

(Exod. 20:12) - The fifth commandment is to honor our fathers and mothers. *“That thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee”* - Rebellious children were to be stoned (*Deut. 21:18-21*). Rebellion towards fathers and mothers reflects a rebellion towards God (*Eph. 6:1-3*).

(Exod. 20:13-14) - The sixth commandment forbids killing (murder). Only God, the Creator and Giver of life, has the right to kill, and when He does so, it is not murder (*1 Sam. 2:6*). He gives this authority to civil authorities for capital punishment, but this is not murder. It is justice. The seventh commandment forbids adultery, which is sexual relations with another person's spouse. The Lord made it clear that these commandments, as is the case with all sin, are broken not only in the acts, but also in the thought and desire (*Matt. 5:21-30*). The Pharisees taught that the sin was only in the act, but Christ said, *“except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven”* (*Matt. 5:20*). We all need a righteousness that we cannot produce!

(Exod. 20:15) - The eighth commandment forbids stealing. This would include armed robbery and more subtle sins, such as taking payment for work we have not done. When sinners attribute things to themselves that belong only to God, they are trying to steal God's glory. That is why it is stated in the Bible that Christ claiming to be God was NOT robbery (*Php. 2:6*). When the people of Israel held back their tithes and offerings, the Lord said, *“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed Me ...”* (*Mal. 3:8-9*). It is robbery when sinners seek salvation, or any part of it, based on their works and/or their decisions. God's highest glory is to save sinners by His grace based on the merits of the blood of Christ. God will not share His glory (*Isa. 42:8; 48:11*). It is stealing for one to take credit for something that he or she did not do. When sinners claim that they are saved because of their works or their decisions, they are taking credit for something that God alone does for His people (*John 1:12-13; 3:3-7; Eph. 2:8-10*).

(Exod. 20:16) - The ninth commandment forbids bearing false witness against another person. This is lying against a person in court charging them falsely and lying against a person privately by slandering his character. And we should never overlook the sin of bearing false witness against the Lord which false preachers do when they preach a false gospel of salvation conditioned on the works and wills of sinners. This is lying on God Who saves sinners, again, by His free and sovereign grace and mercy through the Lord Jesus Christ. In salvation, God justifies the ungodly based on the righteousness of Christ freely imputed to them and received by them through God-given faith in Christ. In conversion, God gives spiritual life to dead sinners and draws them to Himself through Christ. This is His glory.

(Exod. 20:17) - The tenth commandment forbids covetousness. Covetousness is a sin of the mind and heart. It is an excessive desire to possess something that belongs to someone else. It is failure to recognize that all good things are ultimately gifts from God, and that neither we nor others deserve or have earned any of these good things. We see covetousness in ourselves when, even as believers, we go through times of suffering and see the wicked prosper in comfort and ease - *“But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked”* (*Psalms 73:2-3*). This is the same as boasting that we deserve better, claiming that God is treating us unjustly. But, as believers in Christ, we know that God is good and just towards us. When we try to figure these things out from a human point of view, they perplex

us - *“When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me” (Psalm 73:16)*. We can only find the answer in God’s Word - *“Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end” (Psalm 73:17)*. The end of all things is the glory of God in Christ and the good of all His people. The wicked shall be destroyed.

It is clear, then, that God’s law not only forbids external acts of sin, but also inward thoughts and motives of sin. Paul wrote, *“for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet” (Rom. 7:7; cf. Matt. 5:21-30)*, and *“covetousness which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5)*. This is an inordinate desire for material things to the point that it takes a person away from the true worship of God.

(Exod. 20:18-21) - After hearing the law and seeing the manifestations of God’s power from the mountain, the people (who had boasted that they would do all that God commanded) *“removed, and stood afar off.”* They did not want God to speak to them directly lest they die. So, they begged Moses to speak to them. This shows that WE NEED A MEDIATOR BETWEEN US AND THE LORD GOD. To meet God directly without Christ is certain death for sinners. Moses here is a type of Christ Who goes to Father on behalf of His elect (His sheep).

(Exod. 20:22-24) - The basis and ground upon which Moses could go before God as the mediator of the people was found in the altar of sacrifice upon which burnt offerings would be offered to God. It was to be *“an altar of earth”* as it typified the Lord Jesus Christ Who, in His humanity, sprang out of the earth and united His nature of deity with a sinless human body (*Psalm 85:11; Matt. 1:21,23*). *“Burnt offerings”* were sin-offerings picturing the justice of God falling upon Christ, the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of His people. *“Peace offerings”* were thank-offerings as they typified reconciliation between God and His people accomplished by the death of Christ (*Eph. 2:13-18; Col. 1:20-23*). This is where the glory of God as both a just God and a Savior (His name) would shine forth to His people in the way of blessing.

(Exod. 20:25) - God also allowed them to make Him *“an altar of stone,”* but it could not be built or touched by sinful man, or it would be *“polluted”* (defiled). We are sinners who have broken God’s law (*Rom. 3:23; James 2:10*). Salvation is in no way, to no degree, and at no stage conditioned on our works, efforts, and/or decisions. SALVATION IS ALL OF GOD IN AND BY CHRIST! Man has no part in producing the righteousness by which God justifies His people and from which they obtain spiritual life. We who believe and are brought to serve the Lord are the fruit of Christ’s perfect work. If we had anything to do with it, we would pollute it!

(Exod. 20:26) - The justification of sinners is not something we achieve in degrees or steps that we take seeking to reach the goal of righteousness. It is not some progressive holiness whereby we gradually qualify ourselves by great strides of obedience whereby we become less and less sinful and more and more righteous. All that would do is to expose our nakedness - our lack of righteousness before God. Justification is God’s legal declaration wherein, not imputing our sins to us, He has cleansed us from all sins by the blood of Christ once and for all time and for all His people. He has declared us completely righteous in His sight based on Christ’s righteousness imputed to us. Salvation is not a matter of us taking the first step (or few steps) towards God causing Him to step towards us. The Lord reaches all the way down and lifts us beggars off the dungheap of sin and depravity. He is found of them that seek Him not because He seeks and finds them Himself. God takes the initiative and saves His people fully once and for all time.