

1. "But the Ten Commandments Are the Eternal, Unchanging, Moral Law of God"

First of all, you're right that God probably has one eternal, unchanging, so-called "moral law" for all people of all times. Even though it isn't explicitly stated in Scripture, we can imply it from 3 facts...

1. Guilty consciences of all humans, including Gentile heathen (Rom. 1:18-32ff.)
2. Providential judgment of all humans, including Gentile heathen (the Flood, Egypt's plagues, Sodom, etc.)
3. The final judgment of all humans, including Gentile heathen (1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8, etc.)

The fact that all humans have a conscience implies they know specific acts are right or wrong (sin). The fact that God providentially judged some unbelievers like Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19) and Herod (Acts 12:22-23) implies that He has a standard of right and wrong (sin). And, the fact that God will judge all men in the end implies that He will do so by a standard of right and wrong (sin).

Whether those 3 examples of law are the same, and eternal and unchanging, we don't know for sure, but it's highly likely. Yet, the term "moral law" is confusing. Perhaps a better term is "conscience law."

Second, the real question is, "Where are those standards defined in Scripture: The Ten Commandments, or elsewhere?" Is there anywhere in Scripture that defines the sins of all humans (Gentiles, Israel, and the Church) for all times? On the Judgment Day, what standard will God use to judge Gentile heathen: The Decalogue or another standard?

Yes, there are several, major passages that define the sins of all humans (including Gentiles) for all times: The sin lists for all

Part I.

9 Objections to "All Old Testament Laws Are Cancelled"

The following 9 objections are popular among some Covenant Theologians, some Seventh Day Adventists, and other seventh day, Sabbath-keeping groups. Since Covenant Theology is the most influential view, we will focus on it.

humans are the most likely definition of the so-called "moral law of God"...

"You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you...None of you shall approach any one of his close relatives to uncover nakedness... You shall not approach a woman to uncover her nakedness while she is in her menstrual uncleanness. And you shall not lie sexually with your neighbor's wife and so make yourself unclean with her. You shall not give any of your children to offer them to Molech, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD. You shall not lie with a male as with a woman; it is an abomination. And you shall not lie with any animal...Do not make yourselves unclean by any of these things, for by all these the nations I am driving out before you have become unclean..." (Lev. 18:1-30).

The sins of the Gentiles here include incest, menstrual sex, adultery, child sacrifice, homosexuality, and bestiality. (Perhaps God revealed incest as conscience law after Adam's early descendants married, later in Genesis.) And, Leviticus 18 reveals the same laws that God probably revealed to the conscience. (But, since all Old Testament laws are cancelled, if a man commits incest today, he violated the law of conscience, not Leviticus 18, which still tells us what is probably written on the conscience.)

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men...idolatry, lusts, impurity, lesbianism, homosexuality, unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness, gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die..." (Rom. 1:18-32).

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor

revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

"Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

"But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

"Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood" (Rev. 22:15).

Also, for those Jews who heard Christ in the 1st century, the standard of judgment will be Christ's words...

"the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day" (Jn. 12:48).

The Holy Spirit says that the sins of all men (including Gentiles) are defined in Lev. 18; Rom. 1; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; Gal. 5:19-21; Rev. 21:8, 22:15; etc. (never the Ten Commandments). The texts do not say these are the only sins of the Gentiles. These are not exhaustive lists.

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Interestingly, in Romans 1, God lists 30 sins, but not the Sabbath. The absence of the Sabbath from those 6, Gentile sin lists above is significant.

Not only has God never said that the sins of the Gentiles are defined in the Ten Commandments, He even says that Gentiles do not have the law...

"The LORD our God made a covenant (a.k.a. "The Ten Commandments") with us in Horeb. *Not with our fathers did the LORD make this covenant (Ten Commandments), but with us...*" (Deut. 5:2-3).

"He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and rules to Israel, *He has not dealt thus with any other nation; they do not know His rules*" (Ps. 147:19-20).

"For all who have sinned *without the law* will also perish *without the law...Gentiles, who do not have the law...*" (Rom. 2:12-14).

