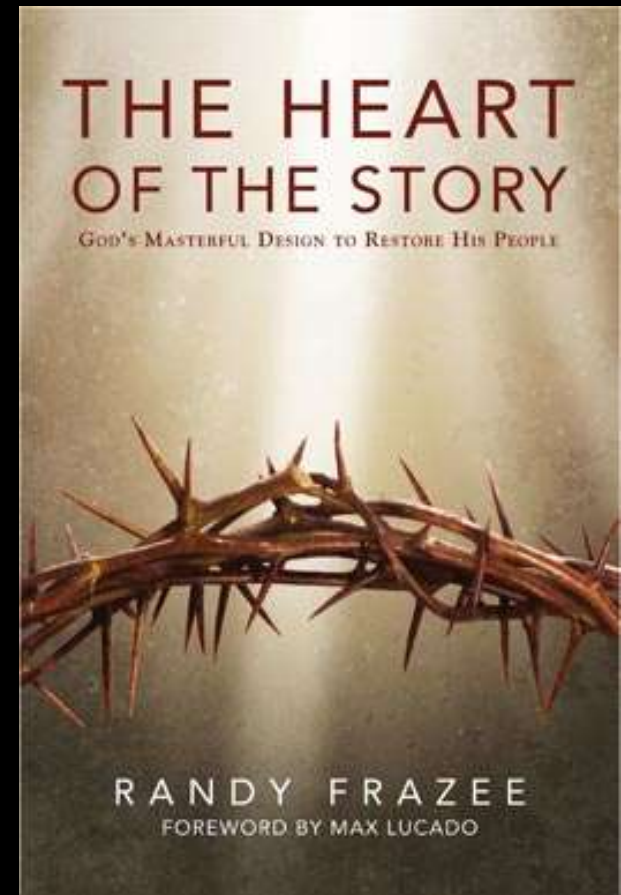


The Heart of the Story

Chapter 5: Rules of Engagement

October 26, 2011



Another garden...

- *“God was ready to lead his people—through Moses—into another garden. Canaan. The Promised Land. A land gardenlike, flowing with milk and honey.”* (p. 59)
- *“As the Israelites wandered in the wilderness, God was getting ready to put them into this new garden and meet with them again.”* (p. 59)

A God of relationships

- *“His desire for intimate relationship with us is the heartbeat of the Upper Story: God desperately wants to experience life with us.”*
(p. 60)



A missed point?

- Perhaps our author misses the point here.
- God indeed wanted “his people to get it right” (p. 59), but that was not going to happen in the Promised Land.
- The only way we are made right is through Jesus.
- Our author seems to put the responsibility with us.
- Lets go to John 1...

John 1

- ¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. ⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Jesus the tabernacle

- σκηνώω *skēnoō*
- **1)** to fix one's tabernacle, have one's tabernacle, abide (or live) in a tabernacle (or tent), tabernacle
- **2)** to dwell



Jesus and the tabernacle

- The point of the tabernacle, and the commandments as well, is not to give humanity another chance at getting right with God, but to point to the cross and what Jesus would do so that He can dwell with us for eternity.

The 10 Words

- *“And God spoke all these words: ‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.’”*
- Words → Commandments
 - Decalog = Ten Words
- There is a distinction between the “words” given in chapter 20 and the “laws” (wide sense) which come in the following chapters.
 - Laws- rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of Israel as a nation. See ch.21-23:19

The 10 Words

- Notice how the “Words” begin.
- Who is the subject?
- Is this Law or Gospel?
- Why start here?
- What does this say about God?
- In the Jewish tradition this is the first word.
 - God always has the first word.
 - “And God said...” –Genesis 1:3
 - “In the beginning was the Word...” –John 1:1



The 10 Words

- This “Word” forms the basis for all that is to follow.
- The “Words” flow from grace, from a God who kept his promise.
- These “Words” of Yahweh form the foundation of the law.
- *“There is no purer, more heartwarming gospel in the whole Scripture than this verse with its promise.”*
 - -August Pieper

The 10 Words

- Yahweh did not give these “words” so that Israel should obey his commands and thereby earn a favorable relationship with him.
- God had already made clear what this relationship was. He was their Savior-God.
- In love he had adopted them as his chosen covenant people.
- He now showed them how they could respond to his grace by living according to his will.

