

# Exodus Part 20 – The Big Ten

1. Pray
2. Cute Illustrations
  - a. In Lexington, Ky., there is an ordinance forbidding anyone to carry an ice-cream cone in his pocket.
  - b. In Zion, Ill., it is illegal for anyone to give lighted cigars to dogs, cats and other domesticated animals kept as pets.
  - c. In Carmel, N.Y., a man can't go outside while wearing a jacket and pants that do not match.
  - d. In Hartford, Conn., you aren't allowed to cross a street while walking on your hands.
  - e. In Baltimore, its illegal to take a lion to the movies.
  - f. In Carrizozo, N.M., it's forbidden for a female to appear unshaven in public (includes legs and face).
  - g. In New Jersey a person can be arrested for slurping soup in a public restaurant.
  - h. In Lehigh Nebr. it is against the law to sell doughnut holes.
  - i. In Nicholas County, W. Va., no member of the clergy is allowed to tell jokes or humorous stories from the pulpit during a church service.
3. Review and Preview: Exodus and Now the Law is about to be given!
4. Exodus 20:1-2 *And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery"*
  - a. **A Profound Introduction**
    - i. We have here just two verses that form the prelude to one of the most profound set of words ever spoken to the human race.
    - ii. Without these two verses "*God spoke all these words*" and "*I am the Lord Your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery*" we will misunderstand all that the next passages say and use them wrongly in our lives.
      1. You can know God's word right but use it wrong?
        - a. The Pharisees in the time of Jesus knew the bible inside and out but they used it as a club to keep others in line.
        - b. They had all of the words and yet misunderstood how it was to be used.
      2. There are many in the church today who likewise misunderstand the role of the 10 commandments.
        - a. They believe that if only everyone would obey them that the world would be a perfect place.
        - b. They have relegated them to a list of rules.
    - iii. The truth is, unless we really understand these two verses at the prelude to these commands, we will repeat the mistake that many have made in history.
  - b. **Understanding the Big Ten**
    - i. Hidden within these two verses is not only the secret to understanding the 10 Commandments, but also the reason for the law being given.
    - ii. The Jews, when they list the 10 commands, list verses 1&2 as the 1<sup>st</sup> command, and then combine what we general suppose as the 1<sup>st</sup> and second commandments.
    - iii. Lets look at why:
    - iv. "*And God spoke all these words:*"
      1. **What the most important thing is behind a law is its source of authority.**
        - a. For example, look at the source of authority for our modern laws in USA.
          - i. We have popular vote.

1. If 51% of people believe something is right or wrong, then the will of the people determines its morality. Majority becomes the source of authority.
    - ii. We have the power of judges.
      1. If a judge decides that a law is out of touch with his beliefs or his idea of morality or fairness, he can change the laws of a land. His will becomes the source of authority.
  - b. The problem with these two concepts is that beliefs change and who is in the majority or minority change.
    - i. Just look at beliefs on abortion, 95% of people believed it was wrong just 50 years ago.
    - ii. Who 20 years ago would have ever conceived of some of the possibilities being discussed for marriage...including being married to multiple spouses of different genders?
    - iii. Yet as social trends change, so do our laws when they are based upon men's authority.
  - c. A law's authority comes from whoever has the final say concerning the legitimacy of the law. Its source determines its authority.
2. The ideas that men come up with generally seem right at the time.
    - a. Take Karl Marx, who insisted that man is controlled not by the absolutes of God, but by economic factors.
    - b. Or Friedrich Nietzsche's proclamation that "God is dead," and therefore, the only thing that controls man is the quest for power.
    - c. Sigmund Freud maintained that man is controlled by sexual desire and not by the laws of God
    - d. Charles Darwin, vowed that the only law that really mattered was "the survival of the fittest."
    - e. Each of these men led millions to believe in their ideas. But what has happened to them since?
      - i. The Communist empire that was built on the teachings of Karl Marx lies in shambles—a failed experiment, leaving behind a sordid history of torture, murder, genocide, corruption, and betrayal of the innocent.
      - ii. Friedrich Nietzsche? The man whose theories gave rise to the secular religion known as humanism, he who would elevate man into the position of God—lived out the last years of his life in a mental institution.
      - iii. Sigmund Freud is no longer revered in psychological circles. In fact, his theories are considered passe by most modern psychologists. Sadly, it is too late to undo the damage his theories did by unleashing a sexual revolution that perverted one of God's great gifts to mankind.
      - iv. And what of Darwin? His views have largely been discarded by scientists working in the field of genetics. Why? They just don't seem to fit the facts.
    - f. The bible says, Proverbs 14:12 *“There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death..”*
  - v. The fact that the commandments are spoken by God's indicates that they obtain their authority from
    1. He is above all, over all, before all, He is the maker of Heaven and Earth, and will hold all men accountable for their lives and actions