"To those *outside the law* I became as one *outside the law...* that I might win *those outside the law*" (1 Cor. 9:21).

When you read the phrase "the law" it's important to understand that the Ten Commandments were the foundational document of the whole law. So, when God says that the Gentiles do not have the law, He means the whole Decalogue and all the other Old Covenant commands. (Although, they had *some* of the same laws in their conscience which God also recorded in the Decalogue.)

So, the eternal, unchanging law for all men at all times is revealed in the sin lists for all men, not the Decalogue in Exodus 20. (By the way, no Gentile heathen or convert has ever testified to knowing about the Sabbath. Therefore, there is no evidence that God has ever written the whole Decalogue on their hearts.)

What about the fact that the Ten Commandments are distinguished from the rest of the law? Granted, the Ten Commandments are distinguished from the law, but never divorced from the law.

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But, why did God distinguish the Ten Commandments from the rest of the law? Because they are the Old Covenant's foundational document, not the eternal, unchanging, moral law of God.

The Ten Commandments = the Old Covenant (Document)

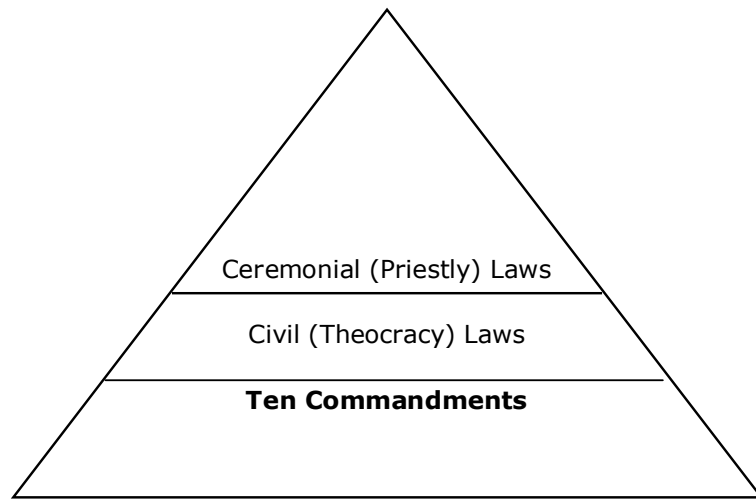
"...And He wrote on the tablets the words of *the covenant, the Ten Commandments*" (Ex. 34:28).

"And He declared to you *His covenant* which He commanded you to perform, that is, *the Ten Commandments...*" (Deut. 4:13).

"...*the ark, in which is the covenant (Ten Commandments) of the LORD that He made with our fathers, when He brought them out of the land of Egypt*" (1 Kings 8:21).

"...*the ark, in which is the covenant (Ten Commandments) of the LORD that He made with the people of Israel*" (2 Chr. 6:11).

Could anything be clearer? God uses the phrases "Old Covenant" and "Ten Commandments" almost synonymously. (Although, the Ten Commandments represent the whole Old Covenant, they are not the whole covenant. The Ten Commandments are the foundation document on which the rest of the Old Covenant is built.)



**The Ten Commandments Are the
Foundation Document of the Whole Old Covenant**

So, when you hear the phrase "Ten Commandments," God wants you to think, "the Old Covenant." Here are the other 11 ideas you should think when hearing the name "Ten Commandments"...

**The 12 Names That God Calls the Decalogue in All 56 Verses:
"Ten Commandments" Only 3 Times (Zero in the N.T.)**

When you hear the words, "Ten Commandments," what's the first thought that comes to your mind? If you automatically think, "The moral law of God," then your view is very different from God's view.

Depending on how you classify them, the whole Decalogue and its synonyms appear ~56 times in Scripture. (We'll exclude the names "ark of the covenant," "ark of the testimony," and "tabernacle of the testimony," even though they would be accurate.) And, in those 56 occurrences, God calls the Decalogue by 12 different names. Listed below, are the number of times He uses each name.

