

Destin Church of Christ

April 2, 2023

Chapter 5: 10 Commandments: “New Commands and a New Covenant”

Timeless Truth: Be different—set apart—for God’s purposes.

Exodus 19 – 20; 24 – 25; 32 – 34; 40

Timeline: 1525-1450 B.C.

Every time we get in a car and drive somewhere, we follow countless rules without even noticing. Following simple “rules of the road” when driving protects us, directs us, and keeps us (and others) safe. Without them, a one-mile drive across town would be dangerous, chaotic, and potentially life-threatening. Without them, a one-mile drive across town would be dangerous, chaotic, and potentially life-threatening.

The Ten Commandments are the basic “rules of the road” for how people are to relate to God and each other.

This lesson is not about the individual Commandments, but the events leading up to and then after God gave the Israelites the Commandments.

Plot Points:

- God presents his people with his commands, outlining his expectations for the covenant community.
- God’s central desire is to have a people with whom he can dwell in relationship and through whom he can reveal himself to the world.

Lesson Breakdown:

- At Mount Sinai (Exodus 19)
- Ten Commandments (Exodus 20)
- Worshipers Called Out (Exodus 24-25)
- The Golden Calf (Exodus 32)
- God with Us (Exodus 33-34, 40)

As you watch this week’s video, notice some of the main points.

- ✓ People see God as a cosmic killjoy.
- ✓ If I come down, there have to be guidelines on how you treat me and how you treat each other.
- ✓ If I come down, I’ll need a place to stay.
- ✓ If I come down, sin must be atoned for.
- ✓ And this new nation was to be different.
- ✓ “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.”

UNDERSTAND THE STORY

- Exodus 19:1 (pg. 59): The Israelites came to the Desert of Sinai. They camped there before the mountain (pg. 59). God tells Moses to come up to the mountain.
- Though we often think about Moses going up Mount Sinai once and receiving the Law of God for the Israelites, he actually ascended Mount Sinai either seven or eight times.

I. Ascent 1 (Exodus 19:2–7) (pg. 59):

Moses ascends the mountain in verse 3 and comes back down in verse 7. On the mountain God tells Moses that He is offering a covenant to the people of Israel: if they will keep the covenant, He will make them His own “treasured possession” and “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation” (verses 5–6).

II. Ascent 2 (Exodus 19:8–9) (pg. 59):

Moses returns to the top of Mt. Sinai in Exodus 19:8 in order to relay the people’s response to the offer of a covenant. God then tells Moses that He will speak audibly to Moses in a thick cloud so that all the people will put their trust in Moses as God’s chosen leader. Moses descends the mountain in verse 9 in order to relay this information to the children of Israel.

1. Why did Moses repeat the people’s response to God in verse 9, when he had just told God in verse 8?
2. Why did God want the people to hear him speaking to Moses from a dense cloud? (pg. 59) (Exodus 19:9)

III. Ascent 3 (Exodus 19:10–19) (pg. 60):

In Exodus 19:10, God is speaking to Moses again, which implies that Moses may have again climbed Mt. Sinai. Moses is said to descend the mountain again in verse 14. Moses consecrates the people in preparation for the Lord’s appearance on the mountain on the third day (verses 10–11).

On the third day, “there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast” (Exodus 19:16). The people of Israel were understandably frightened. Then “Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder” (verses 18–19).

3. As instructed in verse 14, the people washed their clothes. What restriction did God put on them in verse 15? (pg. 60)

IV. Ascent 4 (Exodus 19:20—20:20) (pg. 60-62):

Moses’ fourth trip up Mt. Sinai is described in Exodus 19:20–25. God summons Moses to the top of the mountain in order to have him warn the people not to draw near the mountain while His presence is on Sinai. He also tells Moses to bring his brother, Aaron, up the mountain with him. Moses descends the mountain in verse 25. God then delivers the Ten Commandments audibly in Exodus 20:1–17. In fear, the people of Israel plead with Moses not to let God speak directly to them. Instead, they ask Moses to be their intercessor and they would listen to him (verses 18–19). Moses tells them to not be afraid but that God is testing them so that they would fear Him and not sin (verse 20).

They are no-nonsense rules for how the Israelites were to relate to God (commands 1 – 4) and to each other (commands 5– 10). (pg. 61)

4. How did God initially deliver the 10 Commandments to the Israelites?
5. What was the purpose of the Ten Commandments? (Romans 7:7)

Ray Chihak ... “The 10 Commandments was like a nanny, showing the people the difference in what is right and what is wrong.”

Brad Coonfield ... “The 10 Commandments showed the difference in God’s people and those of the world.”

V. Ascent 5 (Exodus 20:21—23:33) (pg. 62):

Moses returns to Mt. Sinai in Exodus 20:21. He “approached the thick darkness (“dark cloud”) where God was.” (The people kept their distance.) At this time, God gives Moses various laws, recorded in chapters 21–23, along with a promise to give the land of Canaan to the children of Israel (Exodus 23:20–33).

