

THE PENTATEUCH II: EXODUS

WEEK 4

Patrick Reeder

October 15, 2015

OUTLINE

THE DECALOGUE

Loving God

Loving Others

THE GOLDEN CALF

Replacing God

Israel's Leadership

OUTLINE

THE DECALOGUE

Loving God

Loving Others

THE GOLDEN CALF

Replacing God

Israel's Leadership

INTRODUCTION

The Decalogue (Ten Commandments) has a quick but essential introduction:

Exodus 20:2-I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

There are a few reasons for this:

1. This is a standard format in all of Scripture, linking imperatives to indicatives (Cf. Declaration preceding Covenant of Circumcision)
2. God is linking himself to a very specific historical act, which becomes a benchmark for centuries (recall History theme)
3. God is linking his moral demands to his incredible power
4. God is laying claim to them, morally, because he redeemed them from slavery

I, II COMMANDMENTS

The first and most essential commandments involve getting right *who is God*. (Cf. Deut 6:5)

Exodus 20:3-6—You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

The language of jealousy is closer to the righteous anger of a cuckold husband. (Cf. Ezekiel 16, Hosea)

I, II COMMANDMENTS

These are related but distinct. Together these clearly exclude all idols. The way they're distinct comes out here:

Deut 4:12; 15-18-Then the Lord spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form—only a voice. . . 15 So watch yourselves carefully, since you did not see any form on the day the Lord spoke to you at Horeb from the midst of the fire, so that you do not act corruptly and make a graven image for yourselves in the form of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any animal that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged bird that flies in the sky, the likeness of anything that creeps on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the water below the earth.

Why then would God permit himself to appear as a man in Christ?

III COMMANDMENT

Stereotypically, conservative Christians indicate that this means using 'God' as an exclamation or some kind of swearing. What do you think?

Exodus 20:7-You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

At least includes e.g. from Leviticus 24:10ff. Recall our discussion before about 'name.' It is far more likely that it has more to do with profaning God *in toto*, not just in how a given sound 'God' is used.

IV COMMANDMENT

Should we follow this commandment? What is meant here?

Exodus 20:8-10- Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.

Cf. Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:27; Colossians 2:16

IV COMMANDMENT

Recall the gap hypothesis for Genesis 1. The following passage makes it very hard to maintain:

Exodus 20:11-For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

Why?

- ▶ The only thing that theory has going for it is that the word ‘was’ in Gen 1:2 could be read ‘became’ but that only includes *the earth*. (not the heavens, sea, etc.)
- ▶ This passage uses nearly identical language to Gen 1:1. It’s settled if ‘create’ and ‘made’ are synonymous in Hebrew (as in English).
- ▶ This passage forces us to give some measure of accord to the seven days—even if we draw a perfect connection to modern science.

OUTLINE

THE DECALOGUE

Loving God

Loving Others

THE GOLDEN CALF

Replacing God

Israel's Leadership

V-IX COMMANDMENTS

In what ways do these express God's moral character? Why is God so concerned about these civic or filial laws?

V	Honor your Father & Mother
VI	You Shall Not Murder
VII	You Shall Not Commit Adultery
VIII	You Shall Not Steal
IX	You Shall Not Bear False Witness

X COMMANDMENT

This commandment is probably the most difficult to keep. This is the only commandment that explicitly strikes at the heart.

Exodus 20:17- You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Take note that Paul cites this law in Romans 7. As a Pharisee he probably didn't struggle much with the others. But as a fallen human, he couldn't help to fail this one.

OUTLINE

THE DECALOGUE

Loving God

Loving Others

THE GOLDEN CALF

Replacing God

Israel's Leadership

IDOLATRY

One of the most striking portions of this narrative is here:

Exodus 32:1,4b- Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god [(b)] who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." . . . [(a)] This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.

There is a blatant replacement operation here both regarding (a) God's historical work and (b) his future leadership.

IDOLATRY

A key explanatory piece is that *sin makes us insane*:

- ▶ Isaiah 44:15-17—Then it becomes something for a man to burn, so he takes one of them and warms himself; he also makes a fire to bake bread. He also makes a god and worships it; he makes it a graven image and falls down before it. Half of it he burns in the fire; over this half he eats meat as he roasts a roast and is satisfied. He also warms himself and says, “Aha! I am warm, I have seen the fire.” But the rest of it he makes into a god, his graven image. He falls down before it and worships; he also prays to it and says, “Deliver me, for you are my god.”
- ▶ Romans 1:21-23 For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.

Cf. Developed vs Undeveloped Cultures

IDOLATRY

Some brief remarks on “idolatry movement”-

- ▶ In the last few years there has been an inordinate amount of ‘idol’ talk (pun intended?), most likely inspired by Tim Keller’s *Counterfeit Gods*.
- ▶ I don’t think this is bad *per se* but I think it ends up being misleading, drawing our eyes to the law rather than to Christ.
- ▶ There are few (< 5) direct warnings about idols proper in the NT
- ▶ The only time the New Testament uses idols in this analogical sense, it refers to *money*:
 - ▶ Colossians 3:5- “dead to . . . greed, which amounts to idolatry.”
 - ▶ Matthew 6:24-“No one can serve two masters. . .”
- ▶ Ironically, *money* way more air time in the New Testament than idols!

OUTLINE

THE DECALOGUE

Loving God

Loving Others

THE GOLDEN CALF

Replacing God

Israel's Leadership

AARON'S WEAK LEADERSHIP

Here are a few details that demonstrate Aaron's weakness in this episode:

- EXO 32:4 He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. (*Leading From Behind*)
- EXO 32:5 Now when Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord." (*Soft Leadership*—too little too late)
- EXO 32:22 "Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil" (*Blaming the Flock*)
- EXO 32:24 "I said to them, 'Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf." (*Rationalizing and/or Diminishing Own Role*)

MOSES' INTERCESSION

Moses explicitly takes up the task of interceding in behalf of Israel (32:30), even to the point of sacrificing his own life (32:32).

Noteworthy what God accepts:

EXO 32:12 “Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, ‘With evil intent He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth’?”

EXO 32:13 “Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel. . .”

“Moses defends *the Lord* before the Lord” (Blackburn, 173)

REFERENCES

1. Blackburn, W. Ross. *The God Who Makes Himself Known: The Missionary Heart of the Book of Exodus*. IVP, 2012.
2. Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 2: Exodus*, edited by Frank Gaebelin. Zondervan, 1990.