2. He is timeless, and therefore His commands are timeless.
3. God has absolute authority, therefore His commands possess His authority not man's.

#### 5. **Three Types of Laws in the Bible:**

- a. There are 3 types of "laws" that are defined in the bible during the giving of the Law to Moses, of which the 10 commandments are a portion. **Civil law, ceremonial law, moral law:**
- b. **Civil laws** are easy to recognize because they always mention a punishment that is incurred when they are broken, such as a fine, a beating, or an execution.
- c. **Ceremonial laws**
  - i. These had to do with how a person approached God and how they were to maintain their covenantal relationship with God.
  - ii. These dealt with the sin offerings, the trespass offerings, and all of the various offerings and sacrifices of the Jewish religious system.
  - iii. All of these sacrifices served as a foreshadowing of Christ, the Messiah, who was yet to come.
  - iv. When Christ gave His life "as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28), that changed.
    1. There was no longer any need for ceremonial sacrifices because Jesus had paid the price for our sins once and for all (Hebrews 10:11-14).
    2. When Christ died and rose again, the requirements of the ceremonial laws were canceled.
    3. There is no longer a need for animal sacrifices or the other ceremonial components of the law.
    4. We are saved, we are forgiven, we are purified, through the blood of Christ.
- d. **Moral laws** which are embodied in the Ten Commandments.
  - i. These laws represent God's moral character, and His moral character never changes.
  - ii. Is it not a bit ridiculous to think that 3,500 years ago God was opposed to stealing, but now He has changed His mind?
  - iii. Is it not ludicrous to say that adultery offended Him then, but it is of little importance to Him now?
  - iv. Yet this is exactly what some people think. They view God as having mellowed over the years-like a parent who was more strict with his oldest children, but then lets his last-born get away with everything.
  - v. But God is consistent. He is fair. His character is firm forever.
    1. He is the same today as He was 3,500 years ago- just as He will be the same four million years into the future.

#### 6. **Ultimate Accountability**

- a. **Because God is the author of the moral laws embodied in the 10 commandments, the absolute nature of accountability is displayed.**
- b. What holds you back from committing theft or murder? Is it because society will chastise you?
  - i. Is it because you might get caught, or because of the threat of punishment?
  - ii. If you could do something that no one would ever know about and you would never get caught at...what would it be?
  - iii. That is the limitation of human authority when it comes to law.
  - iv. It only has the power to control behavior based upon actions that can be caught.
  - v. But when you answer to God, there is a much greater control on our lives that works from our inside out.
- c. Atheists love to bash the Biblical accounts of genocide, but the major accounts of genocide in the last century were authored by the godless, or rather, by those who stood in the place of God themselves.

- i. Stalin killed twenty million. Hitler killed six million Jews alone and authored a war that killed nearly 50 million people. Pol Pot killed two or three million of his own people, Saddam Hussein killed around one million.
- ii. They perceived that they were the law of the land, and there was no one to whom they would ever answer to, or so they thought.
- d. God asserts his own authority to enact these laws by the declaration *And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery*
  - i. God didn't give the Israelites the the 10 Commandments and the Law in Egypt as a condition for their deliverance.
    - 1. He didn't say, "obey these and make yourselves right with me, and then I will deliver you from bondage and make you my people" did He?
    - 2. No! By something called grace, God had already saved His people out of Egyptian slavery (despite their sin and rebellion) in order that they might enter into a covenant relationship with Him and obey the Ten Commandments.
    - 3. He picked the Jews not because they were good, beautiful, strong, holy, or because they had been followers of Him.
    - 4. Instead, God selected them while they were a slave nation, He chose them not based upon anything they had done but solely out of His own SOVEREIGN choice.
    - 5. And then He gave them the 10 Commandments so that by obeying them, they would reflect His character.
      - a. They didn't become good so that God would accept them, but rather, God accepted them so that He could make them good.
      - b. In the same way, God didn't ask you to clean up your act before you receive Jesus Christ as your Savior. He doesn't tell you, "stop smoking" and then you can become a Christian. He doesn't say to you, "stop drinking" and then you can become a Christian.
      - c. He brings us to receive His love in Christ and as a result, we begin to fall in love with Him and lose our love and attraction for these other things.
- e. **The Ten Commandments were designed as a way for Israelites to show their gratitude to God.**
  - i. We spoke to this last week when we said that obedience is a response to God's graciousness. It is never a means to gaining God's love.
  - ii. God is the giver. We respond to His love with surrender.

