

Moses, Horns, and the Ten Commandments

Matthew Vander Els · 2020-02-08 · foundedintruth.com

MAIN VERSES

[Exodus 20:1](#) · [Exodus 34:29](#) · [1 Samuel 2:1](#) · [Habakkuk 3:4](#) · [2 Corinthians 3:7](#) · [Exodus 20:12](#) · [Ephesians 6:2](#) · [Deuteronomy 28:64](#) · [Exodus 20:13](#) · [Exodus 20:14](#) · [Exodus 20:15](#) · [Exodus 20:16](#) · [Exodus 20:17](#) · [Matthew 17:1](#) · [John 5:1](#)

Welcome Home

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love? A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God? Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family, so welcome home. Well, Shabbat Shalom again, everybody.

I'm excited about today's message. Leadership was a little timid. They were like, "What are you doing?" I said, "We're just talking about history, guys. It'll be okay." We've been journeying through the Ten Commandments, or the Ten Words, as we discovered last week or last time we had services. And was it interesting the other week when we learned how to count to ten?

One of the most interesting things about learning about the Bible and learning about the history of Christianity is just how interesting it is, and definitely from a spiritual growth standpoint, it's edifying and it's life-changing. But sometimes it's just neat to see the reality of Christian history, the varying evolutions throughout time, the denominational influence that changed the course of many different things. And I just find that fascinating.

The Journey of Understanding

And so when we come across a traceable history of how the Ten Commandments were viewed and counted—and when I say counted, I mean this is the first commandment, this one, and this is the second commandment, and so on and so forth—a history where Judaism counted them a little bit differently than, let's say, the Catholic or the Lutheran tradition. And then the

Reformed tradition came about, one that we're mostly familiar with, and it counted them differently than them. Man, it's humbling and it's also exciting because it causes us to ask the question: which one is right? Which one is right?

Have you ever been in a long discussion with someone, maybe even a debate, where when it finally came to an end, you had the holy, solid answer that was discovered in the process? Did you ever feel a bit sad at the end of a conversation, as if the discussion and the journey towards the answer was actually more edifying in the relationship between you and another person than the answer itself? Anybody ever had that experience? I've had that experience.

And I wonder if that's how the Bible is sometimes. How do we count the Ten Commandments? I don't know. Let's discuss it, right? Let's vitalize the text and those words in our relationship. Let's think as a community. Let's internalize. Let's meditate together as fellow followers of this rabbi that taught us to do just that.

Jesus Loves a Conversation

You ever notice that Yeshua loves to have a conversation? Right? He doesn't come to his disciples saying, "Hey, I'm the son of man prophesied by Daniel. I'm the Christ. I'm the king. I'm the Messiah, period." That was not his approach. Instead, he asks his disciples, "Who does everyone say I am?" They answer, "You're Elijah, you're the son of man, you're other prophets, you're this, that." Then he asks, "What do you say I am? Who do you say I am?" He invites a conversation.

And what's Peter's answer? "Well, you are the son of God." Peter, you've meditated on this and God has revealed this to you. This is awesome.

How about when Jesus is walking on the water? Anyone else want to walk on some water? Yeah, that'd be neat. That'd be awesome. So Peter is anxious when this happens. "Let me come to you, Lord." Alright, Peter, come on. Peter gets out of the boat. Peter, if you look across the synoptic accounts, Peter loves just getting out of the boat when he sees him on the beach—he just jumps. He loves jumping out of the boat. And Peter starts to walk on the water. And then he starts to doubt a little. Why does he doubt? Well, he sees some wind and some waves. Not the fact that he's like defying gravity, right? Like a Broadway song or something. No, not the fact that he's defying the laws of physics. No, some wind blowing. I'm scared. That's fine. He got scared of some waves. Then what happened? He sinks.

