

Moral Code from the Mountain. Effective History of the Decalogue (Ex. 20, 1-19)

The Decalogue is a summary of the Jewish and Christian ethical values, regarded even by contemporary theology as a fundamental text belonging to natural law, or being a part or a summary of the divine law. The paper examines the place of the Decalogue in the Torah, its different textual versions and its context. The textual analysis is followed by a comparison with other ancient legal texts. Subsequently the various interpretations of the text and its effective history are discussed. The Decalogue stood at the centre of the covenantal constitution of Israel, and had an enormous influence on the development of moral norms both in Judaism and in Christianity. The Ten Commandments seem to have preserved their central role in Christianity, even if some of the commandments have been changed.