

THE MORAL BASIS FOR SUPPORTING ISRAEL

PART ONE

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Today more than ever, it is essentially important to support Israel and the Jews in any way that we can. Their enemies are trained to hate and kill them. If you come alongside Israel, you will likely be considered guilty by association and possibly even attacked yourself. From this and the following articles, I would like to lay out the moral basis from the Scriptures for our support of Israel. There is a theological and covenantal truth that is the foundation of the moral truth, yet the moral truth will help us make this more personal. I believe in these last days that with the power of the Holy Spirit our 'inner moral compass,' if you will, will be what most determines how we respond to any situation. I also want to show that what is true in an individual's life is the same as what is true at the international level.



I will not need to hop around between Scriptures to make this case: Moses already did it in Deuteronomy chapters 5, 6, & 7. The core moral tenets of the Messianic faith are the same moral foundation for our call to support Israel. This first article will focus on the 10 Commandments (10 Words or Utterances in Jewish thought) in Deuteronomy 5. The second article will focus on the Sh'ma in Deuteronomy 6, and the final article will explain the foundation of supporting Israel from Deuteronomy 7.

In Deuteronomy 5, Moses repeats the 10 Commandments for the next generation about to enter the land of Canaan. He knows they are the foundation of everything that was told to him on Mt. Sinai. In recounting the overall story in the beginning of Deuteronomy, it seems much of his abbreviated recounting is intended to get to the 10 Commandments as the focal point because after that the Sh'ma and the following chapters turn into an exposition and explanation beyond just recounting the story. I think Moses had a long time to meditate on the 10 Commandments over those 40 years in the wilderness. From this perspective, I will reveal a pattern within the 10 Commandments which helps to highlight how cohesive and comprehensive the 10 Commandments are as a moral code for our lives.



The pattern in the 10 Commandments is what is called a parallelism, with themes repeated in the same order twice. In this case the 1st Commandment parallels with the 6th Commandment, the 2nd with the 7th, the 3rd with the 8th, the 4th with the 9th, and the 5th with the 10th. There are all aspects of each of the commandments and is set to help us to understand the other part of each of the parallel commandments in deeper ways.

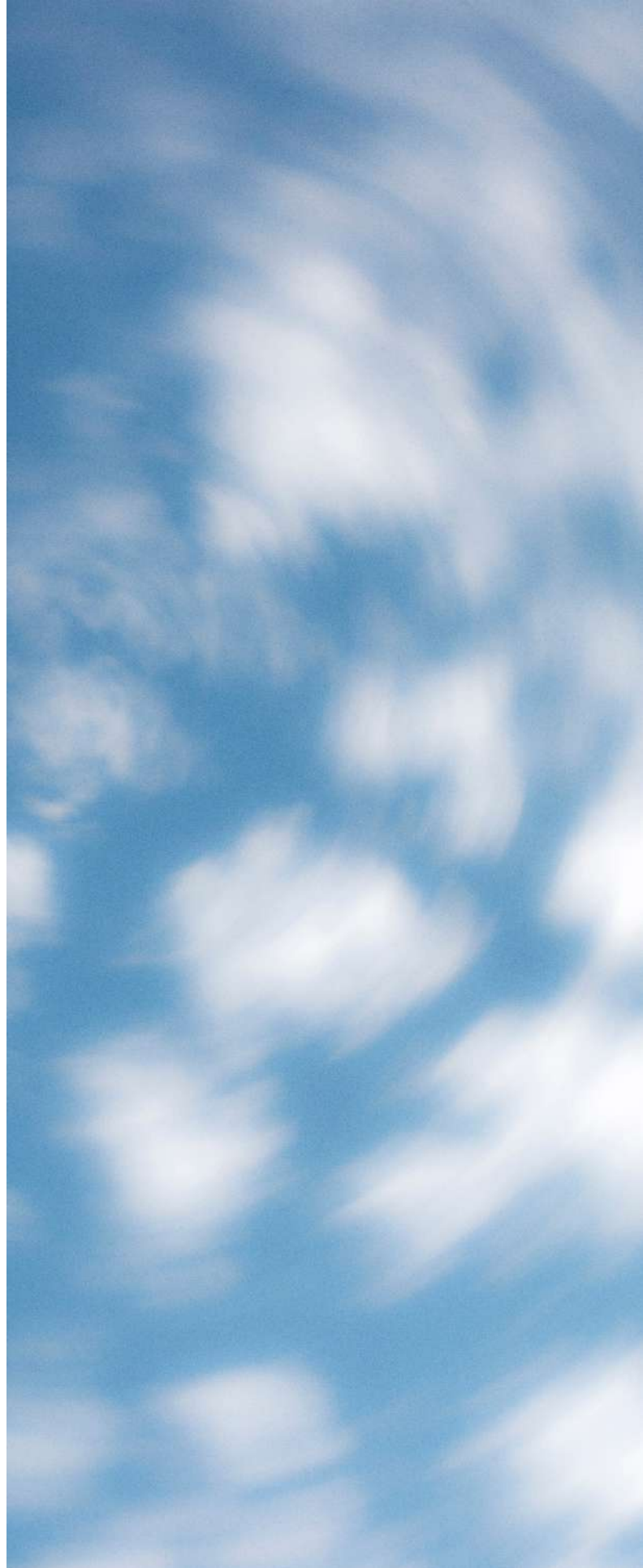
The 1st Commandment (according to Jewish counting of the 10 Words)—that Adonai is our God who brought His people up from the land of Egypt—parallels the 6th word in commanding us not to commit murder. These are statements of identity and the importance of who someone is. Killing an animal is not murder because they are not made in the image of God. Murdering another human is an affront to the God who made them. The living God who acts according to His own word commands us to honor the life He created just because He made that life to be in His own image. All of the other commandments draw from this same place of identity and the value of life first.

