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C0631 – August 23, 2006 – Ex 20:12-14– The Decalogue - Part 3

II. The Last Seven Commandments: Israelites Relationship to One Another (vv 12-17)

A. The Fourth Commandment: Honor Your Parents (v 12)

¹² **"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.**

This commandment is the only positive commandment of the 10. It deals with the family, the basic unit of society. The commandment is not primarily for children to obey their commandments, though that is included. But it is primarily for adults who are no longer dependent on their father and mother and whose father and mother may even be dependent on them. They are to treat their parents with respect not as long as *they* live but as long as *you* live in the land. In other words, long after the parents have departed they are still to be treated with respect by honoring and obeying the instruction they gave during their lifetime. If they obeyed this it would be the means by which God would prolong the effects of love to thousands of generations. If they disobeyed this command and dishonored their parents then their days would not be **prolonged** but cut short. The violation of this commandment was capital punishment. As long as one honored his parents he would not be subject to capital punishment and would therefore live a long life (Exod 21:15, 17).

This command is repeated in the NT for the Church in Ephesians 6:2-3 where Paul said it was the first commandment with a promise.

Ephesians 6:2-3 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), ³ SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.

Notice, the promise is not in the “land which the LORD” gave them but simply “on the earth”. That’s because the Church has not been promised any land. Still the principle of honoring one’s parents is in effect today and when followed generally results in well-being and long life.

B. The Fifth Commandment: Murder (v 13)

¹³ **"You shall not murder.**

This commandment forbids the unlawful taking of human life. It respects the sanctity of human life. However, it clearly does not forbid the lawful taking of human life through capital punishment because God demanded the death penalty on several occasions in the OT (e.g. Exod 21:12). The basis of this commandment was laid down at creation when God made man in His image. However, the first time man had the right to carry out capital punishment was after the flood. The reasoning for capital punishment is given in Gen 9:6

“Whoever sheds man's blood,
By man his blood shall be shed,
For in the image of God He made man.”

The logic of capital punishment is compelling.

- man is made in God’s image
- murdering a man is murdering God’s image
- murdering God’s image is wrong
- murdering man is wrong

The purpose of capital punishment is to discourage murder. Many say this is impractical because often the judicial system makes mistakes. The OT law remedied this difficulty by the necessity of two or three witnesses. Therefore, this commandment forbids the unlawful taking of human life.

Murder is also forbidden for Christians (Rom 1:29; 13:9; Js 4:2; 1 Pt 4:15). We do well to remember that Satan is the source of murder.

John 8:44 You are of *your* father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. (Cain and Abel)

We do well to remember that a Christian can murder as well. However, in the NT what constitutes murder is expanded to include hating a brother. It is not solely external, the overt action, but also the internal, covert action. “The spirit of hatred is that we want “to be rid” of our brother and would not really care if he died. But this is the spirit of a **murderer.**”¹ Turn to

1 John 3:10-15 By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother. ¹¹ For this is the message which you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another; ¹² not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother. And for what reason did he slay him? Because his deeds were evil, and his brother's were righteous. ¹³ Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you. ¹⁴ We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. ¹⁵ Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

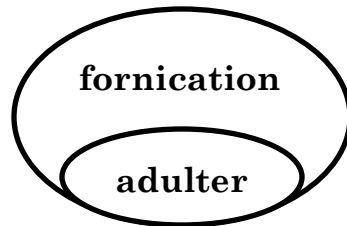
C. The Sixth Commandment: Adultery (v 14)

¹⁴ **"You shall not commit adultery.**

This commandment forbids either husband or wife committing sexual acts outside of marriage. It respects the marital relationship which is the basis of family. The commandment is based on God's purpose for marriage in the Genesis narrative, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh” (Gen 2:24). Two become one; three or four cannot become one.

