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Introduction

The Decalogue or “ten words” are first recorded in Exodus 20:1-17 although they are not labeled as such until Exodus 34:28. They are set apart from the rest of the commands in the Torah in that they are recorded as to have been spoken directly to Israel from the mouth of God. The intent of this paper is to first provide the best literal translation based on the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS) along with footnotes describing where there are textual variants among the original manuscripts and then to provide an in depth grammatical and syntactical analysis of the text in order to discuss the nuances found in the original Hebrew text.

Translation

And YHWH¹ spoke all these words saying:

I am YHWH your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt, from the house of slaves.

You shall not have other gods for yourself against My face².

You shall not make a divine image of worship for yourself or³ any form that is in the heavens above or in the earth below, or in the waters beneath the earth. You shall not bow down to

¹ אֱלֹהִים (“God”) in the Masoretic text. The Septuagint and Vulgate render Κύριος instead of θεός. Κύριος is translated from the Hebrew יְהוָה over 75% of the occurrences in the Septuagint. Furthermore, the phrase אֱלֹהֵי יִדְבָר is found only three places in the Hebrew Bible (Genesis 8:15, Exodus 6:2, and Exodus 20:1) and two of the three are translated with Κύριος in the Septuagint, while the phrase יְהוָה יִדְבָר is found one hundred times in the Hebrew Bible with most occurrences found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers.

² Septuagint renders πλὴν ἐμοῦ (“except Me”)

³ The parallel text in Deuteronomy 5:8 fails to have a waw after the noun, which changes the syntax of the sentence so that the final clause is describing the divine image, rather than prohibiting a separate type of idol (Childs, 387)

them, or shall you become subservient them because I, YHWH your God, am “El Qana”^{4 5}, the One who brings to bear the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generations* of the ones who hate Me, but acting in covenantal loyalty to thousands; to the ones who love Me and guard My commandments.

You shall not lift up the name of YHWH for perjury⁶ because YHWH will by no means leave unpunished whomever shall lift up His name⁷ for perjury.

Remember⁸ the Shabbat day to consecrate it. Six days you may labor and do all your occupational work, but on⁹ the seventh day is a Shabbat *to honor* YHWH your God; you shall not do any occupational work on it¹⁰; you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant¹¹, or your maidservant, or your domestic animal, or the stranger who is within your gates¹², because

⁴ “Jealous God” or “Passionate God”; used as one of the title’s of God (cf. Exodus 34:14)

⁵ Nash Papyrus alternately spells as קנא. This spelling can be seen in Joshua 24:19 and Nahum 1:2.

⁶ שׁוּא is used in legal text speaking about committing perjury (cf. Exodus 23:1, Deuteronomy 5:20).

⁷ Nash Papyrus renders as שמה (“its name” or “her name”)

⁸ Samaritan Pentateuch renders as the infinitive שמור (guard) instead of זכור as it appears in Deuteronomy 5:12. זכור is preferred here as there is a different reason for Shabbat observance given in each account, thus it is improper to assume that the rendition of the “Ten Words” in Deuteronomy was intended to be a verbatim copy of the rendition in Exodus.

⁹ Nash Papyrus, Medieval Manuscripts, Septuagint, and Vulgate render וביום instead of ויום.

¹⁰ Nash Papyrus, Septuagint, and the Syriac Peshitta add בה, translated here as “on it”

¹¹ Medieval Manuscripts, certain copies of the Septuagint, Syriac Peshita, and Targums render as רע (“neighbor”).

¹² Septuagint renders as ὁ παροικῶν ἐν σοί (“dwelling beside you”).

in six days YHWH made the heavens and the earth and¹³ the sea and all that is in them, but He rested on the seventh day; therefore YHWH greatly blessed the Shabbat¹⁴ day and consecrated it.

Honor your father and your mother in order that it may go well with you¹⁵ and in order that they may cause your days to be prolonged upon the good¹⁶ ground that YHWH your God is giving to you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery¹⁷.