The 2nd Commandment that we should have no other gods before Adonai and make no graven images to worship them is parallel to the 7th Commandment of do not commit adultery. Even a cursory reading of the prophets reveals this parallel often when the prophets say that Israel was prostituting itself or committing



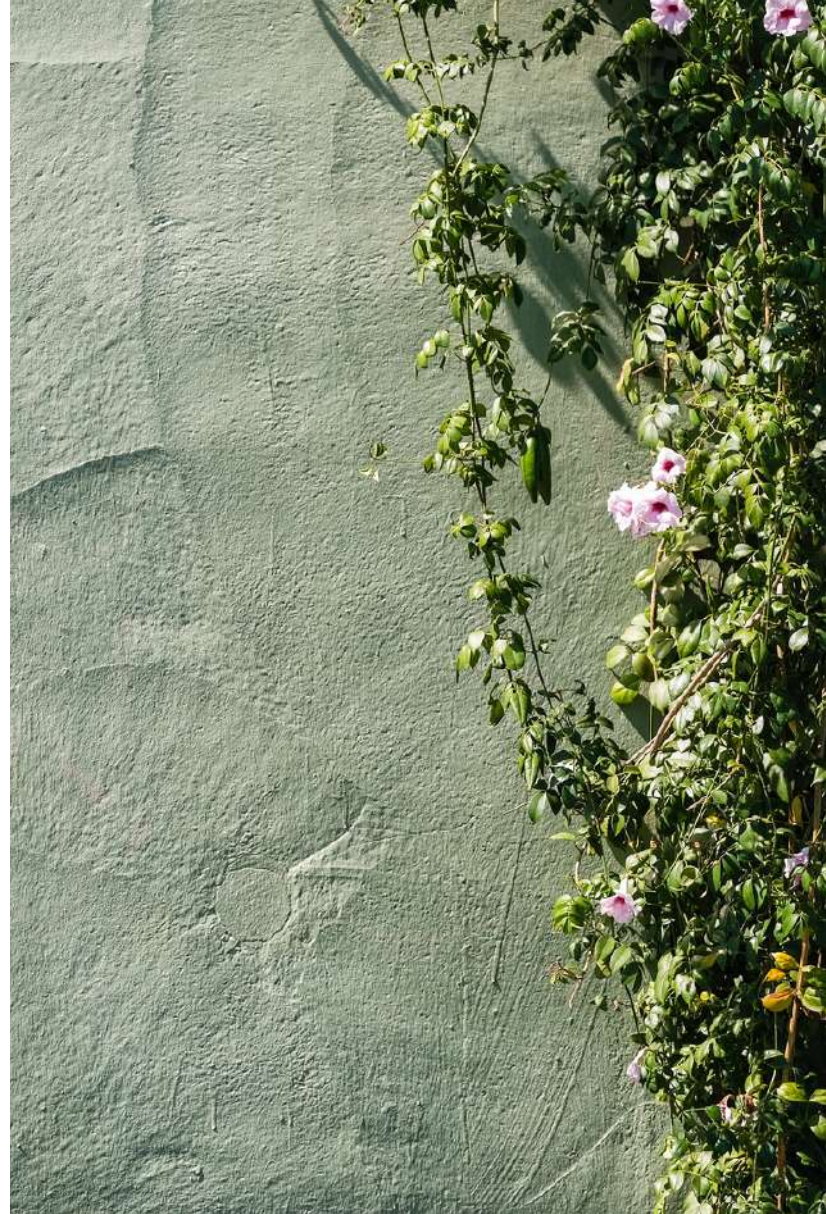
adultery by worshiping other gods with idols of wood and stone thus using adultery to explain the sin of idolatry. Asher Intrater has thoroughly laid out the importance of covenant commitment in his book *Covenant Relationships* and often lays out many of these parallels between our relationships with Adonai and with others.

