

Moses is Charlton Heston - everyone knows that! Did you know, though, that Cecil B DeMille's last film ("The Ten Commandments" 1956, in case you've missed the reference) was actually a remake of his other "The Ten Commandments" 1923, a silent movie. Out of the silence, however, came a greater spectacle and a greater depth of message; DeMille, in part 2 of his first version, makes the parallel between the errant Hebrews abusing their new freedom and (his) modern day people falling into old moral traps.

It was a long film for its day (2 hrs 16 mins) but the remake (3 hrs 40 mins) was especially long - for any day. Nonetheless, we've managed to outdo both those by spending at least 3 hrs 45 mins, albeit over 5 weeks, looking at the ten commandments as part of our Lenten disciplines. (Tuesdays at All Saints', Sutton, 18.00 for 45 minutes, plus compline. There are a few more; do come.)

Several things are coming out of this that come as a bit of a surprise. For example, the commandments are not explicit about blaspheming, killing, lying, pre-marital sex (which is not to say that's all OK!).

They also fall into two sections: how we should act towards God; how we should act towards one another. (You may be aware that Jesus gave us two commands summing up that: love God with everything you are; love others as yourself.)

Frequently overlooked is that they form a contract between God and us. Keeping the covenant means all sorts of bonuses for us. Breaking it is life damaging - or life ending. Of course, the people of this covenant brokered through Moses paid many penalties for all the times they broke their part of the deal.

The thing about Holy Week and Easter is that we have an easier covenant - love God, love all other people - and a no-exceptions insurance policy when we break it, paid for in blood by Jesus and assurance of new life in his resurrection. I've fallen short too often to ignore this sort of deal.

Trust me, I've looked very hard for one but there is no better offer. I know it's almost too good to believe, perhaps why some don't. DeMille may have used smoke and mirrors to make the Moses deal a spectacle but the Jesus deal surely is so much more real for you and me. Out of the quiet of his humility this becomes personal, reconciling, forgiving, loving. Take Jesus at his word: have a new start, new life, resurrection. If you have a better assurance for this life *and* the next, I'm all ears...