You shall not steal.

You shall not testify against your neighbor *as* a false¹⁸ witness.

¹³ Masoretic text renders as אֶת-הַיָּם while the Medieval Manuscripts, Septuagint, Targums, Syriac Peshitta, and Vulgate render as וְאֶת-הַיָּם which fits the context of the clause.

¹⁴ Nash Papyrus, Septuagint, and Syriac render הַשְּׁבִיעִי ("the seventh") instead of הַשַּׁבָּת.

¹⁵ Nash Papyrus and Septuagint add לְךָ וּלְמַעַן ("it may go well with you and in order that")

¹⁶ Septuagint adds τῆς ἀγαθῆς ("the good").

¹⁷ Nash Papyrus and Septuagint switch the order so that "You shall not commit adultery" comes before "You shall not murder".

¹⁸ Nash Papyrus renders שׁוֹא instead of שֶׁקֶר (cf. Deuteronomy 5:20). Both words carry a similar meaning of "false" or "deceptive".

You shall not desire your neighbor's house or field¹⁹, you shall not desire²⁰ your neighbor's wife²¹, or his servant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything²² that *belongs to* your neighbor.

Analysis of grammar and syntax

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֶת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאָמָר

The compilation of commandments in Exodus 20:1-17 is elsewhere referred to as the "ten words" or Decalogue as was popularize by the Septuagint translation (Exod. 34:28 and Deut 10:4). However, nowhere in the Hebrew bible is the Decalogue recorded in an ordered list of ten distinct "words" or commands. Most attempts to divide up the passage into ten distinct commandments agree upon the final eight but differ as to where the first commandment starts and where to split between the first and second commandment. Recent research into ancient Near Eastern treaties has shown that the Decalogue bears striking resemblance to the format of these treaties and that the introductory sentence, "And YHWH spoke all these words saying" is in the format of a preamble, while the next sentence "*I am YHWH your God who brought you out from the land of Egypt...*" is in the format of a historical prologue²³, which would indicate that these sentence would not have been considered part of the list of ten "words". Further evidence to this fact is the lack of either a second person masculine singular prohibitive

¹⁹ Nash Papyrus, Medieval Manuscripts, Septuagint, and Samaritan Pentateuch add שְׂדֵהוּ ("his field").

²⁰ Nash Papyrus renders as אֶת־תַּאֲוָה ("crave for") (cf. Deuteronomy 5:21).

²¹ Septuagint reverses the two clauses, rendering first "you shall not desire your neighbor's wife" followed by "you shall not desire your neighbor's house or field".

²² Septuagint adds κτηνους αυτοῦ οὔτε ("his domestic animal, or")

²³ Kline, *Treaty of the Great King*, 13-16.

imperfect ("you shall not...") or an imperative command in either phrase which are characteristic of the other eight "words". Thus the first "word" must be the prohibition against another god (or gods) and the second "word" must be the prohibition against formation and worship of a graven image.

אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבְּיַת עַבְדִּים

The relative clause²⁴ that begins with אֲשֶׁר in this sentence is used here to relate exactly which god it is that the children of Israel are entering into a treaty with. The verb immediately follow אֲשֶׁר is not in the third person as would be expected to agree with the אֲשֶׁר, but is instead in the hiphil first person which makes the subject of the verb אֲנֹכִי. Thus this verb is literally stating "*I am the one who caused you to come out of Egypt*".

לֹא יִהְיֶה־לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל־פְּנֵי

לֹא יִהְיֶה־לְךָ is the first of twelve prohibitions found within the Decalogue. All of the others use the formula לֹא followed by a second person masculine singular imperfect verb while in this instance the negative article לֹא is followed by a third person masculine singular imperfect verb. However, לְךָ ("*for yourself*") is attached to this verb with a maqqef, giving it the same prohibitory function as the other instances of this formula. The usage of לֹא with the imperfect is significant because it tends to indicate a permanent prohibition while אַל with the jussive is used for prohibitions for specific situations and tends not to be a permanent

²⁴ Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, (WS §540).

prohibition²⁵, thus its usage throughout the Decalogue indicates the permanence of the prohibitions with respect to time and situational application.

