

THE GOSPEL PROJECT – CHRONOLOGICAL

GOD DELIVERS

GOD THE LAWGIVER

The Loving Lawgiver

Today's lesson begins the first of six lessons on Old Testament law. Today's focus is on the Loving Lawgiver. As God's Spirit hovered over the face of the waters, He created not only physical laws but also moral laws. The moral laws, though found throughout scripture were "summed up" when God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses.

Though God's law is sometimes called the Law of Moses, make no mistake, "God's Commandments" originate with God and God alone – *Isaiah 33:22 (ESV)* ²² *For the LORD is our judge; the LORD is our lawgiver; the LORD is our king; he will save us.* Almighty God, the Creator of heaven and earth, is our Lawgiver and Judge but as Isaiah reminds us, He is also the King who saves! When you go before a judge in this world, you need a lawyer – one who knows how to represent you properly. We have a lawyer available to us if we choose to accept His perfect defense. Paul calls Him the Mediator in *1 Timothy 2:5 (ESV)* ⁵ *For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.* It has been said: "A man who is his own lawyer has a fool for his client." Judgment Day is coming for each of us. Be prepared if you are not already. Make Jesus your Advocate. *1 John 2:1 (ESV)* ¹ *My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.*

Last week we studied the Israelites' rebellion in the golden calf incident which is out of chronological order to today's study. The writers of our study guide wished to connect the study of the Ten Commandments with the other laws we will study in this unit including the tabernacle, the sacrifices, and the Law's blessing and curse.

I mentioned last week that the Israelites fell into a spiritual low as they determined to worship the golden calf instead of God the Redeemer who delivered them out of bondage in Egypt. I also mentioned that during their spiritual low Moses was experiencing a spiritual high on the mount with the LORD. Moses was communing with the very One who first spoke to him at the burning bush.

The Lawgiver loves His people then and now. His love never changes. We begin with the passage where the LORD declared how much He loved His people before He gave the Law to Moses.

Read Exodus 19:1-6 (ESV) ¹ *On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.* ² *They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain,* ³ *while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel:* ⁴ *You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.* ⁵ *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my*

covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

After receiving this message from the LORD, Moses shared the Word from God to the people before he returned to the mountain to receive God’s Commandments.

We find encouragement when we see the promises of God fulfilled in our own lives. In this passage, Moses is seeing a promise of God fulfilled. Moses was encamped with the Israelites at the foot of Mt. Horeb or Sinai, also called the Mountain of God. There he experienced the literal fulfillment of God’s personal promise to him during his ‘burning bush’ experience. *Exodus 3:12 (ESV)* ¹² *He [meaning the LORD] said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”* He had come to the exact place God had promised.

FYI – The people would be encamped at this spot for 11 months. During this preparation time, Moses would receive the law from Yahweh and share it with the people; the workers would construct the tabernacle and its furnishings; the priesthood would be established; and the people were numbered and the tribes would be organized for their march to Kadesh-Barnea which was 11 days away from where they were encamped in the Sinai. At Kadesh they would have a direct entry into the land of Canaan. Of course, that entry into Canaan would be delayed for 40 years because they doubted God.

One major point to remember is the Law was given **AFTER** the children of Israel were delivered from Egypt. They were first delivered from slavery by God’s grace and then they received the Law that would show them the proper response to God’s grace! Grace comes first. Today, we receive grace from God in His salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. After we receive His grace we are called to reflect that grace by the things we do. We do not keep the Law for the purpose of receiving God’s grace. Let me repeat – **SALVATION BY GRACE COMES FIRST!**

God said: *I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself.* God used the imagery of the eagles as a call to the people to grow to maturity. At a certain stage in the development of their young, the eagle parents break up the comfortable nest and force the eaglets to fly. The young birds may not be anxious to leave the security of the nest, but they must learn to fly if they’re going to fulfill their purpose in life. The adult birds stay near the babies and, if they fall, lift them up on their strong wings until the young birds learn how to use their wings to ride the air currents, and enjoy the abilities God gave them.

Young eagles learning to fly picture our freedom in Christ:

- (1) freedom **from** the nest (a picture of our **redemption**)
- (2) freedom **in** the air, (a picture of Christian **maturity**)
- (3) freedom **to** fulfill their purpose in life, (picturing **ministry**)

The Israelite nation was to go from being slaves to being God’s treasured possession. Here we see a picture of what happens when we accept Christ as Savior – we go from being slaves to sin to be God’s special children.

