

# Exodus 19 & 20:1-21 • Meeting God and receiving the Law

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Exodus, chapter 19. We've got important stuff that, I mean, I don't want to give you the impression that sometimes it's not important. But there are some just particularly important and challenging things that we're dealing with here in these 2 chapters, as God continues to minister to the people of Israel to help them to understand His holiness.

In chapter 19, it begins by saying. *“On the third new moon...”* And what that means is, they had been out now of Egypt for approximately 2 months, because as you know, it's a new moon during the Passover, which is when they left. And now this is the third new moon since they left, meaning that it is essentially 2 months that they have been, as we might say, on the road. But it says, *“after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.”* (ESV)

This is now for Moses coming full circle because this is where God first appeared to him and spoke to him in that bush that was on fire, but was not consumed. It was such a site that Moses had to go see what it was all about. And there, the Lord met him and spoke to him, and this is where Israel is going to stay for a good long time. We think somewhere in the neighborhood of a year.

That's a long time, but they're going to..., in fact Israel's not going to move for the rest of the Book of Exodus. In fact, they're going to be right here for all of the Book of Leviticus, and it's going to be, I think about halfway through the Book of Numbers before they actually pack up and move to another location.

This is such a pivotal place for them to be because it is here that the nation of Israel is going to hear from God. He is going to reveal Himself to them in ways that He has never revealed Himself to any other nation.

And in verse 2, it says, *“They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain,<sup>3</sup> 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: <sup>4</sup> 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.'*

I find it very interesting that as God prepares His people for this revelation of Himself, that the first thing He wants Moses to convey to the people is a very simple message. It was Me, and you saw how I brought you up out of Egypt, out of slavery, delivered you from your taskmasters.

And I love how He says, *"I bore you on eagles' wings."* I almost wonder if that's where Lord of the Rings got that whole idea of being born up on eagles' wings and being delivered from a difficult situation. But the Lord is speaking symbolically here of the deliverance. And He says, *"I brought you to myself,"* and this is so important.

And so He says, *"<sup>5</sup> Now therefore, (and I want you to pay attention here to verses 5 and 6) 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; <sup>6</sup> 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."*

Now what we're seeing in these couple of verses are what we call, a conditional promise. Because, the promises given in the Old Testament were very conditional, and this is no less that. Notice, first of all, what the promise is that first of all, they would be God's *"treasured possession."* In other words, they would be uniquely exalted among all the nations of the earth in that they were the ones chosen to receive this revelation of God and His holiness.

Second of all, He said, you will be *"a kingdom of priests."* That's an interesting statement, isn't it? What is a kingdom of priests? Well, first of all, you have to know what is a priest? And the reason it's important to ask that question and to answer it from a biblical perspective is that we've had 2,000 years of church to muck up the definition of what a priest is, particularly in Roman Catholicism. Roman Catholicism has come up with ideas about priests that are nowhere found in the Bible.

A priest, according to the biblical definition, is someone who functions in a mediatorial role for the people unto God. All right. So a priest speaks to God on behalf of others. All right. And that was the priestly role we see in the Old Testament that of course, the priesthood hasn't even been developed here in the Old Testament in what we're reading. But when God gives to Israel, the priesthood and selects Moses's brother, Aaron to be the first priest, He's going to define that role and say that Aaron is to mediate for the nation of Israel.

He is to carry the blood of the sacrificial animals before the Lord. He is to make atonement for the people of Israel. He is to function in that role. And so we see that first and foremost, a priest functions in a mediatorial role. It would be like if I were a priest, I would be talking to someone on your behalf, who maybe you wanted to find favor with.

Maybe, let's bring it to a completely human level. Maybe there was somebody in your life that you wanted, there'd been problems between the two of you and you wanted me to go to that person and speak on your behalf and ask if forgiveness was possible between you and that individual. That would be really in a very true sense, functioning in a mediatorial way, right? I go up to that person and I say, this person wants to be forgiven. Would you forgive them and so forth?

Now notice what He's saying to Israel. You are going to be a kingdom of priests. In other words, the whole nation of you is going to function in this mediatorial role. For who? This was God's original intention for Israel to function in a mediatorial role for the nations of the earth. They never achieved that. All they ever functioned in was the role of the priest related to the law and for themselves, but they never really became that kingdom of priests. They never functioned in that, which is kind of sad.

And then He said, you will be "*a holy nation.*" Again, these are all promises. And the word, holy, as we've said before, means set apart. Doesn't mean perfect. People think that, oh, you think you're so holy. You don't even know what you're saying. Holy means set apart, set apart for special use. Do you have any plates at home that you only get out for company? For us, it's the paper plates. I'm just kidding. No, but sometimes I don't think fine china is much of a deal anymore, is it?

