

The Ten Commandments (the Decalogue)

Bruce T. Forbes, 2014 (Revision 1)

The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17) were actually given prior to the Lord revealing the bulk of the Law to Moses. They are, however, as central to the heart of the Law of Moses as they are to the Gospel of Christ - both systems of law and commandments are founded upon these ten simple statements.

Additionally, they are considered the foundation of the ancient English Common Law, and as such were considered by the Founders of the United States Constitution as the foundation and bedrock of any civil law and government - just read their public and personal writings and you will learn this truth very thoroughly.

There are several interesting ways scholars have grouped the Ten Commandments. Christian scholars like to group them according to the "Two Great Commandments": that of loving God and loving thy neighbor. Alfred Edersheim, in his commentary on the Old Testament, groups them thusly:

1-3: Who We Worship

4: Who we Honor

5-10: Who we Love and Respect

The Ten Commandments are given twice in the Old Testament - first in the book of Exodus, prior to the giving of the bulk of the Law of Moses, and again forty years later, when Moses reiterates the entire Law in the Book of Deuteronomy. In the Book of Mormon, the prophet Abinadi recites them to a group of wicked priests. I have harmonized these three sources in side-by-side boxes so the reader can compare them.

During His mortal ministry, Jesus Christ expanded on several of the commandments in the Sermon on the Mount, and the Lord expanded upon several of them in revelations to the modern prophet Joseph Smith, as recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Deuteronomy 4:1-13 . . . 1 Now therefore hearken, O Israel, unto the statutes and unto the judgments, which I teach you, for to do *them*, that ye may live, and go in and possess the land which the LORD God of your fathers giveth you. 2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. 3 Your

eyes have seen what the LORD did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the LORD thy God hath destroyed them from among you. 4 But ye that did cleave unto the LORD your God *are* alive every one of you this day. 5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it. 6 Keep therefore

and do *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people. 7 For what nation *is there so* great, who *hath* God *so* nigh unto them, as the LORD our God *is* in all *things that* we call upon him *for*? 8 And what nation *is there so* great, that hath statutes and judgments *so* righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? 9 Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; 10 *Specially* the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and *that* they may teach their children. 11 And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the

mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. 12 And the LORD spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only *ye heard* a voice. 13 And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, *even* ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. . . . **Deuteronomy 5:1-5** . . . 1 And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. 2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, *even* us, who *are* all of us here alive this day. 4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, 5 (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying,

1		
Exodus 20:2-3. 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.	Deuteronomy 5:6-7. I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. Thou shalt have none other gods before me.	Mosiah 12:34-35. I am the Lord thy God, who hath brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other God before me.

Deuteronomy 4:35 . . . the LORD he *is* God; *there is* none else beside him.

Deuteronomy 6:4 . . . Hear, O Israel, the LORD is our God, the LORD is One. . . . *a literal translation being:* Give Heed, O Israel: Jehovah [is our] god - Jehovah alone.

Isaiah 43:11 . . . I, *even* I, *am* the LORD; and beside me *there is* no saviour.

Hosea 13:4 . . . Yet I *am* the LORD thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no god but me: for *there is* no saviour beside me.

Doctrine & Covenants 76:1 . . . HEAR, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof, for the Lord is God, and beside him there is no Savior.

Moses 1:6 . . . And I have a work for thee, Moses, my son; and thou art in the similitude of mine

Only Begotten; and mine Only Begotten is and shall be the Savior, for he is full of grace and truth; but there is no God beside me, and all things are present with me, for I know them all.

2		
<p>Exodus 20:4-6. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the 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.</p>	<p>Deuteronomy 5:8-10. Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters beneath the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto 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.</p>	<p>Mosiah 12:36. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing in heaven above, or things which are in the earth beneath. . . . Mosiah 13:12-14 And now, ye remember that I said unto you: Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of things which are in heaven above, or which are in the earth beneath, or which are in the water under the earth. And again: Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me; And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.</p>

3		
<p>Exodus 20:7. 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.</p>	<p>Deuteronomy 5:11. 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.</p>	<p>Mosiah 13:15. 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.</p>

Leviticus 19:12 . . . And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.

