THE LAW OF GOD

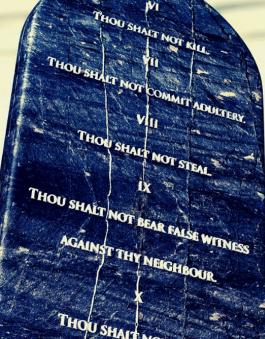
LESSON #8

THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME. IL THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD THY GOD IN VAIN

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT

TONOUR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER



CHRONICLES OF REDEMPTION

The Law of God

Exodus 15-20

INTRODUCTION

Israel, now free from Egyptian bondage, had an appointment to worship at Sinai, the mountain where Moses first spoke with God in the burning bush. The multitude of over two million newly-freed slaves would witness again the gracious and patient nature of their God as He miraculously provided for every need during the three-month journey through the barren wasteland of the Sinai Peninsula.

At Sinai, Israel would receive their charter which clearly and simply set the standard for their relationship with God and man. They would emerge from their wilderness experience a well-defined nation, war-ready, divisions in place, with a unifying code which would later



Bitter water made sweet

• "So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, 'What shall we drink?" (15:24).

Israel faced their first test at Marah in the wilderness of Shur, the desert region between Egypt and Canaan. At the first sign of need, their ______ wavered, and they quickly forgot the awesome power of God so vividly displayed in the Passover and Red Sea crossing a mere three days before (cf. Exod. 14:31).

• "And the Lord showed him a tree...and the waters became sweet. ... I, the Lord, am your Healer" (15:25-26).

Israel encountered the bitter water while following in the way of God's leading. As He had led Israel into the box canyon at Pi-hahiroth where, to prevent their destruction, He opened the sea before their eyes, so now God tested Israel by leading them into this difficult situation only to prove that He could be implicitly trusted.

God often tests His people in order to _____, not destroy, their faith.

Read Exodus 16:1-5, 11-15

Satisfied with bread of Heaven

• "Would that we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt...for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (16:3).

Their path took them on a south-westerly track back along the sea to a dreary and desolate stretch of land called the Wilderness of Sin. A month since their exodus from Egypt, the food taken to sustain two million people and their livestock must have been nearly gone. Looking back across the sea they would have been able to imagine the fertile fields and pots of meat lost to them forever--and they ______.

• "You shall eat meat and in the morning you shall be filled with bread...I am the Lord your God" (16:12).

Announcing beforehand what He would do and when He would do it, God graciously gave Israel both ______ and _____. The *manna*, meaning "what is it?" could only be collected in the morning in amounts sufficient for a day's supply. Thus Israel would depend upon God daily for their survival (cf. 16:16-19). This *bread of angels* would sustain them for forty years (cf. Exod. 16:35; Psa. 78:23-25).



NOTES:

• "Why now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" (17:3).	
Now months from Egypt and near their	
destination, Israel's faith again failed as they gave in to	
quarreling and complaining. Their incredibly short	
memory provides a snapshot of human nature at	
variance with the long-suffering and merciful character	
of God.	

• "...You shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink" (17:6).

The riverbeds which were typically filled to overflowing during the winter months were now hopelessly dry. At God's command Moses struck the rock—a benign act in itself, yet water ran like a river toward the waiting multitudes (cf. Psa. 105:41). Once again God had miraculously overruled natural forces for the benefit of His people. And once again God repaid Israel's insolent complaints with gracious ______ and abundant ______.





• "...And there Israel camped in front of the mountain" (19:2).

Israel arrived at Mount Sinai three months after leaving Egypt thus fulfilling God's word to Moses as he stood before the burning bush (cf. Exod. 3:1, 12). Moreover, the promise to make ______ a great nation was now fulfilled as God initiated another covenant officially establishing Israel as a nation.

eclaration of the covenant

• "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself" (19:4).

As the eagle teaches her young to fly by bearing them on strong wings, catching them when they fall, so God bore His young nation Israel, guarding and guiding their every way. As the eagle carries her young to the protected heights of the mountain eyrie, so God led Israel from slavery to the high plain of Sinai where He would reveal His purpose for her (cf. Deut. 32:11-12).



