

## **Dr. Anthony J. Tomasino, The Ten Commandments, Session 1, Ten Commandments and the Law**

This is Dr. Anthony J. Tomasino and his teaching on the Ten Commandments. This is session 1, The Ten Commandments and the Law.

Hi, I'm Tony Tomasino, author of a book on the Ten Commandments that came out a number of years ago entitled: "Written Upon the Heart, the Ten Commandments for Today's Christian."

That book actually started out as a series of sermons, and then from a series of sermons it went to a series of Sunday school classes, and then from a series of Sunday school classes it went to a series of lectures that I presented to different clergy groups, and so on. And from there, I thought, well, I might as well gather all my notes together and put them into some form that other people can appreciate as well. So what I'm doing at this point is reflecting on, well, years of thinking since I first wrote that book, as well as some of the major points that I brought up in that treatment of the Ten Commandments so long ago.

Very practical, I believe the Ten Commandments are very practical. I believe that the Ten Commandments need to be understood in the context in which they were given as well as in our context. We might talk about the merging of the horizons of the ancient Near Eastern world and our current society, which is why these are "Ten Commandments for Today's Christian."

Sounds kind of mod, I guess, or something, but even so, I think it is an appropriate title in its way because we face different questions today. We face different challenges than maybe they did 50 years ago or 500 years ago, and certainly different challenges than they did 3,000 years ago. So the Ten Commandments still give us guidance for how to live if we understand them, if we appreciate them, if we apply them in our own lives and situations.

So, we're going to be looking at the Ten Commandments as they relate and as part of, or even we could say, the foundation of the biblical law code, the laws that were laid down in the Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, etc. So, the first place to begin with this treatment, this topic, would be just understanding what we mean here by law and how the Ten Commandments fit into that whole law tradition. Now, first of all, let me give a little more of a current context for the Ten Commandments.

Now, Ten Commandments in church tradition, also known as a Decalogue, and I'll use that word from time to time, they are regarded as one of the three foundational documents of Christian faith. The three foundational documents of the Christian faith, according to church tradition, are the Ten Commandments, which provide an

ethical foundation, the Lord's Prayer, which provides a spiritual foundation, and the Apostles Creed, which provides a theological foundation of the Christian faith. Oftentimes, when I start at a new church, what I do is I present all three of these in a series of sermons, starting with the Ten Commandments and then moving on, usually during Lent, I do the Lord's Prayer, and then in the summer, I do the Apostles Creed.

And so, we cover the entire foundation of the Christian faith, and therefore, every church that I have ever served has had a total, full basis of all the necessary knowledge of being Christians. Don't I wish? But anyway, this is a good place to start. Sometimes, we hear the Ten Commandments called a basic law code, the basic law code of ancient Israel.

Back when I wrote this book, there was a lot of debate about whether or not the Ten Commandments could be hanging in courtrooms, and whether or not we should be putting them in every school, and all this kind of thing. And oftentimes, it was argued that the Ten Commandments are truly the basis of any just society. Well, I don't agree with that, personally, because I think that the Ten Commandments are made for a specific society, a society that worships the Lord, the God of Israel, not for any society.

And our society, whether or not we worship the Lord, is a debatable question these days, I guess. But the Ten Commandments have been sometimes presented as sort of like the panacea. You know, why do we have school shootings? Well, if we had the Ten Commandments up in all of our classrooms, we wouldn't have school shootings going on like this kind of thing.

I'm not so convinced about that, either. The Ten Commandments aren't magic, but they are wise. And that's what I hope to be able to bring out in this study, in this treatment of the Ten Commandments, is the wisdom and the knowledge which are embedded in these commandments.

Interesting thing about the Ten Commandments is that even back when there was this big fight over whether or not the Ten Commandments could be put in classrooms and in courtrooms and so on, there was a survey taken, I believe it was by Christianity Today, I might be mistaken on that, but they asked people to name the Ten Commandments. Christians, okay, Christians, to name the Ten Commandments. How many commandments do you think the average Christian could name? Most of them got four. Four out of the Ten Commandments.

If they were asked to put them in order, almost everybody failed. So even though people seem to think that these are so very, very important and so very vital to the understanding of a just society, most people are woefully uninformed about what they actually say.

So let us try to get this fleshed out a little bit over the next several lectures here. The first place to begin is with the whole concept of law, because we've talked about the fact that the Ten Commandments are the foundation of the law code of ancient Israel. And this is a significant kind of thing.

We think about law, and I remember reading a number of years ago in a book about law in the Old Testament, and it started off with a poem that basically argued that we don't really know what law is, that defining law is very hard. And I guess you might say it's like pornography. You know, it's one of those things that you know when you see it.

I don't think it's quite that bad, really. According to the Cambridge Dictionary, law is a rule usually made by a government that is used to order the way in which a society behaves. That seems pretty straightforward, pretty simple.

And we have rules, we have governments enforcing the rules, and we have regulations of behaviors. Now, on the other hand, a lot of people stop with simply rules, you know, the law is the rules. And it doesn't matter if you're talking about civil society or if you're talking about a game; you still have the laws that you have to obey and the things you have to do.

So, most of us are familiar with the concept of law, and we think of the law in very, I would say, kind of absolute terms. The speed limit is 55, that is the law. If you go 56 miles per hour, you're breaking the law.

If the law says, you know, if you loiter on a street corner, you can be fined 50 bucks. Yeah. So that is the rule.

That is the regulation. And that can be enforced if somebody chooses to do so. And so there is that sense among many people that the law is, is absolute in that way.

And many Christians take that same idea and put it back on the biblical laws. And I'm going to argue that the biblical laws are a little bit more flexible than that. And for reasons that we'll see in a minute, but in the ancient Near East, law was a little bit different from the way that we tend to think about law in our day and in our society.

There has been a lot of study on where the law came from. And we know that there were many different ancient societies, even before there was writing, there were laws. The people in these different societies and these different groups had to have laws and regulations in order to prevent people from killing each other, to prevent them from stealing from each other, to give them a sense of what each person's role in the society was.

So oral law codes have existed from probably as soon as people started getting together and forming groups and trying to create things that we might call society. Law codes. Now, the law codes were imposed by various kinds of lords to establish their authority over local powers.

And we see this happening as soon as we get kingdoms growing up, as soon as we get empires growing up, that the rulers of some of these city states and Mesopotamia in particular, began to try to impose their rule over those of these different tribal groups that existed under their realms. So you have this shift, you might say, from the, say, you have this tribe that has their rules regarding how you deal with, say, adultery. You have this tribe that has a different set of rules.

Well, then you have a king who conquers all these various groups, and he says, OK, now I'm going to show you, you're going to do it my way. And he was not necessarily abrogating or trying to negate what was being done by these previous groups, but rather what the king at this point is trying to do is simply assert his own authority to show that they are answering now to a higher authority. So you've got these suzerains establishing these powers.

And when we look at ancient Near Eastern texts, written documents that we have from ancient Mesopotamia in particular, some of the most ancient texts that have ever been discovered were law codes. And many people are familiar with the laws of Hammurabi by this point, 1750 BC. But Hammurabi is actually fairly late in the scene.