And then Yeshua lectures him. "You didn't have enough faith, Peter. You could have done better. Period. End of discussion." Now, what does Yeshua do? Immediately, immediately, Jesus reached

out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said. "Why did you doubt?" Yeshua does not cut the conversation off with a period when Peter sinks. He asks Peter a question. He welcomes this discussion, this conversation. The next thing we know, they crawl in the boat and his disciples conclude, "You truly are the son of God."

The Invalid at the Pool

There's another incident here in John chapter 5 involving an invalid. In John chapter 5, verse 1, it says, "And this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem." So there was a feast going on in Jerusalem. Most likely it was Feast of Sukkot, according to some scholars. It doesn't name it.

Verse 2: "Now there is in Jerusalem a sheep gate, a pool called Bethesda in Aramaic, which has five roofed corridors, colonnades. And in these lay a multitude of invalids, blind, lame, paralyzed." One man was there who had been an invalid for 38 years. "And when Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had already been there for a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be healed?' The sick man answered, 'Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, and while I'm going another steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, 'Get up, take your bed and walk.' And at once the man was healed, and he took up his bed and walked."

So what's interesting about it is Yeshua could have simply healed him. He could have made a spectacle. Bam! Done! Walk! No. Yeshua asks him a question, and the question is not meant to be like a big decision, as if Yeshua doesn't know what the man is going to say. Of course he does. "Do you want to be healed? No. Okay, have a great day." That wasn't what was going to happen.

Yeshua knew, just like we all know, what the man was going to say. Yeshua asks him a question because he wanted to have a conversation with the man. He wanted to engage. He wanted this miracle to have some substance of relationship. Not simply Yeshua's power just being sprinkled on random people and them being healed. He wanted to hear the man talk to him. "Do you want to be healed? Yeah, but I don't have anyone to help me. I can't do it myself. I need somebody to take me into the waters when they're stirred up. I want to be healed. I can't do it myself. I need mercy. I need grace. I need to experience the hands and feet of heaven." Okay, Yeshua says, "Get up, walk, it's done. Go, it's done."

Never Too Late

And so what's amazing is we have no idea how old this man is. We do know he's been disabled for 38 years. Why is that surprising? Well, the average lifespan during this time in history is just over 40 years. Oh yeah, we forget the majority of folks didn't live until 60, 70, 80, 90 years old. It's nice to live in 2020, right? This man had been disabled longer than most people had been alive.

And the point of the story that I see is it's never too late to have a conversation with Jesus. And when putting this message together, I wanted to make sure that I gave heavy emphasis on the gospel message of God's love poured out through Yeshua. So I wanted to start off with an example of what happens when you choose to have a conversation. And I really don't know why, but I hope it's for someone here today.

When was the last time you had a conversation with Yeshua? Has it been a while? Do you want to be healed, he asks. Do you want peace, he asks. Do you want to move closer to me, he asks. Do you want to enter into life that spans eternity, he asks. He asks to see if you want to have a conversation with him. See, the man was so focused on the fact that he didn't have anyone to help him—or so he thought—he had Yeshua. Get up.

The Moses Conversation

Another one of the conversations that's very interesting in regards to the Bible is with Moses. We've been talking about Moses the past few weeks, and we'll continue to today. But see, in Exodus chapter 20, God deals with giving the Decalogue to Israel, the Ten Commandments, the Ten Phrases. And it ends with Israel being afraid and terrified. And Moses, you need to be the mediator between us and God. So Moses ascends the mountain. He gets a bunch more commandments. And he brings down the two tablets of stone. And then we come to [Exodus 32](#). And he sees Israel worshipping a golden calf. Indeed, Aaron really did mess up.

And I wanted to read a verse that's Exodus chapter 34, 29. If you would turn with me there in your Bibles to [Exodus 34](#), 29, and I want to read this verse together as a community because I really want to get your feedback, because there's something very neat about this verse. And I'm reading from the Dewey Rames Bible here. And I'm going to read from the King James Version. Older version, much older, very old version.