• "If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant" (19:5).

This covenant is referred to as the Law of Moses and contains within it the _____

______. Unlike the Abrahamic covenant which would be fulfilled by God alone, God's covenant with Israel set forth the condition of perfect obedience. Israel would receive the promised blessings only if they obeyed completely.

Blessings

Three distinct characteristics define Israel's newly proposed relationship with God...

• *"My own possession among all the peoples"* (19:5).

Of all nations, ______ would be God's "special treasure," distinctly belonging to the Lord, even though all peoples of the earth belong to Him.

• *"A kingdom of priests"* (19:6).

As a priest typically has access to God and therefore functions as a representative between God and man, so Israel would be a nation of priests representing God to the nations of the world. One way God did this was to entrust Israel with the Old Testament ______ which they received and recorded for the world (cf. Rom. 3:1-2).

• *"A holy nation"* (19:6).

Israel would be a nation *set apart* from all other nations and devoted specifically to carry out God's purpose as a channel through which the ______ would come to bring redemption (blessing) to all the earth.

• "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (19:8).

Though God had not yet given the commands, Israel affirmed that they would ______ all. Quickly forgetting their recent failures in the wilderness, this was nevertheless an appropriate response based on the nation's knowledge of God as their sovereign Redeemer. Later God affirmed Israel's commitment to obedience when He answered...

NOTES:

	Deuteronomy 5:28-29	
	"I have heard the voice of the words	of
		this people which they have
T	spoken to	you. They have done well
\mathcal{L}	in all that	they have spoken. Oh, that
	they had	such a heart in them, that
	they would	fear Me, and keep all
	my	
	well with them and with their [childr	ren]
		forever."
	Read Exodus 19:9-15	
Preparatio	on of the people	
• "Go to the peo	ple and consecrate them" (19:10).	

Consecration simply means to make oneself ______ for a specific task. In this case, the people were to prepare for God Himself to descend upon Sinai to reveal the terms of the covenant. Imagine the mounting apprehension of Israel as they prepared to meet their God. The requirements laid before them—the washing of clothes, the sexual abstinence, and the boundaries erected to block the people from the mountain on which God would descend—graphically illustrated the gulf between sinful man and holy God. The

______ penalty exacted upon man or animal for violating the breach only intensified the solemn fact that God is unapproachable in awesome majesty.

Read Exodus 19:16-20

Revelation of the covenant God

What is God like? The Bible gives us a picture—a revelation of His ______ when He descended upon the mountain. And what Israel saw shook them to the core of their being. They saw a mountain blazing with fire *"to the very heart of the heavens."* They saw *"darkness and gloom and whirlwind."* They heard the intense ram's horn drone louder and louder. Then God spoke *"from the midst of the fire,"* and while Israel didn't see God's form, they heard *" the sound of words"* so terrible that *"those who heard begged that no further word should be spoken to them."* Even Moses was terrified by the sight and said, *"I am full of fear and trembling"* (cf. Deut. 4:11-12; 9:19; Heb. 12:18-21).

Deuteronomy 5:23-26



"... When [Israel] heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire...[They] said, 'Behold, the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice from the midst of the

fire... Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any longer, then we shall die. For who is there of all

flesh, who has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire,

as we have, and lived?'"

Read Exodus 20:1-2

• "Then God spoke all these words" (20:1).

God alone is the Source of these words, referring to the Ten Commandments which God declared to Israel as part of His covenant (cf. Deut. 4:13). As God lays out His Law, He identifies Himself as the Lord, the God, and the Redeemer of Israel. God gave Israel many other instructions at Sinai, including a multitude of

laws to govern the community life of the nation and ______ laws to direct Israel's worship as a distinct people of God. Jewish rabbis have traditionally taught that the book of the Law (the Torah) contains at least 248 positive commands and 365 negative commands (one for each day of the year)— totaling 613 distinct laws! For our



purposes, we will focus on the Ten Commandments.