The earliest extant law code that we have comes from a fellow by the name of Ur-Nammu, who was an ancient Sumerian who lived about 2500 BC, maybe. And these laws were remarkably similar to some of the laws that we see in later law codes. A lot of overlap.

And so we've got a lot of these law collections, very ancient texts that show how these kings were imposing their authority over the various peoples under their realms. So this is something that has been a bit of a debate. And I've had some arguments with some folks about this. But good folks.

But the question is about where the laws come from. And I've had friends say, well, the Bible laws are different because the biblical laws come from God, whereas the laws of the ancient Near Eastern peoples came from the kings.

And the kings claimed to present these laws. The kings claimed to present the laws, but they claimed they got the laws from the gods. This was the source of their authority.

And we see this, for instance, in the law code of Hammurabi. We see this depiction of him standing, receiving a tablet of laws from the god Shamash. Shamash was the god of justice in ancient Babylon.

The laws were a stipulation, a covenant stipulation in a sense. So you've got this king. He has conquered these various peoples.

And now he's saying, you people need to agree to these new regulations. There's a new sheriff in town. You're going to answer to me.

And there's a covenant relationship between the king and his people. So the people are, in a sense, taking upon themselves the rights, whatever they might be, of being part of, say, Hammurabi's empire. But at the same time, they're taking upon themselves the responsibilities of obeying Hammurabi's laws.

But an interesting thing here, and this goes through the entire ancient Near Eastern law tradition. Law exists in a covenant relationship. The king has a covenant relationship with these people, which gives him the right to impose upon them the laws.

And the same thing, of course, we see in the Assyrians, the same thing in the Hittites. Everybody agreed that it is the king's rule and the fact that he has done things for the people that gives him the right to impose upon them these covenant obligations, which take the form of laws. Now, in the ancient Near East, there are two major kinds of forms in which the law is expressed.

And these were first identified by a fellow by the name of Albrecht Alt. He came up with these words. I think that everybody has known for a long time that the forms of the law vary, but Albrecht Alt coined these terms, apodictic and casuistic, to describe two types of laws.

Apodictic comes from words that basically mean by the word, by the dictate, sort of thing. So by pronouncement, thou shalt, thou shalt not. That's an apodictic law.

The vast majority of the laws that we find in ancient Near Eastern law codes are what we call casuistic laws. And that is the case law. If a man has an ox that he knew would gore people, and the man has done nothing to pin up his ox, and that ox kills somebody, then that man shall be put to death.

That kind of thing. If this happens, then you do this. That's what we call a casuistic law.

And that is far and away the vast majority of the laws that we find in the ancient Near East. This is a copy of Hammurabi's stela. His law code is all inscribed here.

These were probably set up all around the borders of his kingdom. But here we see the god Shamash. You know he's a god because he's got these horns on his head.

This was the way that the Mesopotamians would depict their gods, as they always had horns of some sort. So he's got this whole set of horns up here on top of his head. And he's kind of big.

He looks like a guy. And he is handing the laws to King Hammurabi. So, Hammurabi is claiming here in very graphic terms that the god Shamash, the god of justice, is the source of law.

And these laws are very typically casuistic rather than apodictic. And here we can see for instance, this is from Hammurabi's law. If anyone brings an accusation against a man, and the accused goes to the river and leaps into the river, and if he sinks to the river, his accuser shall take possession of his house.

But if the river proves that the accused is not guilty and he escapes unhurt, then he who had brought the accusation shall be put to death, while he who had leaped into the river shall take possession of the house that belonged to his accuser. Sometimes this reminds people of the witch trials, where, you know, if you throw a witch in the river, if she's really a witch, she'll float because she's made of wood. And if she sinks, then you put her to death because, well, if she sinks, then that means she was innocent, right? So, you know, darned if you do and darned if you don't kind of thing.

But that's not really what's going on here because you take the accused, he jumps in the river, if he swims, good, that means he's innocent. But if the river pulls him down and drowns him, that means he was guilty. So that's the idea here.

Fascinating thing about Hammurabi's code, and we found this to be the case in many of the ancient law codes, is that as we've deciphered more and more texts, one of the things that has come around is we have lots of records from court proceedings. So we can see in many cases what decisions the judges rendered when these different cases came before them. And remarkably enough, Hammurabi's code wasn't enforced.

Even though they had this wonderful, well-designed law code, which people even to this day study and say, you know, this is remarkable stuff here, the judges didn't use Hammurabi's code when they went to decide their cases. I say, you know, mostly symbolic, maybe, we could say. Hammurabi's suggestions, you know, maybe.

But the remarkable thing, of course, is that now the basic principles clearly are understood. It was in the penalties that we found that there was a great deal of

variation. So, everybody agreed, you know, if a man committed adultery, that was wrong, and the adulterer and adulteress should be put to death kind of thing.

But there was a whole lot of leeway built into that system. And we find this particularly, it's interesting when you get to the middle Assyrian law codes, because they are very, very explicit about this. They say, if a man is committing adultery with a married woman and he has seduced her and committed adultery with her, they should both be put to death, but if the husband is inclined to let his wife live, then let her live.

And in that case, the man won't be killed either. If the man is inclined to cut his wife's nose off, which is one of the ways they dealt with adultery, then they would cut the man's nose off too. The Assyrians were really big into cutting body parts off for some reason.

Kind of creepy. But anyway, the point being here is that these laws were more like guidelines, not in the way we typically think of laws today. So it's sort of like, we've got a 55 mph speed limit, and you go 56 mph, you can get a \$100 fine.

And maybe it's gone up since then. That's what they did to me when I was in Chicago. But anyway, you've got a 55 mph speed limit.

It's sort of up to the cop's discretion, right? Whether or not they're going to actually give you a ticket for going 56 mph. Now, they could technically give you a ticket for going 56 mph. Technically, they could charge you \$100, but most of them are going to give you some leeway.

They're going to think, well, you know, everybody else is going 56, why should I pick on you? So yeah, there was a certain amount of what we might call grace or lenience or simple discretion built into these law codes. Now, how does this compare to the law of the Israelites, the law that we find in the Hebrew Bible? And again, one of the things that people get so hung up on is, oh, the Old Testament laws are so harsh, oh, these people, they were killing everybody for everything, right? Well, let's think about that. First of all, let's talk a little bit about what we mean by law, Torah.

It usually gets translated as law, but really, the word Torah means teaching or instruction. And we find this, for instance, in the book of Proverbs. This is the word that is used in the book of Proverbs for teaching.

It does not have the same connotation as a rule. It can, but it doesn't necessarily have that connotation. It's more, in a sense, it kind of arises more out of the wisdom tradition.

Teaching or instruction. So, the word first appears in the book of Genesis 26. Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.

So that's the first place that this word appears. Now, the question: did Abraham have the laws of Moses? No, of course not. He lived at least 500 years before Moses.

He does not have the laws of Moses. So what laws are we talking about here? We're talking about God's general instructions to Abraham, like laws about not marrying your sister.

Oh, wait a minute. Anyway, what we find is that Abraham was acting in good faith with the instructions given to him by God. And that's really what's meant here.

That is what this word is intending in that passage. We use, of course, the word Torah as a technical term for the first five books of the Old Testament. It's typically called Torah.

