

“The Authority and Purpose of the Ten Commandments”

Exodus 20:1-17

Open: Background

- The Children of Israel had been living in Egypt for nearly 500 years. (*Compare to America and her short history of being a nation. Look how far we have come with the godly foundation of our spiritual heritage.*)
 - 500 years living with a promise, but no deliverance.
 - 500 years living in and around a pagan god-filled, yet godless, society.
 - 500 years being conditioned to follow man and not God.
- The Children of Israel, though God’s chosen people, were carnal at best. They were not equipped to be blessed by God in the wilderness or in Canaan.
 - God wanted to bless His people and for His people to learn how to live in liberty.
 - So, God needed to teach His people what makes a civilization civilized; and how His people were to live if they intended to be blessed and live in liberty.
- God not only understood the cultural conflict Israel faced; but he also understood the carnal conflict.
 - **Rom. 12:2** “*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*”
 - God realized the Israelites had been influenced and indoctrinated by the world for many years.
 - God understood that the Israelites had become programmed to follow the flesh rather than to live by faith.
 - God understood that the Israelites had developed an appetite for living a fleshly and a carnal lifestyle.

Application:

- We need to recognize that the 10 Commandments were not given for salvation; but rather for the sound government of ANY people who would choose to live by them.
 - **Gal. 3:21** “*Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.*”
 - **Gal. 2:16** “*Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.*”
 - The law was not set as the standard for salvation, but as a safeguard for humanity. **I Tim. 1:9-10** “*Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;*”
 - The keeping of the law never has and never will satisfy the wrath of God. **John 3:36** “*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*”
- We need to recognize that these 10 Commandments were not given as a suggestion, but as a command.
 - God understood for man to have true liberty he must learn to live by certain moral precepts.
 - **ILL:** *The Rules of a Football game are there to keep people safe and to keep the focus of the game clear & Fences are set in place to protect children from going out into the road or to protect predators from getting in and hurting them.*
 - God did not force the Israelites or mankind to live by the 10 Commandments (they chose to **Ex.24:3**); but He was clear that these laws were to be lived by if they wanted to enjoy their life to the fullest.

- We need to recognize God gave us the 10 Commandments not out of authority, but out of love.
 - God did not give man the 10 Commandments to enslave man, but to teach man how to live in freedom.
 - God had to teach man the difference between man’s law and God’s Law
 - Man’s Law = What can I get you to do for me, through the use of unjust force.
 - God’s Law = What can you become (because of what I did for you) by obeying just rule.

Tran: You will follow the rule of someone. “Both individuals and societies must choose to either voluntarily follow thy teachings of God’s Word, or forcefully be subjected to the rule of Man.”

- Bible Illustration:
 - **ILL#1:** The Jews transitioning from following God to making Saul their King. **I Sam. 8:10-22**
 - **ILL #2:** The result of being subjected to the violent rule of man because of a turning away from obeying God’s laws. **Is. 13:15-18**
- Historical Illustrations:
 - **ILL #1:** Notice this to excerpt from a speech Robert Winthrop (Speaker of the House 1847-1849) delivered on the Bible and American government, *“All societies of men must be governed in some way or other; the less they may have of stringent state government, the more they must have of individual self-government. The less they rely on public law or physical force them or they must rely on private moral restraint. Man in a word must necessarily be controlled, either by a power within them, or by power without them; either by the word of God, or by the strong arm of man; either by the Bible, or by the bayonet...”*
 - **ILL #2:** James McHenry (signer of the Constitution and namesake of the infamous Ft. McHenry) said, *“...In vain without the Bible, we increase penal laws and draw (protections) around our institutions.”*

I. Where did the 10 Commandments come from?

- A. By the Creator of the Universe. **ILL:** Man broken down on the side of the road turns away the maker of his car (Henry Ford). Because he thinks he knew how to handle the situation better.
 1. Since, God created the world and all laws, both natural and spiritual; what makes man think he could live his life better than how he has been instructed to live.
 2. We need to recognize that by the Word of God the world was created and by the Word of God life should be lived. **Ps. 33:6** *“By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”*
- B. By the Just Judge of the Universe.
 1. The 10 Commandments were not made up by some man, church, or religion to rule all men unjustly.
 2. God first delivered the 10 Commandments verbally (**Ex. 20:1**) then He gave them to man engraved by His own finger (**Ex. 32:15-16**). God then restates them all throughout the New Testament.

II. What gives the 10 Commandments their ultimate authority?

- A. God giving them to man. **I Cor. 2:6-7** “Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: [7] But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory:”
- B. Jesus Reinforcing them as He lived among man. **John 5:18, 26-27** “[18] Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God. [26] For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; [27] And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man.”
- C. Absolute Truth. – Jesus Himself was submitted to the pre-established truths of God’s Word while He was here on earth. **John 5:30** “I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”
- To claim that there is no absolute truth or that there is truth outside the realm of God’s Word is to claim that the laws of gravity are non-existent.

III. What happens when the authority of the 10 Commandments is undermined?

- A. Departing from morals. **Prov. 14:12** “There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.”
1. Without a track, a train would be out of control. So is a man who rejects all form of rules or guidelines.
 2. There is no limit to the sin a man will justify as “ok” when he lives his life without the moral restraint of the law
- B. Destruction of a society. **Ps. 9:17** “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”
1. Man will become his own god and the judge of right and wrong. **Prov. 12:15** “The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise.”
 2. Truth will be taught as error; and error will be taught as truth. **Is. 5:20-21** “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! [21] Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!”
 3. The effects of sin will be carried out. **James 1:14-15** “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. [15] Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Close:

- Do you know how God wants you to live your life?
- Are you trying to live a righteous life in your own power?
- Are you yielding to the Spirit and obeying God’s Words or are you living to please the flesh?

The 10 Commandments

1. Thou Shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath.
5. Honour thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness.
10. Thou shalt not covet.