

Ten Commandments:

God's Pathway to Blessing the Nations



August 16, 2020

Open: How do you tend to respond when people give you rules to follow? Explain.

Read & Discuss: Exodus 20:1-21

1. Exodus 20-23 is mostly a record of God's laws given to His people through Moses. Historically, Old Testament laws have been divided into three types: moral, civil and ceremonial. Do you think the New Testament believer is obligated to obey all three kinds of laws in the Old Testament? Why or why not? What type do you think best describes the laws in verses 20:1-17?
2. Perhaps the weightiest phrase in this chapter is "God spoke all these words" (v. 1). Why are these words so significant for this context? If God's laws are intended to protect us from the power of evil and bring blessing to our lives, what words might we substitute for "commandment" or "law"? Does using a different word change how you think about these commands? Explain.
3. Why do you think God starts this section by reminding the Israelites that He brought them out of slavery in Egypt (v. 2)? How is this idea similarly reflected for the New Testament believer in 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20? How does this concept play a role in your motivation when you think of your obligation to obey God?
4. How would you put the first commandment (v. 3) in your own words? In what way do you think this commandment is related to Deuteronomy 6:5 and Matthew 22:36-38? How might this first command be understood as the foundation of all the other commands?
5. All these commandments are endorsed by Jesus and his apostles in the New Testament except for the fourth command (vv. 8-11). Read Mark 2:23-28; Romans 14:5, 6; Colossians 2:16, 17. In light of these passages, how do you think we should view the fourth commandment today?
6. What do Jesus' comments in Matthew 5:21, 22, 27, 28 tell us about God's concern for our heart attitude with regard to these laws? Do you ever catch yourself experiencing emotions that are contrary to these commands? What do you think we should do when that happens?

Apply: How would you assess your heart attitude toward the Ten Commandments? (And, do you find yourself more often obeying God out of duty or delight?) What changes do you need to make so your heart better aligns with God's design for these commands?

Pray: Ask God to help us all to embrace God's design for us with glad and joyful hearts.

Exodus 20

¹ And God spoke all these words, saying,

² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷ "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

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

¹³ "You shall not murder.

¹⁴ "You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ "You shall not steal.

¹⁶ "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

¹⁷ "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

¹⁸ Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off ¹⁹ and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." ²⁰ Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin." ²¹ The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

(ESV)