

INTRODUCTION:

By way of review... The LAW is given to Israel in Exodus 20

- This occurs on the Feast of Shavuot, also known as Pentecost
- What is significant about the giving of the law is it signifies from this point forward, Israel is a nation governed by God
- In the same way when the Holy Spirit is poured out on the Church in Acts 2, it signifies from that point forward... we are a people governed by the Spirit of God
- The giving of the law does not have to do with imposing a set of rules and regulations to follow
- The giving of the law represents the institution of the Kingdom of God, the government of God and the acceptance of God as King
- Because the law is given by God... the basis of the law is love

Jesus said

Matthew 22:37–40 (NKJV)

37 “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

- The foundation of the law is loving God and loving each other
- We see this reflected in Exodus 20
- The first half of the law deals with loving God
- The second half deals with loving each other
- Last time we looked at the first half of the law... today we will continue with the second half of the law governing man’s relationship to others

Exodus 20:12 (NKJV)

12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

- This actually goes with the LOVING GOD side... let me explain
- Notice God goes from keeping Sabbath to honoring father and mother
- In the Hebrew it’s kab-bed et-a-bi-ka ve-et-im-me-ka
- The word “kabbed” means to be honorable, heavy, glorious or weighty
- In English it’s the word gravitas which suggests dignity or importance

- The command is for us to demonstrate the significance, the importance of our parents and the way we do that... as suggested by the order of scripture... is by obeying God
- Remember, the Father is the priest of the home and it was the responsibility of the parents to teach the kids to honor and obey God
- For a child to dishonor their parents meant they were rebelling against the parents teaching them to honor and obey God
- That is the sole responsibility of the parents... not the church, not the youth leader or the Sunday school teacher
- In fact, the number one reason for kids leaving the faith is the lack of godly influence in the home... even amongst Christian families
- I believe it's because parents have bought the lie that they need to go to a church with a great youth program for their kids...
- So they find a good church with great programs, they drop off their kids and the kids grow up outside of church
- AND when they graduate from high school or college they go back to church because they've never been to church... they've been entertained, they've been babysat... but not disciplined
- One of the things I've loved about this Pandemic... is it's caused parents to take the lead through our Sunday School materials to teach their kids about the LORD...
- As their kids grow up following the ways of the LORD, it will bring honor to the parents.
- NOTE: It says honor your father and mother that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you
- Now this often gets misinterpreted to say... if you honor your mother and father you will live a long life
- But notice.. it doesn't say that... it says you will live long ON THE LAND the LORD is giving you... speaking of the land of PROMISE
- This promise is specifically directed to the nation of Israel
- When mom and dad are committed to raising a godly family, that family will be committed to the Word of God and committed to obeying God which results in a long life in the land of Promise
- Rebellion results in being taken out of the land
- Thus this commandment is saying a Godly household will preserve Israel in the land of Promise
- But there is a principle that can apply to everyone...

- There is always a connection between obeying God and honoring our parents AND the PROMISE of God
- The greatest thing I can do to honor my parents is the obey God and as I obey God, I am living in, walking in the PROMISES of God for my family and that results in stability for my life and stability for my family
- I'm not going to be an unstable person, living an unstable lifestyle of rebellion against God... I will have a stable life which is perfect for kids
- So this commandment is not talking about living to a ripe old age, but how long Israel will live in the land until they are exiled

Now we have a series of short commandments... literally 2 words

Exodus 20:13 (NKJV)

¹³ "You shall not murder... "lo tir-sah"

If your Bible says... you shall not kill, it's wrong

- There are those (primarily pacifists) who take this verse and use it to say all killing is wrong because the Bible says you shall not kill
- But it doesn't say you shall not kill, it says you shall not murder
- Murder is an intentional killing with evil intent or illegal killing
- This word is unique and it's never used in the administration of justice or the killing in war
- It is never used in reference to God or an angel, like the angel of death
- It literally means to shatter something into small pieces or to slaughter, to crush, to grind, with shouting... so you can see the definitions imply hatred or an extreme emotional outbreak

Genesis 9:6 gives us the rationale behind this command

Genesis 9:6 (NKJV)

⁶ "Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed; For in the image of God He made man.

- Thus we see the basis for capital punishment in the Bible
- Life is from God, therefore God is the only One who can give or take life
- The boundaries of one's life are defined by the sovereignty of God
- When a murderer takes life away from someone prematurely, they usurp the sovereignty of God and challenge His authority to rule over creation

- Because life is given by God, no man has the authority or the right to give or take life, no man has the authority or the right to forgive a murderer or to commute the death penalty of someone who is guilty
- The Bible is clear... a murderer is to be put to death (Numbers 35:31)
- The fact that this is the first command having to do with loving each other shows how valuable life is, how valuable people are to God

The next command is

Exodus 20:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery... “lo tin-ap”