The verb יִהְיֶה is in the third person masculine singular form has a plural subject "*other gods*". Cassuto²⁶ notes this anomaly is used to emphasize the prohibition against even associating with one other deity while also clearly forbidding association with all other deities in general. This particular command would have been revolutionary to a people coming out of the ancient Egyptian society that worshipped many gods and did not conceptualize any conflict of interest in their polytheism. This prohibition is further strengthened by the addition of the adversative preposition עַל-פְּנֵי ("*against My face*") indicating that the worship of other gods not only violates the exclusivity requirement, but sets one in opposition to YHWH. The Septuagint fails to capture the full implication of this prohibition by rendering עַל-פְּנֵי as simply πλὴν ἐμοῦ ("*except Me*").

לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה-לְךָ פֶסֶל | וְכָל-תְּמוּנָה אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם | מִמֶּעַל וְאֲשֶׁר בְּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת וְאֲשֶׁר
בַּמַּיִם | מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ

The second of the twelve prohibitions prohibits the creation of a פֶּסֶל ("*image of the divine*") or any "*form*", a term which is elaborated upon using a relative clause to explain the prohibition includes any form existing in the heavens, on the earth, or in the sea. These were

²⁵ WS §396.

²⁶ Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 241.

the realms where the deities of the ancient Near East²⁷, especially Egypt existed and thus YHWH elaborates to ensure the children of Israel understand the totality of the prohibition.

לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם

This clause is not a separate “word”, but is in fact functioning as a circumstantial subordinate verbal-clause²⁸ that contains two more prohibitions and should be understood to clarify that the prohibition against making an image is prohibiting the making of an idol to which people will bow down and become subservient; that they will worship. The Hebrew Bible contains multiple instances where God Himself commands Israel to create both heavenly and earthly objects such as cherubim, flowers, pomegranates and even a bronze serpent. None of these creations are problematic when this clause is understood as clarifying the circumstances of the image-prohibition commandment. However, in 2 Kings 18:4, the texts indicates that the bronze serpent had become problematic as it had become an image of worship and was thus destroyed by king Hezekiah.

The verb תִּשְׁתַּחֲוֶה is either in a rare form called the ‘estafel’ or ‘histafel’ with a verbal root of חוה (“to bow down”) or is in the reflexive hithpael with a verbal root of שחח²⁹. Its meaning is to cause one’s self to prostrate one’s self .

The verb תַּעֲבֹדֵם is recognized as being in an irregular form of the hofal stem. Cassuto³⁰ states that the vocalization was intentionally changed in order to express contempt (similar to

²⁷ *ibid*, 236.

²⁸ Gesenius, *Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar*, (GK §156.d–g)

²⁹ Heiser and Setterholm, *Glossary of Morpho-Syntactic Database Terminology*.

³⁰ Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 241.

how *ashtereh* was intentionally changed to *ashtoreh* by substituting the vowels for *bosheth*, “*shame*” into the name). This would be to indicate that the worship of idols does not merit the honorable title of “*service*” but “*servitude*” instead. Gesenius³¹ also proposes that the Masora intends the meaning of “*thou shalt not allow thyself to be brought to worship them*”.

כִּי אֲנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קָנָא

This causal clause³² functions to explain why Israel may have no other god or gods nor may they make any sort of image of worship. The reason given is in the form of another title for YHWH, ‘El-Qana’ (“*God of Jealousy*” or “*God of Passion*”). The reason for keeping of a commandment as “*because I am (Title for God)*” is used quite frequently throughout the Torah. The character of El-Qana is then elaborated on in the next clause:

פֶּקֶד עֵזֶן אֲבֹת עַל-בְּנֵיהֶם עַל-שְׁלֵשִׁים וְעַל-רִבְעִים לְשֹׂנְאֵי וְעָשָׂה חֶסֶד לְאֱלֹהִים לְאֹהֲבֵי וּלְשֹׂמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי

The character of El-Qana is dualistic in nature and is contrasted with two different groups; one is identified by the participle לְשֹׂנְאֵי (“*those who hate Me*”) and the other by a construct chain containing two participles לְאֹהֲבֵי וּלְשֹׂמְרֵי מִצְוֹתַי (“*those who love Me and guard My commandments*”). The group who “*hate Me*” are addressed first with a relative

³¹ GK §60.b.

