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# Restatement of the Law

— Good news for the whole world —

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# Order & Structure of Deuteronomy

Who, what, when,  
where & why

Deut. 1-4: Prologue

**Chapter 5: Ten Commandments**

Chapter 6-12: Hear & Obey

**Chapters 13-25: Commentary**

Chapters 26ff: Blessings and  
Cursings; Epilogue

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# Moses's Exposition on the Moral Law: Deut. 6-25

<u>Moral Law</u>	<u>Exposition</u>	<u>Topic</u>	
I-II: 5.6-10	12.1-31	Worship	
III: 5.11	13.1-14.27	Name of God	
IV: 5.12-15	14.28-16.17	Sabbath	
V: 5.16	16.18-18.22	Authority	
VI: 5.17	19.1-22.8	Homicide	
VII: 5.18	22.9-23.19	Adultery	
VIII: 5.19	23.20-24.7	Theft	
IX: 5.20	24.8-25.4	False Charges	
X: 5.21	25.5-16	Coveting	Kaufman, <i>Structure</i>

# How Long is He Going to Talk?

Then Moses called all Israel, and said unto them:

“Hear O Israel, the ordinances and the laws which I propose to you this day, that ye may learn them, and take heed to observe them. (Deut. 5.1)

“I pronounce until you this day, that ye shall surely perish, ye shall not prolong your days in the land ... which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give them.” (Deut. 30.18-20)

# **Jehovah Is Your God**

**Preamble to the Moral Law**

# Behold, Your Redeemer Liveth: Deut. 5.6

- I am Jehovah (a name)
- thy God (a title)
- which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage (a function)

Therefore we are bound to take him for our God alone, and to keep all his commandments. WLC 101

# The Treaty Between God and Man

The historical prologues of the Hittite political treaties typically began with the formula, “The words of [name of the Hittite king]” Berman, Created Equal at 32

The Decalogue itself also reveals such an introduction [b]efore the delineation of the laws themselves. See Exodus 20.1.

Deuteronomy begins, “these be the words of Moses.” Deut. 1.1

# A King of kings: subordinate kings

Elements of Hittite suzerainty (sovereign) treaty (i.e. covenant polity):

1. Historical Prologue
2. Stipulations/Expectations
3. Deposit of Treaty in Temple
4. Witnesses
5. Blessings & Cursings

Berman, Created Equal at 31



# Historical Context: Egypt (Gen. 10.6-10)

The king himself was considered a demigod. Nowhere was this more evident than in Egypt. The king in ancient Egypt was considered to be both the living son and the immediate divine reincarnation of his predecessor.

A vast state apparatus developed around the figure of the king in Egypt, who had ultimate authority over every aspect of life.

Berman, Created Equal at 26-27

# Historical Context: Assyria (Gen 10.6-10)

Mesopotamian culture had its origins in small, tightly knit villages. ... Over time, wars became an increasing threat and shelter could be found only in collective security agreements between villages ... Rulers would no longer be [local] but would now be exalted above many persons from many areas and would rule over them with unprecedented power at their command ... This process culminated with the rise of Sargon, the king of Akkad in around 2300 BCE, who achieved hegemony over a vast region, a hegemony that was later revived ... by the great Hammurabi around 1800 BCE.

Joshua Berman, Created Equal, 18

# Historical Context: Assyria (Gen 10.6-10)

## Sons of Ham

And the sons of Ham; **Cush**, and **Mizraim (Egypt)\***, and Phut, and **Canaan**.

## Sons of Cush

And **Cush** begat *Nimrod*: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

\*The Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, 824

# Nobody Understands Me (Gen. 11)

- Shem ... begat Arphaxad 2 years after the flood (10) 2
  - Arphaxad lived 35 years and begat Salah (12) 37
  - Salah lived 30 years and begat Eber (14) 67
  - Eber lived 34 years and begat Peleg (16) 101
- In his days was the earth divided (Gen. 10. 25)

**~2382 B.C. Tower of Babel occurred**

# War Against the Idols

Statutes, statues and foreign laws

# Moral Law: No other gods; No other engravings

Deut. 5.6-8

## Ethical Demands: War against the idols (Deut. 12)

- This is the law (1)
- Total Ban (2-3)
- One Lord/One Alter (4-12 right treatment, 13-28 wrong treatment)
- Don't be like them. God's law ... no more, no less (29-32)

Kauffman, 119-122

# Westminster Larger Catechism 105

Q. 105. *What are the sins forbidden in the first commandment?*

A. The sins forbidden in the first commandment, are, atheism, in denying or not having a God; idolatry, in having or worshiping more gods than one, or any with or instead of the true God; the not having and avouching him for God, and our God; the omission or neglect of anything due to him, required in this commandment; ignorance, forgetfulness, misapprehensions, false opinions, unworthy and wicked thoughts of him; bold and curious searching into his secrets; all profaneness, hatred of God; self-love, self-seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or in part; vain credulity, unbelief, heresy, misbelief, distrust, despair, incorrigibleness, and insensibleness under judgments, hardness of heart, pride, presumption, carnal security, tempting of God; using unlawful means, and trusting in lawful means; carnal delights and joys; corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal; lukewarmness, and deadness in the things of God; estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God; praying, or giving any religious worship, to saints, angels, or any other creatures; all compacts and consulting with the devil, and hearkening to his suggestions; making men the lords of our faith and conscience; slighting and despising God and his commands; resisting and grieving of his Spirit, discontent and impatience at his dispensations, charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us; and ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do, to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature.

# Westminster Larger Catechism 105

A. The sins forbidden in the first commandment, are

- giving any religious worship, to ... creatures;
- making men the lords of our faith and conscience;
- slighting and despising God and his commands;
- ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do, to ... any other creature



# Something is Foul in the State of Denmark

Deuteronomy is structured as a series of addresses to Israel as a collective “you”: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart” (6:5); “you shall feast [in the Temple] before the Lord your God, happy in all the undertakings in which the Lord your God has blessed you” (12:7). There is a fundamentally egalitarian streak at play here.

“[Y]ou” constitutes a fraternal and egalitarian citizenry that is the foremost political body within the polity. [I]t is this collective “you”—the covenantal community ... that bears responsibility for proper covenantal behavior.

Berman, *Constitution, Class, and the Book of Deuteronomy*, 529-530

# It Could Never Happen Here

The First Commandment is axiomatic. It is the basis and starting point for all further inferences and arguments in both theology and politics.

The [German] Confessing Church had not understood and in part did not even want to understand that the acknowledgement of the first commandment “under National Socialism is not just a ‘religious’ decision. It is not a decision of church polity either. It is in fact a political decision. It is a decision against a totalitarian state which as such cannot recognize any task, proclamation or order other than its own, nor acknowledge any other God than itself.”

Karl Barth, *Theologische Existenz heute*

Miller, The God You Have, 3-4

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