Jerome of Stridon, also known as St. Jerome, translated the Bible into Latin. This translation is called the Vulgata, or as we call it, the Vulgate. Now when translating the Bible into Latin, he came across this verse, [Exodus 34](#), 29, and he saw the word Quran in a verb sense. And this

word used as a verb is only used three times in the entire Hebrew Bible, and all three times it refers to Moses' head.

Now, the word *Quran*, when it's found in the noun form multiple times throughout the Hebrew Bible, is translated as horn—or when it's a noun, horn.

The Translation of Moses' Horns

From Abraham looking up and seeing the ram's horns caught in the thicket, to the fashioning of the horns of the altar, the noun is horn. To oversimplify the entire debate that was really underneath this topic, the translation of horned became the verb form of *keren* in the Latin Vulgate, the official Bible of the Catholic Church. The Douay-Rheims translation that we just read from is based on the Vulgate. It's a translation of that. Notice the date of it. Did you notice the date of this translation? This specific edition was 1899. That's quite a long time to have this translation. The implications are pretty neat when you think about it.

For most of Christian history, this is how Moses was presented to people. This is when Michelangelo was commissioned to carve a sculpture depicting Moses. Do you believe that he carved Moses with a bunch of little shiny spots on his face because his face shone? No, he put horns on his head and he made him look like he goes to CrossFit every day. That's incredible. We have a medieval painting in the church of Valencia in Spain. Moses is very scary looking. He's very intimidating when they painted the horns on him. Let's see here.

Isn't that interesting? How about a sculpture of Moses that dates to the 14th century AD in the chapel at New College, Oxford. We've lost our presentation. Throughout history, we have this ongoing tradition of Moses being presented with horns. This is a stained glass window in St. Andrew's Church in Mark's Day in England. When we see older depictions of Moses, specifically in the Catholic tradition, you'll typically see some form of horn. I've preached about the horns coming out of Moses' head. I find that fascinating. That's neat, man.

The Metaphorical Horn

We know from other verses in the Bible that the noun *keren*, horn, is also used metaphorically. The authors of the Bible were not dumb. They love to use metaphor, just as we do, in order to drive dramatic points in the literature. The prayer of Hannah says in [1 Samuel 2:1](#), "My heart exalts the Lord, my horn is exalted in the Lord." No one imagines Hannah looking like a unicorn with a big thing coming out of her head. Rather, she's using the word *keren* to mean my strength that projects out.

We also have the word *keren* used in the sense when it's applied to God. It certainly means a ray of light, but it's the word *keren* here in the prayer of Habakkuk in 3:4. "His splendor was like the sunrise. Rays, or *keren*, horns flashed from his hand." The same way we should read the ancient text with this in mind is the same way that ancient biblical authors actually read the text as well: as Moses having glory shining forth from his head.

When we read [Exodus 34](#), we should read it as his skin, the skin on his face was *keren*, as a metaphorical phrase meaning the face was radiant, the skin of his face shined. This is what responsible modern translators have written in all of our newer translations. It's also the same way that New Testament authors saw this exact passage. In [2 Corinthians 3:7](#), this is what Paul writes about. This is how Paul perceived it. "The Israelites could not look steadily on the face of Moses because of the glory that came forth." I love that. I just thought that was neat. That's a little bit of Bible history. Can you imagine? Man, I want to hear the sermons about his horns.

The Fifth Commandment: Honor Your Parents

So when reviewing the Ten Commandments, last time we met we covered worshiping God alone, bearing God's image, and keeping Sabbath. I figured we'd just keep going with that this week. We're going to downshift, slow down, go around the turn, and speed up in a slightly different direction, but we'll come back around the track.

[Exodus 20:12](#), which is where we left off last time. Now, what a vital decree for ancient Israel, a community that was focused on multi-generational households. Can you imagine? That's something very difficult to imagine today, having the economical scope to facilitate multiple generations at once in a home where everybody works together, fueling the family dynamic inside the single home. Here we have a command: Honor your father and your mother.

