

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This morning, we are continuing our study through the book of Exodus.

Our text is going to be Exodus 20 –

We are going to be spending a good amount of time on the Ten Commandments -

For the past couple of weeks, we have followed the Children of Israel as Moses has been used to bring them out of the slavery of Egypt, through the Red Sea, through the wilderness, and now we find them camping at the foot of Mt. Sinai.

Here is where they are going to meet God.

Here is where they will hear the voice of God speak to them directly as He gives them the Ten Commandments –

Many of us have the misunderstanding that Children of Israel were first presented with the Ten Commandments by Moses bringing the two stone tablets from the mountaintop.

That is not so – they first heard these commands spoken by God from heaven in an audible voice. This would have made the greatest impression upon the Children of Israel.

Before we get started, I feel that it is necessary to remind us that the law cannot save us – and I say that because I have had conversations with individuals where they make the statement that they believe that they are going to heaven because they keep the Ten Commandments -

Paul writes in the book of Romans -

[Rom 3:20-26 NKJV] 20 Therefore by the **deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight**, for by the law [is] the knowledge of sin. 21 But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, 22 even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; **23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**, 24 being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God set forth [as] a propitiation by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, 26 to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

The Law cannot save us because we are incapable of keeping the entire law – James tells us that if we break one of the commandments, we break them all.

This is why Jesus came to die for us – to pay the price for breaking the law.

So if the law cannot save us, why do we need to study it???

First of all, it shows us how sinful we are.

Secondly, it shows us our need for a savior.

It also provides us for a template for our lives -

You see, when a person comes to Christ, the Spirit of God will begin to work in their life and change them from the inside out. In other words, God begins to paint a picture with our lives – and that picture begins to look like the law that God is going to present the Children of Israel here.

Let's pray...

[Exo 20:1-26 NKJV] 1 And God spoke all these words, saying: 2 "I [am] the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Once again, before God gives them the Ten Commandments, He reminds them of what He has done for them.

You see, obedience to the law is going to be in response to what God has already done on their behalf –

We are not saved because we obey God's laws – we understand that salvation is by grace through faith and not by any works of any kind – we respond in obedience because of the grace that has been already shown to us.

So let's take a look at the first commandment -

3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

The Children of Israel lived in the midst of a society where every pagan nation worshipped a multitude of gods.

When we were studying the different plagues that God brought upon Egypt, I made the point that each of those plagues was directed at an Egyptian deity.

When the Children of Israel enter into the Promised Land, they will have their share of gods that they worshipped.

Notice that the command says that You shall have no other gods before Me. This doesn't mean that they could have other gods as long as they didn't position them higher than God.

No – this means that they were not allowed to have any other gods period.

[Isa 43:10-11 NKJV] 10 "You [are] My witnesses," says the LORD, "And My servant whom I have chosen, That you may know and believe Me, And

understand that I [am] He. Before Me there was no God formed, Nor shall there be after Me. 11 I, [even] I, [am] the LORD, And besides Me [there is] no savior.

In fact, the violation of this first commandment is one of the reasons that God delivered the Children of Israel into the hand of the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

You see, when they came into the Promised Land, they added other gods – notably, Baal and Ashteroth.

They didn't stop worshipping Yahweh – they just added more gods -

The significance of these two gods is that Baal was the god of prosperity and Ashteroth was the god of pleasure.

The same two gods that we find ourselves worshipping today when we choose prosperity and pleasure above God's will for us.

God wants all of our lives – not just bits and pieces.

That is why He commands that we have no other gods in our lives.

4 "You shall not make for yourself a carved image--any likeness [of anything] that [is] in heaven above, or that [is] in the earth beneath, or that [is] in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, [am] a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth [generations] of those who hate Me, 6 but

showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

This second commandment isn't just about carving things. It's about making an image, making a representation of what something is like for the purpose of worshipping it.

In a few weeks, we will see Aaron collecting gold and he proceeded to mold a golden calf out of it so the Children of Israel would be able to worship it.

This doesn't mean that we cannot have any artwork or pictures in our home or at church – we will see that when the tabernacle is built, God is going to command them to make two cherubim of gold – the cherubim are not going to be worshipped – God is going to be worshipped.

I had you make a note in verse 5 that God is a jealous God.

God is not jealous because He's somehow insecure and is afraid of losing you.

God is jealous because He loves you and wants the best for you.

God knows that the best for you is to know Him and follow Him.

I also want to explain what it means where it mentions, "the visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth [generations] of those who hate Me"

I believe that many misunderstand this to mean that a child is punished for the sins of their parents.

That is not the case –

What this speaks of is cumulative effect of sin.

My sin affects my children.

My kids will tend to follow in my footsteps, including my sins.

They say that those who abuse their children were victims of child abuse themselves – their parent's sins affected their life, influencing them (not forcing them) to sin in the same direction.

We must remember that our lifestyle, including our priorities and what we believe in – they will have an impact on our children, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren.