The 10 Words

- As the people looked to the “words” to guide their lives, they also understood that they fall short of their expectations and how much they still needed the forgiving love that only a gracious Lord could freely grant them.
 - Three uses of the law



The 10 Words

- *“Although the Law does not justify, it is nevertheless extremely useful and necessary. In the first place, it acts as a civic restraint [curb] upon those who are unspiritual and uncivilized. In the second place, it produces in man the knowledge of himself as a sinner [mirror], who is therefore subject to death and worthy of eternal wrath. But what is the value of this effect, this humiliation, this wounding and crushing by the hammer? It has this value, that grace can have access to us. Therefore the Law is a minister and a preparation for grace.”*
– -Martin Luther

The 10 Words

- We must keep the gracious introduction in mind as we look at the rest of the “words.”
- The other “words” flow from God’s first word and should be understood in the following way:
- “Because I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, you would never dream of having any other Gods before me.”
- These statements are indicatives, not imperatives.
 - indicative - mood of certainty, actuality
 - imperative - mood of command

The 10 Words

- The big idea here is that the commandments are really our response to what God has done for us (this is a very Lutheran way of thinking anyway).
- Because God loves us, our response is to follow his law. Some get it turned around and think that because I follow God's law then God loves me. This was the thought of the Pharisees in Jesus' day.

The 10 Words

- When we look at these from a “words” point of view we see that all the “words” flow out of a message of the Gospel, *“I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt”*.
- Because of what God has done first then we are able to do the other 9 things. It is like saying; “Because God led us out of Egypt, is merciful to us, remembered us and loves us we would never think of having any other gods, or misusing his name etc.”

Why is the first commandment important?

- *“For I am the Lord your God, the strong jealous one, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, and showing mercy to many thousands who love me and keep my commandments.”* (Exodus 20:5-6* & LC I, 30)
- *Luther’s translation

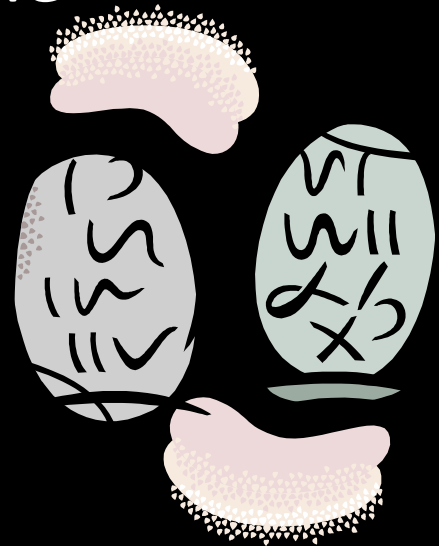
- *“These words apply to all the commandments (as we shall hear later), yet they are attached precisely to this commandment at the head of the list, because it is most important that a person have the right head. For where one’s head is right, one’s whole life must also be right, and vice versa” (LC I, 31, 32)*

- *“Therefore let everyone take this to heart and thus be careful not to regard this as if a mere human being were speaking. For it brings you either eternal blessing, happiness, and salvation, or eternal wrath, distress, and heartache. What more could you want or desire that God’s gracious promise that he wants to be yours with every blessing, to protect you, and to help you in every need?” (LC I, 41)*

- *“For...where the heart is rightly set toward God and this commandment is observed, all the other commandments follow.” (LC I, 48)*
- **Luther’s great insight into the Commandments was his realization that the First Commandment really includes all the others.**
- If we truly kept this commandment, we would not need any of the others.

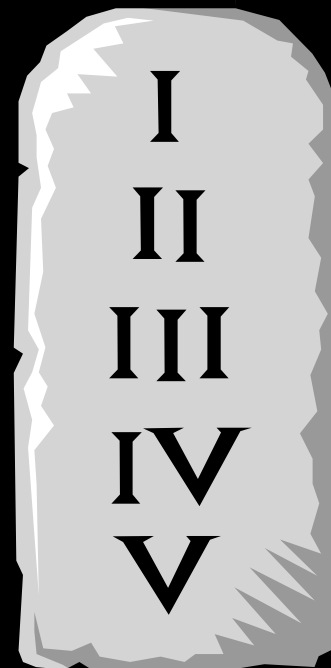
Numbering the Commandments

- When Moses recorded the 10 Commandments in Exodus 20, he did not provide a numbered list. Because of this, people of different religious traditions have assigned different numbers to the commandments.



