

END-TIMES ISSUES



#33 God introduces the 10 Commandments.

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THE MOSAIC COVENANT

- ✓ It contained laws and decrees that showed the people how to live.
 - The laws were from God.
 - They were righteous laws.
 - Observing them would cause the people to be wise and understanding.

See, I have taught you **decrees and laws as the Lord my God commanded me** ... Observe them carefully, for this will show your **wisdom and understanding** to the nations, ...

And what other nation is so great as to have such **righteous decrees and laws** as this body of laws I am setting before you today?

Deuteronomy 4:5a, 6a, 8 (NIV)

This covenant was to influence *all* of life.

- ✓ They were to accept ALL that God said.

Do not add to what I command you and **do not subtract** from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you.

Deuteronomy 4:2 (NIV)
- ✓ It was to determine how they lived.

So be careful to do what the Lord your God has commanded you; **do not turn aside to the right or to the left**. Walk in obedience to all that the Lord your God has commanded you,

Deuteronomy 5:32-33a (NIV)

This is the same attitude that we are to have toward God's Word. Being under a different covenant, there will be differences in some of our obligations. But it doesn't remove the need to have this attitude.

One part of the law was unique – special – above all the other commands. This was a group of regulations called:

"The Ten Commandments."

- ✓ They are the basis for all the other commands.
 - The other commands are *applications* of these 10 commandments, applied to the many aspects of life.
 - The Ten Commandments are binding on all people at all times and in all circumstances. In contrast, the other commands may have relevance in some situations, yet not apply in other situations (and under different covenants).
- ✓ They are summarized by the word "love," and they define the word "love." →

These 10 commands *define* what it means to "love."

- ✓ Moses summarizes our *greatest obligation* as being "love" toward God and toward people.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Deuteronomy 6:5 (NIV)

"... **love your neighbor** as yourself. I am the Lord. **The foreigner... Love them** as yourself, ..."

Leviticus 19:18b, 34a (NIV)
- ✓ Jesus reaffirms this obligation.


"All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:40 (NIV)

- ✓ These 10 commands *define* the nature of this "love."
 - *Genuine* love will express itself in specific ways. These 10 commands show us *how* this love is expressed.
 - *All* the other commands are applications of these 10 commands into different areas of life.
- ✓ The wicked *hate* God's definition of "love."
 - They prefer a *perversion* of that word.
 - Or, they may leave the word undefined, so that people can invent their own meaningless definitions.

There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be **lovers** of themselves, **lovers** of money, ... Without [genuine] **love**, not **lovers** of the good, **lovers** of pleasure rather than **lovers** of God ...

From 2 Timothy 3:1-4 (NIV)



Don't LOVE the LIE about "love"!

✓ God has defined "love."

- It is a *commitment* that involves the use of the *mind*, whether or not emotions are involved. It's a *choice*.
- It is a *commitment* of the will, that continues even when pleasant emotions and excitement have ceased to exist.
- It is a *commitment* to do what is right (another term that God defines), even when we don't "feel" like doing it.

✓ The world has redefined "love" – without God's authorization.

- They have removed the mind and the commitment.
- They have made it fickle and dependent on the emotions of the moment.
- They have "divorced" it from truth, and have "married" it to a lie.

Love is Love

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The Ten Commandments define the nature of "love."

They show us how genuine love expresses itself.

✓ Do you want to know how to love God?

1. Make no substitutes for the True God.
2. Make no images or likenesses of the True God.
3. Do not misuse the name of the True God.
4. Set aside time each week for the True God.

✓ Do you want to know how to love people?

5. You must honor parental authority.
6. You must not take away human life.
7. You must not tolerate sexual impurity.
8. You must not steal something that belongs to another.
9. You must not speak falsely to another.
10. You must not long for anything that belongs to someone else.

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But it's more than just "Don't do these specific things"!

(Here are some EXAMPLES to illustrate this.)

✓ Each command represents a category.

- Taking away human life ("do not murder") includes anger, or a desire for harm to come upon a person.
- Honoring parental authority ("honor your father and your mother") is a principle that applies to all authority.

✓ The "Do Not" commands imply what we should "Do."

- "Do not bear false witness" ("Do not lie" in Leviticus 19:11b) implies the need to speak truthfully.

✓ The commands often overlap – even commands about God and people.

- Scripture often links *physical* adultery with *spiritual* adultery.
- Longing for ("coveting") something that isn't yours is connected to idolatry and to pursuing a false "god."

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The giving of the Ten Commandments.

Background: What happened before that event.

- Everything that happened in their journey was meant to *teach them about their dependence on the God who could be trusted.*

⇒ He delivered them out of slavery – a "picture" that illustrated God's undeserved kindness (grace), and salvation.

- ❖ He did this, *not* because they were better than other people, but because of promises he had made to their ancestors. It was *his* grace, not *their* works.

⇒ He led them through various trials, in order to teach them dependence on God.

- ❖ They needed to understand God's trustworthiness – that they could *obey* him, *knowing* that he would be faithful to his promises. (This is the type of faith that Abraham had. He gave us the example of the type of faith we *all* need.)

- ❖ They needed to understand *in their hearts* that God disciplines us as his *sons* – Deuteronomy 8:5.

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- They needed to know that God's love for them was based on *commitment*, not dependent on *what they did*.

⇒ He demonstrated this, every time he *didn't* destroy them, when they turned to sin!

- **Regretfully, many of them would never be willing to learn.**

⇒ Their commitment would be based on the fickle emotions of the moment.

- ❖ Their hearts would *not* be steadfastly loyal to their God; and they would prove it over-and-over again.

Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!

Deuteronomy 5:29 (NIV)

(In the Old Testament, "heart" refers to the center of *thinking* and *will*. Emotions are not the main focus.)

