

Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20ⁱⁱ

God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name. Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, and said to Moses, You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die. Moses said to the people, Do not be afraid; for God has come only to test you and to put the fear of him upon you so that you do not sin.

ⁱⁱ About: Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20

The Ten Commandments set forth the duties of the Israelites to God (20:3-11) and to those within the community (20:12-17). The commandments are covenant demands founded on their special relationship to God. The commandments concerning human interrelationships have parallels in other ancient cultures, but those concerning the people's relationship to God are unique to the Old Testament.

Verse 7 is a prohibition against swearing falsely or misusing God's name for spells and incantations. This led eventually to a refusal among pious Jews to pronounce the name of Yahweh at all. The commandment to remember (v. 8), may be translated act upon the recollection of. Verse 12 is directed more toward the responsibilities of grown children for the support of and respect for aged parents than toward the behavior of young children. Verse 13 prohibits murder, not capital punishment or warfare. It is probable that covet in verse 17 implies an attempt to acquire unlawfully (defraud).