## 7. Why did God give the commandments?

- a. Galatians 3:22-27 The Message *Its purpose was to make obvious to everyone that we are, in ourselves, out of right relationship with God, and therefore to show us the futility of devising some religious system for getting by our own efforts what we can only get by waiting in faith for God to complete his promise. For if any kind of rule-keeping had power to create life in us, we would certainly have gotten it by this time. 23 Until the time when we were mature enough to respond freely in faith to the living God, we were carefully surrounded and protected by the Mosaic law. 24 The law was like those Greek tutors, with which you are familiar, who escort children to school and protect them from danger or distraction, making sure the children will really get to the place they set out for.*
- b. The Law was given not to make us right with God.
  - i. It was given to show us our powerlessness to keep it.
  - ii. **The Law was given to show us what sin is.**
  - iii. It was given to show us God's perfect standard and our inability to achieve it.
  - iv. It was given to display our utter need of God's forgiveness because we cannot do it ourselves.

- c. There are some people who have tried to be Christians but have given up.
  - i. They couldn't obey the 10 commandments. They found themselves lusting, stealing, maybe even committing adultery in their heart. They couldn't change, no matter how hard they tried and simply said, "**It can't be done!**"
    - 1. So they walked away from their church.
  - ii. But the problem wasn't the 10 commandments. It was what they were trying to do with them.
    - 1. Folks, YOU CANNOT KEEP THEM no matter how hard you try!
    - 2. You need a savior, who ALREADY HAS KEPT THEM and took your place.
      - 1. It is in God's perfect law that we see our depravity.
      - 2. The Big Ten serves as a mirror to show us our total inability to meet those standards.
      - 3. A drowning man must first see that he is drowning before he can appreciate a life preserver.
        - a. The 10 commandments define what it is to drown.
        - b. John Piper, has said that "*you must see your plight before you can recognize the rescue.*"
      - 4. Evangelist Fred Brown describes the purpose of the law. He likened it to a dentist's little mirror, which he sticks into the patient's mouth. With the mirror he can detect any cavities. But he doesn't drill with it or use it to pull teeth. It can show him the decayed area or other abnormality, but it can't provide the solution
    - ii. The law points out the problem of sin; but it doesn't provide a solution.
    - iii. The Ten Commandments show us our problem, and faith in Jesus' death on the cross is our solution!
- d. **Has the Law been made Obsolete?** (check positioning of this point)
  - i. Some will say, well Christ did away with the law when He took my place on the cross. We don't need the 10 Commandments any more!
    - 1. But Jesus said, "I have not come to destroy the Law but to fill it full."
  - ii. The word "law" in Greek is nomos, and those who say that the law has no place at all in the Christian life are called antinomians, which means "against the law."
    - 1. Ever since the first century, some people have said, "We are saved by grace through faith, so we are free to do whatever we want."
    - 2. "*Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law*" (Romans 3:31)
    - 3. *Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven* (Matthew 5:17-19).
    - 4. There is nothing that would please God more than obeying His commands.
    - 5. He doesn't want us inventing ways to please Him. He wants us to show our love by living in obedience to His commandments.
- e. The Christian begins to ask "How can I behave in a way that glorifies and pleases God and allows me to live the best life possible on this earth?"
  - i. Contrasting Illustration of Love and Law:
    - 1. A husband and wife didn't really love each other. The man was very demanding, so much so that he prepared a list of rules and regulations for his wife to follow.

