

Lesson 10 – 3 April 2011 Correct PDF

God Speaks at Mount Sinai

Lesson Scope: [Exodus Chapters 19 through 24.](#)

Lesson Focus

At Mount Sinai God made a covenant with Israel. He had delivered Israel from Egypt; now He gave the Law for Israel to follow, beginning with the Ten Commandments.

God has given all men a sense of right and wrong through the Conscience. Because of this, the moral precepts of the Covenant with Israel were certainly nothing new. The covenant made at Sinai comprised both common moral precepts and ceremonial religious practices. God chooses the terms of His covenants with man. The covenant made by Jesus Christ, in contrast to the one given at Sinai, is based on spiritual faith and Holy Spirit-directed conduct.

What happened at Mount Sinai is important. In the Ten Commandments God codified for Israel His principles of righteousness established from creation.

The Ten Commandments were requirement for Israel as a redeemed out of Egypt. These timeless principles outline man's responsibility to God and one another:

The emphasis here is on the existence of a moral law that is unchanging. The events on Mount Sinai and the resulting covenant did not initiate the moral precepts of the Ten Commandments. These principles dated from near the beginning of human history, several of them date to Creation itself. For Israel, these commandments formed the framework for the whole ceremonial and civil system intended to prepare the way for Christ. Jesus Christ fulfilled the Old Covenant and established a New Covenant based on faith in the power of His life-changing death and resurrection.

Lesson Aim: To study God's timeless principles as embodied in the Ten Commandments.

Theme Verses: [Romans 8:3-4](#). “For what the law could not do, in that it is weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh. and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

Lesson Text.

A Holy Call.

[Exodus 19:3-6](#)

And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; ⁴Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. ⁵Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: ⁶And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

[Exodus 19:16-19](#)

And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled. ¹⁷And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. ¹⁸And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. ¹⁹And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

[Exodus 20:1-2](#)

And God spake all these words, saying, ²*I am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

A Holy Creed.

[Exodus 20:3-17](#)

Thou shalt have no other gods before me. ⁴Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness *of any thing* that *is* in

heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth: ⁵Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me; ⁶And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. ⁷Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. ⁸Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: ¹⁰But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates: ¹¹For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

¹²Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. ¹³Thou shalt not kill. ¹⁴Thou shalt not commit adultery. ¹⁵Thou shalt not steal. ¹⁶Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. ¹⁷Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

Questions for Study

A Holy Call

1. Define the word covenant.
2. Explain the purposes of God's covenant with Israel.
3. How does the Old Covenant compare to the New?

A Holy Creed

4. What are some implications of God's attribute of jealousy?
5. In what different ways might one use the Lord's Name in vain?
6. What is the connection between honoring parents and enjoying longevity? How can adults honor their parent?
7. How is covetousness involved in many other sins? What are some antidotes for covetousness?

Analyzing the Passage

Approximately fifty days had passed since the Passover and the Exodus from Egypt. The Passover and the giving of the Law foreshadowed the crucifixion of Jesus and the giving of the Holy Spirit. After the giving of Law, three thousand people perished: after Peter's preaching on the day of Pentecost, three thousand people were saved.

Two themes recur in chapter 19: Moses ascending and descending the mountain with messages, and the repeated reference to Moses and God actually speaking together. This preface to the Ten Commandments adds special weight to their place in the Old Covenant.

The first four of the Ten Commandments deal with man's relationship with God, the last six deal with his relationship with others. Jesus summarized these commandments with two—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Matthew 22:37-39).

Principles and Applications

A Holy Call

1. God's covenant brought man into a unique relationship with Him (Exodus 19:5-6, 16). At Mt. Sinai God established the terms of His subsequent relationship with Israel. He would continue to treasure Israel with jealous affection, and Israel would "obey [God's] voice indeed. The evidence of God's presence on Sinai was intended to instill a godly fear to disobey. Israel's blessing depended on their adherence to God's Law.

A Holy Creed

2. God commands that our loyalty and worship be directed to Him (Exodus 20:3). In this first command, the extent of God's claim on redeemed man is evident. The question is not, "is God the only true God?" Rather, the question is, "Among the many competing objects or gods to worship, how dare I offer worship to any other than the God of heaven?" He will not accept a divided loyalty.

3. Our worship of God must be in spirit and in truth, avoiding the use of material objects to represent Him (Exodus 20:4-5). After giving the commandments, God stated, -Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. By making images to represent God, man will

always abbreviate the breadth and mystery of God. Man can never adequately represent God in His fullness. What is more, man can already communicate with God apart from graven images.

4. The name of God shall not be used in vain (Exodus 20:7). Speech is more powerful than we will ever realize. The church has been given the authority to speak and act in the Name of Jesus. In fact, His Name is specifically invoked at all of our worship services. God "will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Are we preaching the true Gospel of Jesus, free from private interpretation, partiality, and hypocrisy?

5. One day in seven is to be set aside for rest and for worship of God (Exodus 20:8-11). Of the Ten Commandments, this would seem to qualify most clearly as a ceremonial law rather than a moral one. How does this law fit into New Testament living? It seems that the Christian is at liberty, and indeed encouraged, to set aside one day in seven to worship and to rest from his daily labor. This schedule was ordained at Creation (Genesis 2:2.3). Jesus taught (Matthew 12:1-13) that the Sabbath was made for man, rather than man for the Sabbath. The work of redeeming, mankind never ceases, and the New Testament gives no indication that Sabbath laws should restrict the church in fulfilling her mission. From early apostolic times, the tradition of the church has been to worship on the first day of the week, the day on which Jesus resurrected in triumph over sin and death.

