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"YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE": A STUDY IN DEUTERONOMIC DOMESTIC IDEOLOGY

DANIEL I. BLOCK*

I. INTRODUCTION

In 1990, the renowned Jewish scholar Moshe Greenberg published a short but insightful article that has not received the notice it deserves, "Biblical Reality toward Power: Ideal and Reality in Law and Prophets."[1] In this essay, Greenberg argues that the foundations of the social program of the Torah are clear: while all power belongs ultimately to God, he distributes the exercise of power to human agents—kings, judges, priests, elders, tribal chiefs—for the purpose of maintaining the moral order. Although the Torah calls on all to treat those in authority with due honor and respect,[2] it is intentional in dispersing power among various members of society. In contrast to the neighboring nations, where absolute power tended to be concentrated in the hands of the king and his officials, the Torah not only prevents the accumulation and concentration of power in individuals, but also takes deliberate steps to rein in the abuse of power by those who sit in seats of authority. According to the Mosaic paradigm for kingship as spelled out in Deuteronomy 17:14–20, kings were not to exploit their offices for personal gain, measured in the accumulation of horses, wives, and wealth "for himself" (thrice in vv. 16–17). Indeed, the only activity in which the king was permitted to engage "for himself" was writing a copy of "this Torah." This Torah was to be his constant companion; he was to read it all the days of his life "that he may learn to fear Yahweh his God, diligently observing all the words of this Torah and these statutes by doing them, in order that his heart

* Daniel Block is Gunther H. Knoedler Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College, 501 College Ave., Wheaton, IL 60187.

[1] In *Religion and Law: Biblical-Judaic and Islamic Perspectives* (ed. E. B. Firmage, B. G. Weiss, and J. W. Welch; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 101–12.

[2] Children are to honor parents (Exod 20:12; 21:15, 17; Lev 19:3; Deut 5:16; 21:18–21; 27:16); tribal chiefs (*nāśî'*) are not to be cursed (Exod 22:28 [Heb. 27]): "You shall not revile God, or curse a leader of your people." Lev 19:32 calls for respect for the elder: "You shall rise before the aged, and defer to the elder (*zāqēn*); and you shall fear your God: I am Yahweh." Cf. the sapiential counsel in Qoh 10:20, "Do not curse the king, even in your thoughts, and do not curse the rich, even in your bedroom; for a bird of the air may carry your voice, or some winged creature tell the matter." Also Prov 24:21: "My son, fear the LORD and the king, and do not disobey either of them" (NRSV). According to Deut 17:12, presumptuous disregard for the verdict in a case presented before the priest at the central sanctuary was a capital offense.

may not be lifted up above his fellow citizens and that he not turn aside from the Supreme Command, either to the right or to the left."[3]

Elsewhere, by publicizing the standards for the administration of justice, the Torah reins in the power of those with legal authority.[4] References to these standards are distributed among the various constitutional documents.

Exodus 23:6–9 (The Book of the Covenant):

> You shall not pervert the justice due to your poor in their lawsuits. Keep far from a false charge, and do not kill the innocent and those in the right, for I will not acquit the wicked. You shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the clear-sighted [officials], and subverts the cause of those who are in the right. You shall not oppress an alien (*gēr*), for you know the feelings of the alien (*gēr*), having yourselves been aliens (*gērîm*) in the land of Egypt.

Leviticus 19:15 (Holiness Code):

> You shall not operate unjustly (*ʿāśâ ʿāwel*) in a legal case (*miŝpāṭ*); you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with righteousness (*ṣedeq*) you shall judge your neighbor.

Deuteronomy 10:17–19 (Deuteronomic Torah):

> For Yahweh your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien (*gēr*), giving him food and clothing. So you shall love the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

Moses himself had demonstrated awareness of this paradigm already at Sinai, when he charged the newly appointed heads of the tribes of Israel on the march to Canaan as follows:

> Hear the cases of your fellow citizens, and decide justly (*šāpaṭ ṣedeq*) between any man and a fellow Israelite or an alien (*gēr*). You must not be partial in judging: hear out the small and the great alike; you shall not be intimidated by anyone, for the judgment is God's. Any case that is too hard for you, bring to me, and I will hear it. (Deut 1:16–18)

Similarly, the publication of priestly perquisites in Deuteronomy 18:1–5 and the specification of conditions under which priests disqualified themselves from divine service in Leviticus 21:13–23 have the effect of reining in the

[3] For detailed study of Deut 17:14–20, see Daniel I. Block, "The Burden of Leadership: The Mosaic Paradigm of Kingship," *BSac* 162 (2005) 259–28.

[4] Greenberg notes (p. 108) that the Torah's oral publication of judiciary regulations arms those who feel victimized by the system with "a publicly known divine sanction." This contrasts with the wider ancient Near Eastern situation, symbolized by the Code of Hammurabi, which was transcribed on a large stela to be sure, but it was written in esoteric cuneiform and located inside the temple, away from public view. Accordingly, Hammurabi's claim to fairness rings hollow:

> Let any wronged man who has a lawsuit come before the statue of me, the king of justice, and let him have my inscribed stela read aloud to him, thus may he hear my precious pronouncements and let my stela reveal the lawsuit for him; may he examine his case, may he calm his (troubled) heart.

From the epilogue of the Code, as translated by M. T. Roth, *Law Collections from Mesopotamia and Asia Minor* (2d ed.; SBLWAWS 6; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997) 134.

power and authority of religious officials. Institutions like the year of jubilee every fiftieth year (Leviticus 25), and the seventh year as the year of release for citizens who for reasons of poverty had given up their freedoms to a neighbor (Deut 15:1–18) were intended to curb excessive concentration of economic power. Deuteronomy 21:18–21 limits both the painful responsibilities of parents toward rebellious children, but it also limits their power over them. Parents of a disrespectful and subordinate son were required to submit their case before the elders for final adjudication.

In keeping with these specific instructions regarding those who exercise power, the Book of the Covenant (Exod 22:21, 26 [Heb. 20, 25]; 23:12), the Holiness Code (Lev 19:9–10, 13–14, 29, 33–34) and the Deuteronomic Torah exhibit remarkable coherence. All these constitutional documents are concerned about the well-being of people at the economical and social margins, who are at the mercy of persons with power.[5] Indeed, the charges "to love your neighbor as yourself" and "to love the alien as yourself," mean that all citizens, those with greater and those with lesser power, are always to demonstrate their covenant commitment with actions performed in the interests of the next person, rather than in one's own interests.[6] If this is true for ordinary citizens, it is especially true for those in authority. Israel's constitutional literature perceives the call to leadership, not primarily as an appointment to power, but to responsibility to be exercised on God's behalf for the well-being of those they lead.[7]

For all that is to be learned from Greenberg's essay, this esteemed scholar pays scant attention to the most common leadership position of all—the role of the father in the *bêt ʾāb*, literally "a father's house." The expression reflects the shamelessly patricentric structure of ancient Israelite families. Although men did indeed function as rulers of households,[8] the OT pays relatively little attention to the power of the husband and father.[9] The only reference to a man's status as ruler over his wife occurs in Genesis 3:16, but this text highlights the fundamentally negative effects of the fall on marital relations: as

[5] Note the numerous contexts in which the plight of the widow, the fatherless, and the alien are addressed: Deut 10:18; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:19–21; 26:12–13; 27:19.

[6] For a convincing discussion of *ʾāhab*, "love," as an active and concrete, rather than abstract, expression, see A. Malamat, "'You Shall Love Your Neighbor as Yourself': A Case of Misinterpretation?" in *Die Hebräische Bibel und ihre Nachgeschichte*, Rendtorff Festschrift (ed. E. Blum et al.; Neukirchen/Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1990) 111–15.

[7] Cf. Daniel I. Block, "Burden of Leadership," 276–77; idem, "Leadership, Leader, Old Testament," in *New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (ed. K. D. Sakenfeld; Nashville: Abingdon, 2008) 3:620–26.

[8] Witness the references to a head of a household as its *baʿal*, "owner, master" (Exod 22:8 [Heb. 7]) and *ʾādôn*, "lord, sovereign," of his wife/wives (Gen 18:12), children, slaves, livestock, movable property and land. For discussions of the former term, see J. Kühlewein, *TLOT* 1:247–51; for the latter, see E. Jenni, *TLOT* 1:23–29. Cf. also 1 Pet 3:6 in the NT. 1 Tim 3:12 avoids the vocabulary of power (ἄρχειν, "to rule"; e.g. Rom 15:12), preferring the vocabulary of management and caring for (προϊστημι, literally "to stand before, be at the head").