If we live for Jesus, if we are a person of prayer, if we spend time in the Word and in fellowship, these qualities will be passed on to future generations.

7 "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold [him] guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Taking the name of the Lord in vain is many times associated with those who profane the name of the Lord through blaspheme.

However, there are other ways in which we can take the name of the Lord in vain.

For example, when we swear an oath using His name and have no intention of honoring it –

We might use the name of the Lord in vain when we want someone to believe us – “I swear to God I am telling the truth”

We must be careful with this because God has a problem when we use His name as an excuse to lie to other people.

[Lev 19:12 NKJV] 12 'And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I [am] the LORD.

Another example would be a business that falsely advertises as being Christian owned.

They have a Jesus fish on their window, you hire them to do repairs around your house and then you find out that they rip you off.

Another example is people who misrepresent God – false teachers and pastors who fleece the flock.

8 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day [is] the Sabbath of the LORD your God. [In it] you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who [is] within your gates. 11 For [in] six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth,

the sea, and all that [is] in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

The Children of Israel had already been introduced to this commandment earlier when God provided manna for them.

You might remember that they were only allowed to collect manna for six days and on the sixth day they were allowed to pick up double the amount because God was not going to provide manna on the seventh day.

This must have been a new experience for the Children of Israel as they had probably worked every day of their lives while they were slaves in Egypt –

The Sabbath gave them a day to recharge and to place to trust in the Lord.

This was a day that they were to set apart to remind them that it was not their work that supplied their needs.

Their needs were supplied by God as an act of grace.

Jesus is our Sabbath rest – and we violate our rest when we think that the work of the cross was not enough and feel we have to earn our salvation.

12 "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

The main idea of this commandment is one of giving value or respect to our parents.

[Lev 19:3 NKJV] 3 'Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I [am] the LORD your God.

So someone will ask, "What happens if I had lousy parents?"

And the answer is that you still must honor them.

Honoring them doesn't mean that you agree with their values or continue to repeat their mistakes – it doesn't mean that you honor them because they are the most awesome people in the world.

You honor them, you show respect because they brought you into this world.

Sometimes learning to show respect is about more than just giving someone a gold star for being nice to you.

Sometimes God wants us to show respect because it is going to produce something.

The submission Jesus demonstrated let Him to a cross to die for us and brought about our salvation. Sometimes for a parent, showing respect is the thing they need to pay attention to Jesus.

13 "You shall not murder.

Many people will use this verse out of context to push their political ideology.

Over and over again, you will see protesters that are against capital punishment holding signs up with this verse.

The problem is that they ignore all the other verse that endorses capital punishment.

Because in the very next chapter, the scriptures tell us that murder is one of many crimes that were punishable by death.

This is one of the commandments that many are quick to single out as one they have never violated.

That may be true to the letter of the law -

Jesus expounds on the very heart of this commandment in Matt 5

[Mat 5:21-24 NKJV] 21 "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' 22 "But I say to you that whoever is **angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. 23 "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 "leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.**

The Apostle John writes

[1Jo 3:14-15 NKJV] 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love [his] brother abides in death. 15

Whoever hates **his brother is a murderer**, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

Anger and hate are things we have to address in our lives –

Allowing the anger to boil inside us is only going to give satan a foothold in your life.

We need to humble ourselves and ask for forgiveness.

14 "You shall not commit adultery.

The act of adultery was also one of the commandments that were punishable by death.

Jesus again went to the heart of the law and said this -

(Mat 5:27-28 NKJV) "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' {28} "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Jesus doesn't say that looking at a woman might lead to committing adultery. He says that if you are looking at a woman (or a man) with the intent of simply lusting after them, then you've already committed the act of adultery.

Just like those that are dealing with hate and anger – if we are struggling with lust, we also need to come before the Lord and repent.

15 "You shall not steal.

In this command, God is giving us the right to personal property.

But stealing is more than physical things.

Cheating on our taxes – stealing.

Stealing can involve out time – taking long lunches or long breaks

16 "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

This commandment can be summed up with “don’t lie”

In fact if you read Deut 19:16-21, it states that if you accuse someone of something that they didn’t do – you were a false witness.

The penalty for being a “false witness” was for you to take the punishment of what you accused the other person of doing. If you accused someone of worthy of a death sentence, then you would be put to death.

So the emphasis is to tell the truth.

And the reason is that God Himself is truth.

He will never lie to us.

If you and I are going to be followers of Christ, then we need to learn the concept of truth because that is who He is.

17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that [is] your neighbor's."

The last commandment is one of coveting or desire.

Covetousness works like this: the eyes look upon an object, the mind admires it, the will goes over to it, and the body moves in to possess it.

Just because you have not taken the final step does not mean you are not in the process of coveting right now.

The problem with covetousness is that it leads to other sins.

When the Children of Israel go into the Promised Land and the walls of Jericho came tumbling down – God warned them that all of the spoils of victory were His.