And not only do we apply it to the legal materials, again, the teaching of parents, that's in the book of Proverbs, prophetic instruction is also called Torah. So, it's a much broader term than we usually think of when we think of law. And I would say a much broader concept as well, as we'll see later as we go along here.

A few other words are also used in this context. The word huqqah means a statute. And a statute is a little bit different.

It seems to come from a word that means to engrave. And in this case, it's talking about an immutable principle. And you can think about it in terms of it is an immutable principle that people do not commit adultery, but there is wisdom involved in how one deals with a case of someone committing adultery.

And there was a great deal of variation that was permitted. The immutable principle is clear. The law, the Torah, regarding that immutable principle is a little more fuzzy.

So yet another word here, mitzvot, that's the commands that he commanded, comes from the word tzavah, which simply means to command. And mitzvot, this is kind of an interesting word because in Judaism, and to this very day, it has a sense of more like good deeds rather than commands. So if somebody gives money to the poor, that's a mitzvah, a good deed.

So mitzvot is an interesting one because in the Hebrew Bible, very clearly, it has this sense of an uttered commandment. And yet it has taken on this broader sense of just general good works. It can also, by the way, mean commandments.



It does mean that as well in Judaism. So, in the New Testament, we have this Greek word *nomos*, which is the same word that's used by the ancient Greeks regarding their laws. It's a word that we get things like astronomy, the law of the stars, and things of this sort.

But it can have either the sense of a tradition or a law. And that's again a little bit different from what we usually think about it. Because when we think about the laws of the stars, we're thinking about physics, and we're thinking about things that are sort of set in stone.

More than set in stone, they're set in the very ether and the Big Bang and all that kind of stuff. And they're immutable and eternal, and that's why the world is always going to be working the way it is, because of the laws of physics or the laws of astronomy or the laws of the various kinds of principles of science.

But it also has a sense of tradition and those things which are normally done. So let's talk about the origins and the developments of the Israelite law a little bit here. We talked about how in the ancient Near East, there were these different groups that were brought together under a king.

Like Ur-Namu or Hammurabi. And as they assembled these different peoples, these different peoples had their own existing laws. But now they were having a new code imposed upon them by their sovereign, with whom they are entering into a covenant relationship.

How is this analogous to what we see in Israel? I would argue it's very analogous to what we see in Israel. So we have the different tribes of Israel, the 12 tribes of Israel. There are lots of questions about how they were formerly related to one another, and all these kinds of issues that arise.

Critical scholars believe that the tribes of Israel were originally completely separate groups and didn't have any kind of actual genetic relationship to each other. I don't think that most of us would hold that. But the point is that you did have these different tribes that were in some sense had a very strong identity with their tribes.

More so than they had with the nation as a whole, really. And each of these tribes would have had its own regulations, its own rules. What does it mean to be a member of, say, the tribe of Benjamin? What does it mean to be a member of the tribe of Judah? Well, they had their rules.

They had their own regulations that would regulate their own society. So it wasn't like the people of Judah before the coming of Moses had no sense of law. Clearly, they would have had laws.

They would have had ideas and procedures for how they would deal with lawbreakers and so on. All that existed before the time of Moses. And then we have Moses come along, and he receives all these laws from God on Mount Sinai.

God is, in a sense, exerting his authority over those tribal regulations of those people who have already had. Now, no doubt, the people of Judah had ways of dealing with murderers. No doubt, the people of the tribe of Levi had their ways of dealing with adulterers.

God is saying you are entering into a covenant relationship with me. This is the way I want it done. Now, did God give everything to Moses on Mount Sinai? Well, it's an interesting thing because, according to Jewish tradition, God gave literally everything to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Including not only the laws that we find in the Torah, but also all the prophets and all the writings and all the rabbinic teachings as well. And God just told Moses, Now keep all this stuff quiet here because if the Gentiles get hold of this stuff, they'll ruin it. But yeah, that's rabbinic teachings that aren't necessarily something that we're going to put a whole lot of historical stock in.

It has its purposes, but not history, I don't think. What we can say is that God gave laws to Moses on Sinai, but we can also say that there was a growth of these legal traditions in the courts. And we see this already in the books of the Torah.

That we have something happen where we have immediately after giving of the laws, we have this Egyptian guy who curses the name of God in the camp of the Israelites. And so the people go before God and they say, well, what should we do about this? And God says, Take him out and stone him to death. And so they write it into the law.

If anybody blasphemes the name of God, we stone them to death. So we can see that already in the Torah, there is this provision for the extension, for the building, for the expansion of the law beyond just what is written or what was given to Moses on the mountainside. Now the Bible presents it all as coming in the laws of Moses and the time of Moses.

I think that's more a matter of historiography than history, the way that they wrote history in those days. But at any rate, it's clear that many of the laws that we find in the Torah, well, I can't say it's clear, but it seems apparent that many of the laws we find in the Torah actually come from later periods. And have been brought together in the Torah because they represent the same kind of tradition.

Big question about when the Pentateuch, the five books of Moses, came together in the form we have them. The theory that has been around for a long time is that the laws were really codified under Ezra. And I think there's a lot of good reason.

There's a reason why this theory has stuck around for a long time. According to the book of Ezra, Ezra gathered the various law codes, and he came down to Jerusalem, and he stood before the people and he read the laws. And as he read the laws, the people were weeping, and they were ripping their garments and everything because they hadn't been doing this stuff.

Including things like, for instance, the Feast of Tabernacles. It said they hadn't celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles since the days of Joshua. So, why were they not doing it? Did they actually even know they were supposed to do it? Well, according to Ezra, it doesn't seem like they knew they were supposed to be doing it.

So, the question is, the rabbinic tradition says that if Moses hadn't written the law, Ezra would have. And there's a sense that maybe Ezra was perhaps the ghost writer here or something. But Ezra clearly brought together many of these traditions that had been associated with Moses, with the legal traditions of Israel.

And he promulgated them. He had the authority of the Persian Empire behind him to enforce these codes and to make them really the law of the land. It's not to say that the laws didn't exist or that the traditions didn't exist before the time of Ezra, because we know they did.

It's just that they ignored them most of the time. This is Jeremiah's big complaint against the people of Israel. In one of his chapters of Jeremiah, we'll get to this later, he says, You know, you people, you're ignoring the Sabbath day.

You're doing all this trade on the Sabbath day. They had this understanding that they shouldn't be doing it, but they're doing it anyway. Ezra apparently had the ability to bring these things together.

He's called a scribe, a legal scholar who could bring these traditions into this kind of written form that was compact and pocket-sized. Whatever. Well, scroll-sized, but this big.

But he could bring these things together, and he could impose them upon the people and make them essentially the law of the land. And that seems to be something new. Now, a little bit further.

Old Testament law here. Typically, the form of the Old Testament laws is casuistic, just like the forms in Hammurabi's code, just like the forms in the code of Ur-Nammu, just like the forms in the Middle Assyrian laws. So you have things like this.

If you buy a Hebrew servant, he's to serve you for six years. But in the seventh year, he shall go free without paying anything. So, if you buy, then in the seventh year he goes free.

If he comes alone, he goes free alone. But if he's acquired a wife, then she goes with him. That's casuistic law.