The Ten Commandments reflect the character of by defining His high standard of right and wrong. They were specifically given to Israel, His representatives to the	
nations. Yet the commandments are timeless in their application to all humanity, having been <i>"written in their hearts"</i> by God (cf. Rom. 2:14-15). To easily remember them, think of them divided into two parts: the first through fourth commandments govern man's relationship to The fifth through tenth commandments govern man's	
relationship with his fellow	

The 1st Commandment: Preserving worship of the true God

• "You shall have no other gods before me" (20:3).

By this command, God has established that He alone is God and must be worshiped exclusively (cf. Deut. 4:39; Isa. 45:5). The biblical teaching of belief in _____ God

(monotheism) stood in contrast to the worship of ______ gods (polytheism), the common practice of the surrounding nations.



Isaiah 44:6

"...I am the first and I am the last, and there is no God besides Me."

Only the Creator God is worthy of complete honor and ______. Any person, any object, any activity which usurps the solitary place of the supreme God in the heart of man has become a false god (cf. Rom. 1:25). Any passion which absorbs devotion or diminishes focus from the supreme God in the heart of man has become a false god (cf. Deut. 6:5). Any love which competes with the love of God in the heart of man—the love of things, money, pleasure, or immortality—is idolatry, a false god (cf. Matt. 6:24; Col. 3:5). Trust in self, the abilities of man, or human wisdom is idolatry—a false god (cf. Jer. 9:23-24, 17:5). Violation of this command brought the _____ penalty:

Deuteronomy 6:5, 13-15



"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might... You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him...

You shall not follow other gods... Otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the



earth."



The 2nd Commandment: Preserving correct ______ of the true God.

• "You shall not make for yourself an idol" (20:4).

The Law of God forbids the worship of a false god, but false worship of the true God is also wrong. God must be worshiped as He is—according to His self-revelation in the Bible (cf. John 4:24)—not as He is imagined in the heart of man. When a person says, *"I like to think of God as…"* that can easily reflect a false imagination of God because it is not founded upon biblical revelation. Representations of God in pictures, statues, and artifacts for the purpose of worship or prayer is also a violation of the second commandment. God is Spirit and any attempt to represent Him by a tangible image or idol reduces Him to a created thing when in reality *He* is the Creator of all that exists (cf. Deut. 4:15-19).



Isaiah 42:8 "I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor My praise to graven images."

Violation of this command brought the ______ penalty (c



_ penalty (cf. Deut. 27:15).

The 3rd Commandment: Preserving the name of God.

• "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain" (20:7).

The divine name expresses no less than the very Person, presence, power, and work of God (cf. Psa. 52:9; 83:18; 99:3).

Psalm 138:2 (NIV) "I will boy down...and will praise Your name for Your love and Your faithfulness, for You have exalted above all things Your name and Your Word."

The thoughtless and irreverent use of God's name in swearing is a violation of God's Law because it speaks of Him unworthily and maligns His character. The frivolous use of His names or His titles violates the third commandment because it reduces God's holy name to a common, mundane level.

Violation of this command brought the _____ penalty (cf. Lev. 24:14-16).

NOTES:	
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"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"

(20:8). The *Sabbath*, still observed by orthodox Jews today, refers to a rest from labor and personal pursuits. The seventh day of each week (Saturday) was kept holy by setting the day apart for the

worship of God. Because of Israel's natural tendency to forget

God this command helped them...

Read Exodus 20:8-11

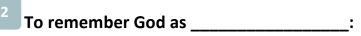
To remember God as :

"For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth...and rested on the *seventh day"* (20:11).

The 4th Commandment: Preserving the Sabbath.

One reason God gave the Sabbath was to remind Israel of the creation week pattern

which they were to follow. With a weekly Sabbath, Israel would frequently reflect on their God as the Creator of all things (cf. Gen. 2:2).



"And you shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand...therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day" (Deut. 5:15).

A second reason for observing the Sabbath was to celebrate the rest experienced by Israel after they were rescued from bondage in Egypt where they had no rest. In this way Israel would take time to show gratitude to God their Redeemer.



