

## What does the Old Testament say about right and wrong?

One of the themes of the Old Testament is that God promised to be in a relationship with the Israelites; and that the Israelites promised to honour God in their lives and worship. In the Bible, this is called a covenant. The rules that God provided for the Israelites to follow include the Ten Commandments, and many Christians believe that they can find in them a set of clear directions to follow and apply to this day.

Earlier on in the book of Exodus, it describes how the Israelites, led by Moses, escaped from slavery in Egypt.

An **idol** is a statue or image which is worshipped as a god.

An **iniquity** is an act of evil behaviour.

In Christianity, the day of rest on the **Sabbath** takes place on Sundays.

An **alien resident** is someone from elsewhere who lives in your country, ie. an immigrant.

Something which is **consecrated** has been made holy.

To **covet** is to want to possess something which isn't yours.

Then God spoke all these words:

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the **house of slavery**; you shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make for yourself an **idol**, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the **iniquities** of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name.

Remember the **sabbath** day, and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work – you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the **alien resident** in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blesses the Sabbath day and **consecrated** it.

Honour your father and your mother, so that your day may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not **covet** your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.

Exodus chapter 20 verses 1-17 (NRSV)

