

KINGDOM SPIRIT

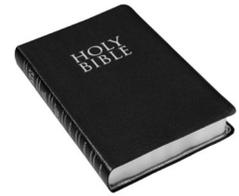
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“SEEK YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD”

Matthew 6:33



Issue 1111

TEN COMMANDMENTS

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not steal.” (Ex. 20:15)

“Neither shalt thou steal.” (Deut. 5:19)

Stealing in some form or another is probably the most common crime we have. As a result there are probably more laws associated with this commandment than any other, as God defines it, presents various situations and spells out the various judgments for it. Basically, the judgment is restoration, but the degree of restoration is determined by the situation. In saying this we are not implying that the judge can supply judgment arbitrarily. The judge’s job is to first determine the guilt or innocence of course, but secondly he must determine the circumstances. Once that is determined, the judgment is set by the written laws of judgment.

Stealing can be both intentional and unintentional. It can be a non-restorable crime as in the case of kidnapping, whether the person “stolen” is hurt or not, and of course, the judgment for a non-restorable crime is death. (Ex. 21:16; Deut. 24:7). Or it can be simply a matter of muzzling the ox that treadeth out the corn. (Deut. 25:4)

The judgment principle of restoration, or restitution, is demonstrated in several ways. Ex. 22:1 says that if a man steals an ox or a sheep, and kills it or sells it, he is to restore five oxen for an ox or four sheep for a sheep. However, if he still has it in his hand undamaged, he has to restore it

double. (Ex. 22:4)

A few situations require only restoring actual worth or cost. Ex. 22:5 tells us that if a man puts his livestock in another man’s field so that they feed on the other man’s feed, the man is to restore what the livestock ate from the best of his own field. If a man hurts another who doesn’t die, but loses time from his work, has expenses of healing, etc., the man causing the damage is to reimburse him for time lost as well as all expenses. (Ex. 21:18-19) If one accidentally kills a beast belonging to another, he shall make it good, beast for beast. (Lev. 24:18)

Some things we might not at first consider to be stealing are dealt with in the law, I believe, which we need to be made aware. If we see our neighbor’s livestock going astray, we are obligated to return it to our neighbor. We are also obligated to help our enemies beast of burden if he needs help under his load. (Ex. 23:4-5) Lev. 19:13 indicates we rob our hired man if we keep wages due him overnight. Ex. 22:7-13 tells us that if we are keeping something for our neighbor, we could be held responsible for it if it is stolen and the thief can’t be found. It is up to the judges to determine, but if we are condemned, we have to restore double.

Charging usury on money, or anything else, lent by us, is strongly condemned as a form of stealing in both Ex. 22:25-27 and Deut. 23:19-20. The law indicates it is okay to lend at usury to the “stranger,” but not to thy brother or God’s people.

Another form of theft is to deal using dishonest weights in weighing, or diverse measure-

ments in measuring according to Lev. 19:35-36 and Deut. 25:13-15). Both passages strongly denounce this type of thievery.

Deut. 23:24-25 may seem a little strange, but we need to look at it as well. We are told we can eat our fill in our neighbor's vineyard, but we cannot put any in a vessel, or we can pluck the ears of grain in our hand in his field, but cannot move a sickle in the standing grain.

Probably the one form of stealing we are all most guilty of is stealing from God. Several passages deal with this theft. Ex. 22:29-30 warns not to delay offering the first fruits and the first born including the first born of thy sons. Ex. 34:19-20 follows the same thought. Lev. 27:26-34 warns that everything that belongs to God, whether it be the first born or things man has devoted to God, can not be taken back or used for the former owner's benefit. Some things can be redeemed, but if redeemed, it has to be redeemed with the full value plus 20%. Deut. 23:21-23 warns that when a man makes a vow unto God, he is not to be slack to pay it. It is no sin not to vow, but to withhold once the vow is made is to steal from God. Num. 5:6-10 says that if a man commits a human sin against the LORD, he is to recompense his trespass to the person damaged with the principal plus 20%. If the victim be dead and has no kinsman to make the recompense to, it is to be paid to God plus a ram of atonement through the priest.