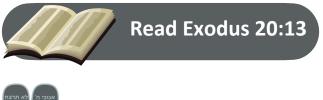
The 5th Commandment: Preserving the family.

• "Honor your father and your mother" (20:12).

To honor one's parents means to deeply revere and respect them. The child honors his parents by submitting to their ______ and obeying their instruction (cf. Eph. 6:1). Grown children honor their aging parents by protecting them, caring for them, and respecting their name even after death.

Order in society begins with order in the _____. The building blocks for a stable society lie within the context of parental authority in the family. The child who learned to humbly submit to his parents while still young would find it easier to submit to God as he grew. Conversely, the child who developed habits of disrespect and rebellion in the home would later disregard authority outside the home—both God's and man's.

So important was this command to the future of the nation that cursing, striking, or even refusing instruction from one's parents was a capital offense. The rebellious son who refused to obey was to be literally stoned to _____! (Cf. Exod. 21:15,17; Lev. 20:9; Deut. 21:18-21).



The 6th Commandment: Preserving life.

"You shall not murder" (20:13).

Murder refers to the malicious and intentional taking of human life and should not be confused with judicial killing (law enforcement) or death resulting from an act of war. The Bible teaches that murder begins in the heart, therefore ______ for another human being also violates this commandment (cf. Matt. 15:19). Cain is a powerful example of this when he murdered his brother Abel in a jealous rage (cf. Gen. 4:5-8).



1 John 3:15 "Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding him."

With the sixth commandment, God established that human life is a sacred trust to be protected and honored because men have been created in God's ______ and belong to Him (cf. Gen. 1:27, 9:6; Ezek. 18:4). It elevated the value of human life in stark contrast to the pagan societies surrounding Israel or the godless philosophy of modern man which believes life is the product of random chance.

As the Source and Owner of life, God alone has the authority to determine a person's day of death (cf. Gen. 2:7; Deut. 32:39; 1 Sam 2:6).



Job 14:1,5 "Man, who is born of a woman, is short lived and full of turmoil...Since his days are determined, the number of his months is with Thee, and his limits Thou hast set so that he cannot pass."

For this reason, suicide (the murder of _____), abortion (the murder of the conceived yet unborn

_____, cf. Psa. 139:13-16), and euthanasia (the painless, easy murder of the ______ or terminally ill) violate the sixth commandment because they rob God of authority that is rightfully His.

Murder was a capital crime which invoked the _____ penalty (cf. Exod. 21:12).

Read Exodus 20:14

The 7th Commandment: Preserving marriage.

• "You shall not commit adultery" (20:14).

As God is the designer of marriage (cf. Gen. 1:27-28, 2:23-24), the intimate relationship which is the exclusive privilege of married couples is not wrong. Rather, the seventh commandment addresses adultery, which is a sexual relationship outside the parameters of monogamous marriage (one man and one woman in a committed life relationship). Similar to the previous command where the outward act of murder is linked to inner hatred, the sin of adultery also begins in the thought life with lust (cf. Matt. 15:19). God holds man ______ for both.

Matthew 5:27-28

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery'; but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart."

Adultery and other forms of immorality such as fornication (between unmarried persons), incest (within the family), and homosexuality (same sex relationships) were prohibited by the Law and throughout the whole Bible as clear violations of God's design for human relationships.

They were all punishable by ______ (cf. Lev. 18:6ff, 22, 20:10; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).



The 8th Commandment: Preserving personal possessions.

• "You shall not steal" (20:15).

To take from another what is rightfully theirs by force, manipulation, deceit, or price-gouging is theft, a violation of the eighth commandment. Overpricing goods or services at the expense of the consumer, underpaying an employee, taking an extra long coffee break on hired time all violate God's intent for man to respect the property of another. Theft originates in the ______ with greed (cf. Matt. 15:19). Ever since Eve reached for the fruit in the garden, man has instinctively longed for more than he has. But God desires man to be a giver rather than a taker...