³² WS §533.

clause that starts with the participle פִּקֵּד “the one who brings to bear”³³. This clause brings to bear the נֶגֶד upon up to four subsequent generations. נֶגֶד is used in the Hebrew Bible to refer to three aspects of the the sin: the sin itself, the resulting culpability for the sin, and the punishment for the sin³⁴. In this clause it is clearly referring to the punishment for sin since it is preceded by the particle פִּקֵּד.

The second group who “*love Me and guard My commandments*” are addressed after the first group using the adversative clause וְעַיִן “*but (the One) doing*”³⁵. This group is contrasted against the first group in that instead of bringing to bear the punishment of sins, instead El-Qana does אֱדֹתָי (“*covenant-loyalty*”) towards them. אֱדֹתָי is a word with no known cognate in other ancient Near Eastern languages but is used in the Hebrew Bible exclusively in covenant relations to express bilateral commitment through the performance of beneficent action to render assistance to a needy party who is unable to help himself³⁶. Also contrasted is the punishment of the first group which is limited to only three or four generations while the latter group is promised unmeasurable covenant-loyalty (certainly one thousand generations is a time beyond human comprehension).

³³ WS §539a.

³⁴ Ludwig Koehler et al., *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 800.

³⁵ WS §552.

³⁶ VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 211-212.

לֹא תִשָּׂא אֶת־שֵׁם־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׂוּא כִּי לֹא יִנְקֶה יְהוָה אֶת אֲשֶׁר־יִשָּׂא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ
לְשׂוּא

The fifth prohibition is against lifting up the name of YHWH for perjury; swearing a false oath in YHWH's name. One's name is directly associated with one's honor³⁷ in the honor and shame based culture of the ancient Near East thus if an Israelite swore an oath using the name of YHWH and it was later discovered that he or she actually lied, it was incumbent upon the Deity to punish the individual or face being dishonored in the eyes of the people. This prohibition was later interpreted as a prohibition of misuse of the name and ultimately lead to a prohibition of pronouncing the name of YHWH for fear of violating this commandment. This can be seen in the Septuagints translation of נִשְׂו as ματαίω, "*frivolous*".

The prohibition is followed by a causal clause³⁸ that explains that YHWH will uphold His honor by punishing the perjurer through the usage of the negative לֹא for denial of the fact³⁹ followed by the verb נִקָּה in the intensive Piel imperfect form to amplify the fact of forthcoming punishment.

זְכוֹר אֶת־יְוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ

זְכוֹר here is in the infinitive and yet contextually is functioning as an imperative.

Gesenius⁴⁰ refers to this as an emphatic imperative and the fact that this fifth "word" alone out

³⁷ Stansell, "Honor and Shame in the David Narratives," 58-59.

³⁸ WS §533.

³⁹ WS §395.

⁴⁰ GK §113.bb.

of the entire Decalogue uses the emphatic imperative must indicate its importance among the ten. The causal clause following this command indicates that the reason why the Shabbat day must be consecrated is because it is the mark of YHWH's authority over His creation. This elevated purpose explains an emphatic imperative would be used here alone since it is a means of reciprocating with giving honor to one's Creator.

וְקִדְשׁוֹ is in the intensified Piel infinitive form indicating that the day is not just simply set apart from the other days, but is elevated above all other days of the week. This is further evidenced by the subsequent instructions.

שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל־מְלֶאכֶתֶךָ וַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבָּת | לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ

תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ are in the Qal imperfect and waw + Qal perfect here and stand in contrast to the frequent usage of imperatives throughout the Decalogue. As such, they should not be interpreted as commands but as permissive imperfects⁴¹ authorizing the children of Israel to work for six days but not requiring a six day work week as has sometimes been suggested. The expression the time of six days coming before the verb is a normal variation of word order⁴² as is the subsequent "*but the seventh day*".

מְלֶאכֶת⁴³ should be understood as occupational work for one's own benefit as it emphasizes skilled labor and its benefits⁴³. Contextually, it does not include work that is in direct service to God since the prescribed cultic functions of the priests and Levites did not cease during the Shabbat.

⁴¹ WS §170.

⁴² WS §572b.

⁴³ VanGemeren, *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology & Exegesis*, 943.

וַיֹּם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ is a verbless equational clause⁴⁴ and thus is translated with a form of the verb “to be”, thus should be translated “*but the seventh day is a Shabbat to YHWH your God*”. It is equated and contrasted to the six other days of the week mentioned in the previous clause.

לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל־מְלָאכָה אֲתָהּ | וּבְנֶךְ־וּבִתֶּךָ עַבְדֶּךָ וְאִמָּתֶךָ וּבְהֵמָתֶךָ וּגְרֶךָ אֲשֶׁר
בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ

The sixth prohibition that appears in the Decalogue prohibits any occupational work and is followed by an unmarked relative clause⁴⁵ that explains that the prohibition not only includes the head of the household (“*you*”) but also includes any of your children, your servants, your hired help, and even your animals through the usage of the alternative ו⁴⁶. This relative clause exemplifies the contrast that the Torah makes between the laws of YHWH and the laws of the other nations. Other law codes of the ancient Near East typically do not apply the laws equally across all classes of citizens but allow the upper classes to enjoy freedoms not permitted and to face lesser punishments for crimes committed against those of the lower classes⁴⁷. Here, YHWH requires that the consecration of the Shabbat through a cessation in occupational work be enjoyed by all people and work animals regardless of their perceived status.

⁴⁴ WS §564.

⁴⁵ WS §540.

⁴⁶ WS §433.

⁴⁷ Pritchard, *The Ancient Near East an Anthology of Texts and Pictures, 3rd ed. with Supplement*, part 2, chapters 1-3.

The relative clause **אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעַרְיָךְ** specifies “*the stranger who is within your gates*” and is used to refer to a class of people who dwelt in the land along with Israel but did not actually own any property and thus were susceptible to being taken advantage of.

**כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת־יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת־הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת־הָאָרֶץ וְאֶת־הַיָּם וְאֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר־בָּם וַיָּנַח
בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל־כֵּן בֵּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת־יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֵׁהוּ**

The causal clause is used here⁴⁸ to give purpose to why the Shabbat day is to be elevated above all other days; it was the pinnacle of His creation. The account of the actual creation begins with a normal variation of word order for expression of time⁴⁹ and ends with a relative clause⁵⁰ used to explain that everything in the three realms mentioned was in fact created by God Himself. This distinction was important to the ancient Israelite because the surrounding nations worshipped various gods in these three realms and YHWH is subtly informing the Israelites that those things are in fact not gods but simply things that He created along with mankind.

The second part of the causal clause is an adversative clause⁵¹ that begins with **וַיָּנַח** (“*but He rested*”) contrasting YHWH’s work of creation during the initial six day period followed by His subsequent rest.

⁴⁸ WS §533.

⁴⁹ WS §572b.

⁵⁰ WS §538.

⁵¹ WS §552

עַל־כֵּן (“therefore”) begins a result clause⁵² within the overarching causal clause and is used to explain that the result of YHWH resting on the seventh day is that the seventh day is the recipient of YHWH’s action described by the intensive Piel verbs בָּרַךְ (“to bless”) and קָדַשׁ (“to set apart”). Thus, our requirement at the beginning of this “word” to consecrate the day through cessation of occupational work is seen as a direct reciprocation to YHWH’s initial consecration of the day when He created us.