[9] The fourth command of the Decalogue (according to the Catholic and Lutheran numeration; see below) addresses children's duty to honor parents, rather than parent's power to demand the respect of the child.

a result of sin responsible headship degenerates to an inappropriate exercise of power over (*māšal*) the woman; patricentrism degenerates to patriarchy.[10]

While this degeneracy is reflected in many OT narratives,[11] we do a disservice to the biblical record if we focus on biblical narratives as the primary source for establishing normative/ideal Israelite social patterns, and if we are preoccupied with the power the *ʾāb* wielded. In functional households, the male head was neither despot nor dictator. On the contrary, since the family members were perceived as extensions of the progenitor's own life, the head's own interests depended upon the well-being of the household. Rather than evoking images of "ruler" or "boss," the term *ʾāb* should have expressed confidence, trust, and security.[12] This emphasis on the responsibilities associated with headship over the household (as opposed to its privileges and power) is consistent with the overall tenor of the OT, which views leadership in general to be a privilege granted to an individual in order to serve the interests of those who were led.[13]

[10] Taken out of context, Ps 105:21 could be interpreted as highlighting the authority of a father over his household (He [Yahweh] made him lord [*ʾādôn*] of his house [*bêtô*], and ruler [*mōšēl*] over all his possessions [*qinyānô*]"), except that this statement refers to Joseph whom the Pharaoh put in administrative charge of his kingdom. Elsewhere, the verb *māšal*, "to rule," occurs in association with the government of a household only in Prov 17:2, which speaks of a wise servant ruling over a foolish son and sharing in the inheritance. But see also Isa 3:12, which speaks of an upside down world in which children oppress and women rule the people of Yahweh.

[11] Including the narratives of the patriarchs and of David. For a study of the problem in the book of Judges, see Daniel I. Block, "Unspeakable Crimes: The Abuse of Women in the Book of Judges," *The Southern Baptist Theological Journal* 2 (1998) 46–55. On the distinction between normative patricentrism and exploitative patriarchy, see idem, "Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel," in *Marriage and Family in the Biblical World*, ed. K. Campbell (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003) 40–45; Andreas Köstenberger, *God, Marriage, and Family: Rebuilding the Biblical Foundation* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2004). For a contrary view, see Russell D. Moore, "After Patriarchy, What? Why Egalitarians Are Winning the Gender Debate," *JETS* 49 (2006) 569–76.

[12] This is evident in texts such as Ps 68:5–6 [Heb. 6–7], which portray the father figure as the protector of orphans, defender of widows, host for the homeless, and savior of the prisoner; or Job 29:12–17, where, as one dressed in righteousness and justice, Job describes himself as a savior to the poor in distress, a helper for the orphan, a blessing to the perishing, a joy for the widow, eyes for the blind, feet for the lame, a father to the needy, defender of the stranger, and rescuer of the victims of the wicked. Although the term "father" always connoted authority, it also suggested protection and security, even when *ʾāb* was used in a metaphorical sense. Cf. Judg 17:10 and 18:19, according to which the unnamed Levitical priest was engaged as priest and "father," first by Micah, then by the Danites. He was not expected to govern either the household or the tribe, but to guarantee its security before God. When Naaman's servants addressed Elijah as *ʾāb* they expressed both their respect and their dependence upon him (2 Kgs 5:13). At the ascension of Elijah, Elisha's exclamation, "My father! My father!" reflected not so much his subjection to his mentor, but the warmth of the relationship between the two men, and his sense of security in the relationship, comparable to Isaac's similar utterance to his literal father in Gen 22:7. The same applies when Yahweh is portrayed as divine Father of Israel (Deut 1:31; 14:1; 32:6; Isa 63:16; 64:8 [Heb. 7]; Jer 31:9; Mal 1:6), of the members of the community of faith (Mal 2:10), of orphans (Ps 68:6 [Heb. 7]), of the king of Israel (2 Sam 7:14; Ps 89:27 [Heb. 28]); or when an idol is addressed as the father of the devotee (Jer 2:27).

[13] In addition to Deut 17:14–20, see also the oracle on righteous rule by Lemuel's mother in Prov 31:2–9, as well as Ps 72:1–14 and Isa 32:1–8. These idealistic statements contrast with Samuel's warning of the oppressive nature of kingship in 1 Sam 8:11–18 and the preaching of the prophets which frequently denounced abuse of power by kings and other government officials (e.g. Ezek 34:1–19).

This perspective is reflected particularly in the Deuteronomic version of the Decalogue, to which we now turn for closer analysis. Few texts in the OT have been studied as intensively and extensively as the Decalogue.[14] Given our limitations of space, there is no need to survey the history of interpretation, or even to summarize the wide range of approaches to this document that are reflected in the scholarly literature.[15] Instead, I offer a synoptic comparison of the versions of the Decalogue preserved in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, and reflect on the sociological and theological significance of some of the shifts that occur when we move from one to the other.

II. THE FORM AND FUNCTION OF THE DECALOGUE

Many scholars look upon the Decalogue as a relatively late composition created by Deuteronomistic theologians as a ten-article compendium of covenantal expectations resembling a catechism and used in lay instruction. As such, it supposedly represents the most mature example of religious lay instruction. By casting the commands in the form of second person singular verbs of direct address, the Decalogue calls upon every individual Israelite to acknowledge Yahweh, the Redeemer of Israel from Egypt, as one's personal God, and to celebrate one's freedom and Yahweh's salvation through obedience to him.[16] But to view the document as a late compendium of earlier laws is precisely the opposite of the way the Decalogue presents itself in Exodus 19–20 and Deuteronomy 5. Both texts declare that the Decalogue was given directly to Israel as oral revelation by Yahweh on Mount Sinai as a fundamental part of the covenant-making event described in Exodus 20–24. Rather than viewing this document as a late summary or distillation of Yahweh's will for his people, the texts consistently invite us to see it as the fountainhead from which later revelation springs and upon which it will expound.[17]

[14] For a helpful and thorough recent theological study, see Patrick D. Miller, *The Ten Commandments* (Interpretation; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2009).

[15] In addition to Miller, see I. Himbaza, Le Décalogue corrupt et l'histoire du texte: Etudes des formes textuelles du Décalogue et leurs implications dans l'histoire du texte de l'Ancien Testament (OBO 207; Fribourg/Göttingen: Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004). See also F.-L. Hossfeld, *Der Dekalog: Seine späten Fassungen, die originale Komposition und seine Vorstufen* (OBO 45; Fribourg/Göttingen: Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982). For helpful collections of essays on the Decalogue, see W. P. Brown, ed., *The Ten Commands: The Reciprocity of Faithfulness* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004); Ben-Zion Segal and G. Levi, eds., *The Ten Commands in History and Tradition* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990). For discussion of how the Decalogue has been handled through the centuries, see P. G. Kuntz, *The Ten Commands in History: Mosaic Paradigms for a Well-ordered Society* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004). For further bibliographies on the Decalogue, see the commentaries, especially, J. I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC 3; Waco, TX: Word, 1987) 274–76; B. S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical Theological Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1974) 386.

[16] R. Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period* (OTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994) 214–16.

[17] Some even argue that the structure of the so-called Deuteronomic Law Code in Deuteronomy 12–26 derives from the structure of the Decalogue. See G. Braulik, *Die deuteronomischen Gesetze und der Dekalog* (SBS 145; Stuttgart: Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1991); *idem*, "Die Abfolge der Gesetze in Deuteronomium 12–26 und der Dekalog," in *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt und Botschaft* (ETL 68; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1985) 252–72; published in English as "The

The narratorial relationship of these documents may be portrayed diagrammatically as in Figure 1:

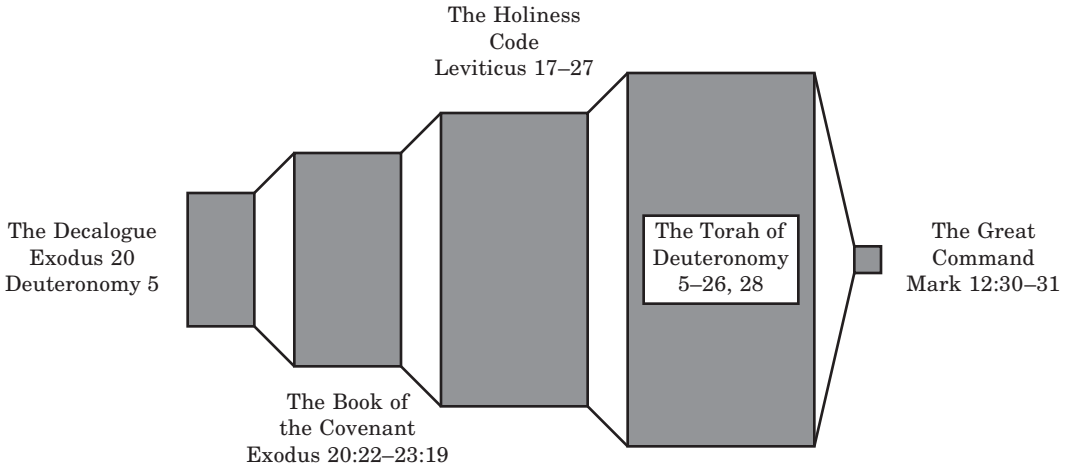

Figure 1. The Evolution of Israel's Constitutional Tradition

Regarding the nature of the Decalogue itself, we note, first, that it is cast as a complete entity. Resembling ancient Near Eastern treaties, the document includes its own formal introduction (the historical prologue, Exod 20:2; Deut 5:6), its own discreet number of terms (ten; Exod 20:3–17; 34:28; Deut 4:13; 5:7–21; 10:4), and later we read of a transcriptional epilogue (Exod 24:12–18; Deut 5:22). The surrounding narrative (cf. Exod 19:4–6), the form of the Decalogue, and the nature of the ten terms themselves demonstrate that this document is to be interpreted, not as a legal code, but as a statement of covenantal policy. Unlike other constitutional documents within the Pentateuch—the Book of the Covenant (Exod 20:22–23:19), the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17–27), and the Deuteronomic Torah (Deut 5–26, 28),[18] the ten