Lev. 19:11 says it all, **"Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another."**

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor." (Ex. 20:16) **"Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor."** (Deut. 5:20)

Bearing false witness is basically a reference to a trial, but it has applications in our everyday life as well. For example, Ex. 23:1, referring to a trial situation says, **"Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thine hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness."** On the other hand, the first part of Lev. 19:16 says, **Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy**

people."

There is also the very serious matter of lying to God. Realizing the seriousness of this, Num. 30:2-16 goes into considerable detail to explain both how serious it is, and points out that the primary responsibility lies with the man. If a man vows a vow unto the LORD or swears an oath to bind his soul, verse 2 simply says, **"He shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth."** No exception is allowed. However, if a woman vows a vow, or swears an oath to bind her soul, her father, if she is not married, has the option of disallowing the vow, or letting it stand. If she is married, her husband has this same option. But, in either case, he has to exercise the option the day she makes the vow. To disallow it later, will bring her iniquity on him. If he allows the vow to stand, then the woman must not break her word, but must do as she has vowed.

One of the major problems many of us face, that cause us to lie, is peer pressure. We are either afraid of physical danger when we deal only with the truth, or we are afraid of what might be said about us. Both appear to be real threats at some time in the lives of each of us. Yet, we find Ex. 23:2 telling us, **"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment."** The first part of Ex. 23:7 tells us, **"Keep thee far from a false matter."**

Sometimes we lie by keeping silent. Lev. 5:1 tells us that if we hear the voice of swearing (I presume this to be against God), and don't let it be known, we have sinned and will pay the penalty for it.

We do not have too much said about the penalties of judgment for lying, but there are a couple of references. Lev. 6:2-7 basically tells us that if in lying to our neighbor we either cause or contribute to a loss being suffered by him, the judgment is that we must restore the principal of the loss and add to it another 20%. A trespass offering to God is also required.

Deut. 19:16-21 tells us that if a false witness, or a false accusation, is brought against another person and the judges determine that it is a

false witness, then the person guilty of the false witness is to be punished with whatever punishment he was seeking to bring on the other person by his false witness, whether it be his life or any other damage he hoped to bring on the other person. As we said at the beginning, the court is the object of a great deal of falsehood. Even the way “justice” is carried out by the court can be a false witness. Therefore, we are warned not to pervert the judgment of the poor because he is poor (Ex. 23:6), nor are we to honor the poor in judgment (Ex. 23:3) The same applies to the rich and the mighty. (Lev. 19:15) To do so in either case is to deal falsely.

Deut. 24:17-18 warns against perverting judgment of the stranger, the fatherless or the widow as well. True justice means truth.

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his man servant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor’s.” (Ex. 20:17) **“Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor’s wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor’s house, his field, or his man servant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is thy neighbor’s.”**

Since covetousness is the major force in our minds behind stealing, we could list the laws concerning stealing, the laws concerning adultery, and probably the laws concerning bearing false witness in this category, but since we have just covered them we will forgo doing so. The fact that God gives us a commandment not to covet should tell us that it is something we can do. Often we feel the passion is so great, it must be natural. This is not so and should be guarded against. We need to learn to control our minds. Jesus tells us in Matt. 5:21-22 and 27-18 that to think to do something evil can bring us unto the same judgment as actually doing it. We need to remember, covetousness is basically a thought rather than an action.