Sometimes we have apodictic laws in the Torah. And here we see something like, for instance, in Leviticus 18:21. Do not cause any of your children to pass over to Molech, whatever that means. There's been a lot of debate about that.

It sounds like they're talking about child sacrifice. I think they're talking about child sacrifice. But some people have thought maybe it's just a dedication, right? I don't know.

I think they're talking about child sacrifice. You must not profane the name of the Lord your God. I am Yahweh.

Leviticus 18:21. That is apodictic. So, where do the Ten Commandments fit in this? Well, obviously, the Ten Commandments are apodictic. Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery. That's as apodictic as you can get. But another interesting thing about the Ten Commandments and something that sort of sets it apart from, say, the laws of Hammurabi or even, say, some of the laws in Leviticus and Numbers and so on is that none of them include any penalties.

Whoops. There we go. So we have something like, you shall not kill.

Okay, well, what do you do to somebody who kills? It doesn't say in the Ten Commandments. You shall not commit adultery. It doesn't say.

What do you do to the lawbreakers? How do you treat them? It doesn't say in the Ten Commandments. And then there's also the problem that the Ten Commandments tend to be rather ambiguous when you think about it. And this is where we get into all kinds of various interpretations and so on.

One of the things you'll always hear from people who don't know the Bible very well is they'll say something like, Well, you can't have war because the Bible says you shall not kill. Now, there is some ambiguity in that English translation, but that's not really what I'm talking about here. There is no ambiguity in the Hebrew in that one.

But there are commandments that seem to be rather ambiguous, like, for instance, honor your father and mother. What does that mean? Honor your father and

mother. They probably had some ideas about what that involved in ancient Near Eastern times, and we'll talk about that when we get to that one.

But there is certainly some ambiguity built into that. Or take something like remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. In six days, do all your work.

Now, this one expands a little bit, but not to the extent that we can identify what work is. And this, of course, is something that the Pharisees absolutely obsessed about, about how you define work. And so that's how you end up with the regulations saying things like if somebody breaks their law on the Sabbath day, you were allowed to soak it, but you weren't allowed to rub it. Or if somebody's pillow is lumpy, you were allowed to fluff it with your head on the Sabbath day, but you weren't allowed to fluff it with your hands on the Sabbath day, because that would constitute work.

Yeah, there is some ambiguity. How do you define work? And the rabbis tried to take all that ambiguity away, but weren't necessarily very successful. But another thing to think about here with the Ten Commandments is that they're kind of unenforceable.

And here I'm thinking primarily about that last commandment, which is totally unique in the ancient world. We're going to talk about that, of course, in our last lecture. But who would ever pass a law like You shall not want what somebody else has got? How do you enforce it? Do you have the thought police going about trying to read people's minds, or do you have to keep an eye on people to see if they're looking lustfully at somebody else's wife or something? There really was no way you could enforce that law if you're viewing it as a rule.

If you're viewing it as a rule. And there lies the big point. Is it indeed a rule in the way we usually think about a rule? No, it is not.

It is a covenant stipulation. Israel is entering into a covenant relationship with their God. And the Ten Commandments are the obligations that the people of Israel have been called to accept as part of that covenant relationship with their God.

Just like the various groups under King Hammurabi had to accept Hammurabi's rules, Hammurabi's laws, because of the benefits that they were receiving from being part of Hammurabi's kingdom, so too the people of Israel are entering into a covenant relationship with their God, and they have to accept the responsibilities of that covenant. And I do believe that the Ten Commandments are the foundation of that law code. They are not the laws per se.

They are the obligations, the stipulations that they are bringing upon themselves. I like to think of the Ten Commandments more as vows than as rules. And here I do think that you have the right to remain silent.

Anything you say may be used against you. The marriage metaphor is a common biblical symbol for the relationship between Israel and its people. And this is brought out particularly in the prophets, in the prophet Hosea, of course.

We have one of the most beautiful and pathetic explorations of that theme in Ezekiel, just heart-rending, this idea that God and his people are in a wedded relationship. And God loves his people, and he's committed to them, and they keep turning their backs on him, and they keep committing adultery and doing this kind of thing. But you think about a wedding and a marriage, and one of the main things, of course, we do is the exchange of the vows.

I promise that I will always be kind, patient, and gentle with you. I promise I won't cheat. And a lot of other lies like that.

I promise not to take the whole bad, this kind of good stuff, that is the foundation for the relationship. But one of the main things that people vow when they enter into that marriage relationship is that whole thing about forsaking all others. I will be true to you alone.

These kinds of vows, by the way, are not something that is necessarily new and modern to us. And they do go back a very ancient, long way. And even back in the times when these laws were given, they had marriage contracts where they would have these kinds of regulations that they would have to undertake.

And so this metaphor is very apropos to what's going on with Israel here. And it starts with this whole thing about the exclusivity of the relationship. You're going to marry me.

You're not going to have any others. And where is that? We see that in the Ten Commandments right at the very beginning. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt.

You shall have no other gods. So, this is a monogamous relationship we're talking about here. I suppose you could argue that God could have other wives, but I don't think we're going to go there.

But anyway. It, of course, requires a commitment on behalf of the people. Nobody is going to be able to say for sure whether or not someone is coveting.

Nobody is going to be able to say for certain that somebody is desiring their neighbor's mule. And so who's going to police that? Yourself. You're going to police it yourself.

You are taking the responsibility upon yourself to keep these commandments. That is really what these commandments are about. They're about this relationship between God and his people and the responsibilities that the people are taking upon themselves to do these obligations that are laid out in the Ten Commandments.

Now, let me talk a little bit about some of the historical critical issues regarding the Ten Commandments because these have come up in many different contexts. There is a lot of discussion about the Ten Commandments even to this day. A lot of scholars just don't know what to make of them.

And you'll hear a lot of comments to the effect that the Ten Commandments, as we have them in Exodus 20, cannot be the original way they were given or the original form of them, and that they must have been changed a lot through the years, and so on and so forth. Why do they have problems with this? Well, first of all, there's a question about how historical criticism just denies the possibility of the miraculous. So the idea of God appearing on a mountaintop and scribbling these things down on tablets of stone seems just a little far-fetched to some people.

So, they're going to reject that just because of the fact that there is this miraculous element. And it's kind of funky when you think about it but there is a lot of skepticism about even the existence of Moses. And when I was in graduate school in my PhD program in Chicago I was kind of surprised I had a friend who was a Catholic priest I had studied the Pontifical Institute in Rome but he and I were talking one time about Moses and I don't even remember how we got into the topic but I mentioned something about well, it's pretty clear to me that Moses existed and he said, seriously? And I said, well, yeah.

He says, How could you believe that? He says he's obviously a made-up character. And he went through and he gave his several reasons why he thought Moses was a made-up character, and I came back with the fact that several of these things that he mentioned, like for instance the fact that Moses had an Egyptian name, are actually evidence for Moses' historicity rather than Moses' non-historicity. I really don't think that the Hebrews, if they wanted to make up their biggest hero, would have given him an Egyptian name.

