pictures on the walls.
 - But when we demand certain musical styles or liturgy programs in order to worship, we are committing a sin equal to worshipping graven images.
 - We have taken the physical and placed it above the spiritual
 - We are worshipping manmade structures or the traditions of our denomination rather than worshipping the Lord through His Spirit and by His truth.
 - And we are at risk of provoking a jealous God.
 - Finally, the second commandment includes an interesting statement from the Lord concerning the consequences of idolatry in Israel.
- f. When Israel committed idolatry, they were violating the covenant and turning their back on the Lord.
- When Israel commits this sin, the Lord promises to visit this iniquity upon later generations.
 - This is a promise unique to the first and second commandments, insofar as it relates to idolatry.
- g. Idolatry in all its forms is a sin so grievous that it will provoke the Lord to visit the consequences of that sin through multiple generations of families.
- This was a promise contained in the Law of Moses, so it is limited to the nation of Israel.
 - We can see plenty of evidence of this promise played out in the history of Israel.
 - Idolatrous generations of Israel were generally followed by generations that suffered the Lord’s judgment.
 - There is no direct parallel found in the New Testament
 - Nevertheless, we shouldn’t test my conclusions

Commandment #3... vs. 7

1. This command is directed at restricting Israel's speech or communication concerning the name of God.
 - a. The name of God was spoken to Moses and repeated within Israel
 - As we learned earlier, the name was I AM and has a certain sound in the Hebrew language.
 - However, the nation became so concerned with the possibility of violating the third commandment, they adopted a practice of never speaking His name
 - And in written form, they removed the vowels of God's name in the Hebrew language to prevent the pronunciation of His name.
 - After the vowels were removed, God's name became YHWH, which has become known as the "tetragrammaton".
 - This shortened form of God's word is commonly pronounced Yahweh, but in reality we do not know how God's name was pronounced.
 - b. As a result of this tradition, it became impossible to take God's name in vain within Israel, at least in the literal sense of a misuse of the actual name of God.
 - But that didn't prevent men from violating the spirit of this Law.
 - Jesus condemned the Pharisees for thinking they were holy by avoiding swearing by things they felt had spiritual significance while avoiding other things that they thought ran afoul of this commandment.
- See...Matt. 23:15- 22
 - Notice they were willing to swear by the temple but if they swore by the gold in the gold in the temple, they were sinning according to their own rules.
 - Likewise, they would allow themselves to swear by the altar but not the offering
 - Jesus pointed out that their rules were stupid and contradictory.
- c. If they desired to take an oath by binding themselves to some representation of God, then they were effectively binding themselves to God Himself, in violation of the third commandment.
 - They were swearing by God, which was a diminishment of God's name.
 - And it's presumptuous to expect that God would honor such pledges anyway.
 - As Jesus said...**Matt. 5:33-37**
 - So merely forgetting the literal name of God isn't a barrier to violating this commandment.
- d. Like all the commandments of the Law, this commandment is present in the Law of Christ in a greater way.
 - Besides Jesus instructions not to swear oaths on God's name, the NT writers expand the intent of this commandment to include any speech that is degrading.
James 3:5-10
- e. The Law of Christ teaches us that when we speak ill of another person, who was created in the image of God, we are violating the spirit of the third commandment.
 - The OT Law stipulated that we ought not to diminish the name of God in any way.
 - But the NT Law extends this commandment to its full purposes.

- The name of God is more than a word.
 - Names in scripture are the embodiment of a person, their character, reputation and their work.
 - The Lord's name represents His goodness and the perfection of His work
- So when we speak degrading things about another person, someone created in the likeness of God, we are degrading the Lord's work and therefore the Lord Himself.