This completes our somewhat brief look at the Ten Commandments. We need to remember that God has given us the principles of law. We

need to learn to apply the principles and not necessarily be looking for the letter of the law for every possible situation. Learning to apply the principle properly will give us law for every situation we might have to deal with. JRL

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

The basic difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant is that the Old Covenant depends on the obedience of man while the New Covenant depends on the ability of God to change the heart of man. The promised result of both covenants is basically the same. To understand this difference in more detail, and the manner of worship under both covenants, chapters 9 and 10 of Hebrews gives us some of these details. (Read Heb. 9:1-5) This gives us a quick view of the tabernacle in the wilderness. The author can’t give us a detailed view since that tabernacle had long since disappeared as had the Ark of the Covenant. But the Ark of the Covenant was, in effect, the throne of God from which God spoke. (Read Numbers 7:89) As we have discussed before, the Ark contained the tablets of stone upon which were written the 10 Commandments. This associates the Ark with law. A king, when sitting on his throne, issued his law and/or sat in judgment, thus the throne represented the law of the land.

Upon the Ark was the mercy seat, so not only did God judge by His law, but He ruled from the mercy seat. This is not very well understood by most people. The common thought seems to be that God put away His law through His mercy. This is not true. He rules and judges by His law, but He knows how to apply His law with mercy. Understanding this, i.e. understanding the law through the eyes of Jesus Christ, should be our goal.

Not just the ark and mercy seat, but each piece of furniture represents something greater that gives us a revelation of God’s divine character that would have a greater revelation under the New Covenant. However, to give us understanding of this is not the intent of the author at this

point. The author turns from a description of the furniture to a description of the manner of worship. (Read Heb. 9:6-10) Only the Levites were allowed to enter the tabernacle and only the high priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies, and that only once a year. The citizens of the Kingdom had only a distant access to God in the outer court. Even the high priest was limited in his access only going into the Holy of Holies once a year. This was the way that the Holy Spirit signified that the way into the true Holy of Holies had not yet been made known. As with the furniture, each of the cleansing rituals were an outer cleansing prophesying of inner cleansings under the New Covenant. They could do nothing to change the heart. But they did symbolize matters of the heart and spiritual things.

(Read Heb. 9:11, 12) Jesus did not enter the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem but rather He entered the heavenly tabernacle, i.e. the true presence of God to finish the work once and for all. He did not sprinkle the blood of bulls and goats, but gave His own blood, His own life.

I don't know what the priests did with the blood of the bulls and goats in Jesus' time since the ark was not in the temple. In fact none of the furniture was probably there, it was only an empty room with a stone where the ark should have been.

Verse 12 says that He entered in **“once into the holy place.”** The word translated “once” means once or once for all. Some translations use the latter. One time for all people was all that it took since He was totally sinless, the perfect sacrifice.

(Read Heb. 9:13, 14) The ashes of the red heifer were used as a purification for sin. (See Numbers 9:2-10) It is thought that since these ashes were to be kept outside the camp that they were kept on top of the Mount of Olives for purification by those who were coming into Jerusalem from the east. “Outside the camp” was defined as 2,000 cubits outside the city walls. This was the place that David stopped to worship God as he left Jerusalem when Absalom tried to take over David's throne and is probably the place where Jesus was crucified. While the ritual of the red

heifer and the blood sacrifice of goats and bulls set one apart for the purifying of the flesh, Christ through His blood, and as the true red heifer, whose death is applied to us as spiritual ashes, cleanses our conscience from sin. The ashes and the blood of bulls and goats could never truly purify the heart in the way that God required. Therefore, these rituals had to be repeated continually, thus we see their ineffectiveness. Christ, however, was the true sacrifice that all of the animals that were sacrificed before Him prophesied of as the greater sacrifice.

(Read Heb. 9:15) Because Jesus offered Himself without spot to God to purge our conscience from dead works to serve the living God, He is the mediator of the New Testament or Covenant. Moses spoke of Him in Deut. 18:15 (Read). Paul, in I Tim. 2:5-6, says, **“For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”** By means of death, for the loosing away of the sins under the First Covenant, or Testament, He provided the way that those who are called might receive the promise of age lasting inheritance.

(Read Heb. 9:16) “Testament” here is like “last will and testament” today. To understand all that is being said here, I feel we need to first understand what a will, or testament consists of. You may have seen the bumper sticker that says, “Where there is a will, I want to be in it.” If you have been a beneficiary, or if you have written your own will, what qualified you to be a beneficiary, or what qualifications did you require, either written or unwritten of those named in your will to be beneficiaries? There are exceptions, but is not being a part of the family the most common qualification required and perhaps the most important qualification?