And furthermore, they didn't really know what the name meant because the folk etymology we have in the Bible is that he was drawn from the river and that comes from the Hebrew word *mashach* which means to draw but we know that the name Moses actually is Egyptian meaning born of or something like a son of like in the name Ramesses, begotten of Ra Thutmoses, begotten of Thut and so on and so forth. So, Moses' name is clearly Egyptian,, and I have no problems with the question of his authenticity myself,, but if there were no Moses, obviously, then there was no Moses going up on a mountain to get the Ten Commandments. There are other people who do believe in the existence of Moses but they believe that and I remember reading

this from a fairly well-known Bible scholar who said something to the effect that he says yeah Moses certainly existed he just loomed so large in the historical record that he must have existed but on the other hand Moses had so much to do that it would be hard to imagine that Moses had made time to be receiving the laws and getting the law code and getting all that so really it was probably the laws all come from later times and were just attributed down to Moses.

How do you prove that? That's just somebody's opinion, right? I think we're on a little more solid ground when we start talking about the question of the original form of the Decalogue, but still, even here, I think we're kind of shaky. The reason why we can talk about some dispute here is because we have a couple of different versions of the Ten Commandments in the Bible, and a couple of places where the Ten Commandments are alluded to, where there are some questions about wording and order, and these kinds of things. So Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 we have some significant differences and I'll point those out in a minute but the fact that we have some differences between these two seems to imply that maybe between the time of Deuteronomy or the time of Exodus writing and the time of Deuteronomy's writing or if you want to take it out of the historical context to say between the tradition of the Deuteronomist and the tradition of the guy who wrote Exodus you have a development in thinking or even just two different streams of thought two different traditions that preserved slightly different forms of the Ten Commandments.

And so that raises the question, well, which one was the original? Many argue that the commandments were originally shorter, like Numbers 6 through 9 you shall not kill, you shall not commit adultery et, et, and that they were all originally negative. So honor your father and mother was probably originally they would say something like do not dishonor your father and mother Instead of remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy it was originally something like do not break the Sabbath day or something like that, and then they expanded on it later. It's possible.

I don't see it as likely, necessarily. I don't even see it as necessary personally. Then there is also the question of whether or not there are actually Ten Commandments because in Exodus 20 it doesn't say Ten Commandments it just says these are the commandments it doesn't actually use the word Ten there but it does elsewhere in Exodus 34 and it does also in Deuteronomy it talks about the Ten Commandments. Another thing that we see often is the idea that all of the Ten Commandments were originally capital offenses.

So murder is a capital offense, adultery is a capital offense, and so there has been this argument that some of these things were added, like coveting. Coveting could not be considered a capital offense, but stealing is one of the things that many scholars argue about. Stealing originally referred only to kidnapping, because kidnapping was a capital offense; stealing, robbing from your neighbor, was not



considered a capital offense. Again, I don't think that there is any basis for that argument either.

A couple of reasons. First of all, it's not clear that these things were capital offenses. Adultery, and we're going to talk about this when we get to adultery, but no point in repeating myself, I guess.

You think about it, how many people in the Old Testament were actually killed for committing adultery? The answer is zero. Nobody in the Old Testament actually died. Several people committed adultery.

In fact, a lot of people committed adultery in the Old Testament, and it's mentioned a number of times, but nobody was ever put to death for committing adultery, even though the law says to stone adulterers to death. We have the famous story again of Hosea and his wife Gomer. What happens? Apparently, Hosea was going to sell his wife into slavery.

Well, we know that was a common penalty in those days. That if you wanted to get rid of your wife, as she had committed adultery, and it was clear that she had done it, and she was guilty, you could sell her as a slave. That was one of the ways that it was dealt with, and that apparently was what Hosea chose to do.

We've got King David, the most famous adulterer of them all, and even a murderer for that matter, and what happens to him? Well, God put away his sin so that David did not die. Of course, he had all kinds of trouble in his household ever after, and then we have in the prophets mentioned a number of times people who have committed adultery. We have references to people being unfaithful to their spouses, and the men complaining about it, but what are they doing? They're not doing anything about it.

If we've got all this adultery going on, you would think that we'd have people dying in Israel, but apparently not so. This idea that these things were all capital offenses doesn't really hold a lot of water when you look at the way that they were actually enforced. Sabbath breaking, I already talked about the fact that Sabbath breaking occurred quite regularly. Supposedly, I mean ideally maybe, apparently it was a capital offense, but it was not really enforced that way.

So if we're going to say, well, there's clearly some possible exclusions here or exceptions, then why not an exception for something like stealing? Why not an exception for something like coveting? I don't think that this notion again is that strong an argument. So, how many versions of the Ten Commandments are we talking about here? Well, scholars like to distinguish between Exodus 20, which they call the ethical decalogue, which is those commandments that we're all familiar with, and then Exodus 34, 10-26, which they call the ritual decalogue. Now, I was going to

pull out a Bible here, not a King James Version, though, but here we go, New International Version, and we'll look at Exodus 34.

What they do is they attribute these to two different source documents. Typically, they argue that Exodus 34 is a version that comes from maybe the priestly tradition or the Deuteronomic tradition or something of that sort, whereas Exodus 20 comes from the Yahwistic tradition, but they call Exodus 34 another decalogue, and the reason is that the phrase the Ten Commandments is actually used there. However, let's read this passage and see what it's really saying here. So the Lord said to Moses Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that you were to write in the first tablets, which you broke Yeah, thanks, God. I really needed that reminder. Be ready in the morning, then come up on Mount Sinai, present yourself to me there on top of the mountain. No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere in the mountain, not even the flocks that heard me graze etc. Moses chiseled out two stone tablets and a sign.

I went up etc. Etc. Then the Lord came down, proclaimed, and stood there and proclaimed his name the Lord, and he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming the Lord gracious, compassionate, passionate, etc. Etc. Moving right along, Moses bowed down to the ground. Let's see here, I'm making a covenant with you before all your people.

I will do wonders, and then here we get into these commandments, the people you live among will see how awesome the work that I, the Lord, will do. For you, obey what I've commanded you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites you type credit I be careful not to make a treaty with those Break down their altar smash their sacred stones Cut down their Asherah poles do not worship any other God for the Lord whose name is jealous is a jealous God now clearly that Corresponds to the first commandment. Okay, be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land, for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice them.

They will invite you to eat with them, etc., etc So that's very similar to the first commandment, right? Do not make cast idols. Well, there's a second commandment for you Celebrate the feast of unleavened bread Seven days eat bread made without yeast as I commanded you now, that's not anywhere in the Ten Commandments Okay The first offspring of every womb belongs to me including all the firstborn males of your livestock whether from the flock or herd Redeemed the firstborn donkey with a lamb, etc. That's not in the Ten Commandments. No one is to appear before me empty-handed. Six days you shall labor on the seventh day.

