

## Legislating the Bible's Ten Commandments

If lawmakers seek to impose **biblical commands** on American citizens (as the basis for civil laws, or posting them in schoolrooms, courtrooms, etc), they should include the **biblically mandated punishments for disobedience** as well. This would be the honest use of ancient Hebrew texts for modern legislation in a pluralistic society under a secular Constitution.

**First Biblical Command:** “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery: you shall have no other gods before me.” (**Exodus 20 & Deuteronomy 5**)

**Biblical Punishment:** “Even if your brother, or your son or daughter, or your wife says ‘Let us go worship other gods’ ... you shall surely kill them ... stone them to death.” (Deut. 13:6-10)

“The first commandment and the US First Amendment fundamentally conflict. They are irreconcilable.”  
(Andrew Seidel, *The Founding Myth: Why Christian Nationalism is Un-American*)

**Second Biblical Command:** “You shall not make for yourself an idol [graven image].”

**Biblical Punishment:** “They have cast for themselves an image of a calf [another god]... And Moses said to the priests: ‘kill your brother, your friend and your neighbor.” (Ex. 32)

**Third Biblical Command:** “You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God.”

**Biblical Punishment:** “One who blasphemes the name of the LORD shall be put to death; the whole congregation shall stone the blasphemer.” (Leviticus 24:16)

**Fourth Biblical Command:** “Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy ... you shall not do any work.”

**Biblical Punishment:** “Whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall be put to death.” (Exodus 31:15)

**Fifth Biblical Command:** “Honor your father and your mother.”

**Biblical Punishment:** “All who curse father or mother shall be put to death.” (Lev. 20:9)

**Sixth Biblical Command:** “You shall not murder.”

**Biblical Punishment:** “Anyone who kills a human being shall be put to death.”(Lev. 24:17);  
“The avenger of blood is the one who shall put the murderer to death.” (Numbers 35:19)

**Seventh Biblical Command:** “You shall not commit adultery.”

**Biblical Punishment:** “Both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death.” (Lev. 20:10)

**Eighth Biblical Command:** “You shall not steal.”

**Biblical Punishment:** “The thief shall make restitution, but if unable, shall be sold.” (Ex. 22:1)

**Ninth Biblical Command:** “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

**Biblical Punishment:** “When any of you sin [and] swear falsely ... you shall bring to the priest, as your guilt offering to the LORD, a ram without blemish ... [a burnt offering is] a pleasing odor to the LORD.” (Lev. 6);  
“If the witness is a false witness ... show no pity: life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth. . .” (Deut. 19)

**Tenth Biblical Command:** “You shall not covet [desire to possess] your neighbor’s [house, wife, slaves ... or anything else that belongs to your neighbor].”

**Biblical Punishment:** {how could this “thought crime” be punished, esp. by civil law?}

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“Nearly all of the Ten Commandments conflict with America’s ideal in one way or another ... the Mosaic laws are not a moral code—they are a religious code. They enforce religious conformity, not morality.”  
(Andrew Seidel, *The Founding Myth*)

“We have Ten Commandments in the West. Why is there no commandment exhorting us to learn?”  
(Carl Sagan, *The Varieties of Scientific Experience*)

When Jesus of Nazareth was asked about the *Greatest Commandments*, how did he respond? (see Mark 12)