Old Testament:

- 14 = The tablets (Ex. 32:15, 32:16a,b, 32:19, 34:1b,c, 34:28; Deut. 9:17, 10:2a,b, 10:3, 10:4, 10:5; 2 Chr. 5:10)
- 13 = The tablets of stone (Ex. 24:12, 31:18, 34:1, 34:4a,b; Deut. 4:13, 5:22, 9:9, 9:10, 9:11, 10:1, 10:3; 1 Kg. 8:9)
- 10 = The testimony (Ex. 16:34, 25:16, 25:21, 27:21, 30:6, 30:36, 40:20; Lev. 16:13; Num 17:4, 17:10)
- 3 = The tablets of the testimony (Ex. 31:18, 32:15, 34:29)
- 3 = The tablets of the covenant (Deut. 9:9, 9:11, 9:15)
- 3 = The Ten Commandments (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13; 10:4)
- 2 = The covenant (1 Kg. 8:21; 2 Chr. 6:11)
- 1 = The words of the covenant (Ex 34:28)
- 1 = His covenant (Deut. 4:13)
- 0 = The moral law

New Testament:

- 2 = The letter (2 Cor. 3:6a,b)
- 1 = Letters on stone (2 Cor. 3:7)
- 1 = Tablets of stone (2 Cor. 3:3)
- 1 = The handwriting of ordinances (Col. 2:14)
- 1 = The tablets of the covenant (Heb. 9:4)
- 0 = The Ten Commandments
- 0 = The moral law

So, when you hear the phrase "the Ten Commandments," the first thought that should come to your mind is, "tablets (of stone)," not "moral law." Remember, another thought that should come to your mind is "the covenant."

Do you think of the Ten Commandments as "the tablets of stone," and "the covenant" (Old Covenant made with Israel?) When talking about the Ten Commandments, if you have to *rely* on words uninspired by the Holy Spirit (like "moral law") to explain your theology, then you probably have a different theology than the Holy Spirit.

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Did you see how many times the phrase "Ten Commandments" appears in the New Testament? Zero! (Think about that.)

**Everything the N.T. Says About The Whole Decalogue:
Only 3 Passages, All Negative**

As we saw above, the Holy Spirit never uses the names "Ten Commandments" or "moral law" in the New Testament. As a matter of fact, there are only 3 New Testament passages that definitely refer to the whole Decalogue, and they're all negative...

1. "The letter," "letters on stone," and "tablets of stone" (2 Cor. 3:6-9) are:

- Not where the Spirit writes (2 Cor. 3:3)
- (What) kills (2 Cor. 3:6)
- A ministry of death (2 Cor. 3:7)
- A ministry of condemnation (2 Cor. 3:9)

2. "The handwriting of ordinances" (Col. 2:14) was:

- Blotted out (Col. 2:14)
- Taken away (Col. 2:14)
- Nailed to the cross (Col. 2:14)

3. "The tablets of the covenant" (Heb. 9:4) are:

- Obsolete (Heb. 8:13)
- Growing old (Heb. 8:13)
- Ready to vanish." (Heb. 8:13)

But, why did God combine 9 universal laws of conscience from the Gentiles with one symbolic law (the Sabbath) in the Ten Commandments? And, why did He include only 9 of the Ten Commandments in the law of Christ for the Church?

The answer is simple. Archaeology reveals that God designed the Old Covenant with some similarities to ancient, near-eastern treaties. And in those treaties, the sign of the covenant was placed in the middle of the covenant document. Likewise, the Sabbath was the

sign of the covenant, placed in the middle of the Old Covenant document, the Decalogue...

"As a further detail in the parallelism of external appearance it is tempting to see in *the Sabbath sign presented in the midst of the ten words the equivalent of the suzerain's dynastic seal found in the midst of the obverse of the international treaty documents...* the Sabbath is declared to be his 'sign of the covenant' (Ex. 31:13-17)."⁶

The Sabbath Was the Sign of the Old Covenant

Do you know what the sign was of Moses' covenant?