You should get some rest. Okay, there's the Sabbath day, right? Celebrate the Feast of Weeks with the first fruits of the wheat harvest So there we have a Celebration of a feast which again is not mentioned in the Ten Commandments Okay, three times a year your men are to appear before me before the Lord God Do not not order offer

blood of a sacrifice to me with anything containing yeast Okay Do not let the sacrifice from the Passover feast remain until morning Bring the best fruits of the land of your soil to the house of the Lord your God Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk Then the Lord said to Moses write down these commands for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and in Israel Moses was there with the Lord 40 days and 40 nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the word of the covenant the Ten Commandments Okay So this is the argument scholars say that the original Ten Commandments included this list of Feasts and these things regarding this the sacrifices and so on and so there were actually two different versions of the Ten Commandments there was the Exodus 20 version and then there's Exodus 34 version which Included all these things regarding these various kinds of feasts and sacrifices and so on Because it says he wrote down the words of the covenant for Ten Commandments. But Yeah, I Don't think that there's any reason to assume that the Ten Commandments refers to all those things that he just said up there You know and I've counted them several times all the different Commandments in that list and there's no way I can get in out of it I Think that he's saying yeah, I wrote he wrote down the Ten Commandments But there's also all these other laws that he's mentioning as well He's not designating that those laws in Exodus 34 are the Ten Commandments So I do not think that constitutes a different version of the Ten Commandments personally, okay How about Deuteronomy 5 because that's the other one so yeah Exodus 34 is a compendium of laws Deuteronomy 5 of course this is a better case because in Deuteronomy 5 We have a version that is very, very similar to the ones in Exodus 20 and Moses says at the beginning You know these are the commandments which God gave us, but there are some differences for instance Let's look at a couple of things here So Exodus 20 Here's a big one. Here's the first one: Remember the Sabbath day to keep it Holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work; the seventh day is a Sabbath day.

You should not do any work You your son's life stocks were in six days the Lord God made the heavens and the earth to see and all that's in them But rested on the seventh day therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it Why are we to keep the Sabbath day according to Exodus 20? Because on the seventh day of creation God rested, okay? How about Deuteronomy 5? Observe the Sabbath day and keep it. Holy is the Lord, your God commanded you six days to do your work, etc. Etc Why Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand And outstretched arm Therefore the Lord commanded you to keep the Sabbath day Okay So we have a different rationale in Deuteronomy 5 then we have in Exodus 20 Exodus 20 Roots the Sabbath day in creation Deuteronomy 5 in the act of deliverance which occurred in the Exodus Okay, and then we have the coveting thing here.

Just a small difference here. You shall not cover your neighbor's house You shall not cover your neighbor's wife male or female slave ox donkey anything that belongs to your neighbor Deuteronomy 5 Neither shall you cover your neighbor's wife Neither

shall you desire your neighbor's house or field or male servant or female servant or ox or donkey or anything that belongs to the neighbor Interesting little difference here My sense is that Deuteronomy is a later and more reflected version of The Ten Commandments why are the Israelites to observe the law well we might say that the the Ontological reason the reason in being is because God established it at creation whereas sort of the moral reason is that you yourselves know what it's like to be worked real hard and to struggle and So because you've had to go through that you should be caring and considerate of other people who have to struggle so take a day off give yourselves a break gives your slaves a break give your servants a break give your animals a break because it's the right thing to do and you should know it because you've been there and This is very, very kind of typical of Deuteronomy and Deuteronomy's way of arguing. You know to hearken back to the Exodus so They're saying the same thing basically they're just giving it a different basis Deuteronomy with the with the coveting this is going to be significant for a reason that we'll get into later But yeah, they move wife to the front and separate it from the others to a certain extent in and Deuteronomy They also add fields And my thinking is the reason why they add fields is just to bring the number of things that are There are coveted here to seven.

Yeah, because you know, they like completion, right? So, you mentioned a list of seven things, and then you said nothing that belongs to your neighbor. You know seven is the number of completion. So you're saying okay, here's seven things, and you know, you're not supposed to covet any of these, and that basically this means by listing seven things you're saying don't covet anything if your neighbors. Why do we move the wife to the front? I say who knows but I says part of the reason that some that is that Deuteronomy might be trying to reflect a tradition that that does not identify the wife with household property now It is easy to read Exodus 20 and the covenant coveting command is saying All all the possessions of your neighbor including his wife that's one way you could read it I don't think you have to read it that way and I'll get to that. Of course when we talk about that commandment, but it is possible that that Deuteronomy wants to make it clear that a wife is not to be considered among a man's possessions And so that might be why they've moved to the front That's just a guess on my part But I do think that Exodus 20 does represent the original form of the Ten Commandments and I think that any other Reconstructions is just speculation doesn't have a whole lot of basis for it.

I mean, another question about the Ten Commandments is, is it 10 or is it 11? Well, everybody agrees on the Ten Commandments because the Bible says the Ten Commandments, but there is a difference in how you count them. For instance, I am the Lord your God who spoke all of these who brought you out of Egypt out of land slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. Let's just bring these up here real quick Don't make for yourselves an idol So yeah for those people who can only remember four of them here they are Don't misuse the name of your Lord your God I don't like this command this translation It really you know Don't take the Lord your

God in the name of your Lord and God in vain the way the old King James version did it Really is the best translation Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy Honor your father and mother Don't murder you shall not commit adultery you shall not steal don't give false testimony Don't covet your neighbor's house Again I would translate this a little different rather than house. I would translate that as household Do not translate and do not covet your neighbor's household. We're not talking.

I don't think about a physical structure, and I'll get to that also when we talk about this later Structure of the Ten Commandments, this is something that Has again it has a little bit of question a little bit of debate behind it, but I don't think that the order is random There is some a well-designed structure here First of all we have commandments one through three which are all about our obligations to God This is another reason by the way why I think Exodus 20 is the more authentic version is because it has this Very clear structure very clear pattern, which is not reflected in some of the other versions as well Commandments one through three human obligations to God then we come to An obligation not only to God but to to creation in the Sabbath day You know why do we keep the Sabbath? Well? It's not because we're our we are honoring God It's also because we are preserving our Society we are being good to our fellow human beings or being good to nature Our fields and so on and you know there's a lot of talk in the in the Bible about giving your lands a Sabbath day Giving your in or years the case may be but the idea is that that land needs a rest too And of course your animals so not only is this about an obligation to God, but an obligation to all of creation Then we go into the next one and we have honor your father and mother And this is the beginning of our obligations to other human beings and it is interesting that it starts with Honor your father and mother which would seem to be a rather minor thing to us Rather than starting with the biggie, which would be don't kill But there is a reason for that which we will get to when we talk about that commandment and then six through nine our obligations to other people and kind of descending order of severity and I've had some arguments with theologians who argue. No. No, you have to count them all the same. Every sin is the same. No, that's not true.

You know, you ask somebody, you would rather have somebody steal your purse or murder you. To say that those are equivalent is ridiculous. You know no there's clearly a reduction in order of severity here from murder to adultery which was considered very, very bad to stealing from somebody to Telling false things about them or telling things about them that you shouldn't be saying and then on down to the last one Which is about our inner life So we're moving from obligations to God through our obligations other people to a really an Obligation to our to our thought life into honoring and to ordering our thought life So let's kind of bring this home here Let's talk a little bit about how we're going to interpret the Ten Commandments real quick so first of all we do need to read them in their historical cultural context and This is this is very important to understand why adultery was so bad to people in the ancient world It was very different on the understanding than what we

understand adultery to be today There's a whole bunch of cultural baggage behind the idea of not bearing false witness you know So look at these things in their context the Commandments are designed for ancient Israel not for modern America Putting them up in our courtrooms might not be the best and wisest case because we are not ancient Israel You know we do not have a theocracy. We are not under the rule of God as a nation, I know some people would argue.

