

The School of Biblical Law

Covenant and Law

Lesson Twelve: “The Covenant Model and The Ten Commandments”

When approached by a lawyer and questioned as to which commandment is the great law, Jesus responded by stating, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind (Deut. 6:5). This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Lev. 19:18). On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Mt. 22:37-40).

1. The Ten Commandments could be described as Ten Boundary Laws.

These moral laws define how people may interact with others without trespassing against them, which means illegally crossing into their God-assigned rights and property. To trespass against another is to sin against that person.

Scripturally speaking, to trespass or to violate the boundary of another is sin and unloving; whereas, love can be defined as honoring another’s boundary.

2. Jesus placed all the law into two categories: loving God and loving your neighbor.

The first five define how to love God and the last five define how to love our fellowman.

- Commandments one through five identify God’s boundaries and states what would be considered a trespass or a lack of love toward God.
- Commandments six through ten identify a neighbor’s boundaries and states what would be considered a trespass or a lack of love toward a neighbor.

3. Law is the terms of the covenant. The third section of the covenant model is ethics, and the Ten Commandments define the ethics of the covenant.

Each Law defines one section of the covenant model as it relates to either God and to man.

The following chart may be used to display the Ten Commandments and their relationship to the covenant model:

<u>Commandments 1-5</u> (Love God with all your heart, soul, and mind)	<u>Covenant Model</u>	<u>Commandments 6-10</u> (Love your neighbor as yourself)
No other gods before me	Transcendence	Do not kill
No graven images	Hierarchy	Do not commit adultery
Do not take God’s name in vain	Ethics	Do not steal
Keep the Sabbath Day holy	Oaths/Sanctions	Do not bear false witness
Honor your father and mother	Succession/Continuity	Do not covet

Jesus stated that all the law relates to and is based upon these two categories and these Ten Commandments. He also declared that all the prophets or all the words spoken by the prophets were to bring Israel into alignment with these laws, which reflected her covenant, or to pronounce an impending sanction (future) resulting from faithfulness or unfaithfulness to these laws. Boundary violators receive a negative sanction whereas those who honor the boundary rights of God and one’s neighbor express love through their law-keeping deeds.