

SERMONS ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

By
JOHN STACY

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my sister in the flesh, Judith Karen Ebert, who recently obeyed the gospel of Christ. It is my prayer that God will grant her a long and fruitful life in the kingdom of God. May her example and influence be instrumental in leading others to Jesus.

About The Author

John Stacy was born on February 5, 1942, in Columbus, Ohio. After graduating from high school in 1959, Mr. Stacy served in the Navy for three and one half years. During this time, he served as a Leadership Training Instructor. He attended Pensacola Junior College, Freed-Hardeman College, A. A., Oklahoma Christian College, B. A., Harding Graduate School, Alabama Christian School of Religion, and The International Bible Institute and Seminary, M. Th., D. Min.

John Stacy has served churches of Christ in Key West and Homestead, Florida; and in Dyer, Dyersburg, and Rutherford, Tennessee.

Mr. Stacy has preached the gospel in eleven states; Trinidad, Grenada, and Freeport, Grand Bahamas in the West Indies; Ghana and Togo, Africa, Germany, Singapore, Sri Lanka and India.

John Stacy has authored four other books, **Sermons On Heaven and Hell, Exhort Brother!, Now Abideth These Three,** and **Citizens of Eternity.** He is also owner and operator of Stacy Publications and Book Service.

He is married to the former Hilda Smith and has one son, John Troy II.

Introduction

I first met Bro. John some years ago at the home of Bro. and Sis. L. D. Willis in Cherokee, Alabama where we had dinner together. At that time he was conducting a series of gospel meetings for a nearby congregation. The thing that I well remember was the fact that Bro. Willis told me that Bro. Stacy was a fine gospel preacher.

During the last two years I have once more come across the name of John Stacy. This time as an author. Becoming an overnight prolific writer, he has turned out four books in rapid succession. This makes his fifth volume to have been published. No doubt there will be others to follow.

Recently my wife and I visited with the good church at Rutherford, Tennessee where Bro. Stacy and family live and work. Of course we have been associated with the congregation there for several years but this was the first visit that we had made since Bro. Stacy had become their local preacher. It was a real pleasure to visit with brethren there again and to have the opportunity to get better acquainted with the Stacy family. Two of the main topics of conversation centered around mission work and literature work. We talked about our efforts in India and other places and the possibility of Bro. Stacy accompanying me on some future trip. He has already made missionary journeys to Ghana and other countries. Then we discussed the possibility of printing this book, and I might say that I am more than delighted to have the opportunity of working with Bro. Stacy on this.

Over the years the Lord's people have been challenged again and again by false teachers on the subject of the Ten Commandments. As a matter of fact, the religious world as a

whole advocated the necessity of following these commandments. It is because of their misunderstanding of the scriptures, and how to rightly divide them, that gives way to much of the religious confusion in the world today. But even though we have had to deal with this subject at length, and often to be misunderstood on the teaching we do on the Old Testament, and for false teachers to vagrantly misrepresent us, still we have written very little on these matters outside of a few tracts and some articles for various magazines and papers. It is therefore long over due for such a book to be brought out. We certainly commend Bro. Stacy for taking the time to do so.

I think you are going to find this book to be very helpful. Each chapter is prefaced by an outline and then the full text follows. It is written in a plain, easy flowing style. Questions are raised and answered. No doubt it will be well received. Above all else, it has been written, and is being published, to teach the truth on this subject. It is hoped that those who study it, along with their Bible, will be able to see the truth and that they will receive it. It is only then that the author, publisher, and reader will be rewarded and God will be honored.

J.C. Choate
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September 11, 1980

Preface

Someone has written that the ten commandments are recognized as the basis for all public morality in the Western world. They are unique in the awe inspiring manner in which they were given. They are special because they make it impossible to separate morality from religion. The ten commandments stand out because they impress upon us that our obligations to our fellowmen are just as important as our obligation to God.

The ten commandments have had a dramatic impact on the lives of untold millions throughout the centuries. The influence of the ten commandments has been so great that multitudes believe that if a man would keep these ten laws, heaven will be his everlasting home. We often hear people say that the world needs to get back to the ten commandments. The world of Christendom continually stresses the fact that, we would all be better Christians, if we just kept the ten commandments.

This author believes that there are several misconceptions concerning the ten commandments, like those just mentioned above. It is my hope and prayer that this book will clear up these erroneous views and help us to have a better understanding of these laws, nine of which have been incorporated into the New Testament and given a much deeper spiritual significance by Jesus.

John Stacy
August 15, 1980

Contents

	Page
The Story	1
Misconceptions	6
Truths	14
No Other Gods	26
Graven Images	34
The Name Of God	43
The Sabbath Day	52
Honoring Parents	61
Human Life Is Sacred	69
Morality A Must	79
Theft Condemned	87
Falsehood Forbidden	95
Control Your Desires	103

THE STORY

Introduction:

1. We all know the story of the commandments.
2. Or do we?

I. The Story

- A. Israel arrives at Sinai
- B. Moses goes up to God
- C. God's message and promise
- D. The people promise to obey
- E. The people prepare to hear God
- F. God appears
- G. Ten commandments given orally
- H. Tables of stone given—Ex 24:12,18
- I. God gives other laws—Ex 25:—34
- J. Israel and the golden calf—Ex 32:
- K. Moses' reaction—Ex 32:19
- L. Second set of stone tables—Ex 34:1,28
- M. Tables placed in Ark of Covenant—Deut 10:5
- N. Summary

II. Influence of the Ten Commandments

- A. Ten commandments—Magna Carta of Old Testament
- B. Jesus added spiritual meaning to them
- C. New Testament writers emphasized the spirit as well as the letter

Conclusion:

1. Delivery of commandments was decisive epoch in history
2. Most important event—to point of occurrence

The Story

We all know the story of the ten commandments, or do we? Three months out of Egypt, the children of Israel come into the wilderness of Sinai. They camped before mount Sinai. Moses then went up to God. God reminded Moses of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. God promised that if the Israelites would obey his voice, he would make them a people for his possession. They would be a special people, set aside from all others. They were to be unto God a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

Moses told the elders what God has said. The people promised to do God's will. God told Moses to sanctify the people and have them wash their garments. Why? Because in three days he was to appear in a thick cloud on mount Sinai. He wanted the people to hear his voice, so that they would believe Moses. He also told Moses to set up a boundary to keep the people away from the mount. This was for their protection, for if they even touched it, they would die.

On the third day as God had promised, there were thunderings, lightnings, a thick cloud, and the voice of a loud trumpet. The camp trembled. The people were brought out to meet God. God descended on mount Sinai in fire and smoke. The mount quaked exceedingly. God then called Moses to the mount. He told Moses to go back down and tell the people to respect the boundary that he had set up. He was also to tell the priests to come nearer and to be sure that they were sanctified. He further instructed Moses to bring Aaron with him.

Then God spoke these famous words. "I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any likeness

of anything that is in the heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and fourth generations of them that hate me, and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain; for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; but the seventh day is a Sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, not thy son, nor thy daughter, nor manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day, and hallowed it. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's."

In Exodus twenty-four God again calls Moses to come up into the mount. He was told to bring Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders. They were to worship afar off. In Ex 24:12 we read, "And Jehovah said unto Moses, come up to me in the mount and be there: and I will give the tablets of stones and the law and the commandments, which I have written, that thou mayest teach them." Note now Ex. 24:18, "And Moses entered into midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights." In Exodus twenty-five through thirty-one, God gives Moses the other laws in great detail.

In Exodus thirty-two Aaron and the people made a golden

calf and worship it as the god that brought them out of Egypt. God told Moses what was going on and told him to leave the mount. God's wrath was exceeding fierce. He was going to destroy the people and make of Moses a nation to carry out his will. Moses interceded on Israel's behalf. God then repented of the evil which he said that he would do unto his people.

Moses' reaction to what was going on with Aaron and the people is seen in Ex. 32:19, 'And it came to pass, that as soon as he came unto the camp, he saw the calf and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands and break them beneath the mount.'

Moses was given a second set of stone tablets. Ex. 34:1 says, "And Jehovah said unto Moses, hew thee two tablets of stones like unto the first: and I will write upon the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which thou brakest." Consider also Ex. 34:28. "And he was there with Jehovah forth days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commamdmnts."

Thus, we have learned that the ten commandments were first given orally. Then they were written on two stone tablets. The first set of tablets was broken by Moses and was replaced by a second set of tablets that were placed in the ark of the covenant.

The ten commandments are the Magna Carta of the Old Testament. But they are more than that. Possibly no collection of commands in civilized societies throughout history is void of copies of these laws. Although some of the ten rules are not strictly *moral* in the true sense of that term, millions today emphatically claim them as their only Bible for moral living.

Written literally by God, the ten laws occupied a special

place in the nation of Israel. They were God's sermon to the nations around them.

Jesus enlarged them and caused them to come alive with greater spiritual force. He plunged beneath the surface of the words to unearth the invaluable nuggets of truth that most Israelites were not aware of. Using divine wisdom Christ summarized the ten commandments with these words. "Thou shalt love with Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Mt 22:37—39)

In laying down the terms of the New Testament, our Lord emphasized that his law was a tool to be used, to live a new life, on a higher spiritual plane. He wasn't interested in having his laws carved on a stone tablets but he wanted his laws engraved on human hearts. (Jer. 31:31—34) Thus, New Testament writers emphasized the spiritual principles behind these ten famous laws. They stressed the spirit then, as well as the letter.

The delivery of the Decalogue on mount Sinai formed a decisive epoch in the history of the human race. It was perhaps the most important event in human history up to the point of its occurrence.

MISCONCEPTIONS

Introduction:

1. Many misconception—lead false doctrines
2. Clearer conception

I. Ten Commandments Not Really New

- A. Sabbath only exception
- B. Always wrong, kill, adultery, lie—Gen. 4:2—15, 2:24, 39:9

II. Ten Commandments Not Given All Nations

- A. Jews only — Deut. 5:2—3
- B. Gentiles—Rom. 2:14—15

III. No Moral Law and Ceremonial Law

- A. No clear line of distinction
- B. Col. 2:14—17
- C. Eph. 2:14:15
- D. Moral laws outside the ten commandments
- E. Sabbath—partly ceremonial

IV. No Salvation From Keeping Ten Commandments

- A. Gal. 2:21
- B. II Cor. 3:6—17
- C. Gal. 3:24
- D. Christians are moral—not all moral are Christians
- E. A Christian is:
 1. Obeyed gospel
 2. Added church
 3. Worship spirit—truth

V. Ten Commandments Used Restrain Moral and Social Evil?

- A. Not sufficient!

B. Why?

C. Jesus emphasized spiritual principles behind them

VI. Jesus Did Not Destroy The Ten Commandments

A. Matthew 5:17

B. Meaning of *destroy*

C. Ways—Jesus fulfilled laws

1. Rom. 7:13, 8:3

2. I Pet. 2:24, Gal. 3:13

3. Luke 4:21, 24:15—27, 44—47, II Peter 1:19

Conclusion:

1. John 1:17

2. Hope look misconceptions will clarify

Misconceptions

There are numerous misconceptions about the Ten Commandments that have led to many false doctrines. It will be the purpose of this lesson to deal with these misconceptions, so that we can gain a clear conception of the ten commandments and their meaning in our lives.

First of all let us learn that with the exception of the command to observe the Sabbath day, the other commandments were not really new. It has always been wrong to kill. Surely the story of the murder of Abel by his brother Cain demonstrates this. (Gen. 4:2—15) Joseph's escape from Potiphar's wife and the possibility of committing adultery, show that adultery has always been wrong. (Gen. 2:24, 39:9) Abraham's half-truth to Abimilech in Genesis twenty shows that lying has always been a sin.

Secondly, it is a misconception to believe that the original ten commandments were given to all the nations. Note Duet. 5:2—3, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The Lord made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." The Old Testament was then a covenant or an agreement between God and the Jews alone. All other people were excluded from this covenant. The Gentiles or non Jews lived by the law of conscience. Paul wrote in Romans 2:14—15, "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another."

Thirdly, it is wrong to believe that the law of Moses is divided into sections, the moral law and ceremonial law. There

is no clear line of distinction between the authority and permanence of the ten commandments and the other laws of Moses.

The ten commandments are called the covenant in Ex. 34:28. The other laws constitute the book of the covenant. (Ex. 24:7) While the ten commandments were kept in the ark of the covenant, the other laws were kept by the ark. (Deut. 31:26)

We are told by the people like the Seventh Day Adventists and Hebert W. Armstrong's Radio Church of God that God nailed the ceremonial laws to the cross but not the moral law or ten commandments. Paul wrote in Col. 2:14—17, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." Make no mistake about it, these verses teach that all the law was done away in Jesus' death. Consider now Eph. 2:14—15, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." How much plainer could God be? All of the law was taken out of the way!

Let us not overlook the fact that there are many moral laws outside the ten commandments. For example Exodus 23:2 says, "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment." Actually, the Sabbath law in the ten commandments is partly ceremonial in character, as we shall see in greater detail in chapter seven.

The fourth misconception is that we can be saved by the Old Testament in general and by the ten commandments in particular. That is not true! Let the Bible speak. Paul in Gal. 2:21, wrote, "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain." Again consider II Cor. 3:6—17, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the Old Testament; which veil is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The Old Testament law was never designed to save us. Gal. 3:24 says that the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ that we might be justified by faith, not by the law! The law was given to the Jews because of transgressions. They needed a law to impress them with the exceedingly sinfulness of sin and to control sin!

Many honest souls declare that if a man did nothing more than keep the ten commandments, he would be saved. In other words, many hold the mistaken opinion that personal goodness

or morality is just as good as being as Christian. Thus, the ten commandments are held up as a standard for people to live by in 1980.

Good reader, all Christians are moral but not all moral people are Christians. There are Atheists, Hindus, Moslems, and Buddhists who live good moral lives, but no one would say that they will be saved in their spiritual condition. You can keep the ten commandments and not be a Christian. A Christian is more than a person who lives on a high moral plane. A Christian is one who has obeyed the gospel. He thus has believed in Jesus (Jno. 8:24); repented of his sins (Lk. 13:3, 5); confessed his faith in Christ (Acta 8:37, Rom. 10:9—10); and has been baptized (immersed in water—Acts 8:35—39). A Christian is one who has been added by the Lord to the Church, upon obedience to the steps that lead to salvation. (Acts 2:41, 47) A Christian is one who worships God in spirit and in truth. (Jno. 4:24) A Christian is a person who lives by the laws of Christ found in the New Testament. (Heb. 7:12, 8:6, 9:15—17)

In the fifth place, many believe the ten commandments should be used to restrain or control the social and moral evils of our day. They would not be sufficient. Why? The Saviour augmented many of them and enhanced their meaning to cause the bulk of the decalogue to come alive with greater spiritual force. He plunged beneath the surface of these laws to unearth priceless nuggets that the average Jew of his day did not know existed. New Testament writers then emphasized the spiritual principles behind the ten commandments. They emphasized the law of spirit as well as the letter.