Doctrine & Covenants 63:61-64 . . . Wherefore, let all men beware how they take my name in

their lips— For behold, verily I say, that many there be who are under this condemnation, who use the name of the Lord, and use it in vain, having not authority. Wherefore, let the church repent of their sins, and I, the Lord, will own them; otherwise they shall be cut off. Remember that that which cometh from above is sacred, and must be spoken with care, and by constraint of the Spirit; and in this there is no condemnation, and ye receive the Spirit through prayer; wherefore, without this there remaineth condemnation.

Poseidon to Percy Jackson: “. . . lesser beings do many horrible things in the name of the gods. That does not mean we gods approve. The way our sons and daughters act in our names . . . well, it usually says more about them than it does about us.” (Rick Riordan, *The Battle of the Labyrinth* (New York NY: Hyperion Books, 2008; copyright by Rick Riordan)

4		
<p>Exodus 20:8-11. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.</p>	<p>Deuteronomy 5:12-15. Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.</p>	<p>Mosiah 13:16-19. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; But the seventh day, the sabbath of the Lord thy God, thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.</p>

Doctrine & Covenants 68:29 . . . And the inhabitants of Zion shall also observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Doctrine & Covenants 59:9-21 . . . And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day; For verily this is a day appointed unto you to rest from your labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the

Most High; Nevertheless thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times; But remember that on this, the Lord's day, thou shalt offer thine oblations and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord. And on this day thou shalt do none other thing, only let thy food be prepared with singleness of heart that thy fasting may be perfect, or, in other words, that thy joy may be full. Verily, this is fasting and prayer, or in other words, rejoicing and prayer. And inasmuch as ye do these things with thanksgiving, with cheerful hearts and countenances, not with much laughter, for this is sin, but with a glad heart and a cheerful countenance - Verily I say, that inasmuch as ye do this, the fulness of the earth is yours, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, and that which climbeth upon the trees and walketh upon the earth; Yea, and the herb, and the good things which come of the earth, whether for food or for raiment, or for houses, or for barns, or for orchards, or for gardens, or for vineyards; Yea, all things which come of the earth, in the season thereof, are made for the benefit and the use of man, both to please the eye and to gladden the heart; Yea, for food and for raiment, for taste and for smell, to strengthen the body and to enliven the soul. And it pleaseth God that he hath given all these things unto man; for unto this end were they made to be used, with judgment, not to excess, neither by extortion. And in nothing doth man offend God, or against none is his wrath kindled, save those who confess not his hand in all things, and obey not his commandments.

5		
Exodus 20:12. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.	Deuteronomy 5:16. Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.	Mosiah 13:20. Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

6		
Exodus 20:13. Thou shalt not kill.	Deuteronomy 5:17. Thou shalt not kill.	Mosiah 13:21. Thou shalt not kill.

Matthew 5:21-26 . . . 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. Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou

shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

Doctrine & Covenants 42:18-19, 79 . . . And now, behold, I speak unto the church. Thou shalt not kill; and he that kills shall not have forgiveness in this world, nor in the world to come.¹ And again, I say, thou shalt not kill; but he that killeth shall die . . . And it shall come to pass, that if any persons among you shall kill they shall be delivered up and dealt with according to the laws of the land; for remember that he hath no forgiveness; and it shall be proved according to the laws of the land.

7		
Exodus 20:14. Thou shalt not commit adultery.	Deuteronomy 5:18. Neither shalt thou commit adultery.	Mosiah 13:22. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Matthew 5:27-28 . . . 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.

Doctrine & Covenants 42:22-26, 80-82 . . . Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt cleave unto her and none else. And he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not he shall be cast out. Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery, and repenteth not, shall be cast out. But he that has committed adultery and repents with all his heart, and forsaketh it, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive; But if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out. . . . And if any man or woman shall commit adultery, he or she shall be tried before two elders of the church, or more, and every word shall be established against him or her by two witnesses of the church, and not of the enemy; but if there are more than two witnesses it is better. But he or she shall be condemned by the mouth of two witnesses; and the elders shall lay the case before the church, and the church shall lift up their hands against him or her, that they may be dealt with according to the law of God. And if it can be, it is necessary that the bishop be present also.