Sequence of the Laws in Deuteronomy 12–26" (trans. L. M. Maloney) in *A Song of Power and the Power of Song: Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy* (ed. D. L. Christensen; SBTS 3; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1993) 313–35. See also S. Kaufman, "The Structure of the Deuteronomic Law," *Maarav* 1 (1979) 105–58. While the influence of the Decalogue on the Deuteronomic Code seems indubitable, to argue for structural dependence is forced. It is an unlikely stretch, for example, to interpret Moses' instructions regarding administrative institutions in 16:18–18:22 as an exposition of the command to honor father and mother in 5:16. This approach is also rejected by Jeffrey Tigay, *Deuteronomy* (JPS Torah Commentary; Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996) 446–49; and Eckhart Otto, *Das Deuteronomium*, (BZAW 284; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999) 226.

[18] Although scholars commonly draw a sharp line between Deuteronomy 11 and 12, and refer to chapters 12–26 as the Deuteronomic Law Code, this obscures the overall unity of Moses' second address, underestimates the dole of chapters 6–11 as an exposition of the preamble and the first command of the Decalogue, and misreads the genre of chapters 12–26. See further Daniel I. Block, *Deuteronomy* (NIVAC; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, forthcoming).

terms are cast consistently in apodictic rather than casuistic form. They appear as second person commands (mostly negative), and occur without qualification and without sanctions or promised rewards.[19] Indeed, they are so general as to be virtually unenforceable through the judicial system. The covenantal (rather than legal) nature of the document is also reflected in the designations by which it is identified: *luḥôt hāʿēdut*, "the tablets of the Pact" (Exod 31:18; 32:15; 34:29);[20] *luḥôt habbĕrît*, "the tablets of the covenant" (Deut 9:9, 11, 15); and *ʿăśeret haddĕbārîm*, "the ten words" (Exod 34:28; Deut 4:13; 10:4). The meaning of the last expression is grasped by the Septuagint, which renders the expression οἱ δέκα λόγοι, from which we get *Decalogue*. This covenantal (rather than legal) interpretation of the document is confirmed by the designations for the receptacle in which the tablets were stored: *ʾărōn hāʿēdut*, "Ark of the Pact" (Exod 25:22; 30:6; 39:35; Num 4:5; 7:89); *ʾărōn bĕrît YHWH*, "the Ark of the Covenant of Yahweh";[21] *ʾărōn bĕrît hāʾĕlōhîm*, "the Ark of the Covenant of God" (Judg 20:27; 1 Sam 4:4; 2 Sam 15:24; 1 Chr 16:6); or simply *ʾărōn habbĕrît*, "the Ark of the Covenant" (Josh 3:6, 8, 11; 4:9; 6:6).

Second, by opening with a summary of the gospel of Israel's salvation, the commands that follow are presented not as prerequisites to deliverance, but as divinely revealed ways to respond to deliverance already experienced. Far from calling for obedience as a matter of mere duty to an overlord, obedience to the terms of the Decalogue is to be motivated by gratitude for the grace the Israelites had experienced through Yahweh's saving actions. This is a document for the redeemed.[22]

[19] These categories, used here for the sake of convenience, derive from the seminal work of A. Alt, "The Origins of Israelite Law," in *Essays in Old Testament History and Religion* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966 [originally published in German in 1934]) 79–132). However, we do not accept Alt's hypothesis of the origins of these forms, which has been rightly refuted long ago. See especially E. Gerstenberger, *Wesen und Herkunft des "Apodiktischen Rechts"* (WMANT 20; Neukirchen/Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1965).

[20] The rendering of the expression in NJPS. Based on the assumption of a derivation from the same root as *ʿēd*, "testimony," most English translations render the expression "tablets of the testimony" (so also LXX, the Vulgate, and the Targums). S. T. Hague (*NIDOTTE* 1.502) comments, "[T]he translation of *ʿēdût* as 'testimony' is reasonable, so long as we understand the testimony as *the law* that is the seal of the Lord's covenant with Israel." However, since today we usually think of a testimony as the utterances of a witness in a court of law or some less formal context in which a particular event is being debated/discussed, this rendering is actually misleading. In Deut 4:45 *hāʿēdōt* clearly refers to the stipulations of the covenant (alongside *haḥuqqîm ûhammišpāṭîm*, "the decrees and rulings"), suggesting that *hāʿēdut* should be interpreted equivalent to "the covenant." This interpretation is reinforced by the use of the Aramaic cognate, *ʿady* for "covenant," equivalent to Hebrew *bĕrît* (Sefire 1A:1ff.) and Akkadian *adû*/*adê*, for "covenant/treaty" and "loyalty oath." For the Aramaic, see J. C. L. Gibson, *Syrian Semitic Inscriptions*, vol. 2, *Aramaic Inscriptions* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 34. On the meaning and significance of *adê*, see Simo Parpola and K. Watanabe, *Neo–Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (SAA 2; Helsinki: Helsinki University Press, 1988) xv–xxv.

[21] E.g. Deut 10:8; 31:9, 25–26; Josh 3:3; 4:7, 18; 8:33; 1 Sam 4:3–5; 1 Kgs 6:19; 8:1, 6.

[22] Which exposes the impropriety of the pressure in some circles to have the document (usually minus the preamble) displayed in courthouses and public schools. For a discussion of the issue see J. Duff, "Should the Ten Commands Be Posted in the Public Realm? Why the Bible and the Constitution Say, 'No,'" in *Ten Commands: Reciprocity of Faithfulness* 159–70.

Third, instead of serving as a mere listing of commands, the Decalogue served as an Israelite version of a bill of rights.[23] By casting each of the terms in the second person of direct address, the document is addressed, not to potential victims of crime, but to a would-be perpetrator of a crime against God or the community. Unlike modern western bills of rights, these terms do not seek to protect one's own rights, but the rights of the next person. The addressee is perceived as a threat to the community. Indeed, each of the terms may be recast as a statement of the other person's rights and addressee's responsibility to guard the rights of others—first, of the divine Redeemer and covenant Lord, and second, of one's fellow Israelite. According to the Deuteronomic version of the Decalogue, these rights may be summarized as follows:[24]

The Divine Rights:

1. The Supreme Command: in view of his gracious saving action Yahweh has the right to exclusive allegiance.
2. Yahweh has the right to proper representation (Israel bears his name).[25]

The Human Rights:

3. The members of the household have the right to humane treatment from the head (Deut 5:12–15).[26]
4. Parents have the right to respect.
5. The next person has the right to life.
6. The next person has the right to sexual purity.
7. The next person has the right to property.
8. The next person has the right to honest and truthful testimony in court.
9. The next person has the right to a secure marriage.
10. The next person has the right to enjoy property without fear that a neighbor may want it for himself.

Fourth, the Decalogue is a comprehensive document with a twofold purpose: (1) to provide the Israelites with a clear understanding of Yahweh's

[23] Though we agree in general with those who treat this document as a "charter of human freedom" (Harrelson, *Ten Commands* 186–93; Stamm, *Ten Commands in Recent Research* 114), here we are looking at the document from another angle, specifically with the view to seeing how the next person's freedom is protected.

[24] Our numbering of the terms of the Decalogue accords with the enumeration in Roman Catholic and Lutheran tradition, and is supported by the discourse syntax of the document both in Exodus and Deuteronomy. See Appendix A.

[25] On the meaning of this command, see Daniel I. Block, "Bearing the Name of the LORD with Honor: A Homily for Scholars on the Second Command of the Decalogue (Exodus 20:7; Deuteronomy 5:11)," *BBR* (forthcoming).