One more question. If you were a beneficiary, or you have written your own will, was there a special condition, or conditions in the will naming you as a beneficiary that had to be met before distribution of the estate could be made or have you in your will established a special condition, or conditions that have to be met before your estate can be distributed? An example of this

might be that the beneficiary would have to reach a certain age before distribution could be made.

The author of Hebrews discusses the subject of inheritance at some length. There are several references to inheritance; inheriting the promises, etc., and I believe that very often this is assumed to be the result of “salvation,” but I would like to submit to you that when this subject is discussed, the reference is to something more than salvation.

If you were to go to your library and check out a book on writing wills, the book would probably first tell you that a basic will contains two classifications of provisions—Administrative and Dispositive. The most complicated provisions are the administrative provisions. These are more or less the working provisions—the instructions and rules as to how, when, etc. the settlement of an estate is to be carried out.

The Dispositive provisions are simply those which tell who is to receive the estate and any other provision as to what is to be done with the property of the one making the will, the testator.

The Administrative provisions could include a considerable number of provisions depending on the size of the estate, the number of heirs and a number of other situations. For simplification, I want us to just look at four basic provisions—these include, 1) Identification of the testator, 2) Appointment of an executor or administrator; 3) Special conditions for the Dispositive provisions; and 4) conclusion and authority provisions.

Identification of the testator, the one making the will, is a necessity, of course. However, because changes occur in our lives that necessitates making changes (or in legal terminology, codicils) to a will, or even the writing of a complete new will, it is also necessary to identify the particular will as the current will. So we might see a will start off something like this: “I John Q. Public, of Montezuma County, Colorado, hereby make, publish and declare this my Last Will and Testament, hereby revoking all wills and codicils made by me at anytime heretofore.” This assures that the will with latest date is the will in effect

should the testator die.

Probably the most important administrative provision is the naming of the executor, or administrator, or mediator of the will. A will is just what it says—your will—what you want or will to be done with your estate. So the person, or persons, named as the executor has to be someone fully trusted by the testator. They have to be capable both mentally and physically of doing the job. Often times the executor will need to make judgments you cannot foresee and these judgments will be critical to the plan you have devised. The will, in effect, is no better than the person, or persons, you select to administer it.

Particularly if an individual is named as executor, it is important to provide a succession procedure should something happen to the named executor before the settlement of the estate is complete. You would need to name a second person, or a lineup of persons to take over the job should they be needed.

The special conditions for the disposition provisions are not unusual. A testator, for example, might be leaving his estate to his children and he might specify that they must be 21 years of age before the full disposition could be made to them. Another example might be that a named beneficiary might have a drinking problem and the testator specifies that the beneficiary must demonstrate continuous sobriety before disposition could be made to him, or her.

The conclusion and authority provisions usually include verification of the competency of the testator to make the will and witnesses that the testator is who he says he is and has the authority to make such a will. Today this includes signing the will before witnesses and a notary public and then having the witnesses sign that they consider the testator competent and then the notary public verifies all of the signatures.

There are two basic provisions under the Dispositive provisions. First, there is the identification of the beneficiary or beneficiaries. Second, there is the actual disposition provisions.

All of these provisions may appear as we have listed them, or virtually in any order.

I submit that God wrote a “Last Will and

Testament” that contains all of these basic provisions. Beginning in Ex. 19:3, let’s read the beginning of that will. (Read Ex. 19:3-8) He first establishes that it is He, the God of Israel, that is making the will. He also establishes His ownership of the estate, **“for all the earth is mine,”** (vs. 5) We’re told in verse 8 that all the people clearly witnessed this covenant or testament and so indicated. This meets the requirements of the identification of the testator and the conclusion and authority provisions. Verse 3 makes it clear that the beneficiaries are the children of Israel.

