



The Holy Bible might be compared to a great mountain range with valley lows and peaks of varying heights. Those lows, I would compare to the Fall of Adam, the murder of Abel, the Great Deluge, the excesses of King Saul, the adultery and murderous betrayal of King David, the apostasy of Israel and Judah, the betrayal of our Lord Jesus Christ into the hands of the Romans, and His death and burial. Those varied peaks I would compare to the calling of Abraham, the substitution of a ram in lieu of Abraham's only begotten son, Isaac, on Mt. Moriah, the elevation of Joseph in Egypt, the night of the first Passover in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, the giving of the Law on Sinai's Heights, the Life, death, and Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc. The valleys are dwarfed by those mountain peaks of such grandeur and majesty as that which we are about to undertake – the giving of the Ten Commandments at Sinai.

I wish that I were a more accomplished scholar and writer¹ to be able to capture the full essence of this event. Mount Sinai is of such magnitude of importance and meaning that I feel the mountain may be too much of a challenge for me to climb. It is truly an epochal event that has bearing on all of the other aspects of Holy Writ and Purpose. The mere mention of The Law of God, whether among laity or theologians, stirs up a mixture of division, doubt, confusion, conflict, and even anger at times. I believe this is results from a misunderstanding of God's purpose in giving the Law, and how He views His own Law in all ages and places.

The Table of Laws cannot be relegated to insignificance, or be hidden back in some theory of past dispensationalism. God is not, in the classical sense, a dispensationalist. His plan and purpose throughout all recorded time as the same object in mind – the salvation of His Elect through the shed blood of a Redeemer – His only Begotten Son.

Society cannot function without law. The security of our persons and property depends upon the efficacy of our laws in civil society. All of our lives are regulated laws of varying import. We have laws and regulations that govern our behavior at school. We have laws that dictate the safe speed we must travel on America's highways. We have municipal laws that regulate local issues. We have state laws to govern a greater measure of our commerce, trade, and court systems. Above the municipal and state governments, we have a Federal Government whose laws supersede the state and local laws, but must conform to the Supreme Law of the Land as expressed in our Constitution. Lower governmental laws must take a back seat to those Constitutional laws enacted by the Federal government. So we see a definite hierarchy in the judicial

¹ The editor had a really hard time leaving this paragraph alone. Bishop Jerry does the best job of explaining things in terms we can understand of anyone I have ever met. His grasp and recollection are unparalleled. His ability to re-form in an order that we can understand is beyond amazing to me. Hap

and legal systems of America. Upon whose Law must all others conform if we will live in peace, freedom, and prosperity? It is the Law of God. All legitimate law descends from God. He is the Supreme Law of the World and Universe, and the sovereign of all of His Creation.

Laws are instituted, or should be, for our well being and liberty. No man can be free when living among barbarians. If laws are to be effective, they must be enforced by a sovereign power having both the authority and the means of enforcement.

When we consider the Law of God, we will admit that there is no greater Authority, no better law for government, and not greater power to enforce that Law than that which resides in the Hand of the Creator! His Law supersedes all others. Though they do not like to admit it, all governments have laws that were given by our Creator – *“Thou shalt no steal; thou shalt not kill; thou shalt no bear false witness.”* The secular power loves to aver that morality cannot be enforced through law. Is this true? Has it not been from the beginning of time? The only question that suggests a variance from the laws of nations is this: *Whose morality do the laws promote?*

The Ten Commandments are of no less relevance to us today than when they were first thundered from the heights of Sinai! It is quite disappointing to hear antinomian preachers thunder from the pulpits that the Ten Commandments are no more binding upon the Christian for *“Christ nailed them to the cross.”* The penalty for our disobedience was nailed to the cross, but not the Commandments of God. The old ordinances of Moses were nailed to the cross, but not those words which God, in solemn assembly, uttered from the cloud atop Sinai: *“**And God spake all these words.**”* (Ex 20:1) God does not impose limits on the behavior of the ancient church which He does not impose on the New Testament Church.

God did not issue His Law as a burden, but as a benefit to us. Strangely, the only answer to the problems in contemporary America regarding deficit spending, abortion, homosexuality, drugs, and HIV may be found in God’s Law; however, that answer is the ONLY one that is not acceptable to the great majority of rulers and citizens in a land that we so abundantly blessed at its founding by the Providence of God.

Without law, there is no curb on behavior. By the same token, without law there are no criminals for there is no law to define them. Moral and civil behavior MUST be observed by the people of God, therefore He codified His Law (which already had existed since at least the Garden at Eden). If we do not have laws to set boundaries for moral behavior, how would we know that we are sinners? Some of that knowledge of sin comes instinctively by way of a God-given conscience such as that of Adam and Eve in trying to hide their nakedness from the Lord. But man needs a Table of Laws to remove all doubt of Godly limits and expectations in behavior. Without the Law of God, there would be no need for Grace. We would simply all perish in a quagmire of illicit and uncontrolled passions.

You will observe that the Great Rock (representing the Lord Jesus Christ) was a source of grace to the Children of Israel (Exodus 17:5-7). It was also on that same range of mountains as was Sinai. They came to the Rock first (grace) before ever receiving the Law of God at Sinai. It should be remembered, too, that Horeb was the same Mountain of God at which Moses had an encounter with the Burning bush. (Exodus 3). Now, before coming to be arraigned to the solemn assembly at the base of Sinai to receive the Law, the Children of Israel already had received ample evidence of the grace and love of God who had saved them in the Sea with a mighty outstretched arm, had given them Manna to eat when they were famished, and provided water from the Rock of Horeb when they thirsted. Need you asked, again, who that Rock represented? *1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud,*

*and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: **for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.** 5 But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. (1 Cor 10:1-5)*

So in some respects, Grace depended upon the Law for its complete realization – Christ being that full measure of Grace to be offered some 1400 years hence from Mount Sinai.

Just as Moses removed his shoes in reverence before the Burning Bush, and the Children of Israel were set boundaries beyond which they could not go even after being sanctified, I feel that we, too, should remove our shoes, our hates, our prideful countenance, and our self-righteous demeanor prior to undertaking this study of Genesis 20. I am well aware of my unworthiness to so much as approach that great Mountain of God. But God has brought me to this chapter, and I intend to do my very best to reveal whatever gems of beauty and truth that it offers insofar as God gives me the Light to see that beauty and truth. May we all be humbled at those same thunderings, lightnings, and shrill tones of the trumpet issuing forth from the ominous Cloud from the Heights of Mount Sinai, in our study, as were those who were gathered about its escarpment more than three millennia ago.

I have wondered at times what the Ten Commandments would have looked like if Moses had run them through the US Congress.

Ronald Reagan

See, dear friends, how different is the Lord's way of working and ours. If you knock down a man who is living an evil life, and put him in chains, you can make him honest by force... but that is not God's way of acting. He who put man in the Garden of Eden, and never put any palisades around the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, but left man a free agent, does just the same in the operations of his grace. He leaves his people to the influences that are within them, and yet they go right, because they are so changed and renewed by his grace that they delight to do that which once they loathed to do. I admire the grace of God in acting thus.

Charles Spurgeon