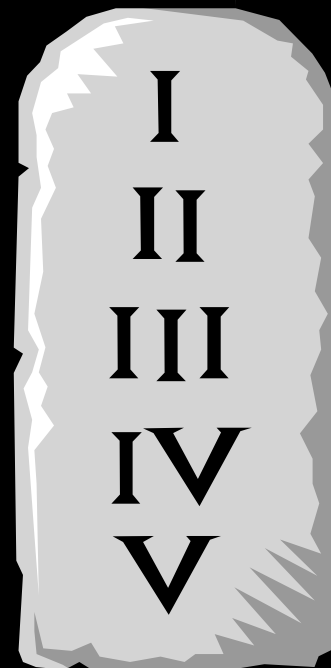
Jewish- “Ten Words”

1. I am the Lord your God
2. No other Gods
3. Don't misuse God's name
4. Remember the Sabbath Day
5. Honor Authorities
6. Don't Murder
7. No Adultery
8. Don't steal
9. No false witness
10. Don't covet



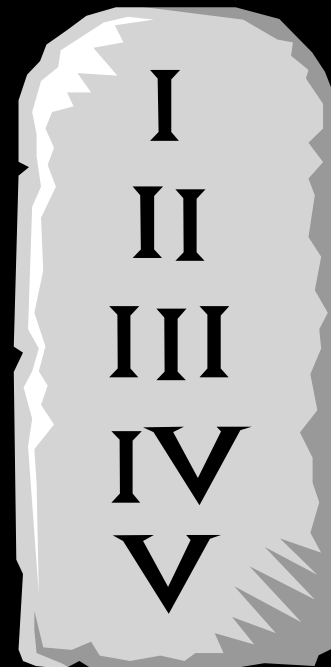
Roman Catholic / Lutheran (Augustine)

1. No other Gods
2. Don't misuse God's name
3. Remember the Sabbath Day
4. Honor Authorities
5. Don't Murder
6. No Adultery
7. Don't steal
8. No false witness
9. Don't covet property
10. Don't covet relationships



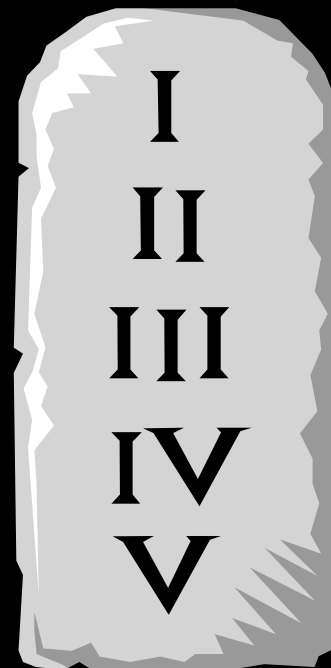
Anglican / Reformed / Other Christian

1. No other Gods
2. No Graven Images
3. Don't misuse God's name
4. Remember the Sabbath Day
5. Honor Authorities
6. Don't Murder
7. No Adultery
8. Don't steal
9. No false witness
10. Don't covet



Orthodox

1. I am the Lord your God so you will have no other Gods
2. No Graven Images
3. Don't misuse God's name
4. Remember the Sabbath Day
5. Honor Authorities
6. Don't Murder
7. No Adultery
8. Don't steal
9. No false witness
10. Don't covet



What does Jesus say?

- *³⁴ Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. ³⁵ One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ Jesus replied: “**Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.** ³⁸ This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: **‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’** ⁴⁰ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*
- Matthew 22:34-40

What does Jesus say?

- *Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*
 - Commandments 1-3 (The first table)
 - Our vertical relationship with God
- *Love your neighbor as yourself.*
 - Commandments 4-10 (The second table)
 - Our horizontal relationship with others

Back to our book...

- *“The only problem is that living by their own rules consistently got the Israelites into trouble.” (p. 60)*
- *“The commandments are a gift from a God who knew that without these guidelines to show his children how to live, they would continue to make life miserable for themselves and others because they just would never figure out how to get along.” (p. 61)*

The problem of sin...

- *“...the gap between his perfect holiness and their flawed selfishness had to be overcome... God and sin cannot peacefully coexist...all humans are corrupted by sin.” (p. 64)*
- [Sacrifice] *“was their only way to bridge the gap between themselves and God.” (p.64”*

Another missed point...

- The sacrificial system was based upon the Passover event, not the requirements of the Mosaic law.
- In the Passover event, God acts to bring about salvation and it points to what Christ would do on the cross.

Is Sacrifice Unfair?

- “Unfair? That’s exactly the point God was making: ‘Yes, it is totally unfair that an innocent creature gets what you deserve. But it’s the only way because you cannot get rid of your sin by yourself. But because I want so much to be with you, I am providing a way ~~for you to pay for your sins.~~” (p.p. 64-65)

An Upper Story Perspective

- *“In the Upper Story, God gives a hint of what is to come in his vision for a perfect community where he can finally be with his children forever...God made a way. No matter how hard we try to be ‘good,’ we can never be good enough on our own.” (p. 65)*