- Adultery is defined as sexual intercourse by mutual consent between a married woman and a man who is not her legal husband.
- In the Near East, when a man took a wife, the man had exclusive rights and adultery was a violation, an infringement of his exclusive rights
- Thus, the husband could decide the punishment or pardon of the two caught in adultery
- But Israel is not governed by man, Israel is governed by God
- The marriage vows are not made between two people, but they are made between two people and God
- Thus adultery is not only treated as a public sin but as an offense against God and the judgement for adultery is not simply a civil matter but a spiritual matter with grave consequences
- The punishment for adultery was for both to be put to death and the offended husband has no legal power to forgive or pardon his unfaithful wife or her lover
- The placement of this command, directly after murder... demonstrates how much God values marriage

The next command is

Exodus 20:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ “You shall not steal... lo tig-nob

- To steal simply means to take something without the owners consent
- However, according to Rabbinic Tradition... the word used for “steal” could also apply to “kidnapping”
- Exodus 21 and Deuteronomy 24 both mention the consequences of kidnapping

- But the majority of times this word is used, it deals specifically with protecting property rights
- Why is stealing such a big deal?
- Because it is a statement of unbelief in God's ability to provide
- If I belong to God and I have to steal to provide for myself then it makes the statement that God doesn't do a good job of providing for His people... He's a bad husband

The next command is longer

Exodus 20:16 (NKJV)

16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor... "lo ta-aneh"

- This is specifically speaking about making a legal case against someone
- The command in the Hebrew says... do not answer with a false testimony
- This is for 2 reasons
- First, the purpose of a court proceeding is to establish truth so that just decisions could be made
- A false testimony would keep justice from being served...
- Second, a just system of law created stability in the nation
- A false testimony would undermine public confidence in the integrity of the judicial system which jeopardize the stability of society
- So there were 3 checks and balances that were implement
- First, you needed 2 or 3 independent witnesses to establish truth
- Second, the witnesses had to initiate the punishment... so if you testified against someone and they were guilty of a capital crime, you were the first to punish them, to throw the first stone
- Third, if you gave a false testimony... you would receive the same punishment as if you were guilty

Now... when we look at the recent impeachment of President Trump

- One of the problems with our judicial system is the lack of moral governance to the degree that you would have senators, CIA and FBI agents, giving false testimony without consequence
- Judges using the rule of law for political reasons and not to uphold justice
- It is creating a serious lack of confidence in our judicial system and without law, a nation will crumble from within

- Of course, this is the socialist agenda to use law to oppress people

The next law is....

Exodus 20:17 (NKJV)

17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor’s.”... “lo tach-mode”

- What is important to understand about coveting is not that it describes an emotion or desire that I feel
- Coveting always focuses on a specific object of desire... the sight of which stimulates the craving to possess it
- It can be negative or positive
- If it’s something that is mine to have... it’s positive to desire it
- For instance, the Bible says to desire earnestly (covet) spiritual gifts
- But if it’s something that belongs to someone else... it’s negative to desire it...
- The command lists 7 things that belong to our neighbor
- His house, his wife, his male servant, his female servant, his ox, his donkey... and in case we forgot something... anything that is your neighbor’s
- Again... why? Why is coveting bad? Because it rejects the provision of God for you
- It’s saying what God has given me is not enough
- I want what you gave to someone else AND I want to remove it from that person so they can’t have it... and this is where it becomes unloving... to undermine, to rob God’s blessing from someone else
- What is implied is an underlying desire to injure that person in the process... you know your actions will hurt them and you do it anyway
- Here’s the problem... it’s still not enough because a coveting heart will always find another object of desire
- What does this reveal? How much God values caring for us

Exodus 20:18–21 (NKJV)

18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, “You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.” 20 And

Moses said to the people, “Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.” ²¹ So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was.

NOTE: vs. 18 beings with all the people

- Who are the people? All the people who were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb
- The word used is “ha-am” and it can be translated “citizens”
- Those who were redeemed by the blood of the Lamb are now citizens of the Kingdom of God
- They were called out of Egypt to meet with God, to worship God and now they are at the foot of Mount Sinai, they see the thundering, the lightning flashes, the sound of the shofar, the mountain is smoking
- God is revealing Himself, His majesty, His overpowering Presence and the language suggests they were not united in their experience of God
- Some were in awe, some were terrified, some were shaking, trembling but all of them stood afar off
- One commentator suggested they turned and ran for their lives in fear
- In Pentecostal services people will often say... God showed up last night and what that means is they saw a few healings, gave out of few words of knowledges or a few prophecies, saw dust and feathers... whatever
- But here at Mount Sinai... God showed up and as He approached His people, the people stood at a distance
- This is significant... this is a defining moment for Israel
- This is a defining moment for Israel

NOTE: Vs.19 Moses, you speak to us and we will listen

- But we don’t want God to speak to us... why? Lest we die
- They were afraid that God would judge them
- Now, why were they afraid? Because of unbelief
- Remember in Exodus 19:4 God reminds them of what He did to the Egyptians and how God bore them on eagle’s wings and brought them to Himself
- And if they obeyed His voice and kept His Covenant then they would be a special treasure above all people
- The children of Israel said... all the LORD has spoken we will do
- But now they are standing before the awesome presence of God