Well. We should be Personally I don't I don't buy that you know I Believe that we have our citizenship is in the kingdom of God and that is whom God rules over Not any political entities in this day and age, but anyway the value is expressed here work in the context of a theocracy of people ruled by God the Commandments are a harbinger of Israel's failures you know David Noel Freedman a number of years Back wrote a book that I don't think really Convinced to anybody, but was very intriguing because he argued that the entire history of Israel basically is based upon failures of the Ten Commandments and That that in each of these cases that we go through each book of the Old Testament We see a different commandment emphasized and sometimes his arguments are pretty creative But the point being I guess that the fact that you could Make that argument with a straight face shows that the really It's the the Ten Commandments are a litany which foretells the failures of Israel Particularly that with that first commandment, which is the big one about you know worshipping other gods Read them also in literary and theological context okay? By this, we realize that the Ten Commandments are part of the Hebrew Bible canon. That is the way they were understood They were understood to have their fulfillment and to all be fleshed out in other books of the Old Testament and now of course for us as Christians we read them also in the light of what is taught by Jesus and There's this little thing called the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus goes through several of these commandments and talks about them in great detail and those Principles that Jesus lays out.

There are really the major Foundation for the way that we are to understand how the Ten Commandments apply to us in our day and our lives now One more question that I'm going to get into here And I'm not going to be able to give it the attention that it should have but I do need to touch upon it at least Are Christians Obligated to keep the Ten Commandments You go online on the internet. You will find a ton of websites where people are arguing that the Ten Commandments have been totally abrogated, that they have no bearing on the Christian life today, which you know, and it seems like what they really fixate on is the Sabbath commandment. You know, I think that what you have here is some people who used to be? Sabbatarians and then left the movement and now have a chip on their shoulder And so they say well, we just don't keep any of the law right so if we don't keep any of the law obviously We don't have to give the Sabbath day Up But are we under an obligation I Do think that whoops let's go from one to for the first one here Almost no Christians argue today that people can do anything they want obviously but many argue that we have no obligation to keep Old Testament laws Which is to some extent you know

supported by a number of passages in the Bible you know Paul wrote By works of the law shall no flesh be justified So we cannot justify ourselves by how many of the laws we keep We are not keep saved by keeping the laws, but I would argue neither was Israel and talk about that in a minute We are not spiritually bound to keep the law, but neither was ancient Israel But you know the laws did order their society to some extent I? Do not believe that the Old Testament is obsolete, and I have that on good authority from this guy called Jesus I do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them and There are those who argue that well the law was fulfilled when Jesus died on the cross I don't think so I think that what Jesus is talking about there is when his kingdom comes in its fullness That's usually the way Jesus talks about the fulfillment of his mission His mission was not fulfilled when he rose from the dead his mission will be fulfilled when he returns in his final glory and his kingdom comes in its fullness and That is when the law will not be necessary anymore because it will be written upon our hearts And no one none of us will have to be giving lectures about the meaning of the Ten Commandments Because as the book of Jeremiah tells us nobody will have to say to his neighbor Know the Lord because they will all know the Lord.

That's not happened now It will not happen until the kingdom of God comes in its fullness so Jesus's approach to the law is to observe the Intention of the laws and this we see very clearly in the tent in the his Sermon on the Mount and that as as I go through the Ten Commandments, that is what we're going to Emphasize over and over again is the fact that we are to keep the intention of the laws Rather than the letter of the laws and Paul says The letter kills, but the spirit makes alive and we could say That speaking of the Holy Spirit, but that's Holy Spirit is the spirit of the laws And so by keeping the spirit of the laws we can fulfill we can be out walking In ways that are pleasing to God Now I think I am going to Bring this to an end here. I actually have several more Slides that I could bring up about the new perspective on Paul and so on, but I think I'm going to pass on that because I think this is a good place to draw this to a close.

This is Dr. Anthony J. Tomasino and his teaching on the Ten Commandments. This is session number one, the Ten Commandments and the Law

Okay, so The Lord said to Moses chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones thanks God I really needed that reminder be ready in the morning then come up on Mount Sinai present yourself to me there on top of the mountain no one is to come with you or be seen anywhere in the mountain not even the flocks the herd may graze, etc Moses chiseled out two stone tablets and Sinai went up, etc, etc then the Lord came down and proclaimed his name the Lord came down to Sinai moving right along Moses bowed to the ground let's see here I am making a covenant with you before all your people I will do wonders and then here we get into these commandments the people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I the Lord will do for you obey what I have commanded you today I will drive out before you the Amorites, etc, etc cut down their Asherah poles do not worship any other God for the Lord whose name is Jealous is a Jealous God now clearly that corresponds to the first commandment be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice them they will invite you to eat with them etc, etc so that is very similar to the first commandment do not make cast idols do not eat unleavened bread 7 days eat bread made without yeast as I commanded you now that is not anywhere in the 10 commandments the first offspring of every womb belongs to me including all the first born males of your livestock whether from the flock or herd redeem the first born donkey with a lamb, etc that is not in the 10 commandments no one is to appear before me empty handed 6 days you shall labor celebrate the feast of weeks with the first fruits of the wheat harvest so there we have a celebration of a feast which again is not mentioned in the 10 commandments 3 times a year your men are to appear before me before the Lord God do not offer blood of a sacrifice to me with anything containing yeast do not let the sacrifice from the Passover feast remain until morning the Lord your God do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk then the Lord said to Moses write down these commands for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and in Israel Moses was there with the Lord 40 days and 40 nights without eating bread or drinking water and he wrote on the tablets the word of the covenant the 10 commandments so this is the argument of feasts and these things regarding the sacrifices and so on and so there were actually 2 different versions of the 10 commandments there was the Exodus 20 version and then there was Exodus 34 version which included all these things regarding these various kinds of feasts and sacrifices and so on because it says he wrote down the words of the covenant the 10 commandments but I don't think that there is any reason that the 10 commandments refers to all those things that he just said up there and I have counted them several times all the different commandments in that list and there is no way I can get 10 out of it I think that he is saying he wrote down the 10 commandments but there are also all these other laws that he is mentioning as well he is not designating that those laws in Exodus 34 are the 10 commandments that is the other one so yeah Exodus 34 is a compendium of laws Deuteronomy 5 of course this is a better case because in Deuteronomy 5 we have a version that is very very similar to the ones in Exodus 20 and Moses says at the beginning these are the