כְּבֹד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמְךָ לְמַעַן יָאָרְכוּן יְמֵיךָ עַל הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ

The fifth “word” begins with the imperative command כְּבֹד (“Honor!”) and is the only one of the ten “words” that does not contain a prohibition. Additionally, this commandment is emphasized within the Decalogue by the placement of six prohibitory statements in the form of לֹא followed by an imperative before this command and six prohibitory statements after this command. This emphasis on honoring one’s parents should be expected in an honor and shame based society and is paralleled to the fourth “word” which honors God through consecration of the Shabbat.

לְמַעַן starts a result clause⁵³ followed by אָרְךָ in the Hifil imperfect third person masculine plural. Since the verb is in the third person masculine plural, the agents of this action can only be referring to the recipients own parents. Thus the result clause should be translated “in order that your parents may cause your days to be prolonged upon the soil which YHWH your God is giving to you”.

⁵² WS §527.

⁵³ WS §525

אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה starts a circumstantial clause⁵⁴ that specifies that it is the plot of land that YHWH is giving to you as an inheritance is the land upon which your days may be prolonged.

לֹא תִרְצַח

לֹא תִנָּאֵף

לֹא תִגְנוֹב

The sixth, seventh, and eighth “words” all occur in a shortened form that only contains the negative article and the imperative verb. There is an omission of the expected direct object of the verb⁵⁵ which most likely occurs because of the universal understanding and applications of these laws in almost every known society. Cassuto⁵⁶ points out that by using their absolute form without object or complement, these commands transcend any condition or circumstance. Being of upper class or royalty does not remove these absolute restrictions as was common practice in many ancient Near Eastern nations. In 2 Samuel 12, the prophet Nathan uses a parable to make king David realize that he has in fact used his position to justify adultery and ultimately murdering him to steal his wife and cover up his deed. Thus this universal and absolute application of these commands was important to emphasize in such a manner.

⁵⁴ WS §494

⁵⁵ WS §589

⁵⁶ Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 246-247.

לֹא־תִעֲנֶנָּה בְּרֵעֶךָ עַד שָׁקֵר

עַד שָׁקֵר (“a false witness”) functions as a predicate adjective describing the manner of the subject’s witness and is thus functioning as an equational clause⁵⁷. The usage of the term רֵעֶךָ (“*your neighbor*”) in the prohibition against testifying as a false witness against your neighbor should be understood as a universal prohibition against false testimony against any human being since Cassuto⁵⁸ has argued convincingly that the Hebrew Bible uses the term to speak of any inhabitant of the land of Canaan while Israel is dwelling in it or to refer to those living around you while Israel is dispersed outside of the land.

לֹא תַחֲמֹד בֵּית רֵעֶךָ לֹא־תַחֲמֹד אִשְׁתִּי רֵעֶךָ וְעַבְדְּךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וְשׂוֹרְךָ וְחֹמְרְךָ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר
לְרֵעֶךָ

The final “word” of the Decalogue contains two prohibitions against having a strong desire for anything that belongs to your neighbor. It is not grammatically necessary for the repetition of the prohibition לֹא־תַחֲמֹד thus this may have been intentionally added to create the two set of six prohibitions on either side of the command to honor one’s parents.

Conclusion

Analysis of the Hebrew text of the Decalogue unveils a rich understanding of the true intent of YHWH’s commands for His people Israel and gives us a better idea of how those laws

⁵⁷ WS §563.

⁵⁸ Cassuto, *Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, 247.

were intended to be applied to one's life. While there are ten "words" or commands found, internal evidence strongly suggests that there is an emphasis on the fourth and fifth commandments; the commandment to honor YHWH through remembering His Shabbat and the commandment to honor one's parents. These two commands are surrounded by eight others which focus on exclusive worship of YHWH and treating all other human beings with respect and dignity.

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