I mean, when my mother had fine china and she would get it out only when special occasions came about some special honored guests, and you get out the fine china and we were all whoa, what is this? But that's the idea of something being set apart for special use. That's what the word, holy, means. Okay. Set apart.

He says to them, you'll be a holy nation. But remember, that's a promise that is conditional. What is it conditioned upon? Well, the condition is, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, that's it. The condition and the promises related to that condition. All right.

Verse 7 says, *“So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the LORD had commanded him. <sup>8</sup> All the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do.”* Which is frankly, a fairly naive thing for them to say, because they don't fully understand the holiness of God and the requirements of God's law. They don't get it yet and we know that they don't get it for many reasons that will be borne out in the coming chapters. But they basically said, yeah we'll do that. Absolutely. We'll do everything the Lord says. *“And Moses reported the words of the people to the LORD.”*

*“And the LORD said to Moses, (verse 9, very important) “Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever.””*

Now, what He's going to do is He's going to declare Himself and He's going to declare His holiness, but He's going to do it in the hearing of the people.

And that means that the Ten Commandments were spoken in the hearing of the people. Right? I don't care what that TV movie you said or watched said. It wasn't just a Moses, this was given, they all heard the Lord speaking the law. And we're going to see that here in a little bit.

We're in the middle of verse 9, it says, *“When Moses told the words of the people to the LORD, <sup>10</sup> the LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate (there's a word that you need to hang on to, consecrate) them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments <sup>11</sup> and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.”*

What is God telling Moses to do? Tell the people to simply prepare themselves. And that's what consecrate means, to prepare yourself, to prepare your heart. To prepare yourself emotionally, spiritually, physically, to meet with the Lord, right? And you're going to see here, how He's going to talk about even how they prepare themselves physically.

But in verse 12, he says, *“And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, ‘Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death.’”*

How would that make you feel about meeting the Lord on the third day? Yeah, these are the words that are given to the people. And they are being told, we're going to gather around the mountain, but we are not to touch the mountain, or to

attempt to climb the mountain, to go up and meet with the Lord. Anyone who does will be put to death.

In fact, He says in verse 13, “*No hand shall touch him, (referring to the person who tries to break through the barrier) but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.*” In other words, if somebody breaks through the barrier, don't even think about going after that person. Just pull back your bow and arrow and run them through right from where you are, just they'll drop right where they stand. You're not to go in and touch that person. And doesn't it sound like just a fun time?

And we're still in the middle of verse 13. It says “*When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.*” Meaning the edge of the mountain. What an invitation we're getting here. We're going to meet with God. We need to prepare ourselves. He hasn't even given us a whole lot of information on how to do that, He's going to in a moment here. But He's telling us here that if we get excited about going up to meet the Lord ourselves, we'll die, we will die. It's all there is to it.

Can you see what the Lord is doing here just first of all, with these initial instructions? He's speaking to the people about His holiness, and that's the point. The point is not that they would be terrified of God all their lives, but that they would understand that He's a Holy God.

And this is something that we as Christians, we've kind of forgotten a little bit about. And the reason is, because our covenant is very different. The way we approach God is very different. The freedom we have to approach God as we're going to see from some scriptures here, is very different. And so we tend to have a little bit more of a lackadaisical attitude about approaching God.

It's just waltzing into His presence giving Him a pop on the shoulder and saying, hey, how things going today? Let's hang together. I just came in to chat, just came in to talk and there's no sense of the holiness of God, the unapproachable holiness of God.

Verse 14 says, “*So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people; (and here we learned a bit a little about what some of that consecration involves, it says,) and they washed their garments.*” First of all, they had to wash their clothes.

And then in verse 15, it says, “*And he said to the people, “Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.”*” In other words, abstain from physical

relations between a husband and a wife. Again, in preparation or to prepare your heart to meet the Lord. He's saying, this is going to even involve a physical time of consecration. We don't really use the word, consecration, much anymore, but we do use the word, fasting, or abstinence. And these words very much apply. He's talking about abstaining for these 3 days from any physical relation between a husband and a woman, a man and a wife, so that they might prepare their hearts. This is not a time for personal pleasure or any sort of a me centered routine, right? This is a time for preparing our hearts. Preparing our hearts.

Is this something that we've lost in the Christian church today? Preparing our hearts. Do we prepare our hearts to come and meet with the Lord on a Sunday, or a Wednesday, or any other time for that matter? This whole idea of fasting physically from physical relations is mentioned also in the New Testament. It's not referred to as fasting, but it is. In fact, it's in 1 Corinthians. Let me show you this on the screen. Paul says,

**1 Corinthians 7:5 (ESV)**

*Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

*Do not deprive one another, (and he's talking about physical relations between a husband and wife) except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, (why?) that you may devote yourselves to prayer; (and then he says) but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

He's saying, it's okay once in a while for a married couple by mutual agreement to abstain, right? From physical relations so that they might devote themselves to a period of time for prayer, right? But he says, make sure it doesn't go on too long because temptations might get the better of you during that time. So here we go, are you ready for the people to meet the Lord?