6. What was the name given to a collection of laws found in chapters, 20-23, as the terms of the covenant made with God, and given for Israel's guidance until a more complete legislation should be provided? (pg. 62)

VI. Ascent 6 (Exodus 24—31) (pg. 62-64):

In Exodus 24:1, Moses is summoned again to climb Mt. Sinai. This time he is to bring Aaron, Aaron's sons Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel with him. The next morning, Moses "built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel" (verse 4). He offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings and read the Book of the Covenant to the people, who responded, "We will do everything the Lord has said; we will obey" (verse 7). To ratify the covenant, Moses sprinkled the people with the blood of the sacrifice (verse 8).

After the ceremony, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the elders ascend the mountain, and there they "saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli ("sapphire"), as bright blue as the sky" (24:10). Amazingly, God allows these men to live, even though they had seen God; in fact, they "ate and drank" on the mountain (verse 11).

God then commands Moses to continue up Sinai in order to receive the stone tablets that God had prepared (24:12). Moses takes Joshua with him and sends the others down to the foot of Sinai. While Joshua waits, Moses continues the ascent. For six days, a cloud covers the top of the mountain. On the seventh day, God calls Moses to enter the cloud and approach the top of the mountain. Moses stays there for 40 days and 40 nights (verse 18).

During this meeting on the mountain, God gives Moses much information which included the Ten Commandments written on tablets of stone by God Himself. Moses also receives complete instructions on how to build the tabernacle, the ark of the covenant, and the altar, specifications for the priestly garments, etc. (Exodus 24–31). Unfortunately, at the foot of the mountain, the Israelites had Aaron build the golden calf and were committing idolatry. When Moses and Joshua descend the mountain in Exodus 32:19 and see what the people are doing, Moses breaks the stone tablets in anger. He then destroys the golden calf and disciplines the people.

7. Where did gold come from? (Exodus 3:20-22)

VII. Ascent 7 (Exodus 32:30–35):

Moses goes back to the Lord in Exodus 32:30 in order to intercede on behalf of the children of Israel, and "make atonement for [their] sin". This implies another ascent of Sinai. In a show of great love and mercy that anticipates the love and mercy of Jesus Christ, Moses offers his own life in exchange for the life of the Israelites (verse 32).

8. What was God's response? (pg. 66) Exodus 32:35

9. How did the Lord speak to Moses? (pg. 67) (Exodus 33:11)

VIII. Ascent 8 (Exodus 34) (pg. 67):

The Lord tells Moses to "chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones," and He will write on them the same words that were on the tablets Moses smashed. Moses is to climb up Mount Sinai alone and present himself to the Lord. Moses worships the Lord and receives a repetition of the covenant, which he writes on the stone tablets. Moses is on Sinai for another 40 days and 40 nights, miraculously "without eating bread or drinking water" (verse 28). When Moses comes back down to the people, he wasn't aware that his face had become radiant. When Aaron and the people of Israel saw the radiance of Moses' face, they were afraid to come near him. (verses 29–30).

The events at Mt. Sinai were monumental in the history of the world. God was creating for Himself a new nation with new laws and a new way of life. The Lord showed Himself to be a God who desires to communicate Himself and to forge a relationship with His people. In giving the Law, God revealed His holiness, clearly defined sin (Romans 7:7); and provided a guardian to eventually bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24–25). The mediation of Moses on Sinai is a wonderful picture of the intercession of Christ on behalf of sinners (Romans 8:34).

10. Why did God command the people not to make an image or idol? (pg. 69)
(Exodus 34:14)

11. Why did Moses put a veil over his face when he talked to the Israelites?
(pg. 69) (Exodus 34:29-35)

The Tabernacle (pgs. 69-70) (Exodus 40):

- A. The Tabernacle is to be set up. (40:1-16)
 - a. God tells Moses how to assemble everything. (40:1-5)
 - b. How to arrange the items in the courtyard. (40:6-11)
 - c. Aaron and his sons are anointed to minister as priests. (40:12-16)

 - B. Moses performs all as directed. (40:17-33)
 - a. The tent goes up by setting up the boards, covering with the curtains. (40:17-19)
 - b. The Ark of the Covenant is set in the Most Holy Place, and the veil is set in place. (40:20-21)
 - c. The table of showbread is put in the Holy Place. (40:22-23)
 - d. The lampstand is put in the Holy Place. (40:24-25)
 - e. The golden altar of incense is put in the Holy Place. (40:26-27)
 - f. The screen is hung at the entrance of the tabernacle. (40:28)
 - g. The brazen altar is put in its place. (40:29)
 - h. The laver for washing is put in between the altar and the tent. (40:30-32)
 - i. The outer court is set up. (40:33)

 - C. The glory of the Lord fills the tabernacle. (40:34-38)
 - a. God's glory fills the tabernacle. (40:34-35)
 - b. God's glory abides with Israel in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. (40:36-38)
-

The Book of Exodus ends with great hope and trust in God. Though Israel was in the middle of a desolate desert, had fierce enemies in the Promised Land, and was weak and liable to sin and rebellion, God was with them. This gave them great cause for faith and confidence.

The God of the Upper Story wants to come down and do life with us in the Lower Story. God is no longer going to be “up there” but “down here.” At our Next class (April 16), we’ll look at the way the Lord miraculously provides for the Israelites as they wander in the desert for forty years. Read Lesson Six of *The Story*.