With one exception, the rest of what we read has to do with the actual disposition. It has 3 parts. The first part is, **“Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people.”** The word “peculiar” restricts ownership to God only. He would not share them with other gods or mix them with other peoples. They would be His and His alone much the same way a young woman becomes a “peculiar treasure” of her husband. But, you might ask, if this is an inheritance, what did they get? Usually, what is inherited is what already exists, is it not? In this case what was promised, whether we look at it as a marriage, or an inheritance, they would receive a special relationship with their God—love, protection, blessing, etc.

The second part of the dispositive provisions is, **“ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests.”** Priest here simply means an administrator, a ruler in the sense that they would be carrying out the job of government, government designed and established by the Supreme Ruler. So again the question, What were they to receive? I think we will see that they were to receive what they were to rule over. God has already stated to them that all the earth is His. This is what He is willing, or giving—dominion over the earth.

The third provision is, **“ye shall be unto me a holy nation.”** “Holy” here means “set apart.” Set apart from all other nations. Any of you who have been involved in personnel management, whether in civilian or military circumstances, probably realize that if a person is “ruling” over others, as a superintendent, foreman, officer, etc., that person, in doing his or her

job effectively, cannot socialize with those he or she is over as if they were one of them—he or she is set apart or “holy” to them.

So again, what is inherited? I think that this and the second part we just discussed together gives “responsibility.” Think for a minute about what you might have inherited, or what you are leaving for an inheritance to your family. Would you agree with me that regardless of what material thing or things any of us might receive, or be leaving to our heirs, it always involves responsibility? If we give or receive land, money, a business, or whatever, responsibility to take care of it, use it, spend it, manage it, etc., is really what we are giving or receiving. God’s estate is no different.

But as I mentioned, there is one provision that is an exception. This is a special provision that has to be met for the disposition of the estate to take place. **“If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant.”** In our imperfect state and imperfect world, I fear we do not take this special provision seriously enough. The word translated “obey” literally means “to hear intelligently.” The word “indeed” is not translated from a Hebrew word but is the translators effort to render a Hebrew idiom into English, thus the use of the word “obey.” If we took the literal translation, “if ye will hear intelligently my voice, and keep my covenant” and understand that His voice is what follows in Ex. 20:2-17, i.e. the Ten Commandments, I think we can begin to see how really serious this is. The first 9 commandments address actions, mental or physical while the 10th commandment addresses the thought behind any violation of the first 9. Remember, Jesus, in His sermon on the mount (Matt. 5) tells us that the thought is as bad as the action. Who among us can claim purity of actions, but even more so, who among us can claim purity of thought? In God’s perfection—obedience must be absolute. Considering this absolute obedience and this special provision, who will be left in the nation or nations of Israel to inherit the three dispositions we have listed? Fortunately, there is still another provision of the will that we have to consider. Remember that we said the most important ad-

ministrative provision of a will is the selection of an executor and if this is an individual, the succession provision for the executor.

We have an individual who was given the responsibility of helping Israel meet this special provision, not only from the standpoint of teaching the “voice” of God, but of carrying out a procedure God said He would accept to right the failures of the people to hear and obey the “voice” of God. This individual was Aaron, whom God appointed high priest. A succession was also appointed, father to son. So we have in effect with this covenant, this first covenant, or testament, made by God at Mt. Sinai, not only a charter for the establishment of a nation, marriage of Himself to the people, if you will, but also from the perspective we are looking at today, a last will and testament providing for the ultimate inheritance, by this people, of the world—the Kingdom of God.

We know from our studies that not only did this people not keep the covenant, the agreement they made with God, but God ultimately had to remove Israel from the land and disinherit them from the inheritance. However, we also know that this was all part of God’s plan since before the creation.