Commandment #4... vs. 8-11

1. The Lord commands the nation to observe a sabbath day on the last day of each week, which is Saturday in the Jewish calendar.
 - a. The occasion for this commandment is the Creation itself.
 - The Lord asks Israel to repeat the actions the Lord took following the completion of Creation.
 - After the Lord spent six days creating all things, He ceased from His work on the seventh day.
 - That final day was therefore set apart from the other days in that it was different from the rest of the days.
 - The first six days were days in which work was done.
 - But the seventh day was a day in which only rest from work took place.
 - Therefore that day is holy, the Lord declares.
 - The word holy simply means set apart from sin.
 - So the final day of each week is set apart from the rest, just as the Lord Himself is set apart from sin.
 - b. The nature of this command is simply to abstain from any form of work.
 - The word "work" in this case means common labors.
 - The ordinary ways men work to sustain their lives.
 - The Law itself expounds on various ways in which work must be curtailed
 - We've already seen the Lord tell Israel not to gather manna on the sabbath
 - Later Israel will be told not to gather wood, kindle fires, or bear heavy burdens among others.
 - But overall the expectation is that men simply rest in the work that had already been done during the prior days, as did God.
 - The Pharisees and lawyers took this commandment and greatly increased its burdens on Israel over the centuries.
 - These added restrictions grew and grew to the point of ridiculous.
 - Today, orthodox Jews who observe a sabbath will refrain from even turning on a light switch in the home.
 - So on Friday afternoon, they will turn on all lights in the home to preclude the need to turn them on during the sabbath day.
 - Like the rest of the Law, this commandment no longer applies for the NT saint today.
 - c. Though the Lord's sabbath existed from the days of Creation, the Law of Moses was the first time the Lord mandated men follow His example.

- Some teachers argue that since the sabbath existed from Creation, then it is a law that didn't go away when the Law of Moses was fulfilled by Christ.
 - So, believers today should observe a strict sabbath on Saturdays as did the Jews under the Law.
- d. But there is no example in scripture of God ordering any man to observe a sabbath prior to the giving of the Law, nor do we see any man practicing a sabbath prior to the giving of the Law.
- Even the order concerning gathering manna is considered to be an early preview of the delivering of the law to Israel.
 - Furthermore, God has never required Gentiles to observe a sabbath.
 - NT teaching specifically states that no sabbath day exists for the Christian.
- Romans 14:5-6**
- e. The believer is free to observe a sabbath day or not.
- But we do not sin if we work seven days a week.
 - Nor do we sin if we observe a sabbath day on Sunday or any other day of the week.
 - Paul teaches that each should do as they feel convicted, because the Law of Christ does not demand such an observance.
 - Nevertheless, this law is still found in the Law of Christ in a new and better way, as are all the Laws of the Old Covenant.
- f. Paul teaches how in Colossians
- Colossians 2:16 - 17**
- g. Paul says that the commandments of the OT Law like the dietary restrictions and festivals and seasonal observances and even the Sabbath Day itself were all shadows.
- A shadow is anything in scripture given in a lesser form to represent something of greater spiritual significance coming in the future.
 - In this case, Paul says the greater spiritual significance is Christ Himself.
- h. So dietary rules and festivals and the Sabbath Day were carefully constructed by God to teach about Christ.
- During the Creation account, the Lord takes a day to rest, which is a strange statement when you think about it.
 - Why would the Lord need rest? Surely, He never tires, since He is all spirit.
 - Now we understand that His rest wasn't a matter of physical rest for God... it was to teach us about Christ.
 - So what do we learn about Christ from the Sabbath?
- i. The Sabbath in the Law teaches that a man's work can end
- And that rest from work is a good thing, something that men look forward to each week.
 - But under the Law, that rest had a limit
 - Before long, the sabbath ended and the work resumed
 - It was a temporary rest and therefore it was one that could never truly satisfy.
 - The kind of rest men long for is that which never ends.
- j. On the other hand, the Lord has never gone back to work.
- His sabbath continues to this day.
 - He is still resting from His work of Creation.