Finally, it is a misconception to believe that Christ came to destroy the Old Testament law of which the ten commandments were a part. In Matthew 5:17 Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill." The word *destroy* means, *to do away with, abolish, annul, make invalid, repeal, ruin, defeat, or*

bring to an end. Thus, Jesus did not come to ruin, to bring to an end by defeating the purpose of the law or the prophets, but rather to fulfill them.

Yes, Jesus came to fulfill the law. He was saying in Matthew 5:17 that he was the exact meaning of all that God intended to say in the Old Testament. Jesus fulfilled the law's purpose to demonstrate the standard of righteousness by showing himself to be the perfect man and all that God had in mind, when he gave the law. (Matthew 3:15, Heb. 4:15, 7:26—28, I Peter 2:22, John 8:46, I Jno. 5:21)

Jesus fulfilled the law's purpose to declare the exceeding sinfulness of sin, by living above sin, thus condemning all sin that men commit. (Rom. 7:13, 8:3)

Jesus fulfilled the law's righteous sentence by receiving in his own body the death penalty. (I Pet. 2:24, Gal. 3:13)

Jesus fulfilled the law's pattern and prediction of the law covenant. He used the law by pointing to the purpose behind its true history, to its types and prophecies as having exact fulfillment in himself. (Lk. 4:2, 24:25—27, 44:47, II Peter 1:19)

Jesus could not break by defeating the true intention of the Old Testament, without undermining his own position and mission. To render vital and valid Jesus' salvation from sin, the law must continue in force to describe and condemn sin. But this cannot mean that Jesus, not having destroyed the law, could therefore, abrogate, repeal, annul, abolish, or render it invalid after he had fulfilled it.

Neither does fulfilling the law mean to perpetuate its force on those saved by the grace of God. By Christ's intention to fulfill the law and prophets, Jesus admitted its full God given authority. By his design to set it aside having fulfilled its requirements, he is not failing to acknowledge its importance and

authority for those to whom it was given.

Let us thank God that we can declare with John, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth by Jesus Christ."
(John 1:17)

I hope that by taking a look at some of the misconceptions that many have about the ten commandments, that we will have clearer conception of them in our own minds.

TRUTHS

Introduction:

1. Christianity did not exist without roots
2. Judaism and its law
3. Ten Commandments—social and moral restraints
4. Much to learn about them

I. Biblical Titles for Ten Commandments

- A. Ten commandments—words—Ex. 34:28
- B. Words of covenant—Ex. 34:28
- C. The testimony—Ex. 16:34
- D. The tablets—Ex. 32:18
- E. The covenant—Deut. 4:13
- F. The two tablets—Deut. 9:10—17
- G. Decalogue

II. Ten Commandments First Delivered Orally

- A. Ex. 19:20
- B. Written form—Ex. 24:12, 18
- C. Second set of tablets—Ex. 34:1, 28
- D. Role of angels—Acts 7:53

III. The Ark of Covenant—Home of Ten Commandments

- A. Deut. 10:5
- B. Deut. 31:24—27

IV. The Difference Between The Exodus and Deuteronomy Accounts

- A. Why differences?
- B. Deuteronomy—extemporaneous
- C. Exodus version—finger God—Ex. 31:18
- D. No conflict

V. Two Fold Division of Ten Commandments

- A. First section—man's relationship to God
- B. Second section—man's relationship to man
- C. Ten Commandments ask for two things
 - 1. reverence God
 - 2. respect man

VI. Ten Commandments—Series of Principles

- A. Not body detailed rules
- B. Control attitude which control action
- C. Negatives needed

VII. Why Were Ten Commandments Given?

- A. Gal. 3:19—Sin
- B. Rom. 7:7, 3:20
- C. Gal. 3:24—bring Jews to Christ

VIII. Nine of Ten Commandments Repeated New Testament.

- A. Matthew 4:1, Rom. 3:9, I John 5:19, Jas. 5:12, Eph. 6:1—3, Eph. 5:3, Col. 3:5
- B. Eph. 4:25, I Cor. 6:9—10, Mt. 5:8, I John 3:15, Acts 14:15
- C. Observe—part law of Christ
- D. Two greatest commands not in ten! Matthew 22:37—39
- E. Christ's law superior to ten commandments

IX. The Order of the Commandments

- A. Protestant and Jewish
- B. Catholic and Lutheran

X. Order and Arrangement On Original Tablets?

- A. Not Known
- B. Several theories

Conclusion

- 1. Jno. 8:32
- 2. Jno. 17:17
- 3. Rom. 2:2

Truths

Christianity did not come into existence without roots and foundation. There was something already there out of which Christianity could build and it was Judaism and its law. The history of Judaism is the history of the preparation of a people through whom God's son could come into the world. Certainly the Ten Commandments helped to prepare God's people for their role by placing the needed social and moral restraints upon them. There are many things we need to know about the Ten Commandments.

First of all let's learn the various names, phrases, or titles given to the ten commandments in the Bible. They are called the Ten Commandments or ten words, Exodus 34:28; the words of the covenant, Exodus 34:28; the testimony, Exodus 16:34; the tablets, Exodus 31:18; the covenant, Deuteronomy 4:13; and the two tablets, Deuteronomy 9:10—17. They are also called the Decalogue. The word *deca* means, *ten* and *logue* means, *word*. This word was first used by Clement of Alexandria 160—210 A.D.

Secondly, the Ten Commandments were first delivered orally by God to the people of Israel. (Ex. 19—20) Then God delivered them for the first time to Moses in written form on the two tablets of stone. (Exodus 24:12, 18) The second set of stone tablets was given by God to Moses. (Ex. 34:1, 28) Somewhere in the process of giving the law, angels played a role in bringing it to Israel! Consider this Old Testament reference, "The chariots of God are twenty thousands, even thousands of angels: the Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place." (Psalms 68:17) Stephen declared in Acts 7:53, "Who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it." Paul wrote in Galatians 3:19, "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.” (See also Hebrews 2:2)

Thirdly, the ark of the covenant was the home of the Ten Commandments. Deuteronomy 10:5 says, “And I turned myself and came down from the mount and put the tablets in the ark which I had made; and there they be, as the Lord commanded me.” While the Ten Commandments were kept in the ark, the other laws which made up the Old Testament were placed beside the ark. Take note of Deuteronomy 31:24—27, “And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, saying, take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee. For I know thy rebellion, and thy stiff neck: behold, while I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and much more after my death?”

Next let's take a look at the difference in the Ten Commandments found in Exodus and Deuteronomy. How shall we account for these differences? Probably it is to be accounted for by the fact that in Deuteronomy, Moses was citing somewhat extemporaneously God's words that were given on mount Sinai. Often in such cases the very words themselves were not cited but certain variations and changes are introduced.

The version in Exodus twenty is said to have been written by the very finger of God. (Ex. 31:18) We accept this as true and therefore regard the commandments there as being the exact original wording.

When Moses repeated the law nearly forty years later in the Plains of Moab (as given in Deut.), he enlarged upon many parts of it and paraphrased somewhat.

This does not imply that the Deuteronomy version of Moses' ten commandments is inferior, or represents only Moses' imperfect memory of them or his personal interpretation of the Exodus twenty commandments. God spoke through Moses at the Plain of Moab just as certainly as he spoke on Mount Sinai. See Numbers 36:13, Deut. 29:1. God allowed Moses or caused him to speak some new words in Deuteronomy five. But the ideas are unchanged, or are merely enlarged upon. There is no conflict of truth between the Exodus and Deuteronomy accounts.

How do the ten commandments differ in Exodus from the form given in Deuteronomy?

The fourth commandment (about the Sabbath) is different in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy says (in 5:12) to keep (or observe) the Sabbath, rather than to remember it, as in Ex. 20:8. Deut. 5:12 adds "as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee." Deut. 5:14 adds "your ox or your ass" and "that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou." Deut. 5:15 says that the Sabbath is to be observed in memory of Israel's deliverance from Egypt, rather than because Jehovah made heaven and earth in six days and rested the seventh day (Ex. 20:11).

In the fifth commandment (Deut. 5:16), the words "that it may go well with thee" are added. Also Deuteronomy has the words "as the LORD thy God commanded thee" added.

In Deut. 5:18—21 the last four commandments are all introduced by *and* (sometimes translated *neither*).

The tenth commandment (about coveting) is considerably different in Deuteronomy 5:21 from Ex. 20:17. Deuteronomy reverses the order of *wife* and *house*. Deuteronomy adds *field*. Deuteronomy also uses *desire* as a synonym for covet at the second occurrence of the word covet.

There is a two fold division of the Ten Commandments. The first section deals with God, the second section deals with man. The lonely supremacy of God is laid down. The impossibility of expressing God in any material form is laid down. The reckless use of the name of God in promises and pledges is forbidden. The rights of God's day are safeguarded. Then we have a section that deals with the human side. Father and mother are to be honored. Human life is sacred. Sexual purity and fidelity are demanded. The rights of human property are preserved. False and slanderous speaking about others is condemned. The desire for that which is not ours and which is not for us is branded as wrong.

It may be said that the Ten Commandments include two things. They demand reverence for God and respect for man. The majesty of God and the rights of the human personality are alike conserved. No man dare say that he loves God, unless he also loves his fellowmen. No man can really and truly love his fellowmen, unless he sees that the true value of a man lies in the fact that he is a child of God. Without the manward look, religion can become a remote and detached mysticism, in which a man is concerned with his own soul and his own vision of God and nothing more. Without the Godward look, a society can become a place in which, as in a totalitarian state, men are looked on as things and not as persons. Reverence for God and respect for man can never be separated from each other.

Sixthly, note the fact that the Ten Commandments are a series of principles and not a body of detailed rules and regulations. They do not attempt to give a man series of rules ready made to apply to any situation. What they do give a man is a certain attitude towards God and towards his fellowmen. Circumstances may change; the situation may alter; what remains constant is the attitude of reverence to God and respect for man. That reverence and that respect may be expressed in different ways at different times and in different situations; but the expression is always the expression of the same

fundamental attitudes to God and to man. The Ten Commandments say: Here is how you ought to feel towards God and man. In each separate situation work out the expression in action of that feeling for yourself.

Furthermore, consider the fact that the Ten Commandments are often criticized because they are a series of thou shalt nots. But there is something to be said for them. Israel left Egypt where they had been slaves. They were little more than a disorganized rabble, when they were three months out of Egypt. They needed a law to make them into a nation. At this point they received the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are a law without which nationhood is impossible!

The Ten Commandments are negative because in the beginning they could be nothing else. They represent the voluntary and accepted principles of self-limitation and self-discipline without which no group of people can ever become a nation.

In the seventh place why did God give the Ten Commandments? Let God answer through the scriptures. In Gal. 3:19 Paul wrote, "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." The law was given then because of sin. It was given that there might be a people of God rigidly controlled out of which could come Jesus Christ. The law was given to show man's sinfulness and his need of the mercy of God. Paul said in Romans 7:7, "... I had not known sin, except through the law ..." " ... for through the law cometh a knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20) The law had at least a twofold purpose. One is civil. The law was given to restrain sin and to preserve good. The second purpose was spiritual. It was to lead the Jews to Jesus, who was the seed to come.

Herman Ridderbos in his commentary on Galatians said,

“The law was given, so to speak, to call forth transgressions and make them manifest. That is to say more than that by means of the law of sin should be acknowledged as transgression in its proper and terrible character. It is to say that by means of the law sin should come out into the open and multiply itself. The law makes guilt and evil greater.” (Rom 5:20)

Paul also declared in Gal. 3:24, “Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” J. W. McGarvey said, “Most families had a slave, who served as a tutor or schoolmaster. He took the child to the teacher. He had charge of him from childhood to manhood to shield and protect him. The law was such a tutor to bring those under its care to a state of development fit for society and fellowship with Christ.” Those who have fellowship with Christ according to our text are justified by faith. They are not justified by the law but by faith. They are not justified by faith only!

In eighth place, please observe that nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament. (Rom. 3:9, Mt. 4:10, I Jno. 5:19, Jas. 5:12, Eph. 6:1—3, Eph. 5:3, Col. 3:5, Eph. 4:25, I Cor. 6:9—10, Mt. 5:8, I Jno. 3:15, and Acts 14:15) We are to observe them not because they are a part of the Ten Commandments, but because they are a part of the New Testament law of Christ! It is worth noting that the two greatest commandments in all the Bible are not a part of the ten! These two commandments are found in Mk. 12:30—31 which says, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. The second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Christ’s law is superior to the Ten Commandments! God said, “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” While this command forbids idolatry, we are also, as we have just noted in

the previous paragraph, to love God with all that we have. Our Lord taught that we must worship God, who is Spirit, in spirit and in truth. (Jno. 4:24) Thus, Jesus adds a positive note to a command that was expressed in a negative form.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.” Jesus’ law goes beyond this. Our Lord teaches, “My little children, guard yourselves from idols.” (I Jno. 5:21) We are also forbidden to love the things of this world. (I Jno. 2:15, I Tim. 6:10) Even loved ones must be second to Christ. (Mt. 10:37) We must not worship anything or anyone but God! (Rev. 19:10, Mt. 6:24)

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” You may never profane the name of God and still pollute the atmosphere with vulgarity. Jesus taught that God’s name is to be hallowed. (Mt. 6:9) Our Lord said in Mt. 12:36—37, “But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.” Paul taught, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” (Eph. 4:29) The misuse of anything sacred is forbidden in the New Testament. (Mt. 5:33—37, Jas. 5:12)

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” There is no Sabbath commandment in the teachings of Christ. Jesus kept the Sabbath because he was born and died under the law. (Gal. 4:4) Christians are to worship on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7, I Cor. 16:1—2, Rev. 1:10) We’ll have more on this in another chapter.

“Honor thy father and thy mother.” Jesus also taught this. In Mk. 7:10—12 we read “For Moses said, honor thy father and thy mother; and whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: but ye say a man shall say unto his father or mother, it is

Corban that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be freed. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or mother." Paul repeated this command in Ephesians 6:1—3. Jesus gave us a wonderful example of how to keep this law in Lk. 2:51, which says that he was in subjection to his parents. In Jno. 19:27 Jesus commits his mother to the hands of John for her safekeeping. See also I Tim. 5:4, 8, 16.