Verse 16, here we are on the third day. *“On the morning of the third day...”* There were cute little birds fluttering around the mountain and a sunshine and a rainbow, it was just so pretty. No, that's not what's happening here, guys. This is the way we would sometimes like to meet with the Lord. Right? I want it to be all pretty.

But I want you to notice what involves the presence of the Lord. It says, *“there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain (and not only that, but) and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled.”*

This is not this warm, fuzzy, environment that God is creating as He reveals Himself to the people of Israel. It's a fearsome thing. It's a terrifying thing, truly. And this trumpet blast, this wasn't Moses pulling out his bugle. This wasn't Aaron, or Joshua, or somebody else like... This was not a trumpet being blown by any human being. This is the trumpet of the Lord. And it is not a blast, if it were a human being, you have to take a breath between blasts or you're going to pass out. This is one long, continuous blast. It just keeps going, and that's what's eerie about it. It's just this long, increasingly louder, trumpet blast.

And verse 17 says, *“Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain.”*<sup>18</sup> Now (it says) *Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire.* (the presence of the Lord is manifested with fire, and then there's smoke wrapping around the mountain. I want you to get this in your mind's eye and see the awesome detail of it. It says) *The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, (and) the whole mountain trembled greatly.*”

I don't know if I have ever seen the smoke of a kiln, but have you ever seen a bunch of tires set on fire? Have you ever seen what that looks like? First of all, stinks to high heaven. You don't want to be anywhere downwind of a rubber fire, but it is just amazing, the billows of black thick smoke that just go puffing up into the sky. And this is what my mind's eye sees related to this smoke that's going up. And it says here at the end of verse 18 that, *“...the whole mountain trembled greatly.”*

In addition to the fire, and the smoke, and of course all the fearful, just instructions they've been given related to this meeting with the Lord. You have on top of all that, an earthquake. And have you seen videos of people in an earthquake? Go on YouTube and just... It's very unsettling. People in a house or in a business place and suddenly things start shaking and people freak. I mean, they panic and they run for the doors and they, whatever they want to do, they want to get outside and away from danger. And I imagine that's just kind of a panic reflex when an earthquake hits.

I've only been in a couple of earthquakes where, I looked up and the light was going irk, irk, irk, and that was about it. That's about all I ever experienced. But I've seen these videos of people in genuine earthquakes, it's fearful. All of these things, one on top of the other has to be creating an environment that's just giving their antiperspirant a real workout. That's the only thing I can say.

Verse 19 goes on and it says, *“And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder.”*<sup>20</sup> *The LORD came*

*down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.*

*<sup>21</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the LORD to look and many of them perish. <sup>22</sup> Also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them." <sup>23</sup> And Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying, 'Set limits around the mountain and consecrate it.'" <sup>24</sup> And the LORD said to him, "Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest he break out against them." <sup>25</sup> So Moses went down to the people and told them.*

This is almost a little bit of an interesting conversation between the Lord and Moses. He goes up to meet with the Lord on Sinai and the Lord says, go down and tell the people don't come anywhere near. Don't touch the mountain. Don't get close. He says, they won't. I already told him that. Yeah. You go down and tell him again.

Why is the Lord doing that? Why the redundancy? Why the repetition? Because these people are stiff necked and they don't listen. I mean, they are seeing what we're reading about here today. They're seeing all that. And they're going to hear the Lord speak the Ten Commandments and they're going to be so freaked out that they're going to beg Moses to tell God, please don't talk anymore or we will die.

And then a few weeks later, they're going to be dancing around a golden calf, having a sex party. There you go, that's these people. And so why is God repeating these commands over and over again? Because they don't listen, and because they're going to see the things that they're going to see. In fact, they've already seen incredible things. Good grief. They went through the red sea. And it's not going to be very long at all before they're going to be dancing around a golden calf and saying, this is the god who brought you up out of Egypt. Is God justified in saying, go back and tell them again? Yeah, I think so. I think so. So Moses went down and told them.

Before we move on here, all of these repetitions, all of these statements about barriers, all of these commands about don't come close. Don't touch the mountain. If you do, you're going to get shot dead. I mean, the message here is clear, stay back and keep your distance. Right. There's no two ways about it.



What is God teaching the people? He's teaching them that He is unapproachable by sinful human beings. Why? Because of our sin. Guys, do you understand that sin still separates us from God and it always will. It creates an impassable barrier to being able to meet with God. Do you know why people who have not come to faith in Jesus Christ don't want to come to church? Because they know instinctively in their heart that they are unacceptable to God. And that's why when you invite people to church, they will say to you, well, once I get my life cleaned up, maybe I'll start coming to church.