Ephesians 4:28

"Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need." Under the Law, theft of property was punishable by various forms of ______ (cf. Lev. 6:1-7) and kidnapping (theft of a person) was a capital offense punishable by ______ (cf. Deut. 24:7).





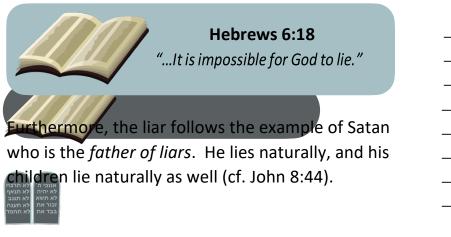
The 9th Commandment: Preserving the truth.

• "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor..." (20:16).

Truthful testimony-telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth—was necessary for the ______ to be administered justly. In capital cases, the death penalty was enforced only on the testimony of two or three witnesses (cf. Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Heb. 10:28). Since testifying truthfully was literally a matter of life and death for the one being tried, bearing false witness brought the ______ penalty (cf. Deut. 19:16-21).

God desired Israel to uphold the truth as they represented Him in every aspect of their lives, thoughts, words, and deeds. A person who lies against the truth, sins against God Who is the essence of truth

(cf. Num. 23:19; Psa. 12:6; 31:5; 119:160; Titus 1:2).



NOTES:

The 10th Commandment: Preserving purity of heart.

• "You shall not covet..." (20:17).

Coveting is linked in the Bible to lust, greed, and evil desire. The covetous person is ______ with what he has and ______ for more. He loves the world to excess, even though it can—and will—never satisfy (cf. Eccl. 5:10). Covetousness takes root in the heart, and like a cancer, it invades the whole man, consuming his thought, word, and deed...

Luke 12:15-21

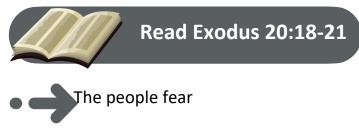
"Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions..."



"The land of a certain rich man was very productive. And he began reasoning to himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no place to store my crops? ... This is

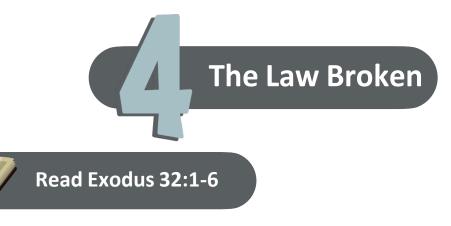
what I will do; I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years to come; Take your ease, eat, drink and be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your soul is required of you...' So is the man who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God."

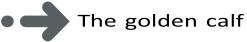
Coveting was _____ punishable by death, but often was the motive behind other capital violations of the Law.



• "The people... trembled and stood at a distance" (20:18).

Fearing for their lives, the people begged Moses to intercede for them. Moses returned to the mountain where God wrote the commandments on two tablets of stone (cf. Exod. 31:18; 32:16; Deut. 5:22). He remained on Sinai for _____ days (cf. Exod. 24:18).





• *"Come, make us a god who will go before us" (32:1).*

While Moses was on the mountain receiving the ______, Israel was on the plain breaking the ______! Impatient that Moses was delayed on Sinai, Israel turned back to the pagan idolatry from which they had been delivered in Egypt (cf. Acts 7:40). Desiring to be led by a god they could see, they violated faith in the true God "Who is unseen" (Heb. 11:27; cf. 2 Cor. 5:7).



Exodus 32:4

"This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt."

The calf that Aaron fashioned was not a false god, but more likely a bad attempt at making a tangible representation of the true God. Nonetheless, worshipping the image clearly violated the ______ commandment, even though a feast was proclaimed to the Lord. They sacrificed to their idol *"and were rejoicing in the works of their hands"* (cf. Acts 7:41).

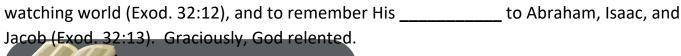
• "And the people...rose up to play" (32:6).

