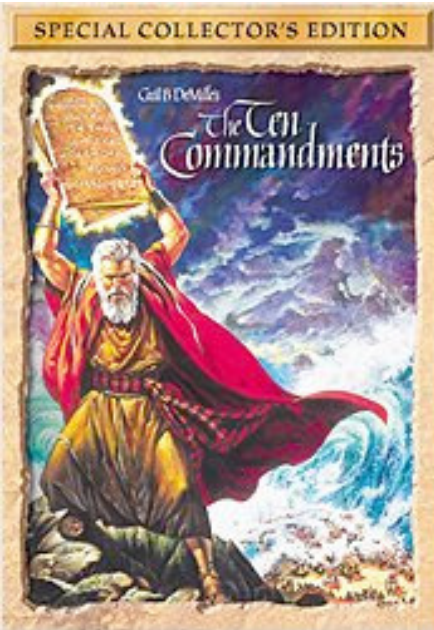


Coming soon, to a magazine near you,  
from January to December during 2007, every month in turn,

## The Ten Commandments



The originals appear in the Book of Exodus, dating from 1400 years Before Christ.

The famous Hollywood blockbuster of the same name was made in 1956, directed by Cecil B. DeMille, starring Charlton Heston as Moses. (left)

In 2004, a musical of the same name written by *Ernio Hernandez* was opened in Hollywood.

More recently, a special Collector's Edition of the film made in c.d. format was published.

So, what are they, and why do we have them?

The *Ten Commandments*, sometimes called *The Decalogue*, are a listing of the ten most fundamental rules for human life and community relationships and are written in the Hebrew Scriptures, which Christians call the Old Testament. So they start their life as a group of commandments in the Jewish

religious community, or *in Israel*, to put it more accurately, but Israel as a tribal group rather than a country.

For Jews, God gave the Decalogue to Moses on Mount Sinai, inscribed on stone tablets, and intended as a covenant between God and the ancient Hebrews. They form a small but vital part of the total of 623 laws in the Hebrew Scriptures. For Christians, the Decalogue has traditionally been regarded as the foundations of laws that all Christians try to embody in their lives and state laws. Most Christians continue to hold them in high regard, even though they have rejected most of the other laws in the Mosaic Code as no longer applicable or binding. Within Islam, the Qur'an appears to refer to the Decalogue and to urge that the rules be followed. It does not contain the actual text.

Perhaps because they are foundation rules given in the ancient past, the Ten Commandments do not specifically address some of the most prominent of today's moral controversies, such as abortion, corporal punishment of children, the death penalty, equal rights for homosexuals, same-sex marriage, assisted suicide, pre-marital sex, ethics of war, environmental issues, etc.

So, what use are they?

Discovering any answers to that question will be our year long task during 2007. I hope that we can have an interactive element with responses and questions published month by month. If you have questions already, send them to me as soon as possible.

There are three versions of the Decalogue mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures. They are at *Exodus 20:2-17*, *Exodus 34:12-26*, and *Deuteronomy 5:6-21*. The version in Exodus 20 is by far the most commonly cited. See next page for details.

Neil Richardson

## **Exodus 20: 1-17**

### **King James' Version (1611)**

1 And God spake all these words, saying,  
2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.  
3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.  
4 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:  
5 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;  
6 and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.  
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.  
8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.  
9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:  
10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:  
11 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.  
12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.  
13 Thou shalt not kill.  
14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.  
15 Thou shalt not steal.  
16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.  
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.

## **Exodus 20: 1-17**

### **New Revised Standard Version (1989)**

Then 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;  
**1st Commandment:**  
You shall have no other gods before me.  
**2nd Commandment:**  
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 bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.  
**3rd Commandment:**  
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.  
**4th Commandment:**  
Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it.  
**5th Commandment:**  
Honour your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.  
**6th Commandment:**  
You shall not murder.  
**7th Commandment:**  
You shall not commit adultery.  
**8th Commandment:**  
You shall not steal.  
**9th Commandment:**  
You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.  
**10th Commandment:**  
You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.