[26] The Exodus version of the Decalogue treats the Sabbath ordinance as a divine right to the Israelite's time/life (cf. Exod 20:8–11).

view of the appropriate response to their salvation; and (2) to instill in the redeemed a respect for God and other members of the community. And herein we discover the Mosaic understanding of "love": total commitment to the well-being of others, whether God or one's fellow human being, demonstrated in acts that seek the interest and well-being of the next person—rather than self-interest. The grouping of the commands is deliberate, beginning with the call to honor the rights of Yahweh (##1–2), and then calling on Israelites to honor the rights of others, who are created as God's image (##3–10).[27]

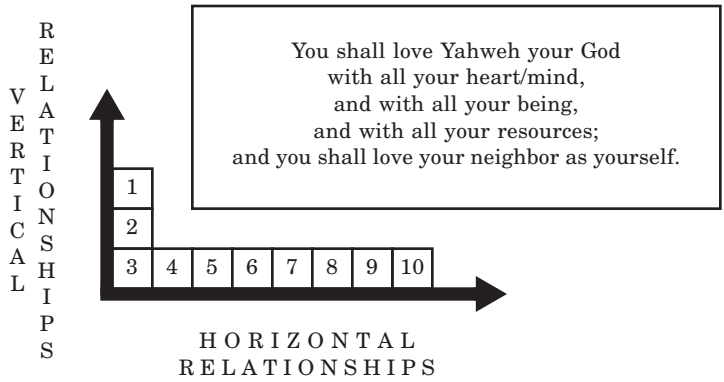

Figure 2. The Vertical and Horizontal Dimensions of Covenant Love

A recognition of the vertical and horizontal dimensions of covenantal actions, specifically this understanding of the Decalogue as a bill intended to protect others' rights, underlies Jesus' distillation of all the commands to two simple commands: "You shall demonstrate love for the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength, and you shall demonstrate love for your neighbor as [you do for] yourself" (Mark 12:30–31; cf. Matt 22:37–39; Luke 10:27–28; Rom 13:9).

Fifth, although the principles of the Decalogue were declared in the hearing of all the people and ultimately applied to every member of the covenant community, the document clearly reflects the patricentric nature of Israelite society. Although its principles obviously apply to every Israelite, the Decalogue is not addressed to priests or rulers, or to the population in general, but to "every *man*," specifically adult males who are heads of households with wives and children, and who possess property. Accordingly, the first command warns the head of the household to be scrupulous in his devotion to

[27] Though the perception is as old as Josephus (*Ant*. 3.5.4, 8) and Philo (*On the Decalogue* [*De Decalogo*] 7.12), and pervasive among theologians and NT scholars, identifying the two tablets of the Law with the vertical and horizontal commands, respectively, is based on a false understanding of the purpose of the two tablets. See Meredith G. Kline, "The Two Tables of the Covenant," *WTJ* 22 (1960) 138–46.

Yahweh, not only for his own sake, but for the well-being of the household, for the consequences of crimes committed against Yahweh extend to the entire family.[28] Similarly, the explicit extension of the Sabbath principle to children and slaves and domestic animals seeks to rein in potential exploitation and abuse of the members of the household by the head.

III. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE DECALOGUE AS A WHOLE IN DEUTERONOMY[29]

When we juxtapose English translations of the two versions of the Decalogue found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, it is evident that they differ in significant points. First, Deuteronomy makes several additions to the version found in Exodus: (1) "as Yahweh your God commanded you" (twice, vv. 12, 16); (2) "or your ox or your donkey" to the Sabbath command (v. 12); (3) a motive clause, "that your male and female servant may rest as well as you," to the Sabbath ordinance (v. 14); (4) a second motive clause, "and that it may go well with you," in the command to honor parents (v. 16); (5) "his field" (*śādēhû*) in the prohibition on coveting (v. 21).

Second, Deuteronomy makes several striking modifications to the Exodus version: (1) the Sabbath is presented as a day to be "kept" (*šāmar*), rather than "remembered" (*zākar*, v. 12); (2) instead of basing the Sabbath command on the pattern of divine work in creation, the command is grounded on Israel's experience of slavery in Egypt, and Yahweh's mighty acts of deliverance (v. 15); (3) the forbidden testimony in a court of law is characterized as "useless, empty" (*šāwʾ*), instead of "false" (*šeqer*, v. 20); (4) "house" and "wife" are transposed in the last two commands (v. 21); (5) instead of repeating the word "covet" (*ḥāmad*) the last command uses "desire" (*hitʾawwâ*, v. 21).

Obviously, in Deuteronomy 5 Moses was not reading the Decalogue from the original tablets of stone.[30] He was apparently reciting the foundational covenant document from memory, which may account for the alterations, especially in the variations in individual words: "keep" instead of "remember"

[28] The idiom "to visit (*pāqad*) the guilt of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who reject (*śānē*), usually rendered 'hate' me," is usually interpreted vertically, as if the effects of the father's sins carry on long after he is dead, even to his great-grandchildren. However, it is preferable to interpret the idiom horizontally, that is, the effects of the sins of the head of a household extend to the entire *bêt ʾāb*, "household of the father." In ancient Israel, up to four generations could live at one time in the household of a patriarch. Fundamental to this principle are notions of corporate solidarity and the responsibility of the male head of a household for the welfare of the family. Achan and his clan provide a classic illustration of the principle (Josh 7:16–26).

[29] Our interpretation is based on the assumption that the Exodus version antedates the Deuteronomic version. Not all agree. See B. Lang, "The Number Ten and the Antiquity of the Fathers: A New Interpretation of the Decalogue," *ZAW* 118 (2006) 218, following Hossfeld, *Der Dekalog*. For defense of the priority of Exodus see M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 243 *et passim*.

[30] To which he would not have had access, since they were housed in the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies.

the Sabbath; "useless" instead of "false" testimony; "desire" instead of "covet" your neighbor's house. It may also account for the addition of "your ox or your donkey" in the Sabbath ordinance, the insertion having been influenced by Moses' familiarity with the last command, which also lists these as standard elements in an economic unit known as the household, as well as the added motive clause in verse 16, since Moses had used variations of these two motive clauses at the ending of his first address (4:40). However, a lapse in memory will scarcely account for the addition of "as Yahweh your God has commanded you," the addition of the motive clause to the Sabbath command, the change in the basis for the Sabbath, and the reversal of "wife" and "house" in the last command. These appear to have been deliberate rhetorical modifications by Moses the pastor to heighten the people's awareness of the gravity of the document ("as Yahweh has commanded you") and to nuance the ordinances regarding the Sabbath and coveting.

But what is the significance of these modifications in the Decalogue? Scholars have long observed the moral and humanistic trajectory of Deuteronomy as a whole, especially when compared with corresponding regulations in the Book of the Covenant and the Holiness Code.[31] But this trajectory is evident already in the Deuteronomic version of the Decalogue, particularly the Sabbath ordinance. First, in keeping with (or preparatory to) later expressions of concern for the well-being of animals,[32] Moses specifies the ox and the donkey, draft and pack animals respectively, as deserving of the Sabbath rest. While this insertion may reflect the influence of the last command, it may also have been inspired by the ruling in the Book of the Covenant: "Six days you shall do your work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed" (Exod 23:12). Second, Moses acknowledges that beyond patterning human creative work after that of God the Creator of heaven and earth, the Sabbath is a gift, offering all who toil an opportunity to refresh themselves. Third, instead of calling on Israelites to remember the Sabbath, Moses calls on them to treasure the Sabbath by recalling their time in Egypt, when they labored for brutal taskmasters, without Sabbath or relief.[33] In addition to observing the seventh-day Sabbath by celebrating God's work in the creation of the cosmos, the Israelites were to use it to celebrate Yahweh's special creative work in rescuing them from bondage with his strong hand and outstretched arm.[34]

When we read this document and the Sabbath ordinance in particular, we need to remember that the primary addressee is the head of the household. It is not difficult to imagine that in ancient Israel the male householder

[31] See M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1992) 282–97; S. R. Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Deuteronomy* (ICC; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1902) 85.

[32] Cf. 22:4, 6; 25:4.

[33] In his second address Moses will repeatedly buttress his ethical and spiritual appeals with reminders of the Israelites' experience as slaves in Egypt. Cf. Deut 15:15; 16:12; 24:18, 22.

[34] For the combination of the motifs of Yahweh's deliverance of Israel as a special creative act and his cosmic creative actions, see, e.g., Psalms 95 and 136.

might be tempted to have his animals and hired hands continue working on the Sabbath even as he and his immediate family personally and smugly observed this ordinance. But this philanthropic sensitivity is not to be restricted to one's family or even fellow Israelites. All who live within the towns and villages of Israel—animal and human—are to be granted one day in seven as a day for rest and recuperation.

IV. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE LAST COMMAND[S] IN DEUTERONOMY

Scholars have spent a great deal of time and energy exploring the significance of the shifts in the last command. Usually these explorations revolve around the meaning of the word *ḥāmad*, "to covet," and *hitʾawwâ*, "to desire," specifically whether the former forbids envious desire for what belongs to another person or prohibits taking specific actions to satisfy those desires.[35] My own sense is that Deuteronomy's substitution of the second occurrence of *ḥāmad* in Exod 20:17 with *hitʾawwâ* argues for the former.[36] However one answers the issue, this preoccupation with lexical and semantic matters may actually overwhelm the ideological implications of the simple fact of the change and other modifications Deuteronomy 5:21 makes to the command(s) on coveting. Indeed, the substitution of one verb with another does not appear to be nearly as monumental as the transposition of "house" and "wife."