The word *play* implies immorality and the fact that they were *"out of control,"* alludes to the drunkenness which was typical of pagan ceremonies of that day (cf. 32:25; 1 Cor. 10:8-

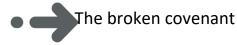


• *"They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them" (32:8).*

Angry that Israel had so swiftly abandoned themselves to worship an idol, God called them *obstinate,* or stiffnecked, like a beast too stubborn to be reined in. Israel bowed before an idol, but not God, so He distanced Himself, referring to them to Moses as *your people.* God was going to *"blot out their name from under heaven,"* utterly destroying them (cf. Deut. 9:14). But Moses interceded for the nation, appealing to God to protect His name before a



Read Exodus 32:19



The broken tablets graphically symbolized the broken covenant between Israel and God. In spite of the nation's sincere intentions to obey ("All that the Lord has spoken we will do!"), Israel was clearly incapable of keeping His commands because of their inherited bent to sin.



Understanding the purpose of the Law

If God knew that Israel would not be able to keep the Law, why did He give it?

NOTES:

To reveal divine _____

The potential for the new nation to become lifted up with pride and abuse their high calling as God's chosen vessel was offset by the incredible revelation of the absolute holiness of God displayed in the revelation of the Law. Whereas God displayed His absolute power in Creation, the flood, and the dispersion at Babel, the Law underscored His holiness. In the Law, God reveals His holy character to Israel.

2 To provide a standard of _____

It was the charter of the newly formed nation of Israel. It was a permanently written code of morality teaching them right and wrong, according to God's standard, not man's. In following the Law, Israel would express individually and corporately the character of God before a watching world. They were to be God's flashing neon sign that displayed what a relationship between God and man looked like.

To expose and identify

Against the background of the holiness of God displayed in the Law, the sinfulness of man would stand in stark contrast. "...Through the commandment, sin might become utterly sinful" (Rom. 7:13). "The Law entered that the offense might abound" (Rom. 5:20). "By the Law is

the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). *"I had not known sin but by the Law"* (Rom. 7:7). The Law exposes sin as an offense against God, and man as helplessly sinful.

CONCLUSION

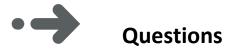
People are prone to view the Ten Commandments as a means to gain some credit with God. Many might believe that, if they follow the Ten Commandments, God will in turn accept them. But they confuse good intentions with actual performance. The problem with their line of reasoning is that God's standard is perfection. The Law of God is perfect and true, and no sinful person would ever be able to attain to that standard, for to break one of the commandments is the same as having broken them all.



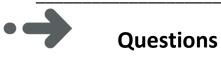
"For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all."

So, to mistake law-keeping as a means to reconnect with God is to invite frustration and despair (cf. Gal. 3:11). The Law was never given with the intention of reconciling the separation between God and man. What the Law does do for man is similar to the function of a mirror. The mirror can easily show a person a smudge of dirt on his face, but is utterly incapable of removing it. The Israelites needed a Redeemer, Someone from without, to rescue them from their sin. Israel broke the Law even before Moses presented the tablets with the commands written on them. God knew man's inability to obey His commands completely, and in grace He provided a way for the Israelites to confess their sin and repent. Later, instructions were given to Moses on Sinai which explained various offerings and sacrifices that would provide atonement, or a sin-covering, while Israel waited for the Redeemer.

NOTES:



- 1. Why did God continue to provide for Israel even though they constantly grumbled and complained?
- 2. What were the stipulations of this covenant with Israel, and how does it differ with the Abrahamic covenant?
- 3. How did the Israelites prepare to meet God and what was the importance of these preparations?
- 4. What three promises did God make to Israel if they obeyed His commandments?
- 5. Were the Ten Commandments only for Israel or do they retain any impact on people today? If yes, how?
- 6. What are the two major divisions into which the Ten Commandments can be divided?
- 7. What was the initial response of the people to their meeting with God and hearing His commandments?
- 8. What led the Israelites to make the "golden calf"?
- 9. If God knew that Israel would not be able to keep the Law, why did He give it?



10. Was the Law God's provision for helpless Israel to reconnect with Him?

11. How is the Law similar to a mirror?

12. How has the Law affected Western culture over the years and is it still affecting contemporary culture?