He insisted that she read them over every day and obey them to the letter. Among other things, his "do's and don'ts" indicated such details as what time she had to get up in the morning, when his breakfast should be served, and how the housework should be done. After several long years, the husband died.

2. As time passed, the woman fell in love with another man, one who dearly loved her. Soon they were married. This husband did everything he could to make his new wife happy, continually showering her with tokens of his appreciation. One day as when was cleaning house, she found tucked away in a drawer the list of commands her first husband had drawn up for her. As she looked it over, it dawned on her that even though her present husband hadn't given her any kind of list, she was doing everything her first husband's list required anyway. She realized she was so devoted to this man that her deepest desire was to please him out of love, not obligation.

f. **The Law Protects God's People.**

- i. It provides us with a clear understanding of what is best for us.
- ii. Story of a high school guy who wanted to go swimming with his girlfriend at midnight. The neighbors down the block had a pool, and he knew it. So they ran down there and scaled the fence even though there were No Trespassing and Do Not Enter signs. Just as he hit the diving board, the girl yelled, but it was too late. There was only a foot of water in the pool. He broke his neck. He didn't realize that the signs on the fence—the precepts—were there to protect him.
- iii. Exodus 20:2 is God's description of how He set His people free, while the Ten Commandments are God's prescription for how His people can STAY free.

g. **Not a Negative: thou shalt not**

- i. Let me attempt to illustrate the positive dimension of negative commandments by drawing your attention to the vows a husband takes in the marriage ceremony. The husband to be will promise that he will "forsake all others" and take this one woman as his wife. The husband could say to himself, "I cannot live with Betty as my wife ... I cannot live with Sarah as my wife ... I cannot live with Paula as my wife ..." On and on the husband could go. In this mode of thinking, the husband could think of millions of women with whom he could not live as husband and wife. But he does not think this way. Instead, the husband who has just taken his vow to forsake all others goes his way rejoicing in this one positive truth, which overrides all others: "I can take Betty Lou (or whatever his one wife's name is) as my wife—Hallelujah!" It is not the number of no's compared to the number of yes's, but the value of the yes that matters most. The few negatives of the Ten Commandments are far outweighed by the positive blessing of having fellowship with God and taking part in being a part of something that has eternal significance.

8. **It is finished.**

- a. I have heard it said that the teachings of most of the world's religions can be summed up in one small word: "Do." "Do this and do that, Obey the Big Ten, and perhaps God will be merciful to you."
  - iii. **Only Christianity says, "Done!"**
  - iv. The last words of Christ on the cross were: "*It is finished!*" (John 19:30).
  - v. In Greek the expression is *tetelestai!* "*It is accomplished!*" Christ has paid it all.
  - vi. There is nothing you can do to attain salvation because Christ has already done it all.
  - vii. As Dr. William Culbertson, Moody Bible Institute's president from 1948 to 1971, put it, "*Every pagan religion in the world sings this hymn: 'Something in my hands I bring.' Only Christianity says, 'Nothing in my hands I bring. Only to the Cross I cling.'*"

- b. The only thing that remains for you to do is to accept by His grace what Christ has done for you- the salvation He offers you.
  - i. The Big Ten has shown you ONE THING – You are a sinner and you need a savior.
    - 1. You are drowning and you need a lifeboat.
  - ii. God has given His Son to endure the requirements of justice by taking the penalty the law requires for sin..
- c. You may stand before God, having violated every commandment, worthy of nothing but condemnation.
  - i. But if you place your faith in Christ, you will be granted everlasting life in His kingdom.
  - ii. You will be adopted into His family, allowed to take His name, given a place in His will, and permitted entrance into Paradise. That is the gift of grace. He takes you like He took Israel.
- d. Have you accepted this gift Christ offers you?
  - i. If not, I urge you to take a few moments to receive Christ and His pardon right now.
    - Wherever you may be, stop and pray this prayer with me:
- e. *O God, I know that I am a sinner. I know that I have no hope of eternal life except through the blood of Your only Son, Jesus Christ, who gave His life for me so that I may live eternally. Lord Jesus, forgive me for rejecting you.. I give you my life. I surrender. Make something meaningful out of my life. Thank You for the promise of eternal life, which is mine now.. I ask this in Jesus Name, Amen.*

With every head bowed, every eye closed, if that was the cry of your heart, would you please slip your hand up. You are now a new creation in Christ. I am going to ask you to take a step of courage now. During our ministry time, I would like you to slip out of your seat and walk up to the front and allow me to pray with you. Won't you do that now?  
Amen!