"Thou shalt not kill." Jesus emphasized this commandment and went beyond it by showing concern over the emotions that trigger this act. In Matthew 5:21—22 Jesus declared, "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." Consider also I John 3:15 which says, "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him."

"Thou shalt not committ adultery." Jesus expanded this commandment by teaching, "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." (Matthew 5:28) See also Hebrews 13:4.

"Thou shalt not steal." This command is repeated in Romans 13:9. It is expanded in Eph. 4:28 which says, "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." See also II Thessalonians 3:10, Romans 12:17, Titus 2:10.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." What about other forms of lying? They are forbidden by Jesus. Jesus said all liars will go to hell and cannot go to heaven.

(Revelation 21:8, 27) He also tells us to learn to speak the truth in love (Eph. 4:15).

“Thou shalt not covet.” Jesus’ law condemns coveting in all forms and taught us to love our neighbor as ourself. (Lk. 12:15, Matthew 22:39, Matthew 7:12).

Furthermore, let us ask and answer the question, which commandments are to be numbered one, two, etc.? Most Protestants and ancient Jewish authorities like Philo and Josephus treat Ex. 20:2 as the first commandment. Then Ex. 20:3—6 is treated as the second commandment. The remainder are divided up as most Protestants do, with all of Ex. 20:17 being the tenth commandment.

Jewish scholars regard Ex. 20:2 as the first commandment. Exodus 20:3—6 is the second commandment and the rest are divided up like the Protestants with Ex. 20:17 being the tenth commandment.

Roman Catholic and Lutheran scholars treat Ex. 20:3—6 as the first commandment, Ex. 20:7 as the second and thus on to Ex. 20:17, which is divided into two commandments, the ninth and tenth. The ninth is, “Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house.” The tenth is, “thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife.” Most non-Catholics believe this is an effort to get around the command dealing with the making of images.

Finally, how were the Ten Commandments arranged and divided on the original tablets? We don’t know! It has been proposed that five were on one and five on the other. This arrangement would have placed one hundred thirty-seven words in the first tablet and twenty-six words on the second. Others say the first three laws were on the first tablet and seven on the second. This would come as near to equalizing them on each tablet, or could be done. Others propose the first tablet had the first four commandments on it that pertained to

man's relationship to God and the second tablet had the last six commandments that pertained to man's relationship to man.

NO OTHER GODS

Introduction:

1. Thou shalt not
2. Ten Commandments—ageless
3. Ancient Creeds
4. Best Known—least understood
5. Text—man's relationship to God

I. A Look At the Text

- A. I am—Exodus 3:14
- B. Jehovah—Lord, “the eternal self-existent one, the everlasting one.”
- C. God—Elohim, “the supreme object of worship”
- D. No appeal to authority as:
 1. Creator-sustainer
 2. But to mercy, kindness, deliverance, provision, protection
 - a. 10 plagues—show power over gods in Egypt
 - b. Divided Red Sea, Exodus 3:14
 - c. Quail, manna, water from rock
- E. Show—he had right be their God

II. Exodus 20:3

- A. Importance cannot be overestimated
- B. If don't obey this command, the others will not matter
- C. *Thou*—2nd person sing—addressed each individual
- D. *Before*, literally—*before my face, besides, or in addition*
- E. Forbids
 1. idolatry
 2. polytheism
- F. Advocating—monotheism
 1. Deut. 6:4
 2. Isa. 45:5, 46:9
- G. Israel quickly forgot

1. Molech
2. Baal
3. Mammon
4. Jud. 2:10
5. Jud. 21:25

H. If God is who He claims—has right expect obedience

III. This Command From A New Testament Perspective

A. Other ways to say no other gods

1. Mathew 4:10
2. Mark 12:28—30
3. I Cor. 8:6
4. Acts 17:16, 29
5. Ephesians 4:4—6

B. Warnings Against idols

1. I Cor. 10:14
2. I John 5:21
3. Col. 3:5
4. Guilty of idolatry without bowing before gods, stone, wood, metal.

C. Modern day gods

1. nature—Rom. 1:23
2. health II Tim. 4:7—8
3. sports
4. knowledge—I Cor. 1:20
5. pleasure—II Tim. 3:4, I Tim. 5:6, Heb. 11:25
6. popularity—Matthew 6:16, Acts 5:29
7. wealth—Matthew 6:24, I Tim. 6:10
8. man—Acts 20:25, 14:8—18, Lk. 12:21—23
9. self—II Tim. 3:2

D. Anything occupies place God is an idol

Conclusion:

1. Israel and Church
2. Voltaire
3. Augustine
4. Leo Tolstoy

No Other Gods

The Ten Commandments contain words that thunder across the centuries. Oh how they echo down the corridors of time. In so many ways they are ageless and up to date. As we have noted in a previous chapter with one major exception there will never be a time or a nation in which it is right to violate the Ten Commandments.

Though the Ten Commandments are well known, I fear that they are often misunderstood. Let us then take a look at our text of Ex. 20:2—3 which is the first of the four commandments, that deal with man's relationship to God.

Exodus 20:2—3 says, "I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

Let's begin our lesson by analyzing our text. Our text begins with the words, "I am." God called to Moses out of a burning bush and asked him to go to Egypt, that he might stand before the Pharaoh. He wanted Moses to say, let my people go. Moses said, but who shall I tell Israel and the Pharaoh that you are? In Ex. 3:14, "God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. He also said, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." The words *I am* come from the verb *to be*, denoting continuous existence.

The great I AM also identified as *Jehovah* or *Lord*. The word *Jehovah* means, *the eternal self-existent one. he who is everlasting*. The *I AM* is not only *Jehovah*, he is God or *Elohim*. He is the supreme object of worship.

God does not attempt to prove his existence. He acts upon the assumption that men know that he is, was, and is to come.

He does not appeal in our text to his authority as creator and sustainer of the universe. He does appeal to his mercy and kindness. He delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage. He also appeals to the fact that he has been their provider and protector. It was this God, Jehovah, the I AM, who sent the ten plagues upon Egypt to free Israel and show his power over the gods of Egypt. This God parted the Red Sea, fed them with quail and manna and gave them water from a rock. Clearly, Jehovah had shown Israel that he had a right to be their God.

The importance of the first commandment in Exodus 20:3 cannot be overestimated. If men do not obey this one, obedience to the others will not matter. This command begins with the word *thou*. Thou is second person singular. Thus, it is addressed to each individual. National obedience was not enough.

There shall be no other gods *before me*. More literally, *before my face, beside, or in addition to me*.

This command forbids idolatry, the worship of a false god. It forbids polytheism or the worship of many gods. It also advocates monotheism or the worship of one God. Each day the Jews were to repeat the Shema. What is that? It is found in Deut. 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord:" Consider now Isa. 45:5, "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God beside me." Note also Isa. 46:9, "Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me."

To Israel's shame, she quickly forgot this commandment and worshipped other gods, such as Molech, Baal, and the Asherah. Judges 2:10 tells us, "And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel." One of the saddest verses

in all the Bible is Judges 21:25, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

If God is who he claims he is and is what he claims he is, then he has every right to expect us to obey this command.

In the second place, let us view this first commandment from a New Testament perspective. There are several verses which tell us that there should be no other gods. Jesus said to Satan, "... thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4:10) In Mark 12:28—30, Mark declared, "And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, which is the first commandment of all: And Jesus answered him, the first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment." Paul wrote, "to us there is one God." (I Cor. 8:6) The Athenians showed Paul a city full of idols. Paul taught them that we ought not to think of the Godhead in the likeness of gold, silver or stone. God is not that which is graven by art or device of man. (Acts 17:29) Then there are Paul's famous, seven ones in Eph. 4:4—6. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

The New Testament warns Christians about idols. I Cor. 10:14 says, "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry." John warned, "Little children, keep yourself from idols....." (I John 5:21) From Col. 3:5 we learn that covetousness is idolatry. Thus, an idol is not just something made of wood, metal and stone. Anything that comes between God and man is an idol or false God.

There are many modern idols that pull men away from the true and living God. We worship nature. Many rather be in the woods or at the lake on the Lord's day. Many like the Gentiles of old have exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for the corruptible things of nature. They will be lost if they don't repent. (Rom. 1:23, 32)

Health is a god! Millions spend all their time, energy, and money to stay healthy. They are so concerned with the appearance of the body. The soul is totally neglected. Many forsake the assembly and fail to participate in the works of the church because of their health. Yet, they manage to work five or six days a week! Paul wrote in I Tim. 4:7—8, "... exercise thyself rather unto godliness. For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Let those who value the body over the soul reflect seriously upon Matthew 16:26. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

We have turned the world of sports into a god. Our favorite players have become gods. The stadiums and coliseums have become temples. People will turn their backs upon the real God and drive hundreds of miles to worship their heroes. They will sit and stand and cheer for two or three hours at a time. Huge amounts of money are spent in order to pay homage to their deities.

We worship science or knowledge in the twentieth century. Someone has stated that knowledge is a tool that we use to get what we want. They say it is though, just an extension of the club. In other words, without God to tell us what to do, we will use it like a savage to beat each other's brains out! Paul wrote in I Corinthians 1:20, "Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?"

Pleasure is a god that has been worshipped since the dawn of time. Paul said in II Tim. 3:4 that in the last days there would be men who would be lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God. Paul wrote in I Tim. 5:6, "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." The pleasure of sin lasts only for a season! (Heb. 11:25)

Multitudes have worshipped at the shrine of wealth. They are guilty of idollartry! Jesus stated plainly in Matthew 6:24, "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mannon." In the famous parable of the sower, our Lord said, "And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful." (Mark 4:19) Paul told Timothy, "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (I Timothy 6:10)

Man has made himself into a god! Peter told Cornelius not to worship him. (Acts 10:25) Paul and Barnabas were worshipped. They quickly stopped it. (Acts 14:8—18) Herod wanted to be treated like a god. (Acts 12:21—23) Man worships himself because, he thinks that God is like man. (Psm. 50:21) Nothing could be further from the truth! (Isa. 55:8—9) The worship of self can bring only wretchedness and death. When this God sits on the throne of the human heart, everything that is good and beautiful is required as a sacrifice.

The famous author Leo Tolstoy told the story of a peasant who was to be given all the land he could walk around in one day. In his haste to return to the place of his beginning, he overtaxed his body and dropped dead. All he really needed was six feet of earth!

We don't need the pagan gods and the material gods of this

world. Like Augustine, let us say, “my soul is restless until it finds rest in thee O God!”

GRAVEN IMAGES

Introduction:

1. Ten Commandments contain moral principles.
2. Jesus put them on higher spiritual basis
3. First command tells who to worship
4. Second command tells how to worship
5. First command forbids false gods
6. Second command forbids false worship
7. Exodus 20:4—6
8. Biblical writers mention second command more all others

I. See Man's Instinct For Worship

- A. God given religious instinct strongest of all
- B. Man-anthropos or upward looking one
- C. All worship someone or something
- D. Perhaps man looks at world—feels so insignificant
- E. Reach out to something greater, stronger, wiser
- F. Psalm. 8:3—4
- G. Plutarch's quote
- H. Message from second command—man will worship

II. What the Command Does Not Forbid

- A. Use talent—carve, sculpture, paint, draw
 1. Moses' brass serpent—Numbers 21:9
 2. Tabernacle—Exodus 24:25
 3. Temple—I King 6:32, 7:22, 29
- B. Muslims—no images
- C. Puritans
- D. Protestant buildings
- E. Icon

III. What This Command Forbids

- A. Making, bowing, worshipping

1. Make—not all forbidden—make wrong purpose
 2. Bow—not all bowing forbidden
 - a. Bow statue Mary
 - b. wooden crucifix
 - c. saint
 - d. idol
 3. Worship
 - a. Matthew 4:10
 - b. Rev. 22:9
 - c. Rev. 19:10
 - d. Acts 10:26
- B. Why Do Men Make Images?**
1. Psm. 115:4—8
 2. Know not sacred—help bring close God
 - a. Matthew 18:20
 - b. Acts 17:27
 3. Dead spiritually—if know God no need image II Cor. 5:7
 4. Ignorant God's nature
 - a. John 4:24
 - b. Luke 24:39
 - c. Col. 1:15
- C. Results of Image Making**
1. Limits God one place—God omnipresent
 - a. Acts 17:24
 - b. Proverbs 15:3
 2. Visualize—invisible—John 1:18
 3. Man becomes like God he worships—Proverbs 23:7
 - a. Psalms. 50:21
 - b. Isa. 55:7—8
 5. Makes a fool of man—Isa. 44:12—17
- D. Images or Idolatry Are Condemned in New Testament**
1. Romans 1:23
 2. Acts 15:20
 3. I Corinthians 5:11, 10:20
 4. I John 5:21

Conclusion:

1. God is jealous—II Cor. 11:2
2. He visits iniquity fathers on future generations
3. He shows lovingkindness on thousands of generations
 - a. love him
 - b. keep commands
 - c. does make difference as to how we worship God
4. Second command designed protect spiritual nature God

Graven Images

The first commandment tells us who to worship. The second commandment tells us how to worship. The first commandment forbids false gods, while the second forbids false worship.

Our text is Ex. 20:4—6 which says, “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 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; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.”

It has been said that this commandment is more frequently mentioned by other Biblical writers. Why? Well, let's take note of three basic ideas, which may tell us why.

Let us begin by pointing out that in this second commandment, we see man's instinct for worship. Man has many God given drives, appetites, or instincts. One of the strongest is man's religious instinct.

Perhaps when man looks at the vast universe of which he is a part, he feels small and insignificant. This overwhelming feeling then motivates him to reach out for a being that is greater, stronger, and wiser than himself. David wrote in Psalm 8:3—4, “When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?”

The ancient Greeks understood this and named man the

“anthropos.” This word means, “the upward looking one.” Plutarch said, “you can find men without walls, letters, money houses, theaters, and games, but you will never find men without gods, temples, prayers, and sacrifices.” G. Campbell Morgan a famous preacher of another generation said that in London’s Westminster Abbey, statues of saints had to be removed to keep people from worshipping them.

John was told by an angel to stop worshipping the angel and to worship God alone. (Rev. 19:10) See also Rev. 22:9. I feel like the person who wrote:

Show me not only Jesus dying
As on the cross he bled,
Nor in the tomb, a captive lying
For he has left the dead,
Not only in that form resplended
My Saviour bid me see,
For to the brightest heaven he
ascended, and he,
reigns in majesty.