Protecting the honor of your parents was important. Sometimes that looks different depending on the situation. It could be a situation where you take care of your elderly parents. It could be a situation where you help sustain your parents. It could be spending time to train your parents, teach them as they get older how to use Apple TV or Netflix or Facebook, to be independent, as they taught you to do.

In the Near East, death rites were a huge sacred part of honoring parents. I think when we did the afterlife series, we touched on that. Many historians go to this verse to speak about that also being a scope of transcending life—mourning and death rites for honoring parents. I don't know, that's a fascination of mine, a biblical topic I love. Mourning is so important.

The Promise Within the Command

What's interesting is this commandment, because if we look in the second part of the commandment, the extra little bit at the end, it has another part. What's the other part? "Honor your mother and your father so that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you." Paul references this verse in Ephesians chapter 6 as being the first commandment with a promise. There's a promise attached to it.

Remember, the Ten Commandments orbit around worshiping one God as well as sharing in the blessing and the freedom and the grace of the commandments within a community structure. The language here is covenant language. I grew up looking at this thinking I need to honor my mother and father so that God doesn't strike me dead early. As that is a great motivator, I don't think that's necessarily what the commandment's saying. It's speaking to the community, and what's it saying? It's saying that you would remain in the land.

Why the land? Because that's part of the covenant agreement. If you obey, you will dwell in the land. If you break the covenant, if you disobey, you will be exiled from the land—[Deuteronomy 28:64](#). This commandment keeps the covenant front and center of the community. You honor your parents because they are covenant partners. You honor them, you learn from them, and you reciprocate the things that they teach you about the covenant. You continue in that covenant.

Why? Because if you choose to ignore them, if you choose to dismiss them and everything they try to teach you, specifically the stories of Egypt, specifically the stories of the plagues, the stories of the Red Sea, the crossing into freedom because of the redemptive power of God, if you neglect them, you're going to neglect what they teach you, and you'll inevitably forget God and the covenant, which will result in getting booted from the land.

Freedom Within Community

Next verse: you shall not murder. This command once again advocates a type of freedom within a covenant community. We far too many times look at commandments and we tend to just look at me. But this is about you. You should not murder. But we forget that the scope was about the freedom that was unleashed into a community of slaves. Your neighbor is free to live. That's what this commandment is saying. They have a right to life, and their life is worth something. It is worth protecting. There is a right to a fair trial. You may not take matters into your own hands disregarding the community leaders and the judges. You don't have that right. You protect that right of others.

Dr. Carmen Imes has a great quote regarding this command in her new book, *Bearing God's Name*. If we look at this, what's the covenant context? What's the community context? Well, it's freedom. All of it boasts freedom. The Torah gives freedom and rights among the community.

Here, your neighbor has a right to a marriage free from competition. Trust is a key foundation for the community of those who find themselves within the sacred scope of marriage. When we see our neighbor and their spouse, it's our job. It's your job to protect the marriage of your neighbor, not prey on it. Preying on the marriage of someone else strips the rights and freedoms of Torah away from the community.

The Sacred Covenant of Marriage

Man, so much could be talked about in this section, but don't do it. Marriage is a sacred bond, and it's a sacred covenant that was established in a sacred moment. Specifically for us today, with the rights and traditions that we have, the moment that you said, "I do," that sacred moment froze, being immortalized from time, from weather, from ups, from downs. Being immune from anger and frustration that would cause hate and division. Being immune, forever imprinted and preserved in the universe by the power that we call love.

In a marriage, you live out that moment for the rest of your life. It's what makes it so sacred. Sometimes we forget that in marriages. Sometimes when frustration becomes pressurized, constantly pressurized, and anger and resentment are allowed to enter into this eternal sacred bubble, we allow the immortality of our marriage covenant to corrode. When we forget, when we choose to cease the love that drove that moment—when you held her or his hand, when you slid on the ring—when we allow, sometimes without noticing, the love to break off that sacred moment, vowed to last forever, the moment is no longer sacred but falls to a status of simple mortality, which experiences aging, which experiences breakdown, which experiences death.