Which, of course, misses the whole point. I mean, they think that we here are people who have our lives put together. I think we fool them. Because this is a hospital, it's for messed up people, it's for sinners, it's for people who don't have their act together. That's why we're here, is because we've recognized we don't have our act together, and we need a savior to help us along the way. That's why we're here. But people don't get that.

But there is a sense in the heart of unbelievers. And I remember because I was one at one point, and I remember how I felt about church. I remember how I felt about the Bible. I remember how I felt when people would come up and start talking to me about church, God, getting right with God, and all those other things. I hated it. It made me incredibly uncomfortable, and I wanted to get away as fast as I could. I mean, I wanted to just, any excuse I could find.

But what I didn't know then, but knew instinctively, but didn't know intellectually, was what God spoke through the prophet Isaiah. Let me put it on the screen. It's Isaiah 59.

**Isaiah 59:2 (ESV)**

*...your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.*

*...your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.*

You see, this is, guys, this is what is best known as, the bad news. This is the bad news. Sin always separates us from God. That's the lesson. That's the lesson that He's teaching the people of Israel right here in chapter 19. You are separated from your God. Don't come near, stay back, keep your distance.

Guys, can I just tell you this? Sinai, when you think of Mount Sinai, think of it this way. It's a place of separation. Okay. Sinai is a place of separation. What happened at Sinai? What did God give them at Sinai? We're going to get into it

in the next chapter. He gave them the law. What does the law do? It makes us aware of our sin and it kills us according to the New Testament. The law puts me to death. Isn't this good news tonight? This is just yeah, great. Sinai is a place of death. It's a place of separation. It's a place of condemnation.

Boy, thank God we don't stay at Sinai. Guys, we can't stay at Sinai. We can't stay in a place of separation and death. And yet I find some Christians want to, they want to stay at Sinai. They want to get involved in the law. They want to apply elements of the law to their lives. Sabbath keeping, or food laws, or any number of other things that were part of the Old Covenant. They want to stay at Sinai. And I'm like, are you joking? You want to stay at Sinai? Sinai is a place of separation and death. Why would you want to stay at a place of separation and death?

That's not your destiny. Our destiny is not Sinai, it's Zion, not Mount Sinai, but Mount Zion. Let me show you what the author of Hebrews had to say on this particular score from Hebrews chapter 12,

**Hebrews 12:18-24 (ESV)**

*For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear."*

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He goes on, and he says,

**Hebrews 12:18-24 (ESV)**

*But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*

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You see, that's our destiny. It's not Sinai, it's Zion. That's where we're hanging out. You know why? Because at Zion, the message is not stay away, stay back, hold your distance. The message is come near, come close, right? Look what the writer of Hebrews goes on to say in Hebrews chapter 10. He says,

**Hebrews 10:19-23 (ESV)**

*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.*

*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, (he's talking about Jesus, look what the word is now today for you and me) let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.*

Do you see what the difference is for you and me who are in Christ? He doesn't say let us hold fast to the confession of our hope that we're going to be good enough to come into God's presence. That's not our hope.

Guys, I've been walking with the Lord now for good grief. How long? 40, 40 some years. My hope is not in the fact that I've tried to live a good life in those 40 some years so that now God's going to accept me. I have no hope in that. None, zero. My hope is in one thing and one thing alone, that what Jesus did on the cross when He died for my sins was enough. That's where my hope is. And that's the hope that he's saying. That's the confidence he's talking about here, when he says, hold fast to your confidence and to the hope that you have. Hold

fast to that confidence. Don't let anybody try to tell you that you got to be a good enough because you can't be. Not possible.

I like hanging out at Mount Zion because there's forgiveness. There's acceptance and at Mount Zion, I am bid to come near. Not stay away, but to come near. In fact, anytime Jesus says to me, come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden, I'll give you a rest, rest for your souls, for I am gentle and humble in heart. (Matthew 11:28) Isn't that beautiful? Isn't that the opposite of stay back, don't touch or you die.

Chapter 20. *“And God spoke all these words, saying, <sup>2</sup> “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”*

Here comes the first commandment. <sup>3</sup> *“You shall have no other gods before me.”* Now you're going to notice here that these first 4 commandments that are given to us here in the Ten Commandments, speak to the relationship of the Israelites to God. All right. The Israelites and their relationship to God. The last 6 are going to speak to the Israelites in their relationship to one another.

Here we go. <sup>3</sup> *“You shall have no other gods before me.”* And I think we all know what that means. God is not necessarily acknowledging the existence of other gods in the sense that He has an equal, or even a god that you and I would even consider as such.