Why do people make images? After all, David wrote of images, “Their idols are silver and gold, the work of men’s hands. They have mouths, but they speak not: eyes have they, but they see not: They have ears, but they hear not: noses have they, but they smell not: They have hands, but they handle not: feet have they, but they walk not: neither speak they through their throat. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them.” (Psm. 115:4—8) Many argue that they know that images are not sacred. But they help bring God closer to man. God is so far away we are told. Well that is not true. Jesus said in Matthew 18:20, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Paul preached to the Athenians, “That they should seek the LORD, if haply they might feel after him, and find him,

though he be not far from every one of us.” (Acts 17:27) Others make and worship images because they are dead spiritually. If they really knew God, if they had daily intimate communion with God, they would need no image. Paul in II Cor. 5:7 declared, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Images are used by many because they are ignorant of God’s nature. Jesus said of God, “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” “A spirit hath not flesh, and bone as ye see me have,” taught Christ. (Luke 24:39) Paul said Jesus is the image of the invisible God. (Col. 1:15)

What happens when man tries to put God in the form of an image? He is attempting to put that which is infinite into the finite. That is impossible. You can’t limit God to one place. Solomon said of God in Proverbs 15:3, “The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.” Paul said to the Greeks, “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is LORD of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands.(Acts 17:24) God is omnipresent!

Image making tries to visualize invisible. Could we take a picture of our souls? NO! Why? Because our inner self is spirit. God is a Spirit (Jno. 4:24) We do not know what God looks like. “No man hath seen God at any time.” (Jno. 4:8) God is light. (I Jno. 1:5) How do you put love or light into a visual image that will enable you to see God? You don’t! To do so would be futile.

Image making causes man to be like the god he worships. False ideas about God will cause man to live and worship in a false manner. Proverbs 23:7 says “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

Finally, man makes a fool out of himself, when man degrades God, by making him into the image of man or creation. Some men actually believe that God is like man. Psm. 50:21 declares, “... thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself ...” How foolish! God is not made in man’s

image, man is made in God's image! (Gen. 1:26—27) Isa. 44:12—17 describes the foolishness of the idolater by describing him as one who makes an axe and chops down trees. Then man uses the wood for a fire to warm himself and to cook his food. With the same wood, he carved out a god and bows before it. How ridiculous! How tragic!

The New Testament has much to say about the use of images or idolatry. Gentile Christians were to abstain from the pollutions and sacrifices of idols. (Acts 15:20) Paul said that one of the great sins of the Gentiles was that they, "... changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things." (Romans 1:23) Christians who get involved in idolatry are to be withdrawn from. (I Cor. 5:11) Behind idol worship are the demons. (I Cor 10:20) Christians are urged to guard themselves from idols. (I John 5:21) This would include covetousness. (Col. 3:5)

My friends, God is a jealous God. He will visit the iniquity of the fathers on the third and fourth generations of them that hate him. On the other hand, he will bless thousands of generations with his lovingkindness, if we will love him and keep his commandments.

Surely, the consequences of a failure to obey God's will in the matter of images are awesome! It does make a difference as to how we worship God. This principle is true in every age. The commandment that we have just studied was designed to protect the spiritual nature of God. We still have the same responsibility in our generation.

One of the great messages of the second commandment is that man is going to worship someone or something.

In the second place consider what this second commandment does not forbid. It does not forbid the use of one's talent.

Many are blessed with the ability to sculpt, carve, paint, and draw. Exercising these talents is not forbidden.

In the Old Testament, Moses ordered a brass serpent to be erected, so that the people could look upon it and be healed. (Num. 21:9) When the people began to worship it, it was destroyed.

The Old Testament tabernacle with its holy place, most holy place, veil, and ark was filled with pictures of the things of this earth and images of beings (cherubim) that are not of this earth. (See Ex. 24—25)

Solomon's temple was adorned with images of flowers, palm trees, oxen, lions, and cherubim. I Kings 6:32 says, "The two doors also were of olive tree; and he carved upon them carvings of cherubims and palm trees, and open flowers, and overlaid them with gold, and spread gold upon the cherubims, and upon the palm trees." (See also I Kings 7:22, 29)

The Moslems have taken this command so literally that they will not use any images of men, animals, plants, in their mosques. The Puritans would not allow pictures of man, beasts, or anything else to hang in their homes. Many Protestant church buildings have no crosses, pictures, or stain glassed windows with religious images upon them. Why? Because of a misunderstanding of the second commandment. Churches of Christ are not exempt from this kind of thinking. Many brethren object to having a cross carved into the communion table or a cross on the lid of the communion trays. The use of pictures on Sunday school literature and the showing of filmstrips in our buildings have met stiff opposition. In many ways the old iconachistic controversy is still going on. Throughout church history the use of icons or images has caused much division and sorrow. Our Catholic friends of course have been the chief users of the icons. They have gone so far as to remove this second command from many versions of their Bible. They have taken

the last command which deals with covetousness and have divided it into two commands, thou shalt not covet thy neighbors wife and thou shalt not covet thy neighbors house, manservant, maidservant, ox, ass, or anything that is thy neighbours. Using this arrangement the Catholics have ten commandments though they have removed one to justify their use of images.

Finally, what does this command forbid? It forbids the making of images for the purpose of bowing before them in worship.

Now notice again that the making of an image is not forbidden. It is making an image for an improper purpose that God forbids.

Bowing is forbidden. Not all bowing. It is not wrong to bow one's head and pray to God. Bowing before a statue to Mary is forbidden. Bowing before a crucifix is forbidden. Bowing before a saint is forbidden. Certainly bowing before idol gods is forbidden. Jesus said to Satan, "Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." (Matthew 4:10) Peter told Cornelius, " ... Stand up, I myself am a man." (Acts 10:26)

THE NAME OF GOD

Introduction:

1. Third command—guard name God
2. Ex. 20:7
3. Words important
4. Name parents—evoke emotions—memories
5. Bible names had meaning
6. Names of God
7. All God is, says, and does summed up in name God
8. Vain—“unreal, empty, profane, flippant, light, lack of trust.”
9. How use name vain?

I. Profanity

- A. Profanity—insanity, sin without temptation
- B. Will do no good
- C. What profanity say?
 1. ignorance
 2. condition heart
 3. prayer of revenge
- D. By-words

II. Hypocrisy

- A. Profanity Church
- B. Matthew 7:21, Lk. 6:46, Rom. 2:24
- C. Worship
 1. Matthew 18:20
 2. Col. 3:17
 3. Titus 1:16

III. Frivolous

- A. Jokes, stories, rob God's name, sacredness, reverence due
- B. Ephesians 5:4
- C. Matthew 12:36—37

IV. Presumptuous

- A. Acts 19:13
- B. Acts 19:14
- C. Name—charm, magic
- D. Not all who use name of God are of God
- E. Psalms 111:9, Matthew 23:9

V. Empty Vows—Vain Oaths

- A. Matthew 5:34
- B. Jas. 5:12
- C. Deut. 23:21
- D. Christian married Christ—II Cor. 11:2, Rom. 7:4
- E. Faithful to vows—Jer. 2:23
- F. Japanese promise
- G. Man must not forget his promises to God

VI. Right Use

- A. Hallow—Matthew 6:9—10
- B. Turn to Salvation—Acts 4:12, Rom. 10:13
- C. Believe on —Acts 10:43
- D. Repent in name—Luke 24:47
- E. Confess name—Acts 8:37
- F. Baptism into name—Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38
- G. Wears—I Peter 4:16
- H. Do all—Col. 3:17
- I. Praise—Hebrews 3:15

VII. The Consequences of Profaning God's name

- A. Guiltless—*clear*
- B. God no view the profane man as clean—Rev. 21:27

Conclusion:

- 1. Review of ways to profane
- 2. Name God—man's last refuge
- 3. Acts 2:21, 2:38
- 4. Romans 10:13, Acts 22:16

The Name of God

The third commandment tells us to think of God in the right way. This command was given to guard the name of God. Our text of Ex. 20:7 says, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

We must learn that words are important. If they are used skillfully, they could start a revolution. Clothed with sincerity words can melt hearts that hurt and are hardened. The names of our parents, friends, or enemies evoke various emotions and memories! In Bible times a name meant something. Adam means, *earth*. Abraham has been defined as the *father of the faithful*. Eve means, *the mother of all living*. Jacobs means, *the supplanter*.

The names of God describe his office, position, nature, character, authority, purpose, providence, and truth. All that God is, says, and does is found in his name. The name *Adonai* means, *Lord* or *ruler*. *El* is defined as, *strong* or *powerful*. *Elijon* refers to, *exhaltation*. *Elohim* is a word defined as, *to be feared, to fill with majesty*. *El Shaddai* means, *all high*. Jehovah has been translated, *I am*, denoting continuous being, *Jesus*, means, *Saviour*. Christ is a term denoting, *the annointed one*.

Now the third commandment forbids the use of God's name in vain. The word *vain* means, *unreal, empty, light, flippant, profane, that which lacks truth*.

Let us look at several ways that we can take God's name in vain.

First of all there is profanity. Profanity is insanity. It is a sin without temptation. Profanity is the tongue gone berzerk. The

profane man is a swearomaniac. It is the mind out of control. To the non-Christian and Christian, we ask what good will profanity do? When the tire goes flat, profanity will not put air in it.

When you stub your toe, profanity will not stop the pain. There is nothing about profanity that makes it desirable or attractive!

Have you ever thought about what profanity says? First of all it says that the profane man is ignorant. There are over four hundred thousand words in the English language, yet the profane person can't speak a half dozen words without cursing.

Profanity speaks loud and clear about the human heart. Jesus said in Matthew 12:34, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Paul wrote in Eph. 4:29, "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Profanity is a prayer to God to carry out a curse of revenge. Jesus taught us though to love our enemies. (Matthew 5:44) We are to love our neighbor not curse our neighbor. (Matthew 22:39) Good reader, God does not want to damn any man. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. (Ezk. 33:11) God wants all men to be saved. (I Tim. 2:4) He wants no man to be doomed (II Pet. 3:9) If a man is to be damned, he will damn himself through his disobedience. Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." John 3:17 says "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

Multitudes are guilty of profanity through the use of by-words, such as *lordly*, *golly*, *gosh*, *for goodness sake*, *good*

gracious, hallelujah, etc.

James summed it all in James 3:10 by saying, "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be."

Secondly, let us suggest that we can violate this commandment through hypocrisy. Someone has observed that profanity in the church is far worse than profanity on the street!

Jesus said in Matthew 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." In Luke 6:46 the Lord cried out, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" Paul in rebuking the hypocritical Jewish Christians in Rome, said their conduct had blasphemed the name of God. (Rom. 2:24)

The hypocrisy that manifests itself in worship, drags the name of God in the mud. We gather together in the name of Jesus. (Matthew 18:20) In Col. 3:17 Paul wrote, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." In our worship, we praise the name of God. In prayer, we invoke the name of God. We preach about his name. We honor his name by giving and through our participation in the Lord's Supper. Paul said there would be those who profess that they know God but by their works they deny him. (Titus 1:16) This happens at each worship service. When it does, God's name is profaned.

In the third place, we profane God's name when we use it in a frivolous manner. The name of God is often used in jokes or stories. This kind of usage robs God's name of the sacredness and reverence that it deserves. In Eph. 5:4 Paul wrote, "Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks." Jesus warned in Matthew 12:36—37, "But I say unto you, That every idle word

that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

Next, men often abuse the name of God in a presumptuous manner. In Acts 19:13 we are told that exorcists took upon them to name over them that had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, “I adjure thee by whom Paul preached.” Those who did this were the seven sons of Sceva, a chief priest. (Acts 19:14) These Jews were using the name of Jesus like a charm or some magical chant. Certainly we have learned recently from the tragedy in Jonestown, Guyana, South America, that not all who use the name of Jesus are of Jesus!

In the fifth place empty oaths and vain vows use the name of God profanely. Jesus said in Matthew 5:34, “But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God’s throne.” James later wrote, “But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.” Our Lord and the Apostle James are not forbidding the judicial oaths that we are familiar with today. They forbade oaths that used the holy and sacred with no intention of keeping them. The Jews were using everything but the name of God to guarantee their empty oaths. They uttered oaths with their mouths but annulled them with their hearts. Our modern day equivalent may be the uttering of a solemn statement with our fingers crossed behind our back!

In Deut. 23:21, Moses wrote, “When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not slack to pay it; for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee; and it would be sin in thee.” Christians like the Jews are married to God. Paul declared in Rom. 7:4, “Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto god.” We should be

faithful to our wedding vows! Many Christians like the Israelites of old are not faithful. Jer. 2:32 tells us, "Can a maid forget her ornaments, or a bride her attire? Yet my people have forgotten me days without number."

In 1933 earthquakes devastated Japan. Thousands lost their lives and homes. The United States sent millions of dollars in aid. The Japanese people vowed that they would never forget. Yet, on December 7, 1941 they bombed Pearl Harbor and fourteen hundred Americans lives were lost!

God has done much to aid man, when he was down and out. He must not forget to be true to the vows which invoked the name of God, as he cried out for relief in the valley of affliction!

In the sixth point of this lesson let us note the right way to use the name of God. We must hallow it. Jesus taught, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:9—10) Paul later wrote in Romans 10:13, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." We must believe on God's name. Peter told Cornelius and his household, "To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." (Acts 10:43) Repentance is to be preached in God's name. (Luke 24:47) We must confess the sweet name of Jesus. The Ethiopian Eunuch said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (Acts 8:37) Paul wrote in Romans 10:9—10, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Jesus said that men are to be baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (Matthew 28:19) We should wear the name. Peter wrote, "but if a man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God in this name." (I Peter 4:16) All that we do is to be done in Jesus

name. (Col. 3:17) Our lips must praise the name of our God. (Heb. 13:15)

Finally, let us consider the consequences of profaning the name of God. Our text said, that God will not hold us guiltless. The word, *guiltless* means, *clean*. God will not view the profane man as clean. John wrote in Revelation 21:27, “And there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”

My friends the name of God is man’s last refuge. Man often stands with his heart broken, his dreams shattered, in want, destitute, without strength. When youth fades away and old age comes, when man lies upon a bed of agony and pain, and when the cold icy fingers of death have him by the throat, man calls upon the name that is above every name. It is the only name that can save, forgive the erring, console, and give hope in the world beyond.

How tragic it must be for the profane man, when he calls finally, if ever, on the name, he has used and abused.