"...Above all, you shall *keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between Me and you...* Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations *as a covenant* forever. *It is a sign* forever between Me and the people of Israel..." (Ex. 31:13-17).

"Moreover, I gave them my *Sabbaths, as a sign* between me and them..." (Ezek. 20:12).

"...keep my Sabbaths holy that they may be a *sign* between me and you..." (Ezek. 20:20).

The Sabbath was the sign of the Old Covenant. Therefore, if you keep the Sabbath sign, you're SIGN(ifying) that you're under the Old Covenant, law of Moses. If the Abrahamic Covenant was "the covenant of circumcision" (Acts 7:8), then the Old Covenant was the "covenant of Sabbath."

⁶ Meredith Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority*, 2nd Edition, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 120.

The Signs of the Covenants	
The Sign of Noah's Covenant: Rainbow	"This is the <i>sign of the covenant...</i> I have set My bow in the cloud, and it shall be a <i>sign of the covenant...</i> This is the <i>sign of the covenant...</i> " (Gen. 9:12-17).
The Sign of Abraham's Covenant: Circumcision	"This <i>IS my covenant...</i> Every male among you shall be circumcised...it shall be a sign of the covenant..." (Gen. 17:10-11). "And He gave him <i>the covenant of circumcision...</i> " (Acts 7:8).
The Sign of Moses' Covenant: Sabbath	"...keep my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you... observing the Sabbath throughout their generations <i>as a covenant</i> forever. It is a sign..." (Ex. 31:13, 16, 17; Ezek. 20:12, 20).
The Sign of Christ's Covenant: Lord's Supper	"...This is My body...This cup that is poured out for you <i>IS the New Covenant...</i> " (Lk. 22:19-20; cf. Gen. 17:10).

But, doesn't the Bible say that the Sabbath is forever? Yes, and so are circumcision, the Passover, and the Day of Atonement. So, how can we harmonize these "eternal" commands with the New Testament cancelling them?

Here's a solution: The Old Testament physical laws are cancelled, but their spiritual symbolism is fulfilled eternally in Christ.

Eternal Laws Fulfilled Eternally in Christ	
<p><u>Circumcision Is Everlasting:</u> "...shall surely be circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant" (Gen. 17:13).</p>	<p><u>Regeneration Is Circumcision (Forever):</u> "...nor is circumcision outward and physical. But a Jew is one inwardly, and circumcision is a matter of the heart, by the Spirit..." (Rom. 2:28-29). "For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation" (Gal. 6:15). "In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ" (Col. 2:11; cf. Rom. 2:28-29; 1 Cor. 7:18-19; Gal. 5:2-3, 6; Phil. 3:3).</p>
<p><u>The Passover Is Forever:</u> "This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast" (Ex. 12:14).</p>	<p><u>Christ Is Our Passover (Forever):</u> "...For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (1 Cor. 5:7-8).</p>
<p><u>The Day of Atonement Is Forever:</u> "And this shall be a statute forever for you, that atonement may be made for the people of Israel once in the year because of all their sins" (Lev. 16:34, cf.</p>	<p><u>Christ Atoned Eternally:</u> "...the priests go regularly into the first section, performing their ritual duties, but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year...But when Christ appeared as a high</p>

<p>16:29, 31).</p>	<p>priest...he entered once for all into the holy places...thus securing an <i>eternal</i> redemption" (Heb. 9:6-12).</p>
<p><u>The Sabbath Is Forever:</u> "Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, a covenant forever" (Ex. 31:16).</p>	<p><u>Christ Is Our Sabbath Rest (Forever):</u> "Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col. 2:16-17). "For we who have believed enter that rest...for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his" (Heb. 4:3, 9-10; cf. Rom. 14:5-6; Gal. 4:9-11).</p>

In other words, Christ is our eternal atonement and Passover because He sacrificed Himself for our sins once for all time. And, we are eternally circumcised (regenerated) because we have received eternal life. And, we are eternally keeping Sabbath because we have entered into God's eternal rest by faith in Christ.