He's saying, do not put something or someone else before me, in front of me. And guys, that could be anything. Your god is whatever you serve, so your god can be money, your god can be pleasure, or specifically sex. Or your god can be alcohol, or drugs, or a thrill. Whatever you live for, that's your god, whatever. *“You shall have no other gods before me.”*

The second commandment is really kind of an enlargement on the first commandment to have no other gods, but it specifically deals with carved images. And it says, <sup>4</sup> *“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. <sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.”*

So what is the second commandment? Have no carved images, but do not bow down to any of these other man made idols, right? By the way, this

commandment is the one that Israel broke probably the most by worshiping the gods of the pagan neighbors that they had all around them. In fact, it was the breaking of this second commandment that eventually led to Israel, first of all, being overthrown by the Assyrian empire. And then later, the Southern kingdom of Judah being overthrown by the Babylonian empire. They were overtaken by their enemies.

And I want you to notice too, when we read verse 5, did you notice there was a promise of judgment? Look at it again. He says, *“You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, (look at this part) visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation...”*

And by the way, this is what is commonly referred to as a generational curse that God is speaking here. And He is saying that there are times when He will visit the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation. What are those times? Well, it's the last few words of that verse which most people forget. Look at, what are the last few words, *“...of those who hate me,”* *“...of those who hate me.”*

Do you know, particularly in the continent of Africa and other places in the world, the teaching on generational curses is absolutely enormous. It is widespread and I get notes from that part of the world quite a bit and people wanting to know. And not only have they do, they believe in generational curses and have a completely whacked out idea about what it means, but they have a very whacked out sort of a solution process that they go through.

I get people, this is serious. I get people writing to me, telling me that their church, their Christian church told them that the reason they're having trouble, they're having physical problems, emotional issues, family issues, is because they are under a generational curse and that they have to sacrifice animals to get out from under that curse. Yeah. Yeah. That's being told people in semi Christian churches or so they say. Has nothing to do with Christianity.

But I want you to very clearly see here that God says, when there are people who continue in rebellion and hatred against Me, there will at times be a visitation of the iniquity of the fathers upon the children. But why? Because they're continuing on in rebellion and hatred. That's why. What happens when somebody comes to the Lord? Hey, that's all broken.

Do you understand people that the death of the burial and resurrection of Jesus and the acceptance of it breaks every curse, and every issue, and every problem.

And that's not to say you're going to be problem free, but I mean, the issues that dogged you as an unbeliever. Listen to what Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, this is important.

**2 Corinthians 5:17-18 (ESV)**

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself...*

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. (somebody say, amen, yeah) The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (and this isn't your doing He says) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself...*

What happens when you come to Jesus? Well, you're a new creation. The old is gone. Now, I know people read this passage and they'll say, well, I don't know, maybe I didn't really come to the Lord then because I've still got some of the old things still following me.

People, that's because sin becomes habitual and habits are extremely hard to break. That doesn't mean that you're not saved. That means you've got things dogging you. I get it. Been there, done that. Right? Don't let the difficulty of your circumstances and the issues that you've struggled to break free from cause you to doubt in the work of Jesus Christ on your behalf. Please don't do that.

That, I've told you before, I'll say it again, that is the devil's playground. He loves it when he can get people to doubt their salvation because they know they're not living the way they should. Your salvation is not marked by a perfect lifestyle.

It's marked by faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. We are saved by grace through faith and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Please understand, please understand, and be patient with yourself to at least to some degree.

I find Christians are they're so judgmental of themselves. They get saved and then they realized that some of these things that they gave into for years, and years, and years before they came to Christ are following them into their relationship with the Lord. And they're just, and I understand the feelings about those things. Believe me, I understand the angst that those things can create in our lives.

But you have to understand, you didn't get into those sinful, habitual behaviors in a day, and you're probably not going to get out of them in a day. Now, it doesn't mean God can't deliver somebody in a day because He can, and I've seen it happen. But more than not, I see people struggle with their habitual behavioral lifestyle addictions.

And I think it's God's way of saying, this was serious. You were messing around. You thought you were having a good time and this was serious. I love you. You're my child, but this was serious, and I'm not going to patty cake this for you and make you feel like this was not a serious thing you got yourself into. It was incredibly stupid, but here you are.

But I still love you and I will bring deliverance into your life. Keep your eyes on Me. Walk with me closely, trust in Me, I'll see you through this time. But there may be some challenges along the way to remind you of where you've come, where you've come from, and what I actually saved you from. Right?

Command number 3, verse 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.”*

The word, vain, in both Hebrew and Greek means, empty or meaningless. The command here is not to take the Lord's name in a meaningless or to use the Lord's name in a meaningless or empty way. And by the way, God is not his name. God is a title, right? So just something, I'm not saying I'm not giving you freedom to use the title God in an empty and meaningless way. I'm just simply making a distinction.