commandments which God gave us but there are some differences for instance let's look at a couple of things here Exodus 20 here is a big one here is the first one remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy six days you shall labor and do all your work the seventh day is the Sabbath day you shall not do any work you and your sons livestock for in six days the Lord God made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them but rested on the seventh day observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy as the Lord your God commanded you six days you shall do your work why? remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm therefore the Lord commanded you to keep the Sabbath day so we have a different rationale in Deuteronomy 5 the act of creation Deuteronomy 5 in the act of deliverance which occurred in the Exodus and then we have the coveting thing here just a small difference here you shall not covet your neighbor's house you shall not covet your neighbor's wife male or female slave ox donkey anything that belongs to your neighbor Deuteronomy 5 neither shall you covet your neighbor's wife neither shall you desire your neighbor's house or field or male servant nor shall you covet your neighbor interesting little difference here my sense is that Deuteronomy is a later and more reflected version of the Ten Commandments why are the Israelites to observe the law well we might say that the ontological reason the reason in being is because God has a moral reason sort of the moral reason is that you yourselves know what it's like to be worked real hard and to struggle and so because you've had to go through that you should be caring and considerate of other people who have to struggle so take a day off give yourselves a break give your slaves a break and this is very kind of typical of Deuteronomy and Deuteronomy's way of arguing to harken back to the Exodus so they're saying the same thing basically they're just giving it a different basis Deuteronomy with the coveting this is going to be significant for reasons that we'll get into later but yeah they move wife to the front and separate it from the others to a certain extent in Deuteronomy they also add fields and my thinking is the reason why they add fields is just to bring the number of things that are coveted here to seven because they like completion so you mention a list of seven things and then you say nor anything that belongs to your neighbor seven is the number of completions so you're saying here's seven things and you're not supposed to covet any of these seven things by listing seven things you're saying don't covet anything of your neighbor's why do we move the wife to the front? I say who knows but part of the reason is that Deuteronomy might be trying to reflect a tradition that does not identify the wife with household property now it is easy to read Exodus chapter 20 in the coveting command as saying all the possessions of your neighbor including his wife that's one way you could read it I don't think you have to read it that way and I'll get to that of course when we talk about that commandment but it is possible that Deuteronomy wants to make it clear that a wife is not to be considered among a man's possessions and so that might be why Exodus 20 does represent the original form of the Ten Commandments and I think that any other reconstructions is just speculation it doesn't have a whole lot of basis for it

another question about the Ten Commandments is it 10 or is it 11? well everybody agrees it's the Ten Commandments because the Bible says it's the Ten Commandments but there is a difference in how you count them for instance I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt out of land slavery you shall have no other gods before me let's just bring these up here real quick don't make for yourselves an idol so yeah for those people who can only remember four of them here they are don't misuse the name of your Lord your God I don't like this translation don't take the name of your Lord your God in vain the way the old King James Version did it really is the best translation remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy honor your father and mother don't murder you shall not commit adultery you shall not steal don't give false testimony don't covet your neighbor's house again I would translate this a little different rather than house I would translate that as household do not translate do not covet your neighbor's household we're not talking I don't think about a physical structure and I'll get to that also when we talk about this later structure of the Ten Commandments this is something that has again has a little bit of question a little bit of debate behind it but I don't think that the order is random there is a well designed structure here first of all we have commandments 1 through 3 which are all about our obligations to God the reason by the way why I think Exodus 20 is the more authentic version is because it has this very clear structure very clear pattern which is not reflected in some of the other versions as well commandments 1 through 3 human obligations to God then we come to an obligation not only to God but to creation in the Sabbath day why do we keep the Sabbath because we are preserving our society we are being good to our fellow human beings we are being good to nature our fields and so on there is a lot of talk in the Bible about giving your lands a Sabbath day or years as the case may be but the idea is that land needs a rest too and of course your animals so not only is this about an obligation to God but an obligation to creation then we go into the next one and we have honor your father and mother and this is the beginning of our obligations to other human beings and it is interesting that it starts with honor your father and mother which would seem to be a rather minor thing to us rather than starting with the biggie which would be don't kill but there is a reason for that which we will get to when we talk about the commandment of severity and I have had some arguments with theologians who argue no no you have to count them all the same every sin is the same no that is not true you ask somebody would you rather have somebody steal your purse or murder you to say that those are equivalent is ridiculous no there is clearly a reduction in order of severity here from being bad to stealing from somebody to telling false things about them or telling things about them that you shouldn't be saying and then on down to the last one which is about our inner life so we are moving from obligations to God to our obligations to other people to really an obligation to our thought life and to ordering our thought life so let's talk a little bit about how we are going to interpret the 10 commandments real quick so first of all we do need to read them in their historical cultural context and this is very important to understand why adultery was so bad to people in the

ancient world it was very different understanding than what we understand adultery to be today so look at these things in their context the commandments are designed for ancient Israel not for modern America putting them up in our court rooms might not be the best and wisest case because we are not ancient Israel we do not have a theocracy we are not under the rule of God as a nation I know some people would argue well we should be personally I don't buy that I believe that our citizenship is in the kingdom of God and that is whom God rules over not any political entities in this day and age but anyway the values expressed here work in the context of a theocracy of people ruled by God the commandments are a harbinger of Israel's failures David Noel Friedman a number of years back I don't think really convinced to anybody but was very intriguing because he argued that the entire history of Israel basically is based upon failures of the Ten Commandments and that in each of these cases that we go through each book of the Old Testament we see a different commandment emphasized and sometimes his arguments are pretty creative but the point being his straight face shows that really the Ten Commandments are a litany which foretells the failures of Israel particularly with that first commandment which is the big one about worshiping other gods read them also in literary and theological context by this we realize that the Ten Commandments are part of the Hebrew to have their fulfillment and to all be fleshed out in other books of the Old Testament and now of course for us as Christians we read them also in the light of what is taught by Jesus and there's this little thing called the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus goes through several of these commandments and talks about them in great detail in such a way that we are to understand how the Ten Commandments apply to us in our day and our lives now one more question that I'm going to get into here and I'm not going to be able to give it the attention that it should have but I do need to touch upon it at least are Christians obligated to keep the Ten Commandments you go online to websites where people are arguing that the Ten Commandments have been totally abrogated that they have no bearing on the Christian life today and it seems like what they really fixate on is the Sabbath commandment I think that what you have here is some people who used to be Sabbatharians and then left the movement and now have a chip and keep the law so if we don't keep any of the law obviously we don't have to give the Sabbath day but are we under an obligation I do think that whoops let's go for the first one here almost no Christians argue today that people can do anything they want obviously but many argue that we have no obligation to keep Old Testament laws supported by a number of passages in the Bible Paul wrote by works of the law shall no flesh be justified so we cannot justify ourselves by how many of the laws we keep we are not saved by keeping the laws but I would argue neither was Israel we are not spiritually bound to keep the law but neither was ancient Israel who was a part of ancient society to some extent I do not believe that the Old Testament is obsolete and I have that on good authority from this guy called Jesus and do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them and there are those who argue that his mission was not fulfilled when he rose from the dead his mission will

be fulfilled when he returns in his final glory and his kingdom comes in its fullness and that is when the law will not be necessary anymore because it will be written upon our hearts and none of us will have to be a part of the law because now it will not happen until the kingdom of God comes in its fullness so Jesus' approach to the law is to observe the intention of the laws and this we see very clearly in his sermon on the mount and as I go through the Ten Commandments that is what we are observing the intention of the laws rather than the letter of the laws and Paul says the letter kills but the spirit makes alive and we could say that speaking of the Holy Spirit but that Holy Spirit is the spirit of the laws and so by keeping the spirit of the laws we can fulfill we can be walking in ways that are pleasing to God I think I am going to bring this to an end here I actually have several more slides that I could bring up about the new perspective on Paul and so on but I think I am going to pass on that because I think this is a good place to draw this to a close This is Dr. Anthony J. Tomasino and his teaching on the Ten Commandments. This is session number one, the Ten Commandments and the Law.