- So it leads men to a question...how can we share in THAT rest?
 - How can we share in the Lord's rest, the one that never ceases?
- k. Hebrews gives us that answer....[Hebrews 4:1- 10](#)
- The writer was concerned for some within the church who hadn't come to faith but were merely hanging around the crowd.
 - And the writer uses the term "rest" as a description of coming to faith in Christ
 - In v.3 he teaches that by believing in Christ we can enter (or share in) the Lord's rest
 - The Lord speaks about disobedient not entering "His" rest
 - The Lord's rest is the rest He established when He ceased from all works.
- l. This is the permanent rest that every man longs for
- A rest that never ends and allows men to cease from all their works.
 - But in Hebrews we learn that the ultimate intent of the Sabbath was to picture a spiritual rest, not merely an earthly rest from labor.
 - As the writer says in v.10, we cease from our works when we believe
 - By entering into the New Covenant, we enter into the Lord's sabbath, never again bearing a burden of works for salvation.
 - We rest in the work of Christ on the cross.
- m. So the Law of Christ also has a sabbath law requiring rest
- We keep that law through our faith and reliance in Christ's work
 - And therefore, NT believers do not observe the shadow of the sabbath, that is a physical rest on Saturday.
 - Instead, we observe the greater Sabbath, which is to rest in Christ everyday.

Commandment #5... Vs. 12

1. The fifth commandment requires that Israel show respect for their parents.
 - a. The word for honor literally means something weighty or burdensome, but it can also be used to mean something of honor and significance.
 - Both sense are applicable here.
 - As children we are to honor our parents authority
 - This honor means obeying, respecting and trusting them for no reason beside the fact they are our parents.
 - Then as we become adults and they come to depend on us at some point, we bear that burden gladly.
 - We honor them by continuing to respect and defend them.
 - We may not always agree with what they think or say, but as much as possible we show deference and respect for their views & their needs
 - b. This commandment is the first to include a promise of blessing for obedience.
 - Since the commandment was given to Israel by the Covenant, the promise is limited to Israel as well.
 - If Israel continues to observe this command, their obedience will prolong their time in their land.
 - c. This promise is interesting for two reasons...
 - First...** the fact that the Lord is promising to "prolong" Israel in their land implies that He knew Israel would one day be required to leave the land

- The nation was eventually dispossessed from the land
- They were scattered into the nations as a result of idolatry and disobedience under the Law.
- Secondly**...the Lord says the key to Israel avoiding that punishment was strong, godly families.
 - Therefore, we conclude that a breakdown in the family was the starting point for the sin and idolatry of Israel.
 - And this eventually leads to the nations judgment under the Old Covenant
- d. The family structure is the lowest common denominator within society from which God rules over the hearts of people.
 - When the family unit becomes weak by tolerating disrespect, disobedience, rebellion, and dishonor, the stage is set for a corruption of society as a whole
 - This was Israel's fate and it's certainly happening in our world today, as Paul predicted... **2 Tim. 3:1- 4**
- e. As with the earlier commandments, the Pharisees preached obedience to this commandment while disobeying it in practice.
 - And Jesus called them out for it... **Matt. 15:4 - 9**
- f. The Pharisees recognized that honoring parents meant providing for their financial need when circumstances warranted.
 - But to avoid parting with their money, the Pharisees made an exception if the money had been given to the temple instead.
 - Jesus said this was a hypocritical rule contrived to avoiding doing one's duty because the law required that both parents and God be honored, not one or the other.
- g. How has this commandment been improved upon in the Law of Christ for the NT believer?

First, it's simply repeated in several places...**Eph. 6:1- 3**

 - A promise has been extended to the NT saint as well, though in a new form.
 - Believers are promised to enjoy a long life rather than time in the land.

How would disobedience to this commandment lead to a shorter life?

 - First, there is always the possibility that the Lord might execute supernatural judgment against us for disobeying our parents.
 - Like my mom used to say to me when I misbehaved, "I hope you have twins just like you!"
 - But even natural experience tells us how rebellion to parental authority can lead to a shorter life.
 - Not respecting a parent's wisdom can lead to accident, injury, danger, disease, and assorted calamities.
 - Like Adam in the garden, when we set aside the instructions of a wise parent, we set ourselves on a road to destruction.
 - As Mark Twain once said:
 - When I was a teenager, I was amazed at how little my father knew and when I turned twenty, I was amazed at how much he had learned
 - The Law of Christ also broadens this commandment

