
TEN | Introduction

Rob Rogers May 30, 2021

Introduction

When you hear the phrase, “the Ten Commandments,” anyone who grew up in church, or ever had one of those children’s Bibles, probably have some pictures that pop into your mind.

The most famous image surrounding the event of when the commandments were given reveal what seems to be a very angry Moses, with the tablets over his head ready to smash them to pieces on the ground.

So, when it comes to hearing what the Ten Commandments *are*... they sound like these BIG, PUNITIVE, THOU SHALT NOTS! AND IF YOU DO one of the DON’TS, GOD IS GOING TO SMITE YOU TO PIECES just like Moses did to those stone tablets.

Today is the introduction to our summer sermon series. Over the next 11 weeks, we’re going to be looking at each of the Ten Commandments.

Today we will see that the commandments were not given by an angry God, demanding our obedience... but they were given by a God that was inviting the nation of Israel into relationship with Him.

The Ten Commandments
are one of the most influential texts in all of history.

THE LAW OF GOD
THE LOVE OF GOD
THE LAMB OF GOD

The Law of God

There are some very strange laws in the world...

- In 1872, there was a law passed in Scotland that you cannot be drunk and ride a cow.
- In 1313, a law was written that says it’s illegal to wear a Suit of Armor in British Parliament.
- In one town in France, it is illegal to die without a pre-purchased burial plot and the law says that “Violators will be severely punished.”
- In Poland, it’s illegal to wear Winnie the Pooh t-shirts because Winnie the Pooh doesn’t wear pants...
- In China, it’s illegal to reincarnate without permission from the government.
 - How in the world do you enforce that law!?

But often, when we think of the TEN COMMANDMENTS... we think of it like someone coming up with arbitrary rules and laws to make sure their loyal subjects behave themselves and prove their loyalty.

OR

We think that the commandments were given as a standard for us to live by, in order to get into God’s good graces — and if you make a mistake, then you’re toast!

*What we need to understand is not just what the laws are,
but WHY the laws were given.*

Because before God ever gave a single commandment — before He gave them a single law — here's what He said to Moses.

Exodus 20:2

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

- God didn't say... “**I might** be the Lord your God — so here are rules to follow first, and if you're good enough — **then** I'll be your God. But if you mess up, you're on your own!”

Think about that! Before God ever gave the Israelites a commandment to obey, what did He say to them?

Not “*I might be,*” but “***I AM the Lord YOUR God.***” I'm the God who brought you out of 400 years of slavery in Egypt... **You didn't do a THING.** You didn't even know who I was. And I chose you. I rescued you. I redeemed you. I set you free. I'm your God, and you're my people.

BACKGROUND: God is telling Moses on the mountain, I'm the one who brought you out of Egypt... from 400 years of slavery.

And in Egypt, God for the very first time since the Israelites had been a nation, speaks to Moses... and tells them to get a lamb or a goat... slaughter it at twilight, and then...

Exodus 12:7, 12-14

“Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. ¹² For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. ¹³ The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will **pass over** you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt. ¹⁴ “This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast.

Before a single commandment was ever given... you know what God was saying to the nation of Israel!?

“I'm not angry with you. I'm not looking down on you with scorn and judgment! I've not come to destroy you or harm you.

- ***I've come to save you. I've come to protect you. I've come to deliver you. To set you free.*** *I didn't come to give you a whole bunch of do's and don'ts in order to limit you, or ensure your compliance. I came to rescue you from your oppressors and task masters and bring you into a land of abundance where I will be your God and you will be my people!*

Moses is at the top of Mount Sinai ready to receive the Laws of God because He had already seen the Love of God on full display!

Application: *Maybe for you today, you've run away from or rejected God because you've viewed Him as some heavy-handed task-master — as an authoritarian, vindictive God — ready to smite you when you make a mistake. Maybe you grew up with that in your home and you've projected that onto God.*

- What the events surrounding the giving of the Ten Commandments tells you is
- *that is not who God is— or what He is like...*
- God didn't come to establish himself as our taskmaster, but as our loving Father — as our deliverer, our savior...

