

## Dt. 9:6-10:5 “The Reading of the Law”

**For the Children:** When people write to politicians, they often get back a typed letter, exactly the same as others get back, signed by someone who works for the politician. It's not very personal. But if you get a letter written and signed by the politician, you feel they've taken a special interest in your concerns. Well, God gave Moses a “letter” personally written by Him. He wrote it on stone, to show it was meant to last (today we'd laminate it and back it up on a computer file). This shows us how important the 10 commandments are. But even they are meant to lead us to look to the Lord Jesus Christ – who is even more important! **Questions:** How does the Law cause us to look to the Lord Jesus? How else can it help us? Are the 10 commandments in any way different than the rest of God's laws?

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### Introduction:

#### **First Point: The Giving of the Law**

- 1) Evidence of Special Character: The 10 Commandments are special. They are the only laws written on stone and written by the “finger of God” (9:10). The stone implies permanence. The “finger of God” implies His immediate and personal involvement. See also 10:2,4; 4:13; Ex. 32:16.
- 2) Why It's Special: The Decalogue is special because it is the *summary* of the *abiding moral principles* of all God's Law. It therefore plays a central role in the giving of the covenant of grace. The Decalogue is written on “the tablets of the *covenant*” (9:9,11). They are placed in the ark of the *covenant*. We read the Law regularly today to uphold this special place God has given to the Decalogue.
- 3) Law and Grace: This special role does not mean that law is more important than grace. It means that the 2 go together. The Law shows us our sin and lack of merit – which Moses outlines for Israel (9:4,5,6); our need of Christ; the necessity of grateful obedience if we are to enjoy the gracious promises; and the fear/reverence of God that is involved in accepting both promises and commandments. God gives Israel the tablets of the covenant, as a kind of “covenant-document,” to remind them of their covenant-obligations. The keeping of His promises is *His* covenant-commitment.

#### **Second Point: The Breaking of the Law**

- 1) From Woe to Go: Israel's breaking of these laws, from the time they left Egypt to the day they crossed the Jordan, shows that they do not inherit the Land by their own righteousness (9:6-7). They had been continually stubborn, rebellious and wicked (9:6,13,18,27; Ex. 17; Num. 11; Dt. 1). Their disobedience even broke forth at Horeb, the place one would have expected greater obedience (9:8).
- 2) A Smashed Covenant: Moses smashed the 2 tablets when he saw the idolatry of the golden calf – symbolizing that they had smashed the covenant from their side. The Lord therefore threatened to destroy them. It is because of our sinful tendency to break the covenant, and the seriousness of this, that we need the Law continually read to teach and warn us. That is not to deny that we also need constant reminders of the centrality of God's grace, promises and Christ in our worship.

#### **Third Point: The Renewing of the Law**

- 1) Covenant-Renewal: The Decalogue also played a major role in covenant-renewal for Israel – again showing the connection between law and grace. Moses interceded for Israel on the basis of God's gracious covenant – as a “type” of Christ – and the Lord showed mercy and renewed the covenant. To symbolize that, He re-wrote the 2 tablets. But Moses also reminded Israel of their disobedience. He used the Decalogue to do so on the plains of Moab. See also 2 Kgs. 22-23; Neh. 8-9.
- 2) Renewal Today: We need constant covenant-renewal ourselves. Our worship services are part of that. The summary of the abiding principles of God's Law reminds us that we have broken all of God's laws in every area of life. This reminds us that we need God's grace in Christ, to forgive and renew us. It then tells us how to serve God in every area of life, from gratitude for this mercy and renewal. No other passages from God's Law can cover all of that ground!

### **Conclusion:**