We just read in chapter 8 that there is also a New Covenant, or Testament, in God’s plan. It also was made with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, i.e. the whole house of Israel, but it was not to be like the Covenant, or Testament, He made with Israel at Mt. Sinai. We saw that instead of the **“IF you will obey my voice and keep my covenant,”** it, in effect, says **“you will obey my voice and keep my covenant,”** because He says, **“I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.”** The Aaronic priesthood, the executors of the First Covenant, could not do this, it is a human impossibility to change the heart of another individual. We might help, encourage, and teach, but man does not have the capability to

accomplish this with another individual. So this requires a different executor, one who does have this ability to change men’s hearts. Thus God has provided another priesthood, one with greater authority than the Aaronic priesthood that does have this ability, Jesus Christ, a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec. We could look at this New Testament as having the same conditional provision in a sense, in that it will still be necessary that men appear before God perfect, before the distribution of the estate can be made. But now, through the new executor, this is not only a possibility, it is assured.

So let’s look at this New Will and Testament. The testator is still God. It is a New Testament—certain provisions of the original will are now invalid. The new executor is Jesus Christ, High Priest after the order of Melchisedec. He has all power and responsibility. No succession provision is necessary since He is priest forever. Obedience is through imputation through Jesus Christ—not dependent on man.

In the Dispositive Provisions, the Beneficiary is the same, however, as we have discussed in past lessons, the determination of who is an Israelite depends on faith in Jesus, not genealogy. There is no need for a succession provision as ultimately all will be resurrected to immortal life. The actual disposition remains the same—world rulership under Christ.

Getting back to Heb. 9: 16, 17, if you have written a Last Will and Testament, how much authority does it have right now? It has no authority now, right? A will has no authority until the testator dies, then it has all the force of law. The same thing had to happen to put God’s will and testament into effect. Death is in the nature of man, not angels, not God in all His glory. So for God’s will to go into effect, God had to die as a man. This, of course, He did manifested as man in Jesus Christ. But now, not only is He the testator, but He is also the mediator, or executor of His own will.

(Read Heb. 9:18-21) (Read Ex. 24:6-8) The blood that Moses sprinkled on the people validated the First Testament or Covenant.

(Read Heb. 9:22) This is the basic princi-

ple of Biblical law on which the whole of God's plan rests. One can believe that Jesus Christ lived, was a great teacher, a great humanitarian, a great prophet, but if they do not believe that He died on the cross to pay the penalty for sin of all mankind, they are antichrist. No other religion has a leader, or founder, that is capable of dying as a sacrifice for the sin of man.

(Read Heb. 9:23, 24) It was necessary that the copies of the things in the true tabernacle be cleansed with the blood of bulls and goats. God revealed to Moses on Mt. Sinai the true tabernacle, the spiritual structure and Moses was instructed to copy what he saw in the spiritual realm in an earthly form. What Moses copied expressed spiritual truths, but what he constructed was only a copy, not the real thing. Yet, for the copy to be a true copy, it had to be sprinkled with blood, which itself was only a copy of the blood of Jesus Christ that was to be sprinkled on the people at the appointed time. For this reason, Christ did not enter the Holy of Holies in the temple in Jerusalem, but rather entered the true tabernacle in the heavens.

(Read Heb. 9:25, 26) Because His sacrifice was the perfect sacrifice, it only had to be offered once.

(Read Heb. 9:27-28) This completely denies the idea of reincarnation. Also we need to

note that though judgment comes after one dies, it does not mean that man cannot be saved after he dies. Verse 28 tells us that the judgment process does not begin until the return of Christ, i.e. the first resurrection. JRL

A Sunday School teacher asked her class why Joseph and Mary took Jesus with them to Jerusalem. A small child replied: "The couldn't get a babysitter."

A Sunday School teacher was discussing the Ten Commandments with her five and six year olds. After explaining the commandment to "honor thy father and thy mother," she asked "Is there a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters?" Without missing a beat one little boy answered, "Thou shalt not kill."

An elderly woman died last month. Having never married, she requested no male pallbearers. In her handwritten instructions for her memorial service, she wrote, "They wouldn't take me out while I was alive, I don't want them to take me out when I'm dead."

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