Why not make up your mind to use the name of God properly? If you are not a Christian, won’t you call upon the name of the Lord? Peter said, “And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.” (Acts 2:21) We learn how to call upon the name of the Lord in Acts 2:38—39 which state, “Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

Again in Romans 10:13 Paul penned, “For whosoever shall

call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” How do you do this? Ananias said to Saul of Tarsus, “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.” (Acts 22:16)

THE SABBATH DAY

Introduction:

1. First commandment says worship God
2. Second command forbids idolatry
3. Third command demands reverence for God's name
4. The fourth commandment is found in Exodus 20:8—11
5. More words are used to instruct the Jews in this command, than in any other

I. Remember

- A. *Remember* means, *don't forget* or *observe faithfully*
- B. Remember implies that people knew something
- C. Some say Sabbath observed since Adam
- D. No indication this is true
- E. First time Sabbath mentioned—Exodus 16:33
- F. Lord's Supper introduced before New Testament in force
- G. Exodus 16:4—to test or prove
- H. Manna not provided on 7th day
 - I. Sixth day gather two days
- J. Neh. 9:13—14 and Ezk. 20:10—12 show Sabbath binding after Mount Sinai

II. Sabbath Day

- A. *Sabbath* means, *to cease, desist, seventh, or week.*
- B. Not just one day in seven
- C. Every 50 years
 1. Sabbath days—2,600 days
 2. Passover—100 days
 3. Day of First Fruits—50 days
 4. Feast of Trumpets—50 days
 5. Feast of Tabernacles—50 days
 6. Sabbath of Years—2,520 days
 7. Years of Jubilee—365 days
 8. Day of Atonement—50 days

- D. Every 50 years, 5,785 Sabbath days
- E. Almost sixteen years of the fifty are Sabbaths

III. Keep It Holy

- A. How?
- B. Work six days—rest on seventh—Mk. 6:31
- C. Why? God did!
- D. Gen. 2:15, John 5:17, Eph. 4:28, II Thess., Mk. 6:31
- E. Consequences of disobedience
 - 1. Exodus 34:21
 - 2. Neb. 13:15
 - 3. Jer. 17:20
 - 4. Amos 8:5
 - 5. Numbers 15:32
 - 6. Exodus 35:3

IV. Why Keep Sabbath?

- A. Rest
 - 1. Ex. 20:10
 - 2. Deut. 5:14
- B. Remember—Deut. 5:15
- C. Sign—Exodus 31:17
- D. Worship—Lev. 26:2

V. New Testament and the Sabbath

- A. Christ kept Sabbath
 - 1. Gal. 4:4
 - 2. Mark 2:27—28
- B. Paul kept Sabbath
 - 1. Did so to preach to Jews—Acts 13:14—49
 - 2. Hebrews 4:9
 - a. Context
 - b. Israel fell wilderness—no enter Canaan rest
 - c. We too can fall—fail enter heaven
- C. New Testament teaches the Sabbath abolished
 - 1. II Cor. 3:6, 14
 - 2. Gal. 5:4

3. Eph. 2:15
 4. Col. 2:14—17
 5. Heb. 7:12, 8:6, 9:15
 6. Sabbath not changed by Constantine 321 A. D.
 7. Sabbath changed by God!
- D. First day greater Sabbath day**
1. Greatest event history—resurrection on first day—
Mark 16:1—9
 2. Greatest memorial—Lord's supper on first day Acts
20:7
 3. Greatest blessing—giving on first day I Cor. 16:1—2
 4. Greatest institution—church began on the first
day—Acts 2:1—47
 5. Greatest message—gospel—heard on the first day
Acts 2:1—47
 6. First day called—Lord's day. Rev. 1:10

Conclusion:

1. No Christian Sabbath
2. We must remember the Lord's day and keep it holy

The Sabbath Day

The first commandment urges man to worship God. The second forbids idolatry. The third requires reverence for God's name. The fourth command asks that a special day be observed.

It is interesting to note that more words were used to instruct the Jews, than in any of the other nine. The text is Ex. 20:8 which says, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy."

Let's now take a closer look at our text by breaking it down into its component parts.

First of all let us note the word *remember*. This word means, do not forget or observe faithfully. The word *remember* may also imply that the Jews may have known something about the Sabbath. There are those who believe that the Sabbath was observeth by all men beginning with Adam. There is no indication of that in the Old Testament.

The first time the word Sabbath appears in the Bible is in Ex. 16:23 which says, "And he said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, Tomorrow is the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord: bake that which ye will bake today, and seethe that ye will seethe; and that which remaineth over lay up for you to be kept until the morning." Someone said, doesn't this verse which comes before our text, show that the Sabbath day was already being observed? No! The Lord's Supper was introduced by Jesus to the Apostles before his death and the beginning of the kingdom or church that it was to be observed in. We all clearly recognize the Lord's Supper as a part of the New Testament. Note Exodus 16:4, "Then said the Lord unto Moses, Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a certain rate every day, that I may prove them, whether they will walk in my law, or no."

From this verse, we learn that he put his people to the test to see if they would obey his will. The manna was to be provided on the seventh day. On the sixth day, two days worth was to be gathered. The seventh day was to be a day of rest. It is generally believed that this little bit of foreknowledge helped to prepare the people to observe the Sabbath day which was yet to come.

That the Sabbath was not observed before Sinai can be seen in Neh. 9:13—14 which says, “Thou comest down also upon mount Sinai, and spakest with them from heaven, and gavest them right judgments, and laws, good statutes and commandments: And madest known unto them thy holy sabbath, and commandest them precepts, statutes, and laws, by the hand of Moses thy servant.” See also Ezk. 20:10—12

Secondly, we must now focus our attention on the words, *Sabbath Day*. The word *Sabbath* has been translated, *to cease, desist, seventh, and week*. The word Sabbath was not only used to refer to one day out of seven. There were actually eight classes of Sabbaths. Lev. 26:2 says, “Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord.”

Every fifty years there were 2,600 regular weekly Sabbath days. There were 100 special Sabbaths known as the Passover. The Day of First Fruits came 50 times. The feast of the Trumpets and the Feast of the Tabernacle came 50 times. The Sabbath of years came 2,520 times. The years of Jubilee came 365 times. The day of atonement appeared 50 times. This means that in fifty years there were 5,785 Sabbath days. Almost 16 years of the 50 were Sabbaths!

Keep it holy, is the third point of this lesson. How was this to be done? The Jews were to work six days and rest the Sabbath. Why? Because God did. Gen. 2:2 says, “And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.”

Let it be said, that this commandment does not degrade work. Gen. 2:15 states, "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it." Jesus declared in John 5:17, "... My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Paul boldly proclaimed in II Thess. 3:10, "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." This command recognizes something so many seem to have forgotten in 1979 and that is that there comes a time to cease from our labors. Jesus taught the Apostles this in Mark 6:31 which reads, "And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat."

On the Sabbath the Jews were not allowed to plow or reap, Ex. 34:21; press wine or carry goods, Neh. 13:15; kindle a cooking fire, Ex. 35:3; bear burdens, Jer. 17:20; trade, Amos 8:5; or even pick up sticks, Num. 15:32—36. Those who violated these laws were put to death!

In the fourth place, why did God command the Jews to keep the Sabbath? To begin with as we have already suggested, it was to be, a day of rest for man and beast. (Ex. 20:10, Deut. 5:14) Next, the Sabbath was a day to remember. Ex. 20:11 teaches that the Jews were to remember that God created the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all that in them is. Deut. 5:15 tells us, "And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord thy God brought out thee thence through a mighty hand and by stretched out arm: therefore the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the Sabbath day." Furthermore, the Sabbath was a sign. Ex. 31:17 declares, "It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days the Lord made heaven and the earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed." Finally, the Sabbath was a day set aside to worship God. In Lev. 26:2 God said, "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I am the Lord."

Finally, let us observe what the New Testament has to say about the Sabbath. It is often argued that Jesus kept the Sabbath and so should we. It is true, Jesus did faithfully observe the Sabbath day. Paul wrote of Jesus, "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, born under the law." (Gal. 4:4) Yes, Jesus was born a Jew. He lived and died under the Old Testament law of Moses. Jesus pointed out some Jewish misconceptions of the Sabbath in Mark 2:27—28, "And he said unto them. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath; Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath."

Others preach that Paul kept the Sabbath. They point to verses like Acts 13:14—49. If the reader will check these verses, he will find that Paul went into the synagogue in the Sabbath day in order to preach the gospel! He certainly did not do so to observe the Sabbath. Many point to Hebrews 4:9 which says, "There remaineth therefore a Sabbath rest to the people of God." If you examine the context you will find that Paul pointed out that Israel wandered in the wilderness and failed to enter into the Canaan rest. He uses Israel as an example to warn Christians, that we too could perish in the wilderness of this world and fail to enter into our rest, better known as heaven.

The New Testament teaches that the observance of the Sabbath day was abolished. Paul wrote in II Cor. 3:6, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." In Gal. 5:4 he penned, "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Col. 2:14 states, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross." Consider also Col. 2:16—17, "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holiday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ." The Hebrew writer taught us in Heb. 7:12, "For the

priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." Hebrews 8:6 says, "But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises." Note Hebrews 9:15—17, "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."

These New Testament verses teach what was foretold by the Old Testament prophets. Eight hundred years before Christ Jeremiah said in Jer. 31:31—33, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

We are told that the Sabbath was changed first by Constantine in 321 A. D. My friends, the Sabbath was abolished by God! The first Pentecost after the resurrection (Acts 2:1), was the first observance of the first day of the week by Christians. The change was made possible as we have noted by the death of Jesus. He nailed the old law to the cross.

The first day of the week is superior to the Sabbath day. On the first day of the week, the greatest event in human history, the resurrection of Christ occurred. (Mk. 16:1—9) Our Lord appeared on the first day of the week five times after his

resurrection. Rom. 1:4 says, "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."

The observance of the communion, Lord's Supper, or the breaking of the bread, on the first day of the week, shows its superiority over the Sabbath. (Acts 20:7)

The early Christians were not commanded to tithe on the Sabbath, but to lay by in store as they prospered, on the first day of the week. (I Cor. 16:1—2)

As we have already observed, the church began on Pentecost, the first day of the week, which came fifty days after the passover. (Lev. 23:15) On that first day (Pentecost), the first gospel sermon was preached and three thousand people became Christians. (Acts 2:1—47)

The first day of the week is also known as the Lord's day. Rev. 1:10 says, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day ..."

Batsel Barrett Baxter in an article in the **Gospel Advocate** pointed out a few years ago, that the average life span is made up of ten years of Sundays! How will we use that large block of time? We must remember the Lord's day.

It is a day that belongs to Jesus. Yet, even in the church, the cry is heard that Sunday is the only day I have to relax and enjoy myself. Wrong! Sunday is the only day we do not have for ourselves.

The first day of the week is not the Christian Sabbath! Let us thank God that we do not have to observe the Sabbath.

HONORING PARENTS

Introduction:

1. Ten Commandments—divided two sections
2. Four deal with man's relation to God
3. Six deal with man's relation to man
4. Thus, man's obligations are two fold
 - a. vertical
 - b. horizontal
5. Never please God until we meet both obligations
6. Exodus 20:12
7. Deut. 5:16
8. Lev. 19:3
9. Eph. 6:1—4
10. It is worth noting, that the first of the commands that deal with man's relation with man speak of parents.
11. This shows its importance
12. Don't forget that if the first four commands were not kept, the fifth command would be no value.

I. Honor

- A. *Honor means, reverence, respect, high esteem, to acknowledge the value or worth there of.*
- B. Never call them, *the old man or old lady.*
 1. Lev. 19:3
 2. Lev. 19:32
 3. I Tim. 5:4

II. Why Honor?

- A. Gave us life
- B. Sustained us—no care self
- C. Gratitude—II Tim. 3:2
- D. Prepare us to honor God

III. How Honor?

A. Obey

1. Proverbs 1:8

2. Eph. 6:1—2

a. in Lord

b. right, God's will, Col. 3:20

B. Reverse—parents obey children—right!

C. Consequences of disobedience

1. Deut. 21:18

2. Deut. 21:21

D. Time disobey? Matthew 10:37

E. Not curse

1. Ex. 21:17

2. Prov. 20:20

F. Not mock—Prov. 30:17

G. No strike—Ex. 21—15

H. Parents cared for us in time of need

1. What we do, when they old—helpless?

2. Heathen left die

3. Jews—Mark 7:11—12

4. The Bible

a. Proverbs 23:22

b. I Tim. 5:4, 8, 16

c. No walk—we carry, no eat—we feed, no dress—we dress

5. Jesus' example

a. Luke 2:51

b. John 19:27

IV. Parents will Be Honored If They Will Live Honorably

A. Parents set example—II Tim. 1:5, Gen. 18:19

B. Parents must instruct—II Tim. 3:15

C. Parents must lead—Proverbs 22:6

D. Parents must discipline—Eph. 6:4

V. The Blessings

A. Land promise connected, Ex. 20:12

B. Length of life—Eph. 6:1—4

Conclusion:

Romans 1:30—32

Honoring Parents

The Ten Commandments can be divided into two sections. The first four commandments deal with man's relationship with God. The last six commands regulate man's relationship with man. Thus, man's obligations are both vertical and horizontal. Surely, we learn from a study of the ten commandments, that God will not be pleased, until we meet our obligations to both God and man!

Our text is found in Exodus.20:12 which says, "Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." The Deuteronomy account (Deut. 5:16) differs slightly. This commandment was restated in a little different language in Lev. 19:3, "Ye shall fear every man his mother, and his father, and keep my sabbaths: I am the Lord your God." Our Lord referred to the command twice and Paul quoted it once in the New Testament.

Note if you will that this command is the first of the commandments dealing with man's relationship to man. This ought to tell us something about its importance. We might also point out that the keeping of the first four commandments would make it easier to keep the fifth.

Let us begin our discussion of the fifth commandment by looking at the word *honor*. It means, *reverence, respect, high esteem, and to acknowledge worth or value*. Certainly, when people address their parents as the old man or old lady, they are in violation of this law. In Leviticus 19:32 Moses wrote, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord." Paul told Timothy, "But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God." (I Timothy 5:4)

In the second place, why should we honor our parents? We should honor our parents because they gave us life. They sustained us. They cared for us when we could not care for ourselves. Out of sheer gratitude, we should want to hold our parents in high esteem. Paul declared in the latter times men would be characterized by ingratitude. (II Timothy 3:2)

Someone has suggested that honoring our parents prepares us to honor God. There is a sense in which our parents were our first God. We looked to them as babies and children to supply our each and every need, just as Christians who are children of God, rely upon their Heavenly Father.

Thirdly, how should we honor parents? We honor our parents, when we obey them. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 1:8, "My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother." Paul penned these words in Ephesians 6:1—3, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." What did Paul mean when he said that children were to obey their parents *in the Lord*? Does this mean that children should obey parents who are *in the Lord*? Could it be that these verses refer to children who are *in the Lord*? Neither of these two explanations are reasonable. The phrase *in the Lord* refers to that which is in harmony with God's will.