There is no explicit, Biblical evidence that the Ten Commandments are the eternal, unchanging, moral law of God. However, there are several, explicit passages defining the sins of all humans, including the Gentiles. And, there are 4 verses where God explicitly states that the Ten Commandments are the covenant. It's safer to build our doctrine on explicit exegesis, than implicit reasoning.

On the Judgment Day, can you imagine God condemning Gentile heathen to hell for Sabbath-breaking? They would ask, "What's the Sabbath?" That's why the Sabbath is missing from the Gentile sin lists.

7 Clear Facts About the Sabbath

1. Gentile Heathen and Converts Have Never Testified to Knowing About the Sabbath Written on Their Hearts

It's a fact, no Gentile heathen has ever testified to knowing about the Sabbath on his conscience. And, no Gentile heathen convert has ever testified to knowing about the Sabbath on his heart from regeneration. There's no evidence that God has ever written the *whole* Decalogue on any human heart from creation, or from regeneration.

These 2 unquestionable facts alone should be enough to end all debate about whether the Sabbath and the whole Decalogue are universal laws for Gentiles. The theory that the Sabbath is written on the heart has as much evidence as evolution.

2. Genesis 2:2-3 Is a Description, Not a Prescription

Genesis 2:2-3 is a creation description, not a prescription, or creation ordinance (command). God created, God blessed, and God rested, period! Adam didn't create, Adam didn't bless, and Adam didn't rest from creating. Adam could not have rested from creating because he didn't create.

There's no more evidence that Adam rested from creating than did the angels, animals, or serpent. Plus, the 7th day was only Adam's 2nd day. (Although, Adam didn't rest for 24 hours, but he may have entered into God's eternal rest.)

Contrary to popular Sabbatarian belief, Exodus 20:11 does not necessarily make God's creation rest in Genesis 2:2-3 our motive for keeping the Sabbath.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy...For in six days the LORD made the heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day..." (Ex. 20:8, 11).

Was God's creation rest Israel's *motive* or *model* for keeping the Sabbath? More likely, it was their model, since the Lord gave them a different motive (redemption from Egypt) in Deuteronomy 5:15.

"You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day" (Deut. 5:15).

3. Gen. 2:2-3 Is God's Eternal Rest, Not Man's 24-Hour, Weekly Rest

"...His works were finished from the foundation of the world" (Heb. 4:3c).

Since God ceased from creating, His rest was eternal, not 24 hours. He didn't start re-creating on the 8th day. And, obviously He didn't rest again every 7th day (the 14th day, 21st day, etc.) from His work of creating. In other words, this is God's eternal rest (Heb. 4:3, 11), not the 24-hour, weekly Sabbath rest given later in Exodus.

The Sabbath has 2 functions in redemptive history...

1. Eternal rest before the Fall, and by faith in Christ after the Fall (Gen. 2:2-3; Col. 2:16-17; Heb. 4:3, 11).
2. The Old Covenant sign/shadow of eschatological, eternal rest by faith in Christ (Ex. 31:13-17; Col. 2:16-17).

Beware of confusing the mere sign/shadow in Exodus 20 with the reality in Genesis 2. God created the human Sabbath in Exodus 16 to testify to His divine rest in Genesis 2, and coming in Christ.

4. God Introduced the Sabbath in the Wilderness and Placed it in the Middle of the Decalogue Because it Was the Sign of the Covenant

Archaeology testifies that the reason God placed the Sabbath in the middle of 9 universal laws was because in ancient, near east treaties,

kings often placed the sign of the covenant in the middle of the covenant document.

But, why did the Jews keep the Sabbath in the wilderness (Ex. 16) before the Old Covenant started? Remember when Christ celebrated the Lord's Supper (the sign of the New Covenant) before the New Covenant started, when He shed the blood of the covenant on the Cross? Apparently, covenant parties often celebrated the sign before putting the covenant into effect.

God first "gave" and "revealed" the Sabbath in the Wilderness, not Eden...

"Mt. Sinai...you *made known* to them your holy Sabbath..." (Neh. 9:14).