If you're married today, I want to tell you something. If you're married today, I want to tell you to give thanks always for everything. Husbands, wives, submit to one another. Honor the king that you serve. Wives, I want to encourage you to respect and submit to your own husbands as you do to God.

Husbands: Love Your Wives

Husbands, I want to tell you and encourage you and remind you to love your wives. Give all for them, not holding back anything. Just as Christ did for you. He who loves his wife loves

himself. That's why man should leave his father and his mother and be joined together, right? Hold fast, hold close. Hold them closer than anyone else, becoming one flesh. Even though it seems like a mystery that loving and serving your wife is in the same pattern that Yeshua loves his bride, let each one of you men love his wife as himself for the servitude that he gives. That's a paraphrase of what Paul said, if you didn't catch that. This is a sacred transaction. No matter how long you've been married, no matter what your life looks like, whether you're having a romantic anniversary dinner or you're simply sitting on the couch watching TV together, in that space, the sacred moment of time still permeates and is vitalized. You and them standing, holding hands, rings slid on the fingers, the words "I do" spoken. There are no common moments in a sacred marriage. Embrace them passionately and intentionally.

Trust God, Don't Steal

As a covenant community, we protect marriages because they are so sacred. The next on the list is you shall not steal. Your neighbor, in a community context, has the right to personal property and protection of that property is a community effort. Just like marriage, by taking what is not yours, going out and finding a way to consume things that belong to you, I forfeit the trust that God invites me to have in his sustenance. I forfeit the commitment he provides for me. Gosh, this can go on deep. How many of us simply don't trust God? Silence. How many of us honestly do not trust God with our lives, with our income, with our possessions? How many of us don't think his resume in our lives is good enough? Silence. And you don't have to raise your hands. You already know. And maybe sometimes yes, sometimes no. God has made a commitment and has given an invitation to trust him. Will you choose to trust him? No, you protect the resume of God in the community. He is the provider. Do not steal. Seems like every generation has this problem one way or another.

Speak Truth as an Image Bearer

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. So today we have these great things called security cameras. And we have these things like online tracking and GPS and DNA testing. Anyone had that done? You'll spit in the thing and you're thinking, "Hey, European! What a surprise." It was neat though. Amazing advances in the realm of judicial hearings and court cases. And here at Mount Sinai, they didn't have security cameras. There was no ring doorbell to see if someone was getting your UPS packages. Your word actually carried weight. It meant something. You stop your mouth from speaking things that erode truth. You stop it. Why? Because you are to be an image bearer, [Genesis 1](#) vocation, an image bearer of God's holy

name. When you speak truth, this is why it's one of the ten. When you misrepresent someone's intentions or motives, you make the Lord's name, which you bear, a vain thing. This is a protection of the community.

The Heart Issues: Coveting and Covenant

The last one or two, depending on how you count them, is verse 17. You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything else that's in your neighbor's. So here we have the final one or two. Do not covet your neighbor's wife or even his donkey. Now what's interesting is the ten words, the Decalogue, it ends with these two commandments. It ends with these commandments that have no way of being enforced. These are unenforceable. You can't exactly look at Shlomo and accuse him like, "I know you were coveting it." You can't do that. It's unenforceable. And this is a great example of the inner purpose of the Torah. This is not some black and white law code legislation in the modern sense that we have today. No, it's deeper. Imagine we have a law that says you cannot run a red light. And if you do, you get pulled over, you get some points, your insurance goes up, you get a ticket, pay a fine, all the shebang. What if we had a law that said you should not have hatred for other drivers in your heart? That's the biggest response we've ever had. So yeah, if you call yourselves patriots, you say, "I'm obedient to the law." A state trooper is going to have a very difficult time enforcing that law. On second thought, maybe not for some of you. Maybe it's very outspoken. Maybe it's very apparent when you drive. But why? Why do not covet? Why is that unenforceable? Why is it so difficult? Because it's a heart issue. It's a heart issue. The Torah is not simply about outward appearances. No, an inward motivation must transcend the ways of this world. And this—this must be the guiding motivation for everything that we do.