The 3rd Commandment that we must not take the Name of Adonai our God in vain is parallel to the 8th Commandment to not steal. This connection should humble us to the truth of the 3rd Commandment that is often overlooked. While it includes the words we speak, the heart of the 3rd Commandment is about calling ourselves the people of Adonai (i.e. taking His Name upon ourselves) and not living according to His ways. If we do not live according to His ways, then we are effectively stealing the blessing and honor of His Name while cursing and dishonoring Him with our deeds. That is what it truly means to take His Name in vain: to carry it with us and yet treat it as meaningless in terms of true authority/ownership over our lives. His Name is not ours to do with as we please just as stealing is doing what we desire with something that is not ours. Zechariah 5:3-4 makes this connection when it says that the curse in that vision is for those who steal and for those who swear falsely by Adonai's Name – because they are connected sins.



The 4th Commandment that we are to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy is parallel to the 9th Commandment to not bear false witness against your neighbor. Exodus 31:12-17 explains that the Shabbat is a sign between Adonai and the children of Israel, as in a testimony of witness to the truth that the Creator of the whole universe chose Israel. Keeping the Shabbat is being a true and faithful witness of the Creator, and lying is bearing a false witness of Adonai who made us in His image. Truth should dictate practice and our practice should be truth, because what we do is a witness of what/who we believe and trust.

The 5th Commandment that we are to honor our father and mother is connected to the 10th Commandment to not covet anything of our neighbor. This parallel brings everything home to the beginning in multiple ways. First, the other parallels start with our behavior towards Adonai and then move to our behavior toward others, yet this parallel starts with our behavior towards others and then moves into the attitude of our hearts rather than outward behavior. It is an indication that all of the 10 Commandments are issues of the heart to begin with. Second, the more direct connection between coveting and honoring your parents is common but not commonly understood. Consider that most of the circumstances in your life are dependent on your parents and their choices, blessings, and one's role in life.



So, when we covet something else in life, we are in effect wishing that we were born to someone else. Similarly, it is wishing Adonai had chosen something different for us—bringing us back to the fact that this is the God who brought us up out of Egypt (i.e. His choices not ours for our lives). In Isaiah 45:9-10 the prophet compares those who strived with Adonai as reflective of the clay rebuking the potter or a child rebuking his parents for giving him birth. Again making the connection between coveting and the dishonoring of one's parents.

In summary, there are five key things talked about in the 10 Commandments:

- Identity
- Commitment
- Property and stewardship
- Keeping true witnesses of the truth, and
- Generational responsibilities (children to parents and parents to children)

The more complete the 10 Commandments are to us, the more effective they are at pointing out our sins so we can repent and be free of those sins in Yeshua. If in your mind you have already been thinking of the Sh'ma and Yeshua's teaching on the two greatest commandments, then you already have a taste for the next article during the month of Elul. After that I will bring this back around to the connection with Adonai choosing Israel in the third article for the month of Tishrei.





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