The Literary Structure of the 10 Commandments

Inversion (Chiasm)

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**Note**: The 10 Commandments show us our duty to God and to man. They begin and end with heart issues. They are stated in a way that leads the readers/hearers to consider their heart, their words, and their acts; and then they are led back in reverse order to a consideration of their words and once again their heart. This type of reversal is called “inversion” or “chiasm” and is used often in Scripture.

1. No Other God (HEART)

2. No Idols (HEART)

3. No Blasphemy (WORDS)

4. Keep the Sabbath (ACTS)

5. Honor Father and Mother (ACTS)

6. No Murder (ACTS)

7. No Adultery (ACTS)

8. No Theft (ACTS)

9. No False Witness (WORDS)

10. No Coveting (HEART)