These are the instructions that paint a picture of what a covenant, neighbor-loving, God-fearing Israelite is supposed to look like. And you can see instantly, instantly, where Yeshua gets his motivation for the greatest sermon ever preached on the mount. He's reconstituting what a Torah-observing Israelite looks like on the Sermon on the Mount. And what's amazing is it isn't lining up with what's being taught by the teachers at the time. Because if the heart is unaffected, then the level of true obedience will be unaffected. And these—these are the top ten, if you will. The first words the Israelites heard from God, and from these ten phrases, the ten words, the pattern kind of extends out to all of the other commandments in the Torah, given at Mount Sinai. And there is thunder, and there is lightning, and there is smoke, and the Israelites are terrified. Man, I have a quote here. I meant to put it on the slide. You can hear it.

Carmen Imes, this amazing book she just wrote and released called **Bearing God's Name, Why Sinai Still Matters**. And she writes this. She says, "We learn in [Exodus 20](#) that the law is not an end in itself. It is Israel's means of knowing intimately Yahweh and of living out their vocation in the world." And I feel like that was just so well put. You know, God spoke, Moses was there, the people were terrified, and Moses' face was shining with glory. Glory was radiating off of him.

From Sinai to Transfiguration

Something very similar happens with Yeshua in [Matthew 17](#). You guys think of the instance? It's [Matthew 17](#), verse 1. "After six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, the brother of James, and he led them up on a high mountain by themselves. Moses and Andrew. Peter said to Jesus, 'This is great.' While he was still speaking, a bright cloud covered them, and a voice from God said, 'This is my son whom I love. With him I am well pleased. Listen to him.' When the disciples heard this, they fell face down on the ground, terrified. But Jesus came and touched them. 'Get up,' he said. 'Don't be afraid.' When they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus instructed them, 'Don't tell anyone what you've seen until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.' The disciples asked him, 'Why then do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?' Jesus said, 'To be sure, Elijah comes and will restore all things. But I tell you, Elijah has already come and they didn't recognize them, but have done to him everything they wished. In the same way, the Son of Man is going to suffer at their hands.' Then the disciples understood that he was talking to them about John the Baptist." Love that. Worship team, you guys can get ready.

So here in [Matthew 17](#), we have the same imagery of Mount Sinai, the same imagery of God's meeting with the mediator Moses. But here we have a greater Moses, the greater Moses. And instead of the people being left behind, Yeshua—radiating the glory of God's divine presence—touches them. "Don't be afraid. Believe in me. Trust me. Follow me. Have this conversation with me." And I don't know where you're at today, but I pray. I pray that the word of God was not simply edifying when you heard it today, but that it was actually a blessing to hear. And more so, I pray that it comes to mold our hearts and our minds as image bearers of God and of all the world. So please stand as we enter into worship and conclude services.

Yes, if you need prayer today, it could be because of something we read in Scripture, or it could be a personal situation in your life. As we have a team of people up here every single week prepared to petition and go before the Father alongside you. They will not judge you. They will not belittle you. They will stand beside you. They will listen and they will pray with you. And so

I invite you to take advantage of that as we conclude services today. How long has it been since you've had a conversation with Yeshua?

Avinu Malkinu, our Father, our King, Father, we thank you for this time together. We thank you for your word, Father. We thank you for the conversations that we get to have about your word and your covenant. But Father, we thank you for the one answer we know to be static throughout all conversations, and that is who you are through your Son, Yeshua, the Messiah, the King of the kingdom of God revealed on earth. We thank you, Father, for the spirit given to us, and we ask in the name of Yeshua that you would boldly continue pouring out through us your gospel message in all that we think and do and speak. In Yeshua's name we pray.

Welcome Home

Amen. Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love? A place to worship the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home.

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