Before He gave a single law or commandment, He chose, He delivered, He saved the nation of Israel.

But that begs the question, if God had already chosen and saved the nation of Israel, why then give the Ten Commandments? Why give Moses the Law?

The Love of God

As a law-giver, God has ZERO self-interest in the laws He establishes.

One of the primary reasons people have turned away from or rejected God is because they view God is someone who demands moral adherence to a bunch of rules without an ounce of relationship.

*Rules without relationship will always lead to rebellion.¹
~ Josh McDowell*

Many people who are either very religious or semi-religious use their adherence to the law to either

- prove their love to God or
- earn acceptance from God

And one of the verses that really bugs people who view the law this way is James 2:10...

James 2:10

For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it.

- If you violate the Law of God at any point, you've broken all of God's Law.

**God's law was not given as a means
for us to prove our love for God,
but as evidence of God's love for us.**

The law of God, the commandments in Exodus 20 are evidence of a relationship that has already been established with God, not as a means for us to earn our way into His acceptance or approval.

- The Ten Commandments, every single one of them, is designed, intentionally, purposefully, for your benefit.
- The first four commandments are all about your relationship with God.
- The rest of them are 100% about how we live life with one another.

There's a reason why the Greatest Commandment is what?

¹ McDowell, Josh. *How to be a Hero to Your Kids* (Thomas Nelson, Aug 3, 2008)

Matthew 22:36-40

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?”³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

Commandment 1-4: Love God with all your heart, soul, mind.

Commandment 5-10: Love your neighbor as yourself.

Love God. Love others. All of the law and the prophets is summarized in these two incredibly simple but profoundly difficult commandments

And *why* He gives us the commandments — it’s not for his own benefit — but for *ours*.

The heart of God for you is revealed in Deuteronomy 12:28.

Deuteronomy 12:8

Be careful to obey all these words that I command you, **that it may go well with you** and **with your children after you forever...**

The Lamb of God

Maybe you hear that and say, “I’ve been hurt by churches, I’ve been wounded by people that are supposed to represent God and call themselves Christians...” *I hate that certain people in your life have misrepresented God to you...*

But do you realize what God has done to prove His love for you? To prove His heart behind the commandments?

1,400 years after that first Passover — Jesus is with His 12 disciples celebrating Passover. Because God had the Israelites put the blood of the lamb on the doorposts one time, they were to remember and commemorate what God did for them every year.

And Jesus is pouring the wine that represents the blood on the doorposts.
And He’s breaking the bread that represented the unleavened bread they were eating right before they escaped from Egypt.

And Jesus does something radical in this moment, because He says, *“It’s different tonight. Because this wine no longer represents the blood of the Passover lamb — it represents my blood that’s about to be spilled not just for a single nation — but for the entire world.”*

This bread no longer represents the bread they ate right before they escaped from Egypt, but now — it represents my body, which is about to be broken for you

And when I’m resurrected and ascend to my heavenly throne, when you’ve received power from the Holy Spirit... I want you to scatter all over the world and tell everyone the Good News, the Gospel... That God has made a way for anyone and everyone that would place their trust in Him, to be delivered, to be rescued, to be saved...

Not because I need something from them, but simply because I love them.

**God's acceptance of you has nothing to do with your adherence to the Law.
You know that you don't have what it takes to fulfill the law —
the first lie you ever told, you broke the entire law.**

**That is why God provided the true Passover lamb —
the blood of THAT Lamb brought salvation to the whole world.**

Discussion Questions

1. What is your first recollection of “The Ten Commandments”? How did it affect you?
2. Reflect on: before God ever gave a single commandment, He chose, delivered, and saved the nation of Israel. Apply that to our lives.
3. Discuss: one of the primary reasons people reject God is that they view Him as someone who demands moral adherence to rules — without a relationship (with Him).
4. Discuss: God's law was not given as a means for us to prove *our love for God*, but as evidence of *God's love for us*.
5. Read about the purpose of the commandments, and the heart of God in Deuteronomy 12:28.

NOTES