The Exodus version of the command concerning coveting consists of two statements, each involving the identical negative command, *lōʾ taḥmōd*, "You shall not covet," followed by a direct object. In the first statement the object consists of a single phrase, *bêt rēʿekā*, "the house of your neighbor." In the second command the object is complex, consisting of a catalogue of items claimed by one's neighbor: his wife, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, and his donkey, and then ending with a catch-all expression, "anything that belongs to your neighbor."[37] The traditional numbering of the terms of the Decalogue treats the first statement as titular and the second as expositional: the listing in part 2 clarifies what is meant by *bayit* in part 1.[38] This is the *bêt ʾāb*, "the household of the father," the entire realm over which he exercises leadership. Although grammatically these are two independent commands, by this interpretation they are in essence only one, lending

[35] Thus most recently, Miller, *Ten Commandments* 389–92. For earlier reviews of these discussions, see M. L. Chaney, "'Coveting Your Neighbor's House' in Social Context," in *Ten Commands: The Reciprocity of Faithfulness* 302–8; A. Rofe, "The Tenth Command in the Light of Four Deuteronomic Laws," in *Ten Commands in History and Tradition*" 45–54.

[36] Acknowledging that the two verbs obviously overlap, Miller (*Ten Commandments* 391–92) opines that *hitʾawweh* highlights the sense of inner craving, whether or not one acts on those cravings.

[37] The list is intended to be inclusive, though not exhaustive. It does not specify "your sons and daughters" or "the alien who is in your gates," referred to in the Sabbath ordinance.

[38] It includes anything and everything associated with the family as an economic unit. Cf. similar listings in Gen 12:5, 16; 26:14; Num 16:30, 32; Deut 11:6.

some support to the enumeration of the ten terms of the Decalogue proposed by those in the Reformed and Orthodox Christian traditions.[39]

However, if these are indeed to be interpreted as two separate commands, which the syntax of the Decalogue as a whole and the grammar of these two statements in particular suggest,[40] they distinguish coveting the neighbor's real property (the house) from coveting the human beings who make up the economic unit, the household.[41] This distinction is rendered even more explicit through the four significant modifications that Moses makes in Deut 5:21. First, and probably least significant, he changes the verb in the second command from *ḥāmad* to *hit'awwâ*. Second, Moses adds "his field" to the list of prohibited entities.[42] Third, Moses isolates "your neighbor's wife" from the rest of the human components of the household. Fourth, he transposes "your neighbor's house" and "your neighbor's wife," and creates a separate line item protecting the neighbor's relationship with his wife. "Your neighbor's house" is then dropped down to the second command. This latter move highlights the ambiguity of the term *bayit*. On the one hand, coming at the beginning of a catalogue of possessions, the word now plays a titular role: field, servants, and animals represent parts of the whole. On the other hand, the addition of "his field" to "his house" creates a pair of elements,[43] clarifying the ambiguity in Exodus—"house" refers to the domicile/home compound rather than to the "household"—and to match the following pairs: his male and female servants; his ox and donkey. At the same time this addition compensates for the loss of a member from the catalogue and restores the full complement of seven items.[44] Whether or not Moses was aware of it, this move brings the prohibition on coveting remarkably close to the form of a similar prohibition in a recently published Old Assyrian Treaty text (1920–1840 BC) from Kültepe (*Kaneš*) in Anatolia:

> You shall not covet a fine house, a fine slave, a fine slave woman, a fine field, or a fine orchard belonging to any citizen of Assur, and you will not take (any of these) by force and hand them over to your own subjects/servants.[45]

[39] For a full discussion of the enumeration in Jewish tradition, see Breuer, "Dividing the Decalogue into Verses and Commands," in *Ten Commands in History and Tradition* 291–330, esp. pp. 314–18. See also Himbaza, *Le Décalogue* 92–116.

[40] See the appendix below. For a discourse analysis of the Decalogue yielding similar results, see Jason S. DeRouchie, *A Call to Covenant Love: Text Grammar and Literary Structure in Deuteronomy 5–11* (Gorgias Dissertations 30; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2007) 115–17, 127–32.

[41] Hebrew *bayit* bears both senses.

[42] The Nash Papyrus and the Septuagint of Exod 20:17 add this element, perhaps under the influence of Deuteronomy.

[43] These expressions appear together in Gen 39:5; Lev 25:31; Neh 5:3, 11; Isa 5:8; Jer 6:12; 32:15; Mic 2:2.

[44] Like the list of those who are to benefit from the Sabbath rest in Exod 20:10. Cf. Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (trans. I. Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1967) 249. By adding "your ox and your donkey," Deut 5:14 increases the number to nine.

[45] Kt 00/k6:62–66, as translated by V. Donbaz, "An Old Assyrian Treaty from Kültepe," *JCS* 57 (2005) 65. Notice "house" is at the head of the list followed by two natural word pairs. I am grateful to my colleague John Walton for drawing this text to my attention.

In the absence of further information in the text of Deuteronomy, we are left to speculate what might have motivated this move. It seems best to interpret this as a deliberate effort to ensure the elevated status of the wife in a family unit and to foreclose any temptation to use the Exodus version of the command to justify men's treatment of their wives as if they were mere property, along with the rest of the household possessions. It may not be coincidental that the Decalogue is framed by references to the *bayit* as designations for domains. The opening preamble portrays the land of Egypt as "house of slavery" (*bêt ʿăbādîm*) from which Yahweh had rescued Israel. The last command refers to the home by the same term; this is the male head of the household's domain, in which his style of leadership may be just as oppressive as the bondage under Pharaoh.[46] Indeed, the OT narratives are rife with accounts of abusive men who treat women as property that may be disposed of at will for the sake of male honor and male ego.[47]

Some interpret the transposition of "wife" and "house" in the last commands of the Decalogue as symbolic of "the interchangeability of woman with other items of property."[48] However, Moses' adaptation of the command suggests the very opposite. Aware of men's propensity to abuse women, Moses seems to have recognized that men might marshal the ambiguous wording of the Exodus version of the Decalogue to justify treating their wives the way one treats a slave or an ox. By isolating the neighbor's wife from the household and giving her priority over the property associated with the household, ever the pastor, Moses highlights the special nature of the relationship between a man and his wife. He reinforces this distinction by reserving the verb *ḥāmad* for the illicit lust of a man toward another man's wife[49] and substituting it with *hitʾawweh* when speaking of the desire a man might have for another man's household property. Sivan rightly recognizes that these modifications to the commands reflect "scales of desires." In Sivan's words, the Deuteronomic version "elevates women as the most desirable objects of coveting. It also implies that covert coveting of other men's wives is more pervasive and more complex than the rest of the listed inventory."[50]

The reasons for desiring a neighbor's wife obviously go beyond her utilitarian value as a part of the economic unit; she could also be coveted as an

[46] Cf. H. Sivan, *Between Woman, Man and God: A New Interpretation of the Ten Commands* (London: T & T Clark, 2004) 208.

[47] See P. Trible, *Texts of Terror: Literary-Feminist Readings of Biblical Narratives* (OBT; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984).

[48] Thus Sivan, *Between Woman, Man and God* 220. Regarding the menial status of women in ancient Israel, A. Phillips speaks for many: "They [women] had no legal status, being the personal property first of their fathers, and then of their husbands." *Ancient Israel's Criminal Law: A New Approach to the Decalogue* (Oxford: Blackwood; New York: Schocken, 1970) 70. For discussion and critical responses to this notion see Block, "Marriage and Family in Ancient Israel" 61–72; C. J. H. Wright, *God's People in God's Land: Family, Land, and Property in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990) 291–316.

[49] The root may be employed with reference to licit desire for a woman—as in Ezekiel's reference to his wife as *maḥmad ʿênêkā*, "the desire/delight of your eyes" (Ezek 24:16), or for objects that are aesthetically pleasing or delightful to eat (Gen 2:9).

[50] Sivan, *Between Woman, Man and God* 215.

instrument of sexual pleasure, as well as tool to demonstrate superiority over one's neighbor, which would be implied by taking his wife. However, contrary to Sivan, the intent of the Deuteronomic version is not so much to secure the welfare of men, as if another man's wife is his enemy,[51] but to curb a fundamental weakness in men and to secure the rights of one's neighbor to a healthy and secure marital relationship. This goal is achieved by elevating wives above the status of household property and treating the marital covenant relationship as sacrosanct. Coveting one's neighbor's wife is a particularly heinous moral and social malady, and the general good of the community can only be preserved by "fencing off the home."[52] And this is best achieved by disciplining the passions of the heart, which is precisely Jesus' point in Matt 15:19, "For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander" (NRSV). This notion is expressed even more explicitly in Matt 5:27–28, where Jesus seems to have combined the prohibition against adultery (command #6 in Deuteronomy) with the present command: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (NRSV).[53]

V. THE LAST COMMAND AS A WINDOW INTO THE DEUTERONOMIC DOMESTIC IDEOLOGY

One can imagine that the modifications Moses made to the Decalogue as he recited it at the beginning of his second farewell address on the Plains of Moab caught many in his audience by surprise. After all, had he not ended his first address by warning his hearers (and future readers) not to add or delete anything from the instruction on the divine ordinances and regulations he was presenting to them?[54] And now he has himself exhibited the *ḥuṣpâ* to tamper with the Decalogue, the document that came from the very mouth of God, and was written down by the very finger of God (Exod 31:18; 32:15–16; 34:1; Deut 9:10)! However, we must remember that the Israelites are now almost forty years removed from the original revelation at Sinai, and they are on the verge of a brand new phase in their history—life in the Promised Land. Having lived with this people for forty years, here Moses functions not only as the divinely authorized conduit and interpreter of the divine revelation, but as the people's pastor preparing them for the new circumstances that await them beyond the Jordan.

