

# THE LAW OF GOD

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## LESSON # 8



# The Law of God

Exodus 15-20

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## 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

become the basis of law and community for western civilization.

### 1 Journey to Sinai



Read Exodus 15:22-27



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:



### Read Exodus 17:1-7

•  A river in dry places

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- ***“Why now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?” (17:3).***

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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 \_\_\_\_\_.

## 2 The Law Given


 Read Exodus 19:1-8



-  God’s covenant with Israel

- ***“...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.

-  Declaration 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).

-  Condition

- ***“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...

1

- ***“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.

2

- ***“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).

3

- ***“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 spoken to \_\_\_\_\_ you. They have done well in all that \_\_\_\_\_ they have spoken. Oh, that they had \_\_\_\_\_ such a heart in them, that they would \_\_\_\_\_ fear Me, and keep all my \_\_\_\_\_*




*commandments always, that it may be*

*well with them and with their [children]*

*\_\_\_\_\_ forever."*



**Read Exodus 19:9-15**

●  Preparation of the people

• **"Go to the people 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





(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 (cf. Deut. 27:15).



### Read Exodus 20:7



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 bow 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).

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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



The 4th Commandment:

Preserving the Sabbath.

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).

1

To remember God as \_\_\_\_\_:

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

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).

2

To remember God as \_\_\_\_\_:

- **“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.

Violation of this command brought the \_\_\_\_\_ penalty (cf. Num. 15:32-



Read Exodus 20:



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).



Read Exodus 20:13



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).



### Read Exodus 20:15



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).



## Read Exodus 20:16



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:



### Hebrews 6:18

*“...It is impossible for God to lie.”*

Furthermore, the liar follows the example of Satan who is the *father of liars*. He lies naturally, and his children lie naturally as well (cf. John 8:44).



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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.



#### Read Exodus 20:18-21

• → The people fear

• ***“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).

# 4

## The Law Broken



Read Exodus 32:1-6

- → The golden calf

- ***“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. 10:8-9).



Read Exodus 32:7-14

- ***“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









## Questions

1. Why did God continue to provide for Israel even though they constantly grumbled and complained?

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2. What were the stipulations of this covenant with Israel, and how does it differ with the Abrahamic covenant?

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3. How did the Israelites prepare to meet God and what was the importance of these preparations?

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4. What three promises did God make to Israel if they obeyed His commandments?

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5. Were the Ten Commandments only for Israel or do they retain any impact on people today? If yes, how?

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6. What are the two major divisions into which the Ten Commandments can be divided?

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7. What was the initial response of the people to their meeting with God and hearing His commandments?

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8. What led the Israelites to make the “golden calf”?

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



## Questions

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

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11. How is the Law similar to a mirror?

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

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