And then you have Achan who coveted the spoils and he took some of them and hid them in his tent and then the Children of Israel suffer a defeat against Ai.

David coveted after Bathsheba and he sent for her and we all know what happens next.

The opposite of covetousness is contentment.

And in order to learn contentment, we have to be in God's presence.

Not because He will give us all that we need, but because He is all that we need.

18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw [it], they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." 20 And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." 21 So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God [was].

After the people had heard God reveal His commandments – notice that they were afraid.

It wasn't the smoke or the trumpets or the thundering and the lightning flashes that scared them.

It is that they realized that as they were in the presence of God, He is perfect and holy and they were not.

So they ask that there be a mediator between them and God.

We need a "mediator" like the Children of Israel did.

We have Jesus.

(1 Tim 2:5-6 NKJV) For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, {6} who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

Jesus is the bridge to get us to God.

We can now go straight to God.

22 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. 23 'You shall not make [anything to be] with Me--gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves.

God puts everything in perspective here. He has just spoken to them from heaven. They have heard His voice.

Fashioning little "gods" out of silver or gold is man's way of deciding what his "god" is going to be like.

But now that they've heard God's voice, there is no longer any place for speculation about God.

24 'An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you. 25 'And if you make Me an altar of stone, **you shall not build it of hewn stone; for if you use your tool on it, you have profaned it. 26 'Nor shall you go up by steps to My altar, that your nakedness may not be exposed on it.'**

At the end of the chapter, God provides the Children of Israel with the instructions for the altar that they were to make sacrifices.

God didn't want the altar to be extravagant in decorations and details.

He wanted it to be simple – made out of an uncarved stone. Why?

So that the focus would not be on the altar but on the sacrifice and the God to whom the sacrifice was being made.

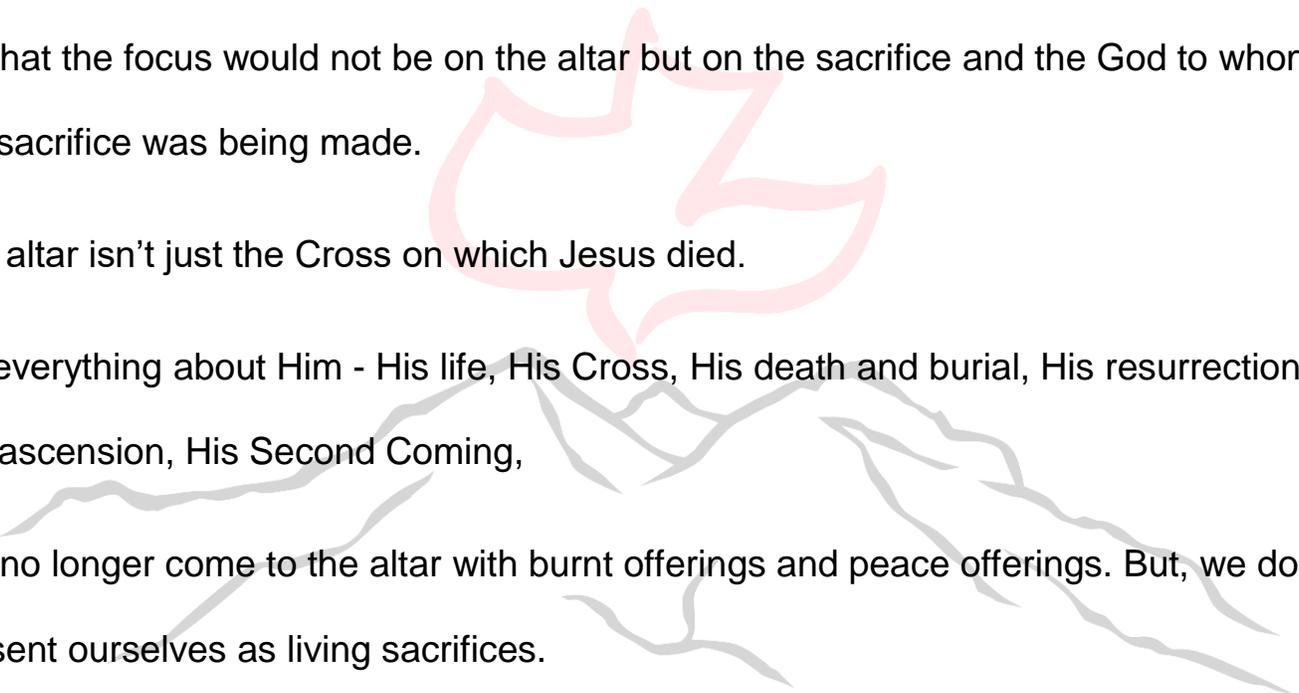
Our altar isn't just the Cross on which Jesus died.

It's everything about Him - His life, His Cross, His death and burial, His resurrection, His ascension, His Second Coming,

We no longer come to the altar with burnt offerings and peace offerings. But, we do present ourselves as living sacrifices.

Amen

Let's pray..



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