

# Catechesis Minute

## The Close of the Commandments

*What does God say about all These Commandments?* He says: I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sins of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments (**Exodus 20:5-6**).

*What does this mean?* God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands.

That may sound Pharisaical: “Keep the Law and live; disobey the Law and die.” But we must remember what the Ten Commandments are. They are God’s Covenant with Israel. A covenant is a promise. The Ten Commandments are also known as the “Decalogue,” which literally means “Ten words.” In the Jewish numbering of them is **verse 2**: *“I am the Lord, your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery”* is the first “word.” In it God is saying, “Because I am your God and have rescued you, this is how you are to live in my covenant community.” They were to live this way because that is how God created people to live. If it weren’t for the fall, we would naturally live this way.

God’s covenant with Israel was sealed with the blood of the Passover lamb. He has made a new covenant with us, sealed in the blood of *the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world* (**John 1:29**). We are now in His covenant community. He rescued Israel out of slavery in Egypt. He has rescued us out of slavery to sin. The Ten Commandments show us how to live in this covenant community, since this is how we were created to live. Jesus summed up the Ten Commandments this way: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ... You shall love your neighbor as yourself”* (**Matthew 22:37, 39**). The Ten Commandments show us how we are to live, how we are to love. We love God by following the Ten Commandments.