6. We shall show respect and appreciation for our parents (Exodus 20:12). This is the first commandment to which God attached a promise. The Old Covenant, and likewise the favour of God, was perpetuated by the child respecting the parent, generation after generation. A breakdown of this respect leads to a general deterioration of order and authority finally destroying a society.

7. Human life is sacred (Exodus 20:13). Man is made in the image of God. and that is sufficient reason to view human life as sacred. The Old Covenant preserved this respect by requiring the death of the murderer. Under the New Covenant, government authorities still carry the responsibility to punish murderers and other evildoers but the church is called to exercise benevolent love toward all men, regardless of their conduct. We should see in every son of iniquity the

potential to become a child of God.

8. Moral purity is an imperative for the preservation of the home and nation (Exodus 20:14). While the command is against the act of adultery Jesus taught that lust is essentially just as sinful. Society around us increasingly disregards, scorns, and violates purity, reaping a heavy price in guilt, insecurity, and broken relationships. In our dealings with others, we must exercise special prudence for the protection of moral integrity, both ours and theirs.

9. God commands us to respect the rights and property of others (Exodus 20:15). Stealing from another person shows that we do not love him as we love ourselves. Stealing in any form is sin, whether it is cheating on our taxes, wasting time on the job, or neglecting to pay bills.

10. God commands His people to communicate without deceit (Exodus 20: 16). Falsehood can take varied forms. One can speak an outright lie. It is also possible to state what is technically true but with intent to deceive. The same effect results when one passes information on to others that is based on hearsay. Words are powerful; we must use them cautiously, sparingly, and accurately.

11. To covet the possession of another is sin (Exodus 20:17). Of the Ten Commandments, only this one points solely to what is inside the heart. It commands us to curb our selfish tendency to desire what belongs to others. The negative effects of coveting are not necessarily immediate or obvious, but they are destructive nonetheless. Contentment is the peace that comes from understanding and appreciating our blessings. The simple New Testament practices of cheerful giving and fasting will aid the Christian in his effort to be content.

Important Teachings

1. God's covenant brought man into a unique relationship with Him (Exodus 19:5-6, 16).

2. God commands that our loyalty and worship be directed to Him (Exodus 20:3).

3. Our worship of God must be in spirit and in truth, avoiding the use of material objects to represent Him (Exodus 20:4-5).

4. The name of God shall not be used in vain (Exodus 20:7).

5. One day in seven is to be set aside for rest and for worship of God

(Exodus 20:8-11).

6. We shall show respect and appreciation for our parents (Exodus 20:12).

7. Human life is sacred (Exodus 20:13).

8. Moral purity is an imperative for the preservation of the home and nation (Exodus 20:14).

9. God commands us to respect the rights and property of others (Exodus 20:15).

10. God commands His people to communicate without deceit (Exodus 20:16).

11. To covet the possession of another is sin (Exodus 20:17).

Answers to Questions.

1. Define the word covenant.

A covenant is an agreement between two parties to fulfill specified obligations. God made covenants with men, whereby He promised certain blessings if they would obey Him.

2. Explain the purposes of God's covenant with Israel.

God's covenant with the Hebrew people was intended to preserve them as a holy people who would demonstrate His power and righteousness to surrounding nations. The Law was Israel's schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. God's long-range purpose was to bring a Saviour into the world for the salvation of all people.

3. How does the Old Covenant compare to the New?

The Old Covenant foreshadowed the New. It could not remove sin, but the New Covenant does. The Old Covenant was temporary, but the New is eternal. The Old Covenant had earthly priests, altars, sacrifices, tabernacles, and so on; the New Covenant has a better Priest, a better sacrifice, a better tabernacle, and better promises.

4. What are some implications of God's attribute of jealousy?

God actively defends His sovereign position as Lord of all. He will not share that honor with another deity; He will not accept any man's divided loyalty. God actively seeks the good of all mankind, but He especially guards the welfare of His redeemed people.

5. In what different ways might one use the Lord's Name in vain?

One might use it profanely as an interjection. The Old Testament people may have used it falsely in the judicial oath. To claim to be

living for the Lord, while acting hypocritically, is to take His Name in vain.

6. What is the connection between honoring parents and enjoying longevity? How can adults honor their parents?

Honoring parents allows them to fill their God-assigned role of teaching and disciplining children for their physical, moral, and spiritual safety. This contributes to long life. For Israel, valuing a godly heritage would insure their continuing enjoyment of the Promised Land.

Adults can respect their parents with careful speech about shortcomings in the home. They can promote the spiritual values and convictions that their parents taught them. They can assist disabled or chronically ill parents throughout their aged years, overseeing their welfare, financially and otherwise.

7. How is covetousness involved in many other sins? What are some antidotes for covetousness?

The breaking of every commandment involves, in some way, an effort to gratify selfish desires (covetousness). We can overcome covetousness by acknowledging divine ownership of all that we have, by understanding that God acts in our best interests, and by being thankful for the blessings He has already given us.

Summarizing the Lesson

The Ten Commandments have much to teach the Christian, even though the New Covenant is not based on keeping the Mosaic Law. The common moral law described in this lesson helps to shape our conscience, which fills a role in leading us to repentance and faith. The moral aspects of the Ten Commandments are still a challenge, still an ideal, and still a revelation of man's inherent unrighteousness. With Paul, we cry, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death" I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Research Guide

Many passages in the Bible help to clarify the place of the Mosaic Law in the New Covenant. See, for example, Galatians 2:16-4:1; Romans 1-3; Matthew 5:17-20; Hebrews 9-10.