We have argued here that the Decalogue functioned as a bill of rights, seeking to protect my neighbor from my potential violation of his or her rights as a human being created as an image of God and as a member of the

[51] Ibid. 216–17.

[52] Ibid. 217.

[53] The Greek word for "lustful intent" (*epithumia/epithumeō*) involves the same root as that used by LXX to translate *ḥāmad* in the present command.

[54] "You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor delete from it, but you are to keep the commands of Yahweh your God that I command you" (Deut 4:2).

redeemed community in covenant relation with God and with one another. While the principles summarized in the Decalogue were to be determinative for the entire community, technically this document addressed the heads of the households, perceiving them as the greatest threats to the well-being of society. It recognizes that those at the head of this most basic human institution, the home, are particularly susceptible to the temptation to view their roles primarily as positions of power rather than as a divinely ordained stewardship of an office that exists for the good of those in one's care. Instead of accepting the model of Christ, who loves the church "and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her . . . so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish" (Eph 5:25–27), male heads of households are prone to exercise their authority in the interests of their own honor and status. One of the primary functions of the Decalogue is to restrain the potential abuse of power by the heads of households.[55] If this was true of the original version, revealed at Sinai, it was even more so of the version we find in Deuteronomy. The modifications introduced by Moses in his recitation of Israel's basic constitutional document,[56] reinforce this goal and signal the trajectory of the Torah's vision of the role of the head of the household in the remainder of the second address.

Earlier we had noted that one of Moses' aims in his second pastoral address was to prevent the abuse of power by those who sit in seats of authority: kings, judges, elders, and even priests. Once our eyes have learned to recognize this, they begin to see that this is even more emphatically so in those contexts that concern the relationship of a man with his family, particularly the women of the household.[57] Scholars have long recognized that Deuteronomy pays special attention to women's rights.[58] By reading the

[55] Our approach differs fundamentally from that of David Clines, who argues that the document was drafted to secure the interests of elites and those who wield power. See D. J. A. Clines, "The Ten Commands, Reading from Left to Right," in *Words Remembered, Texts Renewed: Essays in Honour of John F. A. Sawyer* (ed. J. Davies, G. Harvey, and W. G. E. Watson; JSOTSup 195; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995) 97–112.

[56] M. Weinfeld rightly observes, "At the dawn of Israelite history the Ten Commands were received in their original short form as the basic constitution, so to speak, of the Community of Israel. The words were chiseled or written on two stone tablets that came to be known as 'the Tablets of the Covenant (*berith*)' or "The Tablets of the Testimony (*ʿeduth*) [*sic*, read 'the Pact']." "The Uniqueness of the Decalogue and Its Place in Jewish Tradition," in *The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition* (ed. Ben-Zion Segal and G. Levi; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990) 27–28. Weinfeld reiterates these sentiments in another essay published the same year, "The Decalogue: Its Significance, Uniqueness, and Place in Israel's Tradition," in *Religion and Law: Biblical-Judaic and Islamic Perspectives* (ed. E. B. Firmage, B. G. Weiss, and J. W. Welch; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990) 32, 37. These comments are repeated in his commentary, *Deuteronomy 1–11: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 5; New York: Doubleday, 1991) 262–63 and 267, respectively.

[57] For a detailed analysis of the relevant texts in Deuteronomy, see Rebekah Josberger, "Between Rule and Responsibility: The Role of the *ʾĀB* as Agent of Righteousness in Deuteronomy's Domestic Ideology" (Ph.D. diss., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, KY, 2007).

[58] Thus Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy 1–11* 318; *idem*, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* 282–92.

address serially, we begin to observe the pervasiveness of this perspective throughout the second address.[59]

1. *The concern for widows (10:17–18* et passim*).* One of the striking features of the book of Deuteronomy is its concern for the members of the community who are marginalized and economically vulnerable because they do not have access to the security provided by a normal household led by a male figure, either a father or husband. Beginning in 10:18 and on ten additional occasions, the book declares the Israelites', particularly the heads of the households', responsibility for seeing to the well-being of the widow, the fatherless, and the alien.[60]

2. *Invitations to participate in worship (12:12* et passim*).* Like the Book of the Covenant, the Deuteronomic Torah requires all males to gather at the central sanctuary three times a year for the Festivals of Passover (Unleavened Bread), Shevuoth (Weeks), and Sukkoth (Booths) (16:16; cf. Exod 23:14–17; 34:23). However, in contrast to the segregation that would characterize worship in Herodian times, Deuteronomy invites women, both free and slave, to worship freely in the presence of Yahweh at the central sanctuary (12:12, 18; 16:11, 14; 31:12).

3. *The manumission of female slaves (15:12).* Whereas the regulations concerning the manumission of indentured slaves in the Book of the Covenant had spoken only of male slaves (Exod 21:2–11), the corresponding instructions in Deuteronomy 15 expressly stipulate that the law applies to both male and female slaves (v. 12).[61]

4. *Military exemption for new husbands (20:7).* Like the cases involving a newly constructed house (v. 5) and a newly planted vineyard (v. 6), on the surface the exemption of a man newly betrothed from military service for a year appears to be interested primarily in the man: it would be unfortunate for him if he could not enjoy the benefits of his own labor/commitment. However, in light of the fourth case involving the demoralizing effect of a fearful man on the broader community (v. 8), this ordinance also has the interests of his bride in mind. Surely she would be as eager as he to enjoy the fruits of their betrothal; she might even hope that before he leaves for his tour of duty she will have conceived a child by him. From the construction of the last clauses, "lest he die and another man take her," it seems that a part of the issue is protecting her from another man. This interpretation is reinforced by 24:5, which speaks expressly of the man tending to his new wife's happiness (*śimmaḥ*) for the year.

[59] For further discussion of all of these, see Block, *Deuteronomy* (forthcoming).

[60] Deut 10:18; 14:29; 16:11, 14; 24:17, 19–21; 26:12–13; 27:19.

[61] The potential for abusive power that the heads of households may wield over children, both male and female, is also reined in by prohibitions on offering one's children as sacrifices to the gods (12:31; 18:10).

5. *The captive bride (21:10–14).* For women, few circumstances are more fearful than the conquest of their towns by a foreign army. It is clear from the concluding motive clause of 21:14, *taḥat ʾăšer ʿinnîtāh*, "because you have degraded her,"[62] that the concern here is to rein in the potential for male abuse of women in such contexts. By this interpretation, this paragraph serves not as a legal provision for a soldier to marry a woman in circumstances where contractual arrangements with the bride's family are impossible,[63] nor as an authorization of divorce from a foreign bride—both practices are assumed—but as an appeal to Israelites to be charitable in their treatment of foreign women, who, through no decision or fault of their own, are forced to become a part of the Israelite community. Verses 10–13 call for the charitable treatment of foreign brides when they are first taken; verse 14 for their charitable treatment in divorce.

6. *The second-ranked wife (21:15–17).* Bigamous and polygamous marriages represent fertile soil for the mistreatment of women. This text seems to assume, perhaps inevitably, that one of the wives will became a favored wife for the man, which would lead naturally to favored treatment of her son when the property of the head of the household is divided. This provision seeks to secure the well-being of the son of a rejected wife who happens to be the first-born. Inasmuch as children were responsible for the care of their parents in old age, in so doing it also protects the interests and rights of the second-ranked wife.

7. *The mother of a rebellious child (21:18–21).* The subject of the opening clause—"If a *man* has a stubborn and rebellious son"—and the focus of the paragraph on the son (rather than a child in general) reflect the patricentrism of ancient Israel. However, the instructions on how to deal with such a child modify this patricentrism by explicitly including the child's mother *with* his father as the aggrieved party, and by involving her in every phase of the legal process: though *they* chastise him he will not listen to *them*; *they* seize him; *they* bring him before the elders; *they* address the elders; *they* speak of the child's insubordination to *them*. These instructions prevent the male head of the household from operating only in self-interest and force him to protect his wife from the abuse of the son.

8. *The wife falsely accused of lying about her virginity (22:13–21).* This paragraph divides into two parts, a primary case involving a false accusation (vv. 13–19) and a counter-case in which the charges prove to be true (vv. 20–21). Whereas the latter makes no attempt to defend a woman who

[62] The piel verb *ʿinnâ*, is not limited to "rape" or "sexual abuse." Ellen van Wolde ("Does *ʿinnâ* Denote Rape? A Semantic Analysis of a Controversial Word," *VT* 52 [2002] 528–44) argues that in juridical contexts the word serves an evaluative function, expressing downward social movement and should be translated "debased."