"So I led them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness...I *gave* them My Sabbaths..." (Ezek. 20:10, 12).

If they already knew the Sabbath from creation, then how could God make it known in the Wilderness? And, if they already had the Sabbath, then how could He give it to them? Notice in Exodus 16, there's no rebuke to restore the Sabbath. And, He had to explain the instructions on how to keep it because they had never heard.

There's no evidence that Adam, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob kept the Sabbath. That's because God introduced the 24-hour, weekly Sabbath in the wilderness, not at creation. (By the way, did you know that the Orthodox Jewish rabbis agree that God first gave the Sabbath to Israel in the wilderness, not Adam at creation?)

5. It's Impossible That God Changed the Sabbath Day, Because He Still Calls Saturday *the Sabbath* 13 Times After Christ Rose

It's 100% impossible that God changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, after Christ rose. We can know this for certain because He still calls Saturday the Sabbath (the day when the Jews met in the synagogue) 5 times in Acts.

"...And on the Sabbath day they went into the synagogue and sat down" (Acts 13:14, cf. 13:27, 15:21, 17:1-2, 18:4, cf. 13:42, 13:44, 16:13).

Plus, God still calls Sunday the "first (day) from the Sabbath" 8 times (Greek: *mia Sabbaton*, or *protos Sabbaton*: Mt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2; 16:9; Lk. 24:1; Jn. 20:1, 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2). So, if anyone tries to tell you that God changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, just tell them, "*Mia sabbaton*."

Saturday was still THE only Sabbath. Obviously, there could not have been 2 Sabbaths: A Jewish Sabbath on Saturday, followed by a Christian Sabbath on Sunday. In light of these 13 post-resurrection mentions of the Saturday Sabbath, it is impossible that God changed the Sabbath to Sunday.

6. Jewish Authors Criticized the Sabbath Without Exceptions

When I say that the apostles "criticized" the Sabbath and the law, I mean they criticized their misapplication, not as though God made a mistake.

It's unthinkable that a Jewish author like Paul could believe the Sabbath was still binding when he omitted any exceptions in his 3, negative criticisms of the Sabbath (Rom. 14:5-6; Gal. 4:10; Col. 2:16-17). And, surely if the author of Hebrews believed the Sabbath was transferred to Sunday, he would have explained it in Hebrews 4, right?

Have you ever heard a Sabbatarian teach on any of those passages say, "BUT, we know that can't include the Christian Sabbath?" Paul never said "but" because he didn't believe in Sabbatarianism. Just try substituting Sabbatarian exceptions into the verses below, and see how ridiculous they sound...

"Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath (*except the weekly, Christian Sabbath*). These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col. 2:16-17).

"One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days (*except the weekly, Christian Sabbath*) alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind" (Rom. 14:5-6).

"...how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days (*except the weekly, Christian Sabbath*) and months and seasons and years!" (Gal. 4:9-10).

Can you imagine a Jewish author omitting exceptions like that?

7. We Enter Into God's Eternal Sabbath Rest by Believing the Gospel

"For the gospel came to us...For we who have believed enter that rest" (Heb. 4:2-3).

In Scripture, there are 2 Sabbaths:

1. The big Sabbath: God's eternal rest (Gen. 2; Heb. 4)
2. The little Sabbath: Man's 24-hour, weekly rest (Ex. 16, Ex. 20)

The context of Hebrews 3:11 - 4:11 is God's eternal rest, not man's 24-hour, weekly rest. The words for "rest" appear 12 times, *always* meaning God's eternal rest, *never* man's 24-hour, weekly rest.

But, why does Hebrews 4:9 change the word to "Sabbath-keeping?" Because we are keeping Sabbath by resting in Christ, since we believe the gospel (just like we are circumcised, and keeping Passover in Christ). Notice how the context of v. 9 (before in v. 8 and after in v. 10) speaks of God's eternal rest, not man's 24-hour rest...

"For if Joshua had *given them (eternal) rest*, God would not have spoken of another day later on. *So then*, there remains a (*eternal*) *Sabbath-keeping* for the people of God, *for* whoever has *entered God's (eternal) rest* has also rested from his works as God did (eternally) from His" (Heb. 4:8-10).