Colossians 3:20 says, "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Today of course the prevailing attitude is, *parents obey your children for this is right!* The consequences of failing to obey parents are disastrous. Deuteronomy 21:18—21 says, "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, which will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them: Then shall his father and his mother lay hold on him, and bring him out unto the elders of his city, and unto the gate of his place; And they

shall say unto the elders of his city, This our son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton, and a drunkard. And all the men of his city shall stone him with stones, till he die: so shalt thou put evil away from among you; and all Israel shall hear, and fear." Note also Romans 1:30—32 which says, "Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Is there ever time to disobey our parents? Yes, when parents hinder one's obedience to the will of God. Children must put God first. Jesus said in Matthew 10:37, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Note also Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

We can honor our parents by not cursing them. Exodus 21:17 states, "And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death." In Leviticus 20:9 Moses wrote, "For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him."

Parents are honored by children, who will not mock and despise them. The wise man Solomon taught us, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it. (Proverbs 30:17)

A failure to strike one's parents offers them the reverence and respect, they deserve. Moses told Israel, "And he that smiteth his father, or his mother, shall be surely put to death." (Exodus 21:15)

We can acknowledge the value or worth of our parents by caring for them in time of need. What are we going to do with our parents when they get old and helpless? The ancient heathen left them to die.

Many Jews in Jesus' day sought to relieve themselves of the responsibility of caring for their parents. Jesus pointed this out in Mark 7:11—12 which says, "But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother."

The Bible has a great deal to say about our responsibility to care for our aged and helpless parents. Solomon said, "Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old." Paul wrote in I Timothy 5:4, "But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God." In I Timothy 5:8 Paul told Timothy, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel." Again Timothy was instructed, "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." I Tim. 5:16.

Good readers, when our parents cannot walk, we should carry them. When they cannot feed themselves, we should feed them. When our parents cannot dress themselves, we should dress them.

Jesus set an example for all of us to follow. In Luke 2:51, we are told, "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them ..." Even while on the cross Jesus thought of taking care of his mother. In John 19:27 we are told, "Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from

that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.”

Fourthly, parents must live honorably if they are to be honored. A good example would be Eunice. Paul said that she had an unfeigned faith. This faith had been passed on to Timothy. From a babe Timothy had known the sacred writings which are able to make one wise unto salvation. (II Timothy 1:5, 3:15) Abraham was an honorable father worthy of the honor that God requires. Genesis 18:19 offers this description of Abraham. “For I know him that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”

Parents who should be honored are those who discipline their children. Ephesians 6:4 says, “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Parents who wish to be respected should also be parents who give their children the leadership that they need. Proverbs 22:6 states, “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”

Finally, let's note the blessing connected with keeping the fifth commandment. From the accounts in Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Ephesians, we learn that its observance is connected with the land of Canaan promise that God made to Israel. Length of days and happiness are promised to those who keep this command.

HUMAN LIFE IS SACRED

Introduction:

1. Ex. 20:13
2. Kill—murder, slay
3. All life precious—Genesis 1:27, 2:7
4. Jesus' death

I. Things Not Forbidden

A. Killing of animals—Gen. 9:3

B. Self defense

1. Ex. 22:2
2. Num. 35:13—15
3. Matthew 24:43
4. Acts 23:24

C. Capital punishment

1. Gen. 9:6
2. Ex. 21:12
3. Num. 15:32—36
4. Lev. 24:17
5. Acts 25:10—11
6. Rom. 13:1, 4

D. All war

1. Ecc. 3:1, 8
2. Num. 21:14
3. Lk. 3:14
4. Acts 10:1—2
5. Rom. 12:18

II. Things Forbidden

A. Deliberate, pre-meditated murder—Gen. 4:5, 8

B. Abortion

1. Psm. 127:3
2. Gen. 25:22
3. Jer. 1:5

4. Lk. 1:41
- C. Suicide
 1. Ahithophel—II Sam. 17:23
 2. Zimri—I King 16:18
 3. Abimelech—Judges 9:24
 4. Sampson—Judges 16:23—31
 5. Saul – I Sam. 31:4—5
 6. Judas—Matthew 27:3—5
 7. Why Suicide wrong?
 - a. violates—Rom. 13:9
 - b. against nature
 - c. shows lack trust God—Heb. 13:5
 - d. sin against family and friends—Mt. 7:12
 - e. sin against body — selfish II Tim. 3:2
 - f. play God
- D. Euthanasia
 1. When better life end?
 2. Incurable—define it
 3. Who decides?
 4. Who carry it out?
 5. Abuse other unwanted groups
 6. Against all national laws
- E. Indirect—Proxy
 1. David—II Sam. 11:15
 2. Liquor, drugs, immorality
 3. Neglect
 4. Over-indulgence
 5. Unnecessary risks
- F. Destructive Emotions
 1. Matthew 5:21—22
 2. I John 3:15
 3. I John 4:20

III. Killing the Soul

- A. Home—godless parents
- B. School—teachers
- C. Society—laws

D. Church—liberalism

IV. Greatest Murder of All

- A. Acts 2:23
- B. Acts 3:15
- C. Acts 10:39

Conclusion:

- 1. No take life
- 2. Guilty
 - a. hate
 - b. indirect
 - c. soul

Human Life is Sacred

In Exodus 20:13 God said, "Thou shalt not kill." The Hebrew word for kill is *ratsach*. It can also be translated, "murder or slay." In a world where life is cheap, this commandment brings us face to face with the sacredness of human life. Every life is precious because God made it. Each life is valuable because we are made in God's image. There is a spark of divinity in every human being. (See Genesis 1:27, 2:7) The worth of each person can be seen in the fact that when man went astray, God sent his only begotten son. Yes, in the midnight darkness, Jesus shed his rich, red, royal, blood for us. (Jno. 3:16, Rom. 5:8—9)

Now as we begin our examination of this commandment, let us note first of all, some things not forbidden by this law.

The killing of animals is not forbidden. Noah was told in Genesis 9:3, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things." The Jews offered sheep, oxen, doves, etc. as sacrifices to God under Jewish law. Our Lord ate the Passover lamb every time he observed this annual Jewish feast.

Self-defense is not forbidden. Exodus 22:2 states, "If a thief be found breaking up, and be smitten that he die, there shall no blood be shed for him." Note also Numbers 35:13—15, "And of these cities which ye shall give six cities shall ye have for refuge. Ye shall give three cities on this side of Jordan, and three cities shall ye give in the land of Canaan, which shall be cities of refuge. These six cities shall be a refuge, both for the children of Israel, and for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them; that every one that killeth any person unawares may flee thither." Jesus taught this in Matthew 24:43, "But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would

not have suffered his house to be broken up." Two hundred soldiers were used to escort Paul to the governor Felix. This was done to protect Paul from a band of Jews who had vowed to kill him. (Acts 23:12—24)

In my judgment capital punishment is not forbidden by this commandment. Genesis 9:6 says, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." Moses wrote in Exodus 21:12, "He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death." Consider Numbers 15:32—36, "And while the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the sabbath day. And they that found him gathering sticks brought him unto Moses and Aaron, and unto all the congregation. And they put him inward, because it was not declared what should be done to him. And the Lord said unto Moses, the man shall be surely put to death: all the congregation shall stone him with stones without the camp. And all the congregation brought him without the camp, and stoned him with stones, and he died; as the Lord commanded Moses." Leviticus 24:14 states, "Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him." Summing it up we can say that the death penalty was used for those who were guilty of murder, child sacrifice, manslaughter, allowing a dangerous ox to go uncontrolled, false witness, kidnapping, insulting or injuring parents, and immorality.

The New Testament attitude towards capital punishment can be summed up in Romans 13:1—4, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to

thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

All forms of war are not forbidden. Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 3:1, "to everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." In verse eight he declared, "a time of love, a time to hate, a time of war, and a time of peace." In Numbers 21:14 we read of, "the book of the wars of the Lord, what he did in the Red Sea, and in the brooks of Arnon." When soldiers came to John the Baptist wanting to know what to do, John said in Luke 3:14, "... do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." Notice, he did not tell them to leave the army. A gentile soldier named Cornelius was described this way in Acts 10:1—2. "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian band, a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway." After his conversion, he was not instructed by Peter to leave the army. Perhaps Paul sums it up in Romans 12:18, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." That is not always possible.

In the second place, there are several things forbidden by this commandment.

Certainly, deliberate, pre-meditated murder is forbidden. A good example of this is the murder of Abel by his brother Cain. Cain and Abel worshipped God. Cain's offering was rejected. He became very wroth and his countenance fell. (Genesis 4:5) He then rose up against Abel his brother and slew him. (Genesis 4:8) Cain slew Abel because his works were evil and his brother's righteous. (1 John 3:12) Jude said, woe unto them who have gone the way of Cain. (Jude 11)

Abortion is forbidden by this commandment. We are told

that that which is within the mother is just a mass of tissue. It is not real person. That is not true! Genesis 25:22 says of Rebecca, "And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to enquire of the Lord." God said to Jeremiah, "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." (Jeremiah 1:15) When Elizabeth heard that Mary was to give birth to the Son of God, the babe leaped in her womb! (Luke 1:41) Good readers, abortion is murder! We are murdering as many as one to three million babies a year. Only God knows what the true number is.

Well, what if you have a situation, where either the mother or baby will have to die because of complications? What if you had to choose between the mother's or baby's life? Certainly this situation does arise. There are no easy solutions. If I had to choose, I'd choose to save the mother's life. Somehow, I believe that God would understand. There is a world of difference between a situation like this and the deliberate choice to murder a child because of two people's sexual misconduct!

Suicide is forbidden by this great law. There were seven people who committed suicide in the Biblical record. Ahitophel, II Samuel 17:23; Zimri, I Kings 16:18; Abimelech, Judah 9:54; Samson, Judg. 16:23—31; Saul, I Samuel 31:4—5; and Judas, Matthew 27:3—5.

Why is suicide wrong? It is a direct violation of a commandment that is stated in both the Old and New Testaments. (Exodus 20:13, Romans 13:9) Suicide is against nature. The natural thing is to fight to stay alive. Suicide demonstrates a lack of trust in God. Hebrews 13:5—6 says "... I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that with good courage we say, the Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." Suicide is a sin against family and friends. Jesus taught in Matthew 7:12, "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." Suicide is selfish. Paul predicted that in the last days there would be men who would be lovers of self. (II Timothy 3:2) When men take their own lives, they play a role that God alone has the right to play. God and not man should decide when life is to end.

Euthanasia or mercy killing is forbidden by this command. We are told today that it is merciful to terminate the lives of many who are sick. We are told that there comes a time when it is better for life to end. But when is it better for life to end? We hear that its best for the incurable to have their lives terminated. Who can define incurable? Many diseases once thought incurable are now curable! Who shall decide when life must end? Will the doctor, the family, a panel, or the person himself do it? Who will terminate the patient's life and play God? Would not euthanasia be extended to the old, the retarded, and deformed? If not why not? The potential for abuses is enormous.

The taking of a life indirectly or by proxy is forbidden by this law. David killed Uriah by sending him to the forefront of the hottest battle. (II Samuel 11:15) He may not of actually killed Uriah, but David murdered him. What about those who sell liquor, drugs, immorality, and contaminated food? Many people die as a result of partaking of these things. What about a landlord who neglects the wiring or roof of a house that he owns. When that house catches on fire or that roof collapses and someone is killed, is he not indirectly responsible? What about people who die each year because of over-indulgence? Many people are guilty of taking unnecessary risks. They often are killed because they continue to work and live in unsafe conditions.

Destructive emotions are covered by this commandment. Jesus said in Matthew 5:21—22, "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.” John wrote in I John 3:15, “Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.” It could be no plainer than I John 4:20. “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”

Thirdly, it seems to me that killing the soul is forbidden also. The souls of our children are murdered in homes with godless parents. Thirty eight million children never go to Sunday school in America each week. The youth of our nation and around the world need the influence, instruction, and example of Christian parents. (Ephesians 6:4, Proverbs 22:6) The schools of our land that teach evolution and atheism are slaying the spirits of our youth. In America we have put LSD in our schools and we have kicked out G-O-D! Our society contributes to the death of our souls. Abortion is okay. But let the bald eagle, and endangered species be threatened and you’ll never hear the end of it. Human life is not as important as our environment! We have got it all turned around. God made the world for man’s benefit. (Genesis 1:28—31) Man was not made for the benefit of the environment! Worst of all, the so called theologians of our world with their liberalism are damning the souls of untold millions to hell. The tragedy of tragedies is that many churches of Christ are just as guilty as the denominational world. We not only have liberalism, we also have ignorance, narrowmindedness, and apathy. These things are killing us!

Finally, let’s say something about the greatest murder at all, the murder of Jesus. Peter declared in Acts 2:23, “Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge

of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." He also said in Acts 3:15, "And killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnessess." Peter told the household of Cornelius that the Jews slew Jesus, hanging him on a tree. (Acts 10:39) Yes, on that old rugged cross hung the answer to man's greatest problem, sin, and man crucified him! Let us thank God that we can be forgiven of this hideous crime by obeying the gospel.

In summation, we have learned that it is sinful to kill body or soul, whether directly or indirectly.

MORALITY A MUST

Introduction:

1. Adultery tearing society—church apart
2. No pleasant subject
3. Rather be silent
4. Exodus 20:14

I. What Is Adultery?

- A. Adultery akin to idolatry
- B. Unlawful sexual relationships
- C. Four kinds of adultery
 1. Physical adultery
 - a. Genesis 2:18, 24
 - b. Lev. 18:20
 - c. II Samuel 11:4
 - d. Jer. 5:7, 9
 - e. I Cor. 7:2
 2. Mental adultery
 - a. Matthew 15:19
 - b. Matthew 5:27—28
 - c. Proverbs 23:7
 - d. II Peter 2:14
 3. Legal adultery
 - a. Civil law
 - b. Matthew 19:6
 - c. Romans 7:2
 - d. Matthew 19:9
 - e. Other reasons?
 - f. What to do
 4. Spiritual adultery
 - a. Jer. 3:9
 - b. Romans 7:4
 - c. II Cor. 11:2
 - d. Jas. 4:4

- e. Ezk. 16:32, 35
- D. Command forbids

II. Curse of Adultery

- A. Lev. 20:10
- B. Prov. 6:22—29, 32
- C. Heb. 13:4
- D. Rev. 21:8

III. Why Is Adultery Wrong?

- A. Sin society—Proverbs 14:34
- B. Home destroyer—Mal. 2:16
- C. Sin body — I Cor. 6:18
- D. Sin personality—Psm. 51—3
- E. Sin soul—Proverbs 6:32
- F. Sin God—Gen. 39:9, II Sam. 12:13

IV. What Do If Commit Adultery?

- A. Can be forgiven—John 4:18
 - 1. John 8:11
 - 2. I Cor. 6:9
 - 3. Acts 18:8
- B. Second law pardon
 - 1. Gal. 6:1
 - 2. Jas. 5:16
 - 3. I John 1:9
- C. Stay away from these

Conclusion:

- 1. Command condemns act adultery
- 2. Command condemns attitude leads to adultery
- 3. The curse of adultery
- 4. Hope of forgiveness!