But the point here is that we are to consider the name of the Lord holy. What did Jesus teach us to pray? *“Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name;”* (Matthew 6:9) Holy, that's what, hallowed means. Holy is Your name. Lord, holy is Your name. That's to be are apart. And again, holy means, set apart. You set it apart for special. You don't make it common. We don't make the name of the Lord common. It is special, holy, set apart. Okay. And that's why we've been taught to pray that way.

Now for the Jews, they were big on vows and they took vows many times in the name of the Lord to punctuate their vow. If you could attach God's name to your vow, then people are going to love more likely to believe you sort of a thing. And God addressed that issue. Let me show you this from Leviticus on the screen, chapter 19, verse 12. It says,

**Leviticus 19:12 (ESV)**

*You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.*

*You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am (YAHWEH, I am) the LORD.*

Is He forbidding all swearing by His name? No, He, at this point, He's saying don't swear falsely. Now, in the new Testament, we're told, don't even swear vows at all. It's just get yourself into trouble. Just stay away. Don't even get close to that cliff lest you fall off. But here the Lord says, don't do it falsely because that would be to profane the name of the Lord.

Commandment number 4. *“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> 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 (in other words, the traveler) who is within your gates. <sup>11</sup> 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.”*

So we come to the fourth commandment, which is the Sabbath regulation. By the way, you'll notice there's nothing there at all about going to church or gathering. And so if anybody comes to your door and accuses you of not keeping the Sabbath by going to church on Saturday, you can tell them for me, that the Bible doesn't say go to church on the Sabbath, it says rest on the Sabbath. And that's what the Sabbath is all about for the nation of Israel.

It was also key to the covenant that God made with Israel. Did you hear me? The covenant that God made with Israel. When we get to the, toward the end of the Book of Exodus, here's what we're going to read in chapter 31, up on the screen.

**Exodus 31:16 (ESV)**

*Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, as a covenant forever.*

*Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, observing the Sabbath throughout their generations, (look at this) as a covenant forever.*



See, this was a covenant. This is one of the covenant signs for Israel. Keeping the Sabbath. To rest on the Sabbath was a sign of keeping the covenant as was circumcision and other things. But I want you to notice it says, *“Therefore the people of Israel...”* *“Therefore the people of Israel shall keep the Sabbath, ...”*

It's incredible how many people read that verse and they think, well, it's what we got to do. They just transfer it right over to the church, to the body of Christ today. It says it right there. Keep the Sabbath, supposed to be kept forever. But they missed the point.

First of all, that God says the people of Israel shall keep it, and this is going to be part of their covenant. Guys, we're not under the Old Covenant. We have a different covenant. God said, it's not going to be like the Old Covenant, and unlike other aspects of the law and some that are like it, this one found its fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus Christ. We're told that.

Paul wrote, I quoted this verse on Sunday for those of you that were here. Look at this on the screen, Colossians chapter 2.

**Colossians 2:16-17 (ESV)**

*Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*

*Therefore (Paul writes) let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or (what) a Sabbath. (but look what he goes on to say, all) These (things from the Old Testament, they're) are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*

The substance of the Sabbath belongs to Jesus.

Guys, do you understand that the Sabbath was always meant as something that pointed the people toward having an attitude of resting by faith. That was the point of the Sabbath from the very beginning. And it points toward the new Testament to the coming of Messiah when the people of God would be called to rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

In other words, just as God told the nation of Israel, do no work on the day of rest. Well, guess what the day of rest is for you. It's today and it's every day. And God says, do no work. What is He saying? It's today. Don't think that you can work for your salvation. You have to rest in what Jesus did for you. Right?

You see the Sabbath is a picture of what it means to rest in Jesus. And I always like to ask people, are you resting in Jesus? I can tell when people aren't, when they're restless. When they come to me and they're all upset and bothered, and they're talking to me about their life and they're worried about their salvation and they're thinking I don't know if God loves me. And I don't know if I'm really forgiven and all this and that.

And I know what's going on. They're not resting. They're not resting. They're restless and they're working. And they're like, I got to get ahold of this. I got to change my life. I got to live differently, or I'm not going to be, He's not going to let me into heaven.

And God would speak to that person and say, no, you are to rest in Me and what My Son did on the cross rest. And that's what the Sabbath is all about. Resting from your good works, trusting instead in the work that Jesus accomplished. So if anybody ever asked you, if you keep the Sabbath, just smile and say, every single day. Every day, I am keeping the Sabbath. I am resting in Jesus Christ, my Savior and King.

Commandment, number 5. Again, like I told you, we're going to deal with human relationships here, verse 12. *“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.”*

We're going to find as we get deeper into the specifics of the law, that this is a big deal. The thing of honoring your father and mother. In fact, we're going to find out that cursing your father and mother is a capital offense in the law. How you like that? Mouthing off to mom and dad can get you a rock in the face and more along with it. Yeah, it's terrible. It's a very serious thing that God is talking about here.

