

## The TEN COMMANDMENTS

### Exodus 20:1-17

1. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My Commandments.
3. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.
4. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.
5. "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.
6. "You shall not murder.
7. "You shall not commit adultery.
8. "You shall not steal.
9. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

The biblical narrative of the revelation at Sinai begins in [Exodus 19](#) after the arrival of the children of Israel at [Mount Sinai](#) (also called [Horeb](#)). On the morning of the third day of their encampment, "there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud", and the people assembled at the base of the mount. After "the LORD<sup>[6]</sup> came down upon mount Sinai", Moses went up briefly and returned and prepared the people, and then in [Exodus 20](#) "God spoke" to all the people the words of the covenant, "*even ten commandments*"<sup>[7]</sup> as it is written. Modern biblical scholarship differs as to whether [Exodus 19-20](#) describes the people of Israel as having directly heard all or some of the decalogue, or whether the laws are only passed to them through Moses.<sup>[8]</sup>

The people were afraid to hear more and moved "afar off", and Moses responded with "Fear not."<sup>[9]</sup> Nevertheless, he drew near the "thick darkness" where "the presence of the Lord" was<sup>[10]</sup> to hear the additional statutes and "judgments", ([Exodus 21–23](#)) all which he "wrote"<sup>[11]</sup> in the "[book of the covenant](#)"<sup>[12]</sup> which he read to the people the next morning, and they agreed to be obedient and do all that the LORD had said. Moses escorted a select group consisting of [Aaron, Nadab and Abihu](#), and "seventy of the elders of Israel" to a location on the mount where they worshipped "afar off"<sup>[13]</sup> and they "saw the God of Israel" above a "paved work" like clear sapphire stone. ([Exodus 24:1–11](#))

And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tablets of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.<sup>13</sup> And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.

The mount was covered by the cloud for six days, and on the seventh day Moses went into the midst of the cloud and was "in the mount [forty days and forty nights](#)." ([Exodus 24:16–18](#)) And Moses said, "the LORD delivered unto me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God; and on them was written according

to all the words, which the LORD spake with you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly." (Deuteronomy 9:10) Before the full forty days expired, the children of Israel collectively decided that something happened to Moses, and compelled Aaron to fashion a **golden calf**, and he "built an altar before it" (Ex.32:1-5) and the people "worshipped" the calf. (Ex.32:6-8)

After the full forty days, Moses and Joshua came down from the mountain with the **tablets of stone**: "And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tablets out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount." (Ex.32:19) After the events in chapters 32 and 33, the LORD told Moses, "Hew thee two tablets of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tablets the words that were in the first tablets, which thou brakest." (Ex.34:1) "And he wrote on the tablets, according to the first writing, the ten commandments, which the LORD spake unto you in the mount out of the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly: and the LORD gave them unto me." (Deuteronomy 10:4)

"The old system in the law of Moses was only a shadow of the things to come, not the reality of the good things Christ has done for us. The sacrifices under the old system were repeated again and again, year after year, but they were never able to provide perfect cleansing for those who came to worship. If they could have provided perfect cleansing, the sacrifices would have stopped, for the worshipers would have been purified once for all time, and their feelings of guilt would have disappeared. But just the opposite happened. Those yearly sacrifices reminded them of their sins year after year. For it is not possible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins...

"Christ said, "You did not want animal sacrifices or grain offerings or animals burned on the altar or other offerings for sin, nor were you pleased with them" (though they are required by the law of Moses). Then he added, "Look, I have come to do your will." He cancels the first covenant in order to establish the second. And what God wants is for us to be made holy by the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time" (Hebrews 10:1-4, 8-10).

"This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts so they will understand them, and I will write them on their minds so they will obey them." Then he adds, "I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds." Now when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices" (Hebrews 10:16-18).

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