## Sunday Night thoughts:

Noah Webster, the man personally responsible for Art. I, Sec. 8, ¶ 8, of the U. S. Constitution, explained two centuries ago:

1. The duties of men are summarily comprised in the Ten Commandments, consisting of two tables; one comprehending the duties which we owe immediately to God-the other, the duties we owe to our fellow men.
2. Modern critics, while conceding “six or five Commandments are moral and ethical rules governing behavior,” also point out that because the remaining “four of the Ten Commandments are specifically religious in nature,” that this fact alone should disqualify their display. They assert that only one of the two “tablets” of the Ten Commandments is appropriate for public display.
3. Besides Rhode Island (Roger Williams) every other early American colony incorporated the entire Decalogue into its own civil code of laws
2. When the communists took over education, they outlawed God and the teaching of the Ten Commandments - the very basis of our moral and legal codes in America! We now have their amoral system that has caused a tremendous breakdown in our legal system and in our cultural standards of morality. Right and wrong are done away with in a socialist system because raping, stealing, lying, and murdering are all in a day's work when bringing about the "ideal" society. To complete the U.S. subversion to communism, the Ten Commandments must be done away with in every area of America life!
3. The first four of the commandments have little to do with either law or morality, and the first three suggest a terrific insecurity on the part of the person supposedly issuing them. I am the lord thy god and thou shalt have no other ... no graven images ... no taking of my name in vain: surely these could have been compressed into a more general injunction to show respect. The ensuing order to set aside a holy day is scarcely a moral or ethical one, unless you assume that other days are somehow profane
  - a. there's a reason, after all, those first four commandments are the first four commandments. the ones that come after are **predicated entirely on the authority of God Himself**. why not steal? why not kill? why not covet? because God says so. if you don't respect God, why would you respect God's law? i'm not saying atheists can't be moral, what i'm saying is, if i'm laying down the law on the basis of God's authority alone, then that authority must be absolute, unquestioned, and treated with the utmost respect.
  - b. In a sense, the attacks upon the public display of the Ten Commandments is a barometer for where America stands in its morality, its Constitutional nature, and its deserving of judgment from Almighty God.
  - c. Churches no longer anticipate having a major impact upon society. They have given up! So they hope only to reach enough people to help their church survive (or thrive). They have ceased being yeast!
  - d. Matthew Henry notes, “They were written on men’s hearts in creation but sin had defaced their writing.” Now God reinitiates the writing.
    - i. The preface of the Law-maker: I am the Lord thy God, Exodus 20:2. Herein, 1. God asserts his own authority to enact this law in general: "I am the Lord who command thee all that follows."
    - ii. He had brought them out of the land of Egypt; therefore they were bound in gratitude to obey him, because he had done them so great a kindness, had brought them out of a grievous slavery into a glorious liberty. They themselves had been eye-witnesses of the great things God had done in order to their deliverance
4. Piper Notes

- a. the Ten Commandments is not old fashioned...and need not be legalistic or boring. The Ten Commandments have much to teach us about our great and glorious God. They reflect to us the perfections of God and His heart for His people. They are the foundation of God's moral law. They show His children how to "walk in all His ways." The Ten Commandments have been part of the religious education of Western countries for hundreds of years and have often been part of the public school curriculum. It is only recently that they have been considered "outdated."
- b. We are in great need of moral absolutes in the 21st Century.
  - i. The Ten Commandments stand as God's great moral absolutes to a confused and troubled world.
  - ii. The Ten Commandments are as relevant today as they were when God gave them to Moses on Mount Sinai.
- c. The Decalogue is a not only a constitution, it is God's standard for Israel's culture. As I was studying the commandments, it suddenly occurred to me that God was prescribing, to a large degree, the culture of the nation Israel. We evaluate men by their character (or at least we should). But what is the measure of a nation? I submit to you that a people can, to a large degree, be judged by their culture. While some aspects of a culture are amoral, many are not. By giving Israel the Decalogue, God was prescribing the moral base for their culture.
- d. Not a negative, even if it sounds that way to us (because we think we are no longer under law but grace