And in Hebrews 4, notice how the 2 other verses with the word "remains" refer to God's eternal Sabbath rest, not man's 24-hour, Sabbath rest...

"Therefore, while the promise of *entering His (eternal) rest still remains...*" (Heb. 4:1).

"They shall not enter My (eternal) rest. Since therefore it *remains* for some to enter (My eternal rest)..." (Heb. 4:5-6).

"So then, there *remains* a (eternal) Sabbath-keeping for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9).

So in Hebrews 4, *all* 12 uses of "rest" refer to God's eternal rest, not man's 24-hour, weekly rest. And, *all* 3 uses of "remains" refer to God's eternal rest, not man's 24-hour, weekly rest. This is the big Sabbath, not the little Sabbath.

This eternal rest of God is the same salvation rest that Jesus invites us to enter: "Come to Me, all those tired of working, and burdened, and *I will give you rest...You will find rest for your souls.*" (Mt. 11:28-29).

What About Decalogue-Evangelism? The Apostles' Gospel Defined Sin, But Not From the Decalogue

In the 16th - 17th centuries, some of the Reformers and Puritans popularized the idea that we must teach sinners the Ten Commandments in evangelism. And today in the 21st century, many Reformed theologians continue to promote this view. One evangelist who has popularized it is Ray Comfort in his sermon *Hell's Best Kept Secret*.

Comfort's driving motivation is that 80-90% of modern evangelistic "converts" apostatize. And, he diagnoses the problem as a lack of conviction of sin from law-preaching.

Actually, Comfort is right that one of the reasons why "converts" apostatize is because of lack of conviction of sin. He's got the right motivation and diagnosis, but the wrong cure (the wrong law).

Did the apostles evangelize with the Ten Commandments in Acts?
Doug Moo challenges Comfort and the traditional Reformed view...

"Indeed, the popular notion that the Mosaic law should be preached as a preparation for the gospel, revealing sin and one's need of salvation, has slim biblical support. None of the examples of evangelistic preaching in the New Testament uses the law in this way."⁷

This question is easy to answer if you have a Bible that shows Old Testament quotes in the New Testament. Simply look at all the Old Testament quotes in Acts. You'll see Joel 2:28-32; Psalm 110:1, etc., but not Exodus 20:3-17 or Deuteronomy 5:7-21. The apostles never explicitly quoted any of the Ten Commandments in Acts.

Sure, when evangelizing Jews, some of the Ten Commandments were implied, but never explicitly stated or quoted in Acts. For example, when Peter told the Jews at Pentecost that they killed the Messiah, he and his hearers probably thought of the 6th commandment, "You shall not murder."

But, evangelizing the Gentiles is a different story. Look at the apostles' example of evangelizing Gentiles at Mars Hill. (Acts 17:22-31) You won't see any Decalogue explanation there, just conviction of the sin of idolatry. And, since these heathen didn't have the law, Paul's source of authority that idolatry was a sin was the conscience, not the Ten Commandments.

When evangelizing, we can convict sinners by appealing to any of 3 different sources of law:

1. Conscience: "Idolatry is a sin." (No Scripture)
2. The Law of Moses: "You shall not make for yourself a carved image... You shall not bow down to them or serve them..." (Ex. 20:4).

3. The Law of Christ: "But as for... idolaters... their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire..." (Rev. 21:8).

If you're evangelizing Jews, then yes, use the Ten Commandments, and other sins from the law of Moses. But, if you're evangelizing Gentiles, then use the conscience like the apostles did, or the law of Christ by quoting the New Testament. (Even if some evangelists misapply the Ten Commandments to Gentiles, God can still use them to convict of sin.)

Let's take a quick look at the 5 verses most often used to support Decalogue-evangelism: Gal. 3:24; Ps. 19:7; Rom. 3:20, 7:7; and Mt. 19:16-22...

Galatians 3:24

"So then, the law was our guardian *until* Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith."