- God has just given them the 10 commandments... to them it was God's 10 expectations and in their hearts they've already determined they can't live up to God's expectations
- So what do they do? They distance themselves from God
- This is a common reaction to God... people believe God has this unrealistic expectation that they can never live up to... so they distance themselves from God
- I'll listen to Moses. I'll listen to the law... but I won't listen to God
- Here we see the basis for religion... give me the rules, give me traditions, tell me how to think... but I won't listen to God

Vs. 20 Moses tries to clarify God's intent for the people

- This is what a prophet does... a prophet declares God's mind, God's intentions, God's will and God's heart to the people
- How did Moses know this? By revelation... God revealed it to Moses
- Moses tells the people... do not fear... for God has come to test you
- There are 2 root words for "test" in Hebrew
- "Bechinah" and "Nisayon"
- "Bechinah" is a test that is given to give insight into the skill or ability of a student... like a school test
- The second is "Nisayon" which is better seen as an experience, an obstacle, a struggle that offers the opportunity to propel the person to grow beyond his or her natural ability
- It's an opportunity to achieve what is thought to be impossible
- It's an opportunity to grow into something greater
- The word translated test in vs. 20 is "nas-sot" which comes from "nisayon"
- The second root word for "nas-sot" is "nes" which literally means "mast" or "flag" and it's used to refer to a sign, something miraculous, something supernatural to show or reveal something
- Thus Moses tells the people... do not fear because God is coming to you to give you this supernatural experience, to propel you, to grow you into a supernatural relationship that is beyond your natural ability
- What is this experience that God is bringing to them... to put His fear before them, the fear of the LORD on their face
- What is the fear of the LORD? It's the beginning of wisdom, it's the walking in wisdom that they may not sin or in this case it's the word translated "to miss the mark"

- So God is putting on the people this supernatural experience of His Presence that they might know and be led by His will
- When the fear of the LORD is on you, you have the wisdom to do His will... it's simple... you don't want to do anything to disobey God
- Thus God is blessing the nation of Israel with His supernatural Presence to be a sign to the nations, a testimony to the nations of God's power
- But notice the response of the people... they people stood afar off
- At the end of verse 18 it says the people stood afar off... but there it's in the plural tense which means they were divided in their response
- But in verse 20 it's in the singular tense which means the people were united in their rejection of God
- They had the opportunity to enter into this supernatural experience with God, but instead they rejected God and stood at a distance
- But Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was... God was drawing near and only Moses went forward to meet God
- What does this tell us? We know that Moses told the people to prepare to meet God, but the people didn't listen to Moses, they didn't prepare themselves to meet with God for the purpose of worshipping God
- Why worship? Because vs. 22-26 deal specifically with worship

Exodus 20:22–26 (NKJV)

²² Then the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. ²³ You shall not make *anything to be* with Me—gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves. ²⁴ An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you. ²⁵ And if you make Me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it. ²⁶ Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.'

- Notice vs. 22... the LORD said to Moses, thus you will say... You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven
- God provided to the entire nation this supernatural experience of hearing Him speak from heaven
- This supernatural experience was an invitation to be transformed by this miraculous encounter with God but the people rejected it...
- Remember... this is a type of what would come in Acts 2

- To every believer, every person who is redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, God extends the invitation to be transformed by this supernatural encounter with the Holy Spirit called the Baptism of the Spirit
- My prayer is we will be like Moses... and draw near where God is

Vs. 23 God now instructs the people in how to worship Him

- Why? Because they've rejected this supernatural encounter with God that would keep them from sin, so now He is giving them detailed instructions on how to worship
- Instead of the Presence of God on their face, they are going to experience a lower form of worship, a worship that is centered around an altar
- The first thing God says... you will not make for yourselves gods of silver or gold (idols)
- The second thing God says... you will make an altar of dirt (not an elaborate altar like the nations)
- It will be on this altar that you will sacrifice your burnt offerings, peace offerings, sheep and oxen
- The third thing God says... if you make an altar of stone, you will not use a tool on it because if you cut the stone you will profane the stone
- So you could only use stones that were not cut by man... which means they were made by God
- Vs. 26... God said do not make steps going up to the altar that your nakedness may not be exposed... which speaks of modesty
- So what is God saying in this passage of scripture? God is giving to Israel a foundation for worship that is to be different from the world
- The worship of God is to be focused on the Presence and Power of God
- Not on the band, not on the musicians, not on how good looking the singers are or the fashionable clothes they wear... that's sensual, that's the world's standards... we are to be different
- Let me just say... when we gather to worship, there is an invitation that is extended to every believer... you can enter into the Presence and be transformed or you can listen to the band and be entertained
- God wants to meet with you everytime we gather... it's up to you to do it