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When they reached the mountain (Mt. Sinai, also called Mt. Horeb):

⇒ **Preliminary offer:** God offers to make a covenant with the people.

- ❖ If the people are willing to obey him, he will reward them greatly.

"You have seen for yourselves what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

Now if **you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you will be My treasured possession** out of all the nations—for the whole earth is Mine.

And unto Me **you shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**"

Exodus 19:4-6a (BSB)

- ❖ The people's response:

"We will do everything that the LORD has spoken."

Exodus 19:48b (BSB)

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God gave them the 10 Commandments in a special way, different from all the other commands.

- ⇒ **Preparation:** The people must get ready – they must *consecrate* themselves. They must pursue holiness, and prepare their hearts and minds for the presence of God. Exodus 19:10-15.
- ❖ They must separate themselves from all sin, distractions, and even *good* things that might compete for their attention.
 - ❖ They must prepare their attitude:
 - Aware of their unworthiness.
 - Aware that their sinfulness leaves them *deserving* to be destroyed by a fireball from heaven.
 - *Aware that even touching the sacred space surrounding God – trespassing without his permission – will result in death.*
 - ❖ Even then, when God comes down to the mountain, he must hide himself in a thick dark cloud, lest the people die in an instant.

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Would WE have survived?

- ❖ Today, most people have a light, flippant attitude toward God. They cannot even *comprehend* what it actually means to be in his presence.
- ❖ Even *sinless* beings who reside in the presence of God fall down on their faces before him. Others bow, not daring to look.
- ❖ God, in all his fullness, *cannot* be seen. Yet even the sight of *Jesus*, as he *now* is, would be terrifying.

[God,] who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom **no one has seen or can see.**

1 Timothy 6:16a (NIV)

When I saw [Jesus], I **fell at His feet like a dead man.**

Revelation 1:17a (BSB)

- Our ability to "approach" God is *only* through Jesus Christ.
- In the future, when we "see" God, it will be Jesus who we see.

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⇒ The day when God appeared:

On the morning of the third day there was **thunder** and **lightning**, with a **thick cloud** over the mountain, and a **very loud trumpet blast**. Everyone in the camp trembled.

Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

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, Moses spoke and **the voice of God** answered him.

Exodus 19:16-19 (NIV)

- ❖ God would again warn them to not "force their way through" the cloud, to see God; because, if they did so, they would perish.

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⇒ Then...

And **God spoke** all these words: ...

Exodus 20:1 (BSB)

⇒ What words?

He declared to you his covenant, **the Ten Commandments**, which he commanded you to follow ...

Deuteronomy 4:13a (NIV)

- ❖ Later, he would *personally* write these words on two stone tablets.

When the LORD had finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, He gave him the two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone **inscribed by the finger of God.**

Exodus 31:18 (BSB)

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⇒ How significant was this event?

- ❖ These ten commandments were the *only* words *spoken* by God, with a voice that could be heard by the entire assembly of over a *million* people (based on Exodus 12:37).

The LORD spoke these commandments in a loud voice to your whole assembly out of the fire, the cloud, and the deep darkness on the mountain; **He added nothing more.**

Deuteronomy 5:22a (NIV)

- ❖ The cloud that hid God was a reminder and a warning: *Do not represent God by any visual object!*

And the LORD spoke to you out of the fire. **You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form**; there was only a voice.

So since you saw no form of any kind on the day the LORD spoke to you out of the fire at Horeb, be careful that you **do not act corruptly and make an idol for yourselves of any form or shape, ...**

Deuteronomy 4:12, 15-16a (BSB)

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⇒ The people's response? Terror.

- ❖ They had survived *so far*, but weren't sure how long survival would last. (They might have thought: If the "fireball" on the mountain grew any larger in size, it might envelop them all.)
- ❖ In the end, Moses would speak with God, and communicate God's words to the people. He would be the "mediator" between God and the people.

"Behold, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the fire. **Today we have seen that a man can live even if God speaks with him.**

But now, why should we die? For this great fire will consume us, and we will die, if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any longer. For **who of all flesh has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the fire, as we have, and survived?!"**

Deuteronomy 5:24b-26 (BSB)

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⇒ **Later events.**

- ❖ God would give Moses additional instructions.
- ❖ The people would reaffirm their commitment to obey God (Exodus 24:7).
- ❖ The covenant would then be ratified, sealed with blood (Exodus 24:4-6, 8).
- ❖ There would be a meal. God would call the leaders to the mountain; and they would *see* God – but only his feet (beneath the cloud).*

Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and **they saw the God of Israel**.* Under His feet was a work like a pavement made of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself.

But God did not lay His hand on the nobles of Israel; **they saw Him**, and they ate and drank.

Exodus 24:9-11 (BSB)

* (This was probably Jesus, *temporarily* in physical form, prior to taking on a *permanent* body, when he was born in Bethlehem.)

Now, what about us?

⇒ **Have you ever thought to yourself...**

If I had been able to experience something like that, ...

I would be forever faithful...

... serving God with all my might!

⇒ **Well, it doesn't work.**

- ❖ Even at the time it was happening, God knew that the emotions of the experience *would not last*.

"Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!

Deuteronomy 5:29 (NIV)

- ❖ A few weeks later, they would be bowing down before a golden image of a calf.

OUR MISSION:

To pursue the changed heart that God offers, and let it control how we live!

- ⇒ We need to *trust* God, like Abraham (who *never* had a "Mount Sinai experience," like this). And then, we need to *grow* in that trust.

It's not the "experience" that counts, but our trust in the God who reveals himself in Scripture. If we are NOT willing to pay attention to Scripture, then even someone rising from the dead won't convince us!

"Then Abraham said to him, **'If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded even if someone rises from the dead.'**"

Luke 16:31 (BSB)

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