But I want you to know that there's a promise and you can see a promise that goes along with this commandment, *“that your days may be long in the land that the Lord, your God is giving you.”*

Do you know how many times I've heard that interpreted as, honor your father and mother, and He'll give you a long life. And that's not what He's saying. This is not a promise of longevity of life. He says that your days in the land may be long. He's talking about the promised land and this is a word given to Israel about the promised land.

He says, let there be an attitude among your young people to honor their parents so that your days in the promised land might be long ones. That you might be

there a long, long time. In other words, He's not promising long life. That was not, it was not a promise specifically related to this. All right.

By the way, this commandment is challenging for adults today. Again, I've gotten notes from people saying, how do I apply this? And, particularly when an individual comes to adulthood, they get married, they have their own children and they've got parents making demands on them that are either troublesome, toxic, unbiblical, illegal. You name it.

And people will say... And sometimes those same parents who are doing that will say to their adult children, hey, honor your father and mother. And what they're interpreting that as, is, obey me and you must obey me. And when I get those kinds of notes I write them back and I tell them, no, that's not what that means.

There are wonderful ways to honor your father and mother, but let me tell you something. When an individual comes out from under their parents' home and they create their own home, they, as the Bible says, leave. The Bible says, a man shall leave his father and mother, and be united to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. (Genesis 2:24)

In other words, they together will constitute a new home, a new family unit, when a husband and wife come together in marriage. They are now a new family unit. Now, that doesn't mean you just, you casually blow off your parents and anything they might say. I'm not saying that, but I'm saying, you are your own home and you have to make decisions based on your family now. And that's the family that comes first.

Men, I speak to you as husbands, your wife is first on your list as far as taking care of her and her needs. And you deal with her. You are now your own family unit and so forth. By the way, I've written about this on my blog. If you want to read it, I do go into some depth.

If this is something that is an issue for you just go to [ccontario.com/blog](http://ccontario.com/blog) and you'll come to the main page. There's a search bar on the top. Just type in, honor my father and mother, as a search thing. And the post will come up. And I do go into some depth and use some Scripture to address the issue of honoring your father and mother as an adult. Okay.

Commandment number 6, "*You shall not murder.*" And so this is a clear and obvious prohibition against the indiscriminate taking of human life. It is important to note that the taking of life for reasons of justice, such as when

someone is being executed for a crime. Or the taking of life in the service of the military is not considered murder. That is killing. But it's not murder. There's a big difference between killing and murder, and it's important to know the difference.

Commandment number 7, verse 14, “*You shall not commit adultery.*” This commandment addresses maintaining the sanctity of marriage and the home and it is echoed in the new Testament. Let me show you on the screen. Hebrews chapter 13,

**Hebrews 13:4 (ESV)**

*Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.*

*Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.*

By the way, those words there in Hebrews 13, “*God will judge*” should not be taken as God will never forgive. And I say that for those who may be in this room who have dealt with the pain and difficulty of adultery on whatever side. And I want you to know that there is forgiveness. Okay. That's obviously not an excuse to engage in such a terrible thing because unfaithfulness in marriage is always destructive, but it can be forgiven.

Commandment number 8. Verse 15, “*You shall not steal.*” Every child should be taught this from their earliest days. I remember when I was a kid, I was like 4 years old. Why in the world in the grocery store, they put gum, bubble gum down where kids could get it, 18 inches off the floor? I'll never know because I remember filling my pockets. And got home and my mom found it, and took me, marched me back to the store and I had to apologize to the store manager that I had... If I'd have been smart, I'd have said, well, get it up off the floor or something like that but anyway, that's where they put it. And I think that was on purpose so that kids will go, mom can I have some gum or whatever. Get some last minute sales, but anyway.

Every stable and peaceful society understands that this is not so much about stealing as it is about respecting another person's property. It's like, that doesn't belong to you. Don't touch it. Right. That's not yours. That's not yours.

Now, again, this is something that can easily be lost in a culture, yeah. I was talking to a friend just 2 days ago, from Texas. He was passing through and he said that he got up one morning to find out that his catalytic converter had been

cut off from underneath his pickup. Cause they do that and they sell them, they cut them off and sell them. And they can get money for them on the black market. And there you go. This creates a chaotic society when people don't simply respect the whole idea that what belongs to you is not mine. And I don't have the right to touch it.

Commandment number 9, verse 16, *“You should not bear false witness (your Bible may say, testimony) against your neighbor.”* And this commandment is of course, all about protecting my neighbor and his reputation by not falsely accusing him or bringing false charges of wrongdoing against him or her.

Commandment, number 10, verse 17, *“You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, (or his corvette) or anything that is (in) your neighbor's (garage).”* I just threw that in there because we're kind of just modernizing things a little bit here. Not that I've ever coveted someone's, well, maybe I have, but anyway.

