

Ten Commandments (Part 2)
(Introduction – Part 2)

I. The Designation of the Ten Commandments

A. Their Designation in Scripture

-‘ten words,’ ‘decalogue’ [‘asarah dabarim’ (עֲשָׂרַת הַדְּבָרִים); ‘deka logoi’ (δέκα λόγοι) (Exodus 34:1, 27, 28 with Exodus 24:4, 12, 31:18, and Deuteronomy 9 and 10; Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4)]

-‘law’ (Romans 13:8-10; James 2:8-12; Leviticus 19:18)

-‘testimony’ (Exodus 25:16, 21; 31:18; 32:15; 34:29)

B. Their Designation in Theology: Moral Law

Westminster Larger Catechism Question #93: “What is the moral law?” Answer: “The moral law is the declaration of the will of God to mankind, directing and binding every one to personal, perfect, and perpetual conformity and obedience thereunto, in the frame and disposition of the whole man, soul and body,¹ and in performance of all those duties of holiness and righteousness which he oweth to God and man: promising life upon the fulfilling, and threatening death upon the breach of it.”

Question #98: “Where is the moral law summarily comprehended?” Answer: “The moral law is summarily comprehended in the ten commandments, which were delivered by the voice of God upon Mount Sinai, and written by him in two tables of stone; and are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus.”

2nd LCF 19 (Of the Law of God) Par. 2: “The same law that was first written in the heart of man continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness after the fall, and was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in ten commandments, and written in two tables.” In the subsequent paragraphs, the Confession goes on to say that besides this law, commonly called moral, God gave to Israel ceremonial laws (which are abrogated by Jesus Christ), and judicial laws (which expired with Israel). All people are bound to obey the moral law.

-Three-fold division of the Law is the historic position of the Christian church

-Designation as the Ten Words sets them apart as a unit

-Spoken by God (Deuteronomy 5:22); written by the finger of God; placed in the ark of God (Deuteronomy 10:5); accompanied by the terror of God; inscribed in stone

-Juxtaposition in Exodus: Exodus 20 (Moral Law); Exodus 21-23 (Civil Law). Exodus 24 (Ratification); Exodus 25f. (Ceremonial Law)

-Objection: →Since Christians aren’t under the Mosaic Law as a whole, they cannot be under any of its parts. Answer: Jeremiah 31:33 with Hebrews 8:8-12; Ezek. 36:26, 27

1) The Continuing Validity of the Ten Commandments for Christians

→The Moral Law: revealed in creation, ruined in the Fall, reiterated at Sinai, restored in Christ

2) The Glorious Work of God in the New Birth