[63] Contra C. Pressler, *The View of Women Found in the Deuteronomic Family Laws* (BZAW 216; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1993) 11.

is actually guilty of lying to her husband about her pre-marital virginity, the former goes to great lengths to protect a woman from false accusations by an abusive husband who first turns against her and then trumps up and publicizes charges of immorality against her. (a) It invites the accused's parents (both father and mother) to come to her defense—a remarkable provision in a patrilocal society. (b) It calls for a public hearing of the case before the elders at the gate—commensurate with the public nature of the slander. (c) It invites the presentation of objective evidence to counter the false accusations. (d) It provides for the turning of the tables so that the accused becomes a plaintiff in court and the plaintiff becomes the accused. (e) It calls for the public disciplining of the man. (f) It secures the honor of the woman's parents by forcing the man to pay compensation for having charged them with providing him with "damaged goods." (g) By prohibiting the man from divorcing the woman, it forces him to guarantee her economic well-being for life.

Many modern readers will find the last prescription unpalatable. Surely divorce is better than living with a man who has publicly defamed his wife. However, ancient texts should be read in the light of their own intention, rather than in the light of modern conventions. From the perspective of the husband, this order assumes the punishment will have a rehabilitative effect. Ideally, having been publicly shamed, he will return to his wife and assume his responsible role in caring for her and seeking to build a normal household. From the perspective of the woman, this order guarantees her security; she will be cared for all her days. From the perspective of her parents, they may keep the bride price (plus the fine), but more importantly, they can relax because their daughter is restored to a protective environment. These desired outcomes highlight the importance of the issue being resolved in a public court of law. The elders and the community who witnessed the proceedings become guarantors of the man's good behavior.

9. *The victims of rape (22:23–29).* Here Moses provides instructions for two scenarios involving rape: the rape of a virgin engaged to be married (vv. 23–27) and the rape of a virgin who is not engaged to be married (vv. 28–29). The first provision is interesting for the distinction it draws between the sexual violation of a virgin betrothed to another man in a town (vv. 23–24) and out in the country (vv. 25–27).[64] It assumes that if the act occurs in town, an innocent woman will cry for help and either the man to whom she is betrothed or her townspeople will rescue her. However, since there is no one in the country to hear her cries when she is violated by a man, it gives her the benefit of the doubt and assumes her innocence. Meanwhile, the man must be executed.

The second case involves a virgin who has not been engaged to a man. This case represents an adaptation of Exod 22:16–17 [Heb. 15–16]. Whereas

[64] This compares with ancient Hittite Laws that distinguish rape cases occurring in the mountains and those in a woman's house, the latter being deemed a capital offence. See HL ¶¶197–198 (Roth, *Law Collections* 237).

Exod 22:17 [Heb. 16] considers the man's actions to be seductive (*pth*, piel), here Moses speaks of the man seizing (*tāpaś*)[65] the woman and "lying" with her, and being caught *in flagrante delicto*. In the prescribed response to this adulterous act the attention is focused entirely on the man. Because he has deflowered and degraded (*ʿinnâ*) the woman by engaging in sexual intercourse with her, he must pay the father of the woman fifty shekels. Unlike verse 19, this payment is not a fine but the bride price, since upon its payment she becomes his wife in a marriage from which there is to be no divorce as long as they live (cf. v. 19). On the surface, it looks like Deuteronomy has tightened the law recorded in Exod 22:16–17 [Heb. 15–16]. Unlike the tendency toward a more humanitarian approach that we have witnessed in Deuteronomy's presentation of other laws found earlier in the Pentateuch, it appears Moses has eliminated any other options for the poor woman but to watch the man pay her father the bride gift and then accede to becoming his wife—hardly a pleasant prospect for someone who has been forcibly violated. However, the issue is probably not that simple. As in verse 22, the present text concerns the righteous response to forced sex involving a virgin. The regulation seems to assume the father's and daughter's rights of first refusal provided for in the earlier text. The point here is that if the man pays the bride gift and if the father agrees to accept him as a son-in-law, the man must fulfill all the marital duties that come with the rights to sexual intercourse, and in so doing guarantee the security of the woman.

10. *The divorced woman (24:1–4).* This text has been the subject of more attention that most of the above. Interpretations vary, but the key is found in properly identifying the protases and apodoses. The syntax is admittedly ambiguous, but the following represents the most likely flow of the text.

When a man takes a woman and becomes her husband,
if she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some defect in her,[66]
  and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand
  and lets her go out of his house;
  and she departs out of his house,
  and she goes and she becomes another man's wife,
  and the latter man hates her
  and he writes her a certificate of divorce
  and he puts it in her hand
  and sends her out of his house,
or *if* the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife,
then her former husband, who sent her away,
  may not take her again to be his wife,
  after she has been declared defiled,
  for that is an abomination before Yahweh,

[65] Cf. *heḥĕzîq*, "to overpower," in verse 25.

[66] John Walton is correct in suggesting that *ʿerwat dābār* refers, not to a voluntary sinful action, but an involuntary physical issue, perhaps some menstrual irregularity, like that of the woman who came to Jesus for healing in Mark 5:25–34. See Walton, "The Place of the *hutqaṭṭēl* within the D-Stem Group and Its Implications in Deuteronomy 24:4," *HS* 32 (1991) 14–15.

and you shall not bring sin upon the land
that Yahweh your God is giving you as a grant.

The text may be analyzed according to common diagnostic procedures:

The Problem	When a man takes a woman and marries her, if she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some defect in her,
The Prevailing Practice	and he writes her a certificate of divorce, and he puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house,
The Complication	if she departs from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife, and if the latter man hates her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, and puts it in her hand, and he sends her out of his house, if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife,
The Proscription	then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been declared defiled,
The Rationale	for that is an abomination before Yahweh, and you shall not bring sin upon the land that Yahweh your God is giving you as a grant.

Contrary to common opinion, the purpose of this text is not to authorize or even regulate divorce *per se*—the practice is assumed—but to rein in potential abuse of a husband after he has divorced his wife. Technically the primary issue is not divorce, but palingamy, remarriage to a former spouse.[67] As in 21:10–14, here Moses' concern is to protect the wife from abuse by men, specifically her first husband. He does so by reiterating the procedures already in existence for releasing wives from the bonds of marriage. Furthermore, he insists that when a husband divorces his wife, he relinquishes his authority over her. Having humiliated his wife by forcing her to declare herself unclean, he may not reclaim her if she has remarried and then loses her second husband through divorce or death. The legislation seeks to protect the woman by requiring the husband to produce a severance document as legal proof for the dissolution of the marriage. Without this document, the husband could demand to have her back at any time, and if she were to remarry, he could accuse her of adultery.[68]

11. *Levirate marriage (25:5–10).* The primary purpose of the institution known as levirate marriage was to secure the integrity of families and inherited estates, which were threatened when a married man died without having fathered an heir. This could be achieved by having the widow marry the deceased's nearest unmarried male relative. The first child born of this

[67] Cf. R. Westbrook, Prohibition on Restoration of Marriage in Deuteronomy 24:1–4," in *Studies in Bible 1986* (ed. S. Japhet; Scripta Hierosolymitana 31; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1986) 388; Pressler, *View of Women* 46–47. For defenses of the traditional interpretation see Gordon Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant, Marriage as a Covenant Biblical Law and Ethics as Developed from Malachi* (BSL; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1998) 76–81.

[68] So also Wright, *God's People in God's Land* 217.

union would be legally considered the child of the deceased and would carry on his name and retain the property in his name. Verses 7–10 contemplate the case in which the nearest relative refuses to perform this duty on behalf of his departed relative. As in the case of divorce in 24:1–4, Moses prescribes a precise legal process whereby the *yābām* (levir) may be released from his obligations to his deceased brother.

While the details of the case are interesting in and of themselves, our concern here is the way in which the widow is to be treated. The policies laid down afford the widow remarkable freedom of movement and influence in prosecuting the case. Her authorized involvement may be summarized as follows. She is authorized to appear before the elders at the gate of the community and to present her complaint (v. 7b). The elders of the town shall summon the *yābām* and speak to him (v. 8a). The *yābām* is given an opportunity to speak for himself (v. 8b), and if he declares publicly his refusal to perform the duty of a *yābām*, the widow is invited to perform a ritual of public humiliation of the *yābām*—removing the sandal from his foot (v. 9). Thereafter, in a rude gesture of shame and humiliation,[69] she may spit in the face of the *yābām*, and is invited to interpret her actions before the elders. By announcing, "This is what shall be done to the man who will not build his brother's house," the widow declares that this response to being rejected by her brother-in-law is neither impulsive nor idiosyncratic, but accords with established legal procedure. Although the woman expressly acts in the interests of her deceased husband, in seeking to honor him she is also invited to defend her own honor. This text prevents a person on whose shoulders levirate responsibilities fall from simply disregarding those obligations and discarding his widowed sister-in-law. The elders of the city are to stand by the woman against a potentially abusive male.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the past three decades, feminist scholars have rightly alerted readers of the Scriptures to misogynistic elements in the biblical texts. It is clear that the documents were all written from a patricentric perspective. It is also clear that just as other leaders in the community were prone to twist positions of responsibility into positions of power and to exercise that power in brutal self-interest, so the narratives often paint pictures of the grossly abusive exercise of power by male heads of households. In our attention to these narratives it is tempting to assume that they reflect normal patricentrism; that the system itself is fundamentally flawed and needs to be overturned. The stories do indeed prove the fulfillment of the prediction made by God at the fountainhead of human history:

I will greatly increase your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children, You shall crave the power of your husband, but he will *rule* over you.