Morality A Must

The sin of adultery is tearing our nation and the church apart. We are not dealing with a pleasant subject. Adultery is a word that conjures up the worst of thoughts. We wish that we could skip over this commandment. We would rather be silent on sexual perversion. Yet, the time is long overdue to cry aloud and spare not. Like Paul, we must preach the whole counsel of God! (Acts 20:27)

Our text is Exodus 20:14 which says, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." We are simply commanded not to engage in adultery. No reason is given for this command and none is required.

Let us begin our discussion by asking, what is adultery? Adultery is a word that comes from a root word that is akin to idolatry. Adultery is unlawful sexual relations between two people who are married but not to each other. Adultery is a sexual relationship between one single person and a married person. Often fornication and adultery are used synonymously.

In an effort to define adultery, we shall discuss four kinds of adultery mentioned in the Bible.

First there is physical adultery. God said in Genesis 2:18, "...It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him." He also declared, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Moses told Israel, "Moreover thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neighbour's wife, to defile thyself with her." (Leviticus 18:20) David committed physical adultery. II Samuel 11:4 says of Bathsheba and David, "And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her

uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.”

God said in Jeremiah 5:7, “How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots houses.” Note also Jeremiah 5:9, “Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” Paul wrote, “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” (I Cor. 7:2)

Secondly, there is mental adultery. Jesus said that adultery and fornication begin in the heart. (Matthew 15:19) In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord taught, “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.” Solomon declared, “For as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he ...” Peter wrote of those who had eyes of adultery, who could not cease from sin. (II Peter 2:14)

Thirdly, there is legal adultery. There are multitudes who are considered married according to civil law. Yet, they have no right to be married according God’s law. Jesus said, “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” (Matthew 19:6) Paul wrote in Romans 7:2, “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.” Our Lord was crystal clear when he taught, “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” (Matthew 19:9) Divorce for any reason other than fornication is not acceptable to God. Well what should people do who are married but not in harmony with

God's laws? I know this sounds harsh but they must break up. They should live apart. What if there are children involved? The parents should make proper provisions to care for them. This is the only safe and sensible position to take. No one ever said that living for Jesus would be easy!

In the fourth place, there is spiritual adultery. Jeremiah 3:9 describes Old Testament Israel, "And it came to pass through the lightness of her whoredom, that she defiled the land, and committed adultery with stones and with stocks." Paul taught that we are married to Christ. Romans 7:4 says, "Wherefore my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." Note also II Corinthians 11:2 which reads, "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ." James tells us that we can committ adultery with the world. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." (James 4:4) See also Ezk. 16:32, 35.

Finally, this commandment not only forbids adultery and fornication, it forbids rape, seduction, lewdness, wantonness, lasciviousness, polygamy, sodomy, whoredom, homosexuality, bestiality, and pornography!

In the second major point of this lesson, we should do well to look at the curse of those connected with violating this commandment. Moses wrote, "And the man that commiteth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death." (Leviticus 20:10) Solomon taught, "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth in to his neighbour's wife;

whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.” (Proverbs 6:27—29) Consider also Proverbs 6:32, “But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.” Paul penned these words in Hebrews 13:4, “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” John wrote that fornicators or adulterers would be in hell. (Revelation 21:8, 27, 22:15)

Thirdly, why is adultery wrong? It is wrong because it is a sin against society. The wise king said, “Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people.” (Proverbs 14:34) Adultery destroys the home, the sacredness of motherhood and childhood. God declared in Mal. 2:16 that he hated the putting away. Adultery is a sin against one’s body. Paul taught, “Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” (I Corinthians 6:18) Venereal disease is at epidemic proportions. Adultery has a devastating impact on the personality. It leaves people ashamed. They also struggle with a guilt complex. David also struggled with a guilt complex. David is a good example of this. He cried out, “For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me.” (Psalms. 51:3) Adultery destroys the soul. “But whoso committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul.” (Proverbs 6:32) Adultery is a sin against God. Joseph said, “how can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9) David admitted that his adultery was a sin against God by saying, I have sinned against Jehovah. (II Samuel 12:13)

Finally, what can people do if they have committed adultery? What can we do to keep from committing adultery? Begin by knowing that adultery is a sin that can be forgiven. The woman at the well who had five husbands was offered a drink of the water of life. (John 4:1—26) Jesus was confronted by the Pharisees and Scribes, who brought to him a woman taken in

the very act of adultery. Jesus knew that they were not really concerned with the woman. They were wanting to find fault with Christ. Jesus wrote something on the ground. We are not told what he wrote. He may have written, you hypocrites! Then he asked those without sin to carry out the Jewish penalty of stoning to death the adulteress. Then he wrote again on the ground. We do not know what he wrote. He may have written, you sons of the Devil! One by one the accusers walked away. Jesus said in John 8:10-11. "...woman, where are they? Did no man condemn thee? And she said no man, Lord. Jesus said, neither do I condemn thee: go thy away; from henceforth sin no more." Jesus did not condone what she did. He called it what it was, a sin. Jesus offered hope to the hopeless, when he offered her a chance to start a new life.

The Corinthians were fornicators and adulterers before their conversion. (I Cor. 6:9) Their conversion is given in capsule form in Acts 18:8, "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized." Paul said that though in their past they were adulterers, they were washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God.

Furthermore, if Christians break this commandment, they need to be restored. Paul wrote in Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." James advised. "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." John wrote, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I Jno. 1:9)

We can avoid engaging in adultery by staying away from dancing, drinking, drugs, most movies, pornography, most

television, a lot of music, and petting! You may think that these are extreme suggestions. Well think again, for they all play a major role in motivating millions to committ adultery.

Let us learn that God not only forbids the acts of adultery. He also forbids the attitudes that preceed it. The curse upon those who engage in adultery is exceedingly plain. But thank God, that we can declare that adultery is not the unpardonable sin. There is hope for those caught in the web of adultery. It can be found only in Christ.

THEFT CONDEMNED

Introduction:

1. Violation of the first seven commands—punishable by death
2. Not last three
3. Exodus 20:15
4. Given protect right work, earn, save
5. Unlike Communism—stress dignity ownership

I. God Owns All

- A. Gen. 1:1
- B. Ex. 19:5
- C. Psm. 24:1, 50:10
- D. Hag. 2:8
- E. Jas. 1:17
- F. God holds first mortgage
- G. Not wrong own—Gen. 1:28

II. How Do We Violate This Command?

- A. Theft—I Pet. 4:15
- B. Extortion—Luke 3:14
- C. Cheat—Rom. 12:17, I Cor. 6:9—10
- D. Gambling—II Cor. 8:21
- E. Employee theft—Jas. 5:4
- E. Employer theft—Jas. 5:4
- G. False prophet—thief and robber—John 10
- H. Good Samaritan—Luke 10

III. Who Suffers?

- A. Victim—loss possessions
- B. Public—we pay
- C. Thief—I Cor. 6:9—11
- D. God—Mal. 3:8
 1. Time—Eph. 5:16

2. Mind—Matthew 22:38
 3. Body—Rom. 12:1
 4. Love—Matthew 22:37—39
- E. Lost souls

IV. How Can We Prevent Theft?

A. Old Testament

1. Prov. 23:5
2. Ecc. 5:10, 13

B. New Testament

1. I Tim. 6:7
2. II Peter 3:10:11

C. Jesus' teaching

1. Like 12:15
2. Heart. Matthew 15:17

D. Jesus' example

1. Matthew 8:20
2. Matthew 16:26

V. What Can We Do If Guilty?

- A. Repent—restitution—Luke 19:8
- B. Go work—Eph. 4:28

Conclusion:

1. It has always been wrong to steal.
2. The penalty for violation—hell!

Theft Condemned

It is interesting to note that the first seven commandments were punishable by death! The last three were not.

Our text is Exodus 20:15, which says, "Thou shalt not steal." This commandment was given to protect the right to work, earn and save. Unlike communism it emphasizes the dignity of ownership.

We begin our study of this commandment by pointing out that God owns all. Genesis 1:1 states, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Yes, God owns all, because he created all. "All the earth is mine!" (Exodus 19:5) "The earth is the Lord's! And the fulness thereof." (Psm. 24:1) "Every beast of the forest is mine and the cattle on a thousand hills." (Psm. 50:10) "The silver is mine, the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts." (Hag. 2:8)

God holds first mortgage on everything! It is not wrong to own things. It is God's will that we do so. God told man in Genesis 1:28—30, "..., Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so."

Secondly, how can and do we violate this commandment? Certainly theft is a direct violation of this sacred law. Someone has suggested that there are three ways to own or possess

property. We can receive something as a gift. We can work for property or we can steal it. Surely more than property can be stolen. We can steal things like innocence character, reputation, and spirituality. I Peter 4:15 says, "But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busy body in other men's matters."

Extortion, the use of force to obtain the object of one's desire, is a transgression of this divine principle. Extortion is often seen in the world of crime and business. John the Baptist said to publicans and soldiers, "... Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, extort from no man by violence, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." (Lk. 3:14)

Cheating, deception, fraud, call it what you may, is certainly condemned by this commandment. False advertising steals from the public. Cheating on a test or turning the speedometer back robs our fellowmen and yea even ourselves. Paul wrote in Romans 12:17, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." Pay careful attention to Paul's comments on theft and its consequences in I Cor. 6:9—10 which says, "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

In my judgment gambling is theft. To gamble is to play a game for money or stake. Gambling causes a man to hazzard or risk that which belongs to him, in order to get that which belongs to another, with nothing given in return. In other words, you cannot make money by gambling that is not lost by another. Gambling is not an honorable way to acquire property. The gambler's wealth is another man's poverty. II Cor. 8:21

says, "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

Employees often steal from their employers. They do so when they fail to give a day's work for a day's pay. Often things used on the job like tools are taken home and never returned. Office supplies are often used for private use. Few ever consider this theft. While in the Navy I saw drugs swapped for food. These items were treated as if they personally belonged to those who were using them to get what they wanted. Ephesians 4:28 says, "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needth."

Employers often steal from their employees by withholding wages and other benefits, that rightfully belong to them. James 5:4 declares, "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth." It is interesting to observe that false prophets are called thieves and robbers in John 10. Preachers and teachers who fail to teach the truth to their hearers are robbing them of life giving principles that will mean that difference between heaven and hell. Solomon said of truth, "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." (Proverbs 23:33) Jesus taught, "...If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:31—32)

The famous parable of the good Samaritan in Luke 10 reveals an attitude which places man in violation of the eight commandment. The thief's attitude was, what is my neighbour's is mine and I will take it. The priest and Levite, who passed by, had an attitude which said, what is mine is mine and I am going to keep it. These three people broke God's command. The Samaritan had the attitude we must all have. He reasoned, what

is mine belongs to others, and I will share it.

Thirdly, who suffers when men steal? The victim of course. He loses his possessions! Most of the time they are never recovered or replaced. The public pays. Yes, merchants often add to the price of an item to make up for losses due to theft in a given year. The thief of course suffers. They cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (I Cor. 6:9—10) God suffers. Mal. 3:8 asks, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings." We often rob God of our time. Paul wrote in Eph. 5:16 that we are to, "redeem the time, because the days are evil." We sometimes fail to love God with our mind. (Mt. 22:37) 'Our bodies are frequently withheld from God's service. Paul wrote in Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." The world and all that is in it, takes away our love from God. We are told, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (I John 2:15—17) Jesus commanded, "..., 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." (Matthew 22:37—38) The lost are robbed when we allow these things to be taken away from God.

Fourthly, how can we keep from breaking this law dealing with property? We must work on the human heart. Jesus said that out of the heart come thefts. (Matthew 15:17) Furthermore, we need to see the things of this world from a Biblical perspective. Proverbs 23:5 says, "Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle towards heaven."

Ecclesiastes 5:10 declares, "He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase: this is also vanity." Jesus taught, "... Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15) Paul wrote, "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out." (I Timothy 6:7) Peter left these warnings. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness." (II Peter 3:10:11) Jesus' example should help us to view this world as it really is. He said in Matthew 8:20, "... the foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." We must value the spiritual over the material. The Master commanded, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness ..." Our Lord cried out, "For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Mt. 16:26)

Finally, what can or should we do, if we have broken this law? First of all, if one is a non-Christian, he must obey the gospel, so that this sin can be washed away by the blood of Christ. He can do this by obeying Acts 2:38 which says, "Repent ye and be baptized, everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of your sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." If one is already a Christian, he should confess his sin to God and his fellow Christians and pray for forgiveness. (Jas. 5:16, I Jno. 1:9, Acts 8:21—24)

If at all possible, the Christian should practice restitution. The publican Zacchaeus said to Jesus, "... the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have wrongfully exacted ought from any man, I restore him fourfold." (Lk. 19:8)

Finally, the thief ought to go to work. Paul taught, "Let him that stole, steal no more, but rather, let him labor with his hands that thing which is good, that he may have wherewith to give to him that is in need."

Let us resolve that we will never be guilty of theft that will keep us out of heaven.

FALSEHOOD FORBIDDEN

Introduction:

1. Two commands deal with the tongue—Ex. 20:7, 16
2. Gift speech unique to man
3. Power of tongue
4. Each command protects
5. This one protects reputation and character
6. One we break most?