2. Jesus taught that believers become part of a new family, the Body of Christ, and we gain new relationships we must honor and obey.
 - these relationships take precedence over even our natural family relationships...**Mark 10:28 - 30**
- a. Notice that Jesus speaks of the disciples being forced to leave natural family behind for the sake of the Gospel.
 - Jesus is speaking about priorities, not absolutes.
 - No believer is automatically required to turn their back on their natural family in order to be a disciple of Jesus.
 - But if the natural family makes an ultimatum and the believer is required to choose, then the believer should choose Jesus.
- b. And when this happens, the believer will inherit a new family, the family of believers in the body of Christ.
 - This new family must be honored just as we do our best to honor our natural family.
 - We obey our elders and authorities over us in the church
 - We respect and share the burdens of older members in the fellowship just as we might our own parents.
 - If pushed to choose, we must honor the family of God over our earthly family.

Commandment #6... Vs.13

- a. This command prohibits the unlawful taking of a human life.
 - This commandment says nothing about the killing of animals.
 - Murder is, by definition, the unlawful taking of a human life by another human.
 - Animals can't "murder" one another and we can't "murder" an animal.
 - So this commandment deals specifically with a man taking another man's life.
- b. Some think the sixth commandment outlaws all forms of killing, including capital punishment and acts of war.
 - But there is a difference between lawful and unlawful killing both in scripture and in our laws, which descend from the Law of God.
 - Murder is the unlawful taking of human life
 - The word murder is "*ratsach*" in Hebrew.
 - But Hebrew uses another word for lawful killing: *harag*
 - Lawful killing is a taking of human life in keeping with the rules of law.
 - For example, God's law provides for the taking of human life when certain serious crimes have been committed.
 - And in war, God prescribes for the killing of combatants .
 - and even entire cities.
 - to further His purposes in establishing Israel or eradicating sin.
- c. So when we act under the rule of law to carry out justice or to participate in war, we are not automatically committing murder.
 - However, if government has become corrupt or cruel.
 - Or if war is conducted in unjust ways, then killing can become murder again.
 - The question is whether our act of killing is justified and proper according to law.

- If the Jew was commanded not to murder, then why did individual men kill in war and why did the Law itself allow a person to take another person's life at other times?

d. The confusion comes in comparing the rights and responsibilities of governments with those of individuals.

- An individual has the right to take another human life only in defense of self or others, according to law...
- The NT echoes this right for men to be prepared to defend oneself with deadly force if need be, even Christians.
- This is how Jesus encouraged the disciples to be prepared for rough times after His crucifixion....[Luke 22:36-38](#)
- The Greek word for sword in this passage refers to a small dagger, which was common carried by an individual for self-defense purposes.

e. Apart from that case, however, an individual has no right to take life.

- If we take life other than in self-defense, we do it unlawfully.
- Therefore we commit murder and violate this commandment.
 - When people act as governing authorities, however, they have the power to take human life as punishment for crimes or in times of war.

f. The key to understanding the difference is to remember that God is the giver of life

- Therefore... He also has the authority to determine when it may be taken.
- God has authorized human governments to take human life at times according to His specific instructions.

f. Examples...

Self Defense...

- Exodus 22:2-3
- Nehemiah 4:17-18
- Luke 22:36

Human Government...

- Genesis 9 after the flood, the Lord delegated authority to human government to take life for capital crimes.....[Gen. 9:6](#)
- Rom. 13:2-4
 - Paul reminds us that governments “bear the sword,” he is speaking about the right to execute men for crimes.
 - This right was given by God to government so it may act as a minister of good.
 - Not that all governments act properly toward their citizens, of course, but the institution of government is something God established for good.
 - Imagine what kind of world it would be if evil men were not restrained by governments with their courts and judges and jails and even executioners

Just War...

- we know that God commanded Israel at times to prosecute war against ungodly peoples who stood in the way of God's purposes in Israel.
- Numbers 1:3
- Numbers 31:3

- Remember, all men die and the day and manner of death is appointed by God. **163**