

August 16th, 2020
The Ten Commandments
Exodus 19 – 20

BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN

August 9 Isaiah 54-58	August 13 Jer. 4-6
August 10 Isaiah 59-63	August 14 Jer. 7-9
August 11 Isaiah 64-66	August 15 Jer. 10-13
August 12 Jer. 1-3	August 16 Jer. 14-17

Lesson Introduction: Our lesson this week covers the giving of the Ten Commandments. The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for about seven weeks since the time of the exodus from Egypt until they came to mount Sinai (**19:1-3**). Here, they would encounter God in a magnificent way that would cause them to tremble. He would speak to His people, giving them the Ten Commandments. As we study, we will see the incredible grandeur of God in the way that He presents Himself to His people and will see His complete holiness in the commandments He gives to Israel. Finally, we will consider how God has made it possible for us to come into His holy presence and fulfilled all His commandments through Christ.

FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS:

- ***The LORD is holy, and to be feared (Ch. 19 – 20:21)***
- ***The LORD calls His people to holiness (Ch. 20:1-21)***
- ***Christ Jesus has given us direct access to God by fulfilling all that He has commanded and giving us his righteousness***

Read Exodus 19 – 20

Discussion Section 1: Trembling Before God (Ch. 19)

-What does **V. 4** tell us about the nature of our salvation?

-What do **V. 5-6** tell us about God's standard for those who He has saved?

-What does this chapter teach us about the power and grandeur of God, and the way we should respond to such power and grandeur? (**V. 9-22**)

-What does it mean to fear the LORD and tremble before Him in the life of a Christian?

Note: As the people of God came into the wilderness of Sinai, the LORD spoke to Moses telling him to prepare the people, for He was about to come down in a thick cloud and speak to them (**19:9**). The LORD began this talk with Moses by reminding him of the miraculous, gracious way He had brought His people to salvation. In **19:4** The LORD says, ***“You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.”*** In **V. 5** and in **chapter 20** we will see the LORD call His people to obedience to His commandments but is vital that we do not miss the order here. He first speaks of the way that He had saved His people from the Egyptians like a mighty eagle, and that He had brought the Israelites to Himself. This is always God's pattern for salvation. We see in **Ephesians 2:1-10** that God has made us alive in Christ though we were once dead in our sins, and that none of this was based on our works, but on His grace alone. After that is made clear, only then does Paul remind us that we are thus called to follow Christ in obedience, walking in the good works that He has prepared for us before the world began. We are reminded here again in Exodus 19 that God saves miraculously, and in so doing, calls us to follow Him faithfully.

In **V. 9-22** we see an incredible picture of God's holiness and grandeur. The Israelites are told to consecrate themselves, for the LORD was coming to speak to them in 3 days, and when He showed up, it was clear why this consecration had to take place. Imagine being at the foot of the mountain, when suddenly lighting, thunder, a thick cloud of smoke, and a trumpet blast come upon you! It says in **V. 16** that, ***“all the people in the camp trembled.”*** What other reaction to such a scene could there be but trembling? But the people were not simply fearful because of the loud noises, rather, they understood that their very lives were in danger. If they were to come to the edge of the mountain, they would simply fall dead from being too close to the presence of God (**V. 12**). Chapter 19 is an incredible picture of the power and ferocity of our God. And make no mistake about it, the God of Exodus 19 is the same today as He was then.

We would do well to consider the intensity of Who God is more than we do. So often we think of God as a genie in the sky, who is meant to do our bidding when we are in need. This is not the picture that God paints of Himself in His Word. Rather, He is all-powerful, holy in all His ways, and we are unable to look upon Him. He is not

meant to be thought of merely as a comfort blanket when we face hard times. Although He is merciful and kind to His children, may we never lose sight of His unfathomable power and holiness. We, like the Israelites, should tremble in His presence. It should not be lost on us that every time we pray, we are speaking to the One Who is enthroned in Heaven, Who's name is holy (**Matthew 6:9**). This picture of God in Exodus 19 is meant to prepare us for the holy standard that He would lay out in chapter 20, which we will look to now.

Discussion Section 2: God's Holy Standard (Ch. 20)

-Does the order of the commandments matter?

-What do the first 4 commandments address? (**V. 2-11**)

-What do the last 6 commandments address? (**V. 12-17**)

-What did Jesus say the two greatest commandments are and how do His words relate to the Ten Commandments? (**Matthew 22:37-40**)

Excerpt from *Exalting Jesus in Exodus* by Tony Merida, pg. 102-103:

"At a comprehensive level, the Ten Words may be divided into two parts: love God, and love people. One way you could summarize them, then, is by arranging them in a four-and-six pattern. The first four hang on the command to love God, since they describe ways to show covenantal loyalty directly to Him. The last six hang on the command to love neighbor as self. The first four are "vertical" commandments, and the last six are "horizontal" commandments. In this way, they express how we fulfill the "Greatest Commands" in Matthew 22:37-40.

To love God any way you please is illustrated by the words of Anthony Burgess in 1646—"like having the sun follow the clock" or "the tail wagging the dog" (Begg, Pathway, 41). In these commandments, God tells us how to love Him appropriately. Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commands" (John 14:15). My love for God is reflected by my obedience to His words.

The last six involve treating others properly. Gentry and Wellum say, "These entail basic and inalienable rights of every human and have been recognized by the customs and laws of every society. . . . No society can endure that does not respect the basic inalienable rights of every human person" (Kingdom, 328-29).

While the last six are comparable to some other law codes in the ancient Near East, the first four are "unparalleled in the ancient Near East" (ibid., 329). Israel's exclusive devotion to Yahweh set them apart.

Our exclusive worship of God continues to mark Christians. In addition, our devotion to God will keep us from breaking the last six commandments. Since underneath every sin is idolatry, our obedience to the "vertical" commands inevitably affects our obedience to the last six. We will not scorn parents, murder, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, or covet if God is our ultimate treasure, whom we honor with our lives and lips."

Discussion Section 3: The Better Law Keeper

-According to Jesus, how well do we keep the Ten Commandments? (**Matthew 5:20-48**)

-As you consider God's holy standard, how do you feel you are doing when it comes to meeting it?

-How does this passage ultimately point to Christ?

Note: As we close, we would do well to remember that we fall woefully short of God's holy standard set forth in the Ten Commandments. If we are truly honest with ourselves, we have broken every one of them multiple times. Jesus made it plain in **Matthew 5:20-48** that God's standard goes far beyond a rote keeping of the law but looks to the heart. Part of the reason we have the Ten Commandments is to remind us that we have all sinned, and we all fall short of God's glory (**Romans 3:23**).

The good news, however, is that there is a better Law Keeper than you and me. Jesus came in the flesh and did meet God's perfect standard (**1 Peter 2:22**). He came and fulfilled the law that we could not bear up under (**Matthew 5:17**). Even more, He absorbed God's wrath that we deserved, by becoming sin so that we could become His righteousness (**2 Corinthians 5:21**). So, although we have sinned and fallen short of God's glory, we have been **"justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus"** (**Romans 3:24**). As we recognize the great salvation that has been bought for us through Christ, may we strive by the Spirit, motivated by our love for Him, to walk in obedience to all that the LORD has commanded (**John 14:5, 2 John 1:6**).