Doctrine & Covenants 63:13-19 . . . Nevertheless, I give commandments, and many have turned away from my commandments and have not kept them. There were among you adulterers and adulteresses; some of whom have turned away from you, and others remain with you that hereafter shall be revealed. Let such beware and repent speedily, lest judgment shall come upon them as a snare, and their folly shall be made manifest, and their works shall follow them in the eyes of the people. And verily I say unto you, as I have said before, he that looketh on a woman to lust after her, or if any shall commit adultery in their hearts, they shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear. Wherefore, I, the Lord, have said that the fearful, and the unbelieving, and all liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, and the whoremonger, and the sorcerer, shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. Verily I say, that they shall not have part in the first resurrection. And now behold,

¹ They shall have no forgiveness until they have paid 'the last farthing' (Matthew 5:26); until they *themselves* have suffered and atoned for that murder, Christ's Atonement not covering it. See History of the Church 4:359; Doctrine and Covenants Reference Companion, pg 428

I, the Lord, say unto you that ye are not justified, because these things are among you.

8		
Exodus 20:15. Thou shalt not steal.	Deuteronomy 5:19. Neither shalt thou steal.	Mosiah 13:22. Thou shalt not steal.

Doctrine & Covenants 42:20, 84-85 . . . Thou shalt not steal; and he that stealeth and will not repent shall be cast out . . . And if a man or woman shall rob, he or she shall be delivered up unto the law of the land. And if he or she shall steal, he or she shall be delivered up unto the law of the land.

9		
Exodus 20:16. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.	Deuteronomy 5:20. Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.	Mosiah 13:23. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

Doctrine & Covenants 42:21 . . . Thou shalt not lie; he that lieth and will not repent shall be cast out. . . . **Doctrine & Covenants 42:27** . . . Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, nor do him any harm. . . . **Doctrine & Covenants 42:86** . . . And if he or she shall lie, he or she shall be delivered up unto the law of the land.

Doctrine & Covenants 63:17 . . . Wherefore, I, the Lord, have said that the fearful, and the unbelieving, and all liars, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie, and the whoremonger, and the sorcerer, shall have their part in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

10		
Exodus 20:17. 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.	Deuteronomy 5:21. Neither shalt thou <u>desire</u> thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.	Mosiah 13:24. 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.

Doctrine & Covenants 136:20 . . . Seek ye; and keep all your pledges one with another; and covet not that which is thy brother's.

Doctrine & Covenants 88:123 . . . See that ye love one another; cease to be covetous; learn to impart one to another as the gospel requires.

Doctrine & Covenants 19:25-26 . . . And again, I command thee that thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife; nor seek thy neighbor's life. And again, I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine own property, but impart it freely . . .

Doctrine & Covenants 59:5-6 . . . Wherefore, I give unto them a commandment, saying thus: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy might, mind, and strength; and in the name of Jesus Christ thou shalt serve him. Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Thou shalt not steal; neither commit adultery, nor kill, nor do anything like unto it.

2 Nephi 26:32-33 . . . And again, the Lord God hath commanded that men should not murder; that they should not lie; that they should not steal; that they should not take the name of the Lord their God in vain; that they should not envy; that they should not have malice; that they should not contend one with another; that they should not commit whoredoms; and that they should do none of these things; for whoso doeth them shall perish. For none of these iniquities come of the Lord; for he doeth that which is good among the children of men; and he doeth nothing save it be plain unto the children of men; and he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile.

Deuteronomy 5:22-33 . . . 22 These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me. 23 And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, *even* all the heads of your tribes, and your elders; 24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth. 25 Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die. 26 For who *is there* of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived? 27 Go thou near,

and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear *it*, and do *it*. 28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken. 29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! 30 Go say to them, Get you into your tents again. 31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do *them* in the land which I give them to possess it. 32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 Ye shall walk in

all the ways which the LORD your God hath
commanded you, that ye may live, and *that it*

may be well with you, and *that* ye may prolong
your days in the land which ye shall possess.
