

About the

# Reading of the Law

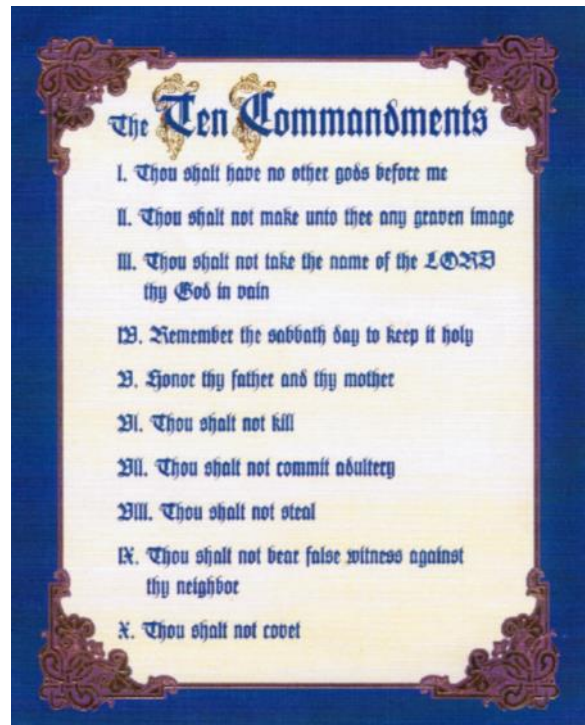
By Rev. Wilbur Bruinsma

A practice that is common to Reformed churches is the reading of the Ten Commandments during the worship service once every Sunday. This is not a common practice, however, to many Protestants outside of Reformed churches. In fact, some people and churches condemn this practice. It is claimed that the church of the New Testament is no longer under the law; rather, it is under grace. The keeping of the Ten Commandments is no longer in effect. Christ has freed us from the slavery of the law. The believer today must be led only by the Spirit to determine what is right and wrong. To read the law during the worship service is a bad practice because it enslaves the church to the law again. We want to answer this objection. We hope in doing so we will also be able to explain why we believe it is a good practice to not only read the law, but to preach on the law.

## A good, biblical practice

During the reign of King Josiah, the nation of Judah had turned from the ways of God. The nation no longer kept God's laws. The temple where that law was taught had fallen into total disrepair. Josiah was a good king and he decided to reform the nation of Judah. He began by fixing the temple. It was while making repairs on the temple that Hilkiah, the high priest, found the book of the law. He brought it to Josiah and Josiah read it with amazement and dismay. Judah had departed so far from that law. Josiah then ordered that the law be read in the ears of all Israel. Afterward, he appointed men to go through the nation and teach the people the law. (See II Kings 22:1 - 23:25).

We bring up this account because it reveals what happens to the church when it is not reminded of God's law and the need to walk in the way of God's commandments. The church soon forgets God's ways and walks in her own ways. It is this that answers all objections against the reading or preaching of God's law. Believers need to hear and know the law of God. It is necessary for their walk of holiness before God.



## God's law is a rule for godly living

Reformed believers maintain that keeping God's commandments is a rule for showing our thankfulness for the salvation earned for us by Christ on the cross. Keeping those commands does not save us, but it is the way we walk in that salvation. Desiring to walk

according to God's law is the fruit of salvation in our hearts. For that reason, God's people must always be reminded of those commandments. Reading them during the worship service and preaching on them periodically is a good reminder of our calling before God.

**God's people are not without law**

Those who object because they believe the Christian is not subject to God's law anymore, but is led only by the Spirit and by grace, are wrong. No kingdom is without law, just as the kingdom of Christ is not without law. By means of God's law we are free to walk in the ways of the kingdom of heaven. The heart of the law is loving God

and the neighbor. If we truly love God then we will strive to keep His commandments (I John 5:2, 3).

Besides, if we say that we need not adhere to God's commandments anymore, then we begin to do what is right in our own eyes. We must not forget that there is still sin in us. Sin will deceive us. So, we read the law during our worship services. As we do we pray God will, by His grace, more and more help us to keep that law.

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