This command is also repeated for the Church in the NT. First, let me explain what adultery is and its relationship to another NT word, fornication. “Adultery” is the Greek word *moicheuo*. In the NT adultery is committed when a married man has intercourse with a married woman. However, if a married man has intercourse with an unmarried woman this is not “adultery” but “fornication” which comes from the Greek word *porneia*. The determining factor as to whether adultery or fornication has been committed is the marital status of the woman. If she is married then it is adultery (*moicheuo*). If she

is not married then it is fornication (*porneia*). Thus, *moicheuo* is a subset of *porneia* so that all adultery is fornication but not all fornication is adultery.



Clearly the NT makes these two acts distinct (also see Matt 19:9; Gal 5:19-21). For example,

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, ¹⁰ nor thieves, nor *the* covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Clearly both are condemned in the NT for believers. I want to take a short but important aside here. We say that 9 of the 10 commandments are repeated for the NT Church. Most of them fall in certain lists in passages like 1 Cor 6:9-10; Gal 5:19-21; Eph 5:5; and Rev 21:8; 22:15. The confusion here is what it means to “inherit the kingdom of God”. Most Christians read this and conclude that “inherit the kingdom of God” means “enter the kingdom of God” so that anyone who has committed any of these acts will not enter the kingdom of God. That would mean that if you were a fornicator or an adulterer or a drunkard you would not enter the kingdom of God. No doubt this passage has been used to measure whether someone was really saved or not or to warn people that they were just professing Christians. However, that is not what Paul is saying. In the similar list in Gal 5:19-21 Paul says these things are the fruit of the flesh and contrasts them with the fruit of the Spirit. Since the believer still has the flesh he can still do these things. It is not what he is supposed to do but nevertheless he can do them and these passages are stiff warnings against doing them. If we persist in them and do them without confessing them then Paul says we will not “inherit the kingdom of God”. If that means “enter the kingdom” then it violates that salvation is by grace through faith alone because avoiding certain sins after salvation would be required to be saved and salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. Further, the Greek word translated “inherit”, *kleronomia*, does not mean “enter” but “to share in”, “to have possessions”, “to have an inheritance” in the kingdom of God. What Paul wants to emphasize is that a believer who does these things will not share in the reign of God. He will enter the kingdom but he will not be rewarded with

rulership in the kingdom. To prove this concept turn over to 1 Cor 15:50 and I will show you that “inherit the kingdom” does not mean “enter the kingdom”. Here Paul is arguing for the resurrection body.

1 Corinthians 15:50 Now I say this, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable.

If inherit means “enter” then how is it that believers in natural bodies will enter the kingdom in order to re-populate the earth (Isa 65:20)? So it is impossible for “inherit” to mean “enter”. “Paul's point in I Cor 15:50 is that if there is no resurrection of the dead, then the Corinthians could not hope to rule with Christ in His coming kingdom—something which they clearly desired (cf. I Cor 4:8; 6:3).”ⁱⁱ This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that the chapter ends with an exhortation for the believer to continue to toil in good works knowing that it is not in vain? All believers get resurrected bodies but only those who toil in good works will share in Christ’s reign. Therefore it is not in vain to “abound in the work of the Lord” for this will be rewarded with positions of reign in the kingdom of God.

Returning to 1 Cor 6:9 where believers are commanded not to commit adultery or fornication, Paul is teaching that those (Christians) who do will not share in the reign of God. In fact, a better translation of 1 Cor 6:9 would read,

1 Corinthians 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not share in the reign of God?

The leading Greek lexicon (BDAG) actually lists this word *basileia* (kingdom) as meaning “royal reign”. So, this verse is not saying that believers who practice such things will not “enter” the kingdom but that they will not share in the royal reign of God in that kingdom (also see Rev 2:27). All believers enter the kingdom but not all believers inherit the kingdom. This is a crucial teaching of Scripture which places importance on spiritual advancement and fruit-bearing.

ⁱ Hodges, Zane, *The Epistles of John* (Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 1999), 159.

ⁱⁱ <http://www.faithalone.org/journal/1991b/Wilkin.html>

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