Here's, what's interesting about the 10th commandment. It takes the idea of sin out of the realm of action and into the thoughts, because to covet is not to take, it's to want to take, right? You see how we've just upped the ante here a little bit on this level of holiness that God is communicating to us in these passages.

So it's like, yeah, I'm not just telling you not to steal your neighbor's ox. I don't even want you to want to steal your neighbor's ox. Right. And that's wrong. It's wrong. Well, have we ever lusted for things that weren't ours and then we wanted and then somebody else owned? Of course we have. Yeah. Of course we have. So we've all broken the law. We're all lawbreakers. Aren't we? Every single one of us.

Verse 18. *“Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off<sup>19</sup> and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.””* They've been hearing God give the Ten Commandments and they've heard enough.

*“<sup>20</sup> Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.” <sup>21</sup> The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.”*

And then the chapter ends with a statement made about laws concerning altars. And frankly, this probably should be part of the next chapter. And maybe we should even take it that way. You know what? We'll take it with the next chapter.

I'm going to end by answering a simple question for you tonight. What then is the purpose of the law? We know that the law can't save you. You can't perfectly keep the law. What is the purpose of the law? Let me show you Romans 7:7, on the screen. Paul writes,

**Romans 7:7 (ESV)**

*What then shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."*

*What then shall we say? That the law is sin? (cause he's already made the point that we sin because of the law makes us aware. He says, no,) By no means! (he says,) Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet."*

In other words, I didn't know that just thinking about wanting my neighbor's ox was a sin. I wouldn't have known that I may be through a conscience might have figured out that taking his ox might be wrong, but I didn't know that even just thinking about it was wrong, so he's telling us something here. He's saying that the law was given to make us more aware of what sin really is.

By the way, if you want to do a little bit of a deeper dive into a study on the law, can I just encourage you maybe to go to the page on our website where I actually go through the Book of Romans. It's [ccontario.com/romans](http://ccontario.com/romans) and listen to the 2 messages that are there on Romans chapter 7, and that will be a very good companion study to what we're doing here tonight. But I just want to remind you of the law as it appears to you as a believer. Okay.

So that's the next question now after, why did God give us the law? Well, how does the law relate to me as a believer? Galatians, I love this passage. Paul writes,

**Galatians 3:24-25 (ESV)**

*...the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,*

*...the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, (are we still under the law? No, he says,) we are no longer under a guardian,*

And what he means by that is we're not under the same guardian. He doesn't mean totally there's no guardian in our lives because we now have the Holy Spirit living within us, which is far superior to the law, far superior.

Because the Holy Spirit can speak to you about anything. Anything, the law was a finite list of rules. You have an infinite God now living inside of you, speaking to you about the important things of life. And so we are no longer under the guardianship of the law. Again, if anybody comes to your door knock, are you doing this? Are you doing that? Are you keeping the rules of the law that God gave in the Word of God? You know what to say. Hopefully, you know what to say.

I love the Ten Commandments because they express the beauty and the holiness of God's moral perfection. But I have to remind you of something that Paul says again, about the law and the New Testament. The law kills, it puts to death, the Spirit brings us back to life when we put our faith in Jesus Christ, but the law kills. (2 Corinthians 3:6)

I'm okay if you guys are, if you're the kind of family that likes to put those signs on your yard of the Ten Commandments, that's fine. Just make sure that the gospels there with it right along with it. Okay? Because if you're giving people the Ten Commandments, all you're dishing out is death. And I'm not saying the law is bad. That's the exact question that Paul answered. So am I saying that the law is sin? Is it bad? No, it's not bad. It's holy. It's righteous. It's perfect, but it kills people because they can't do it. They can't keep it.

And the only way you could be justified by God, according to the law is if you kept it, perfectly. And you can't do that so you see the law puts us to death. It's great talking about the Ten Commandments. Okay, and if you got that sign on your lawn, wonderful. But make sure the gospel is right alongside it. You might even put another sign that goes, you can't do these things so trust in this guy.

Because that's the deal, the law... Remember, remember people at Sinai, there's separation and death at Zion, there's life and forgiveness through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Let's pray.

Father, we thank You so much for Your love for us. The power of that love Lord to transform our lives. Lord, we just want to confess right here in the hearing of everyone, that none of us can be good enough to be saved. I'm not good enough even to be a follower of Jesus. Lord, we put no confidence in the flesh.

Instead, our confidence is what Jesus did on the cross when He bore our sin and then rose again from the dead. That's where our confidence is. That's where our hope lies. That's what we will focus on.

So we thank You Father God for this study tonight. It's a very important one, very vital one, that we would not get blown off course by legalism or false teachings. Or things that do not take into consideration the cross of Jesus Christ.

Lord, keep us fixed on the cross and living out the resurrection day by day.

We thank You and praise You for all you've done for us. In Jesus precious name we pray. And all God's people said, amen.

God bless you.

Have a good rest of your evening.