Regarding *you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation*, J. Vernon McGee comments, “God originally intended for Israel to be a kingdom of priests. All of the tribes were to be priests. Because of their failure to enter the land at Kadesh-barnea and because they made and worshiped a golden calf while Moses was on the mountain receiving God’s law, only one tribe was chosen to be a priestly tribe.” Today, we need no human priest to intervene for us. We can go directly to the throne of God through our Advocate, Jesus Christ!

The Lawgiver deserves first place in our lives.

Read Exodus 20:3 (ESV) ³ *“You shall have no other gods before me.*

God demonstrated His Everlasting Love to the children of Israel by redeeming them from slavery in Egypt. **Deuteronomy 5:6 (ESV)** ⁶ *“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.* Later in history, God would demonstrate His everlasting love for the entire world. **Romans 5:8 (ESV)** ⁸ *but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

As the Israelites came out of a nation that worshipped many gods, they entered a region that also worshipped many gods. The most important aspect of their walk with the LORD would involve staying focused on the One True God. It is the same for us. False teachers abound today telling us there are many ways to heaven and all gods are the same – no matter the name. We must stay focused on the one True God. **John 14:6 (ESV)** ⁶ *Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.* Christians are to be giving/sharing people; however, we should never share our allegiance to the LORD God Jehovah. **Matthew 4:10 (ESV)** ¹⁰ *Then Jesus said to him, “Be gone, Satan! For it is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.’”*

Read Exodus 20:4-6 (ESV) ⁴ *“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or 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 or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me,* ⁶ *but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

We saw in our study last week how displeased the LORD was with the people’s worship of the golden calf. We may be too ‘sophisticated’ to worship a handcrafted image but we certainly bow down to many forms of idolatry. The New Testament counterpart to the second commandment is found in **1 John 5:21 (ESV)** ²¹ *Little children, keep yourselves from idols.* We bow down to peer pressure; we bow down before the almighty dollar and before the idols of lust and self. But, GOD SAID: *You shall not bow down to them or serve them.* We are called to bow down to Jesus! **Colossians 1:15 (ESV)** ¹⁵ *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.*

The Lawgiver deserves honor in all we do.

Read Exodus 20:7 (ESV) 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.*

When we think of taking the LORD's name in vain we tend to think of something different – most particularly those who blaspheme God's name through the use of vulgar language. Since God is the greatest being in the universe, then His name is the greatest name and must be honored. Jesus taught us to treat God's name as holy when He said in **Matthew 6:9 (ESV)** ⁹ *Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.*

Not taking the LORD's name in vain goes way beyond foul language. When we profess Christ with our lips and then make a promise or sign a contract we do not keep, we are taking God's name in vain. **1 Timothy 6:1 (ESV)** ¹ *Let all who are under a yoke as bondservants regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled.* We honor the LORD's name by the lives we live, the words we say and yes, even the words we don't say. We may never utter a curse against God's name vocally and still be taking His name in vain by maligning others with our words and our actions and then using those same lips to say we are 'Christian.'

Read Exodus 20:8-11 (ESV) 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 a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.* ¹¹ *For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

This commandment told the Israelites to cease from labors. Jesus said in **Matthew 11:28 (ESV)** ²⁸ *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

We often think of Sunday as the Sabbath. It is not – Sunday is the First Day of the Week – the Day Jesus rose from the dead – the time when the first followers of Christ began worshipping together. The Sabbath, the seventh day of the week was designated by God Himself as a day of rest – picturing the rest He would bring to His people through the coming Messiah.

Read Hebrews 4:9-10 (ESV) ⁹ *So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God,* ¹⁰ *for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.*

We do not get to heaven by our 'works.' To enter heaven, we must accept Christ as Savior and 'rest' in Him. Perfect peace and rest comes to the one who is in the will of God, doing the work of God, and trusting and resting in Him. That is the glorious place God wants everyone to come. Think back to two sisters during Jesus' earthly ministry – Mary and Martha. Mary 'rested' at Jesus' feet while Martha 'worked' in the kitchen. **Luke 10:41-42 (ESV)** ⁴¹ *But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things,* ⁴² *but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her."* In your walk with Jesus, learn to choose the *good portion* that is resting in Him all the while knowing the best is yet to be.