I. Scriptures Speak—Bare False Witness

- A. Psalms 19:14
- B. Psalms 120:2
- C. Psalms 141:3
- D. Proverbs 6:16—19
- E. Proverbs 12:22
- F. Proverbs 19:5
- G. Matthew 12:34—37
- H. Ephsians 4:25
- I. Col. 3:9

II. What Can Do Stop It?

- A. Consider damage to others
 1. Plunge man sin and death—Gen. 3:4, Rom. 5:12
 2. Israel—ten spies—Numbers 13:14
 3. Peter—Matthew 26—74
 4. Jesus—Matthew 26:63, John 8:49, Matthew 11:19, Matthew 28:13
 5. Victim—Proverbs 22:1
 6. Liar himself
 - a. Defile body—Jas. 3:6
 - b. Show heart—Matthew 12:34
 - c. Show spiritual condition—Jas. 1:26
 - d. Hell—Rev. 21:8, 27, 22:15
- B. Ancient Views of Falsehood

1. Athens
2. Rome
3. Egypt

III. How Violate This Command?

- A. Boldfaced lie—Col. 3:9
- B. False advertising and flattery—Psm. 55:21
- C. Unjust criticism—insinuation—Matthew 7:1—5
- D. Hypocrisy—Titus 1:16
- E. Listen to it—Mark 4:24
- F. Gossip—Lev. 19:16
- G. Silence—Ecc. 3:7
- H. Lie to God—Acts :4
 - I. Half-truth—exaggeration—Gen. 22—Num. 13—14
13—14
 - J. False oaths—Jas. 5:12
 - K. Excuses—Gen. 3:12—13

IV. How Avoid Breaking This Command

- A. Aware source—John 8:44
- B. Imitate—Matthew 5:48, I Cor. 11:1
 1. God—Titus 1:2
 2. Christ — John 14:6
- C. Love truth—Proverbs 23:23
- D. Speak truth—Eph. 4:15
- E. Consider blessings—I Peter 3:10

Conclusion:

1. We must control the tongue
2. Matthew 12:34—37
3. James 1:27

Falsehood Forbidden

Two of the Ten Commandments deal with the tongue. One text is Exodus 20:7 which states, "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." The other is our lesson text which says, "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." (Exodus 20:16)

There are many good reasons for these two commandments. When God created man, he set man apart from all creation by giving him ability to think. Man expresses his thoughts vocally through the gift of speech. The tongue can gladden or sadden.

We should learn that each of the commandments were given to protect things that are valuable, such as God, parents, life, home, and property. The commandment under consideration in this chapter seeks to protect a man's reputation and character against testimony in court, blackmail, and slander. Someone has suggested that this is the command most often broken by man.

First of all let us look at several Scriptures that speak against bearing false witness. Consider these verses from the Psalms. Psalm 120:2 states, "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue." Psalm 141:3 states, "Set a watch O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips." Solomon said there were seven things were abomination to God. Two of them are lying tongue and a false witness that uttereth lies. The wise king also said that lying lips were an abomination unto Jehovah. (Proverbs 6:16—19, 12:22) In Proverbs 19:5 Solomon taught, "A false witness shall not be unpunished, and he that speaketh lies shall not escape." In Matthew 12:34 Jesus taught, "O generation of vipers, how can

ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Our Lord also declared in Matthew 12:36—37, "But I say into you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." Paul instructed the Ephesians to put away falsehood. (Ephesians 4:25) The Apostle to the Gentiles offered this advice to the Colossians. He said, "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds.

In the second place, what can we do to stop the bearing of false witness? An awareness of the damage it can do can help to stop it. It was a lie that plunged the human race into sin and death. The Devil bore false witness to Eve. He told her that she would not die, if she ate the forbidden fruit. Paul later wrote of this in Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

False witness discouraged Israel. The ten spies did not give a true picture of Canaan. (Numbers 13:14) The lying tongue of Simon Peter brought him tremendous sorrow. (Matthew 26:70—75) Jesus was accused of having a demon. (John 8:49) He was accused of being a glutton and winebibber. (Matthew 11:19) False witnessess were brought in at the mock trial of Jesus. (Matthew 26:59—68) Even after his resurrection the soldiers bore false witness by saying that the disciples came and stole the body of Jesus while they slept. (Matthew 28:13)

Certainly the victim of false witness suffers. His character is often destroyed. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 22:1, "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold." Many people lose family, business, and health because of some slanderous attack.

Let us not forget to point out that the liar himself defiles his

body. James 3:6 says, "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell." He shows what is really inside himself. Jesus said, "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." Certainly the spiritual condition of the liar is shown by the way he uses his tongue. James taught us, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain." (James 1:26) In ancient Egypt the bearer of false witness had his nose and ears cut off. The Romans pushed them off a cliff. In Athens the liar was given a heavy fine. If a person was convicted three times for bearing false witness, he lost his civil rights. These were pretty stiff penalties. Yet, there is something far worse than these things in store for the liar. The liar will be in the lake of fire and brimstone. (Revelation 21:8) Revelation 21:27 says, "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." John also wrote in Revelation 22:15, "For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

The third point of this chapter will deal with ways that we can violate this commandment. We violate this law with a plain old boldfaced lie! Why do people lie like this? Many do it to take the sting out of a particular situation. Others lie to rub the glitter off another's crown. Jealousy and an inferiority complex cause many to lie.

False advertisement breaks this law. Often come on items are used to get people into the store, only to find that these items don't exist or are sold out. Frequently people use false flattery to get what they want. How often have people offered false compliments to butter someone up? Only God knows. David spoke of those whose words were smoother than butter, but war

was in their heart. He said their words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords. (Psalms. 55:21)

Insinuation and unjust criticism transgress this command. Jesus taught us these truths in the **Sermon on the Mount**. "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? or how wilt thou say to thy brother, let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." (Matthew 7:1 — 5)

Hypocrisy is condemned by this regulation. Paul told Titus, "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate." (Titus 1:16)

I believe that being willing to listen to false witness puts one's soul in jeopardy. In Mark 4:24, Jesus declared, "... take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given."

Slandorous gossip is wrong. Leviticus 19:16 teaches, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour: I am the Lord."

We can violate this law by remaining silent when we ought to speak up. Solomon said, there is a time to keep silence and a time to speak up. (Ecc. 3:7)

Many like Ananias and Sapphira lie to God. (Acts 5:1—11)

The half truth, the little white lie, and exaggeration will

cause men to break this commandment. Abraham engaged in the half truth or little white lie. He told Abimelech that Sarah was his sister. (Genesis 22) The ten spies exaggerated, when they described the inhabitants in the land of Canaan. (Numbers 13—14)

Many violate this regulation by committing perjury in a court of law.

Gus Nichols used to say that excuses are nothing more than lies all wrapped up in tissue paper. He said that when you take off all the paraphernalia off the excuses that people offer, you'll find that they are nothing more than bold-faced lies. Is this not the case with the excuses offered by Adam and Eve who said, "... The woman who thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." (Gen. 3:12—13)

Finally, how can we avoid breaking this commandment? We can be aware of the source of all falsehood. Jesus said the Devil was a liar and the father thereof. (John 8:44) If we will imitate God, we will never violate this law. Jesus said, "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." (Mt. 5:44—45) Paul urges all men to imitate Jesus. (1 Cor. 11:1) If we will imitate God, we will not lie, for it is impossible for God to lie. (Hebrews 6:18, Titus 1:2) When we learn to love our neighbour as ourself (Matthew 22:39), we will not lie about our neighbour. Love for the truth will hold back falsehood. Solomon declared, "Buy the truth, and sell it not, also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." (Proverbs 23:23) We must not only learn to love truth, we must learn to speak the truth in love. (Eph. 4:15) Furthermore, any falsehood. Solomon declared, "Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding." Proverbs 23:23) We must not only learn to love truth, we must learn to

speak the truth in love. (Eph. 4:15) Furthermore, any consideration of the blessings that come to those who learn to use their tongue properly should motivate people to shun false witness. I Peter 3:10 states, "For he that love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile.

The scriptures are plain concerning God's attitude towards false witness. The Bible declares loudly and clearly, don't do it! If you do, you must pay the price. Let us make up our mind, that we will use our tongues to the glory of God.

CONTROL YOUR DESIRES

Introduction:

1. Most difficult commandment
2. Deals with the inner man
3. Other commands—outer acts
4. Exodus 20:17
5. All covetousness is not wrong
6. Wrong to covet neighbours possessions
7. Covetousness defined
8. Catholics two fold division of this command

I. Abstain From Covetousness

- A. Exodus 18:21
- B. Proverbs 28:16
- C. Like 12:15
- D. Romans 1:29, 32
- E. Col. 3:5
- F. Eph. 5:5
- G. I Tim. 3:3
- H. Heb. 13:5
- I. II Peter 2:14
- J. I John 2:15—17

II. Covetousness—Root Other Sins

- A. I Tim. 6:10
- B. Eve—Gen. 3:6
- C. Achan—Josh. 7:21
- D. David — II Sam. 11:3—4
- E. Ahab — I Kings 21:2
- F. Gehazi—II Kings 5:22
- G. Judas—John 12:6, Matthew 27:3—5

III. How Can I Know If I Am Covetous?

- A. Thoughts

1. Jas. 4:4
2. II Tim. 3:4
3. Prov. 23:7
- B. Conversation—Matthew 12:34
- C. Exchange soul—material goods?
 1. Luke 12:17—21
 2. Matthew 16:26
- D. Heart—Mark 7:22

IV. The Consequences of Covetousness

- A. Adam—Eve—Gen. 3
 1. sin
 2. loss of Eden
 3. death
- B. Achan — Josh 7
 1. defeat Israel
 2. Death
- C. David — II Sam. 11
 1. adultery—murder
 2. suffer—rest life
- D. Judas — Matthew 27
 1. suicide
 2. loss soul
- E. Rich farmer — Lk. 12
 1. loss of goods
 2. loss of soul
- F. James 4:2
- G. I Corinthians 6:9—10

V. How Can We Overcome Covetousness?

- A. Set love's priorities straight—Matthew 22:37—39
- B. Work on the heart—Mark 7:22
- C. Put the kingdom first—Matthew 6:33
- D. I Tim. 6:9, Job. 1:21

Conclusion:

1. Covet nothing that belongs to neighbour
2. Shun all that stands between self and God

Control Your Desires

Many believe that the final commandment is the most difficult of all. It deals with the inner most thoughts of men's hearts. The other commandments dealt with visible acts. This one deals with the control of our desires.

Our text is Exodus 20:17 which says, "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." Now it is not wrong to desire a house, wife, etc. It is wrong when we desire that which is our neighbours. Let us learn that all covetousness is not wrong. Paul wrote, "But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way." (I Cor. 12:31)

The word *covet* has been defined as, *inordinate desire, greed, to grasp for more, to wish enviously, to lust or long after, to set one's heart on, to want that which is not right, passionate craving, to place the secular above the spiritual, the love of money, and to put gain above God.*

Once again, I remind our readers that our Catholic friends have removed the second commandment that forbids the making of images. They have divided this final commandment into two commands, so that they might have a total of Ten Commandments. This was done to justify the use of images.

Let us begin this chapter by taking a scriptural survey. The following verses have something to say about covetousness. Solomon wrote in Proverbs 28:16, "... but he that hateth covetousness shall prolong his days." Jesus said, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." (Luke 12:15) The Gentiles condemned by Paul, were covetous and were worthy of death. (Romans 1:29, 32) Paul taught that no covetous

person who is an idolater hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of God and Christ. (Ephesians 5:5) Yes, covetousness is equated with idolatry! (Col. 3:5) Elders are to be those who are not lovers of money. (I Timothy 3:3) We are told to be free from the love of money or covetousness. (Hebrews 13:5) Peter described some of the lost of his day, as having hearts exercised in covetousness. (II Peter 2:14) John summed it up in I John 2:15—17 which says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, are not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."

Secondly, be aware of the fact that covetousness is the root of other sins. Paul put it this way: "For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows." (I Timothy 6:10) Covetousness moved Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit. Genesis 3:6 says, "And the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave unto her husband with her; and he did eat." She plunged the human race into sin. Achan was greedy. Josh. 7:21 states, "When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonian garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them; and, behold, they are hid in the earth in the midst of my tent, and the silver under it." He then took which God had forbidden and brought defeat to Israel. David was overcome by lust. II Samuel 11:2—4 declares, "And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of

Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.” Lust involved David in adultery and murder. Ahab’s covetousness led to murder. He wanted Naboth’s vineyard. (I Kings 21:2) Jezebel devised a scheme to get him what he wanted. Greed caused Gehazi to lie to Naaman to get the silver and clothing he wanted. (II Kings 5:22) He was punished by leprosy. A covetous spirit caused Judas to betray Christ. John wrote of Judas, “This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.” (John 12:6) Thirty pieces of silver were enough for Judas to sell out his soul and his Lord. His covetous nature led him to commit suicide. (Matthew 27:3—5)

In the third place, how can I know if I am covetous? Well are your thoughts always about this world? Are you always thinking about your house, job, vacation, or hobbies? Do you ever think of God, the church, the Bible, or your soul? What about heaven or hell? Remember Solomon said, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he: ...” (Proverbs 23:7)

How about your conversation? Are you always talking about the things of this world? Jesus said, “O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” (Matthew 12:34)

Are you exchanging your soul for material goods? If so, you are taking an incalculable loss on the exchange. Consider the rich farmer of Luke 12:16—21, “And he spake a parable unto them, saying. The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said

unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." Whatever you do, don't ever forget these immortal words of Jesus. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:26)

Is your heart so set on this world, that you will do anything to obtain your heart's desire?

If you answer yes to any of these questions, you are covetous or are on the road to becoming a greedy, grasping, and lustful person.

In the fourth place, consider the consequences of leading a covetous life. As we have already observed, Eve plunged the human race into sin because of covetousness. Adam and Eve lost their paradise home in the garden and began to die because of their covetousness. Achan and his family were stoned to death for his covetous spirit. David reaped what he had sown all the rest of the days of his life. Judas lost his life and soul. The rich farmer lost his soul according to Luke twelve.

James wrote in Jas 4:2, "Ye lust and have not: ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain ..." The covetous cannot enter into the kingdom of God. (I Cor. 6:9—10)

Finally, how can we overcome covetousness? We must learn to put into practice Mt 22:37—39 which says, "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 the great commandment. And the second is like unto it, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." When we learn to put God first, others second, and ourselves third, we will not be covetous.

We must also work on the heart. Jesus said that out of the

heart comes covetousness. (Mk.7:22) Paul wrote in Phil 2:5, "Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus." To the Corinthians he declared, "Casting down imaginations and every high thing that exhalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought unto the obedience of Christ." Don't forget Prov. 23:7, "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Then, we must heed the command to seek first the kingdom of God and if we do, Jesus said that all these things (the necessities of life), will be added unto you. (Mt.6:33) Yes, we can overcome greed by putting first things first! The spiritual must be elevated over the material.

Let me suggest that if we adopt the philosophy of Job, we will not be covetous. Job 1:21 says, "... naked came I out of my mother's womb and naked shall I return thither ..." Paul said the same thing in I Tim 6:7, "For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain that we shall carry nothing out." It is said that Alexander the Great requested that his arms be left hanging out of his casket, to show that you can't take it with you when you go. If we could all just learn this great lesson, we could overcome our lust for the things of this world.

Summing it up, we are not to covet people, places, and things that belong to another. Someone has said, anything that takes away my taste for the Bible, anything that cramps my prayer life or makes my Christian work difficult is wrong for me. I must turn away from it. Surely, every Christian should say amen to these observations.

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