Not only does this verse not teach Decalogue-evangelism, it actually teaches the opposite: The temporary function of the Decalogue. As a matter of fact, this is one of the Bible's clearest verses teaching that God cancelled the Decalogue.

First, notice the word "until" in Gal. 3:24 above and Gal. 3:19 below...

"Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, *until* the offspring (Christ) should come..." (Gal. 3:19).

What both verses are saying is that the law was added from the time of Moses *until* the time of Christ. It regulated the nation of Israel only temporarily.

Second, notice the word "guardian." In the Greek, this word means "guardian" or "tutor" (similar to a nanny). When some rich families have a child, they hire a guardian/tutor/nanny as a live-in babysitter, *until* the child grows up.

So, what Paul is saying is that the law functioned as Israel's guardian until the time of Christ. To claim that we still need to obey the

⁷ Moo in Gundry, 339.

Decalogue today is like claiming that a 30-year old adult still needs a babysitter.

Third, the context of Galatians 3 is about redemption accomplished for the corporate people of God in the 1st century, not redemption applied to individuals from the 1st – 21st centuries. In other words, the law functioned for a one-time, redemptive-historical period, which is not repeatable today.

Psalms 19:7-11

"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul...the precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart...More to be desired are they than gold...sweeter also than honey...by them your servant is warned..." (NKJV).

The first thing we notice is that the ESV and NIV use the word "reviving" instead of "converting." So, is this verse talking about converting unbelievers, or sanctifying believers? Judging by the context, David is rejoicing in the law for his own sanctification.

Plus, Decalogue evangelists interpret the word "law" here as "the Decalogue alone." However, as we saw earlier, the 2 most common meanings for "law" are "all Old Covenant commands" or "the whole Old Testament." David rejoiced in all 613 of God's commands, not merely 10 of them.

Romans 3:20

"...through the law comes knowledge of sin."

And, what is the meaning of "law" here? In Rom. 3:9-20, Paul quotes Psalms, Proverbs, and Isaiah, but not Exodus 20. So, "law" here obviously means "the whole Old Testament," not "the Decalogue alone."

Romans 7:7

"Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."

The Holy Spirit convicted Saul, a Jew born under the law, of sin from the command against covetousness. So, if you're evangelizing Jews, feel free to use the Ten Commandments.

Matthew 19:16-22

"...a man came up to him, saying, 'Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?' And he said to him, 'Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you would enter life, keep the commandments... You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal, You shall not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother, and, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The young man said to him, 'All these I have kept. What do I still lack?' Jesus said to him, 'If you would be perfect, go, sell what you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.' When the young man heard this he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions."

Finally, what about the Rich Young Ruler? Here is one example where Christ used some of the Ten Commandments to evangelize a sinner (since the man was likely Jewish), but not to convict him of sin. Remember, the man said that he had obeyed all those commands.

Then, Jesus convicted the man of the sin of loving money by demanding that he sell all his possessions and give to the poor. This was the sin of loving his own possessions, not coveting his neighbors' possessions (the 10th commandment). Jesus used His Lordship, not the Decalogue, to convict the Rich Young Ruler of sin.

In conclusion about Decalogue-evangelism...

1. Jesus evangelized a Jew by quoting from the Decalogue, but not for conviction of sin.
2. The apostles evangelized Jews by implying, but not explicitly quoting, any of the Ten Commandments.

3. The apostles evangelized Gentiles by convicting of sin from the conscience, not the Decalogue.

Also, it's important to remember that true, apostolic evangelism is Christ-centered, not law/sin-centered. The apostles' gospel messages in Acts emphasized Jesus Christ Himself: His Messiahship, miracles, death, resurrection, reign, and return. Conviction of sin was only a means to the end: The person of Christ. That's why it's called "the good news of (about) Jesus Christ."

In summary about the so-called "moral law," the Holy Spirit never says that the Sabbath and the whole Decalogue are the eternal, unchanging, moral law of God. But, He does say that the standard of judgment for all humans, including the Gentiles, is the sin lists.