[69] Cf. Num 12:14; Job 17:6; 30:10; Matt 26:67; 27:30; Mark 10:34; 14:65; Luke 18:32.

Because of sin, a woman's role becomes not only painful but also frustrating, and men respond by treating women as subjects rather than as co-regents in their exercise of dominion over the earth. It is easy to forget that while pervasive in the narratives, this represents neither the biblical ideal nor the covenantal norm. According to the covenantal standards signaled by the Decalogue but developed in greater deal in the Deuteronomic Torah, the role of the *ʾāb* in the *bêt ʾāb*, "the house of the father," involved primarily care and protection of all those under his charge. However, because of sheer superior physical power this care and protection often degenerates to exploitation and abuse of women as if they were nothing more than household property, as disposable as sheep or oxen. Contemporary efforts to determine and reestablish biblical ethical norms must pay attention not only to accounts of the way it was, but also to texts that seek to outline the way it should have been. In this and many other respects the book of Deuteronomy offers a glorious gospel, setting a trajectory of male-female relations that leads ultimately to Paul's statements in Ephesians 5:25–33.

> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself. (Eph 5:25–33)

The seeds of this perspective were planted long ago in God's covenant with Israel. May they sprout and may this plant flourish anew among God's people today.[70]

[70] An earlier draft of this paper was presented to the Evangelical Theological Society in 2006. It was modified significantly and presented as the installation address on the occasion of my appointment as Gunther H. Knoedler Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College, October, 18, 2007. I am extremely grateful for the support I receive from the Knoedlers (Gunther and Betty) and the Wheaton College community. I am also grateful for the invaluable help my research assistants (Chris Ansberry, Jerry Hwang, Charlie Trimm) have provided in refining the paper. Of course, any flaws in argument and presentation are my own.

APPENDIX A:
HOW SHALL WE NUMBER THE TEN COMMANDS?
THE DEUTERONOMY VERSION (5:1—21)

The Reformed Tradition	The Catholic and Lutheran Tradition
[6]I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.	[6]I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
[7]You shall have no other gods before me.	[7]You shall have no other gods before me.
[8]You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. [9]You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I Yahweh your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, [10]but showing *ḥesed* to thousands of those who love me and keep my commands.	[8]You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. [9]You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I Yahweh your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, [10]but showing *ḥesed* to thousands of those who love me and keep my commands.
[11]You shall not bear the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.	[11]You shall not bear the name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.
[12]Observe the Sabbath day, by keeping it holy, as Yahweh your God commanded you. [13]Six days you shall labor and do all your work, [14]but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. [15]You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore Yahweh your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.	[12]Observe the Sabbath day, by keeping it holy, as Yahweh your God commanded you. [13]Six days you shall labor and do all your work, [14]but the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. [15]You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and Yahweh your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore Yahweh your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.
[16]Honor your father and your mother, as Yahweh your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you.	[16]Honor your father and your mother, as Yahweh your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that Yahweh your God is giving you.
[17]You shall not murder.	[17]You shall not murder.

[18]And you shall not commit adultery.	[18]And you shall not commit adultery.
[19]And you shall not steal.	[19]And you shall not steal.
[20]And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	[20]And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
[21]And you shall not covet (*ḥāmad*) your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbors.	[21]And you shall not covet (*ḥāmad*) your neighbor's wife.
	And you shall not desire (*hitʾawwâ*) your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbors.

CONSIDERATIONS IN ENUMERATING THE TERMS OF THE DECALOGUE[71]

1. The ambiguity of Exodus 20:17 in MT. The text is obviously cast as two independent clause commands. However, whereas the previous commands are marked as separate paragraphs by *sětûmôt* (nine spaces) in the *Leningrad Codex* these two clauses are separated by only two spaces. The repetition of the verb *ḥāmad*, "to covet," and the meaning of *bayit* as "household," may suggest that the second command is intended to be interpreted as an expansion/clarification of the first. Nevertheless, the way the second clause opens (*lōʾ* + imperfect) is identical to the previous four commands which scribes and scholars unanimously separate as separate commands.

2. The modifications to these commands in Deuteronomy. Deuteronomy 5:17 removes the potential ambiguity by:

(a) adding a *waw* conjunction to the second command exactly as it had done with the preceding four commands;

(b) changing the verb of the second command from *ḥāmad*, "to covet," to *ʾāwâ* (hithpael), "to crave for";

(c) transposing *bayit*, "house, household," and *ʾēšet rēʿekā*, "wife of your neighbor," thereby forestalling the treatment of one's wife merely as property like the rest of the household;

(d) isolating the command not to covet one's neighbor's wife and treating it as a separate "line-item."

(e) adding "his field" as a complement to "his house," and creating a third pair of entities.

[71] Discussions of the issue in Jewish tradition tend to focus on the relationship between the narrative opening statement and the commands. See Breuer, "Dividing the Decalogue into Verses and Commands," in *The Ten Commands in History and Tradition* 291–330. Breuer also recognizes the syntactical and substantive differences between the Exodus and Deuteronomy versions of the Decalogue (pp. 313–14). For a discourse analysis of the Decalogue yielding similar results, see Jason S. DeRouchie, *A Call to Covenant Love: Text Grammar and Literary Structure in Deuteronomy 5–11* (Gorgias Dissertations 30; Piscataway, NJ: Gorgias, 2007) 115–17, 127–32.

3. The grammar, syntax and content of Exodus 20:3–6, which is identical to Deuteronomy 5:7–10 (except for deletion of one and the addition of two *waw* conjunctions):

Deuteronomy 5:7–10	Exodus 20:3–6
לֹא יִהְיֶה־לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל־פָּנָי׃	לֹא יִהְיֶה־לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים עַל־פָּנָי׃
לֹא־תַעֲשֶׂה־לְךָ פֶסֶל כָּל־תְּמוּנָה	לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה־לְךָ פֶסֶל וְכָל־תְּמוּנָה
אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם ׀ מִמַּעַל וַאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת	אֲשֶׁר בַּשָּׁמַיִם ׀ מִמַּעַל וַאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתָּחַת
וַאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם ׀ מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ׃	וַאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם ׀ מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ׃
לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תָעָבְדֵם	לֹא־תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם וְלֹא תָעָבְדֵם
כִּי אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא	כִּי אָנֹכִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֵל קַנָּא
פֹּקֵד עֲוֹן אָבוֹת עַל־בָּנִים	פֹּקֵד עֲוֹן אָבֹת עַל־בָּנִים
וְעַל־שִׁלֵּשִׁים וְעַל־רִבֵּעִים לְשֹׂנְאָי׃	עַל־שִׁלֵּשִׁים וְעַל־רִבֵּעִים לְשֹׂנְאָי׃
וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד לַאֲלָפִים לְאֹהֲבַי	וְעֹשֶׂה חֶסֶד לַאֲלָפִים לְאֹהֲבַי
וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָי׃	וּלְשֹׁמְרֵי מִצְוֹתָי׃

(a) The commands regarding exclusive devotion to Yahweh and the manufacture of images are held together by references to Yahweh in the first person (like the preamble). Thereafter he is referred to in the third person.

(b) The first imperative statement concerns the prohibition of rivals to Yahweh. The second is best interpreted as a clarification of the first, that is, a prohibition of the manufacture of images that may be treated as rivals to Yahweh and erected next to the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle/Temple (cf. 1 Samuel 5).

(c) Following the presentation of Yahweh as formless in 4:12–14, in 4:15–19 the issue is clearly not the reduction of Yahweh to plastic image, but the manufacture of images which, alongside the heavenly objects, might vie for Israel's allegiance.

(d) The identification/characterization of Yahweh in these statements as *ʾēl qannāʾ*, "impassioned El," points to the manufacture of rival deities, not the manufacture of physical representations of Yahweh. Elsewhere this expression occurs only in contexts involving the worship of idols, never in contexts involving the portrayal of Yahweh in physical form.

(e) If these two imperatives are separated and treated as two different commands, then the plural suffixes on *lāhem* and *tāʿabĕdēm* in Deuteronomy 5:9 lack an antecedent. Since all the nouns preceding these forms in v. 8 are singular, the nearest antecedent is *ʾĕlōhîm ʾăḥērîm*, in the first command.

(f) The Masoretes treated these as a single entity, running the prohibition on images immediately after the prohibition on other gods. In fact, in both Exodus and Deuteronomy the MT treats the declarative statement that functions as the preamble to this document as a part of this long paragraph.