The Ten Commandments: what makes them special?

As a preparation for the festival of shabu'ot, less than three weeks away, I will begin today a review of the Ten commandments.
The Ten commandments were given to the Jewish people at the climax of the covenant celebrated between the Children of Israel and God (Ex. Ch. 19, 20). The Ten Commandments represent a sample of the entire Tora. While Christian tradition stresses the importance of the Ten Commandments to the exclusion of the other commandments of the Hebrew Bible, for Jewish tradition the Ten commandments are obviously an essential part of the Tora but every other Biblical precept is of no less importance. To emphasizes this concept and express the Jewish belief on the uniformity of the Tora, Maimonides forbade to stand up while the Ten commandments are read in public in the Synagogue. Lest we will be led to believe that the other 603 precepts belong to a lower category.
What is it special about the Ten commandments then?
First, that while all other Mitzvot were given to the people of Israel through the mediation of Moshe Rabbenu, the Ten Commandments were meant to be given by God Himself. At the end, as the Tora explains, only the first two commandments were given directly by God. Why? The people of Israel explicitly requested to hear the Commandments from Moshe because the experience of God's revelation resulted overwhelming. Ex. 20:19 "And they said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die'."
According to Jewish tradition the Children of israel requested Moshe's mediation after the first two commandments were given. This is why only the first two commandants are formulated on the first person ("I'm HaShem your God"… "You shall not have any other gods before Me") but from the third commandment Moshe is addressing the people of Israel and refers to HaShem in the third person ("You shall not take the name of God in vain").