The Decalogue and the Deuteronomic Laws†

The Decalogue in Canonical Perspective

The Ten Commandments are set apart from the other laws in the Pentateuch by a variety of factors:

• By Placement: In Deuteronomy (and Exodus) the decalogue is placed at the head of all the other laws; and the other laws in Deut 12–26 are organized according to it. In this way the decalogue is the key to the rest of the law, while at the same time the rest of the law is an interpretive expansion of it.

• By Promulgation: Only the Ten Commandments are spoken directly from God to the people. All other laws are mediated through Moses.

• By Perspective: The Ten Commandments are absolute (apodictic); most other laws are case law that is focused on life in the land (and consequently casuistic).

---