

The Ten Commandments

The Story—part 5

October 9, 2016

DAY 1: The Ten Commandments

1. God began the work of taking a slave “nation” and turning it into a real nation, one that was supposed to be a reflection of His love for people and their love in return. Because the people were so averse to loving and following God, He gave them these commands.

Exodus 20:1 And God spoke all these words: ² "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

³ "You shall have no other gods before me.

⁴ "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments.

⁷ "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping 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, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

¹² "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

¹³ "You shall not murder.

¹⁴ "You shall not commit adultery.

¹⁵ "You shall not steal.

¹⁶ "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

¹⁷ "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

2. The first four commands give direction regarding our relationship with God. The last six have to do with our relationships with people.

3. Which of the commands is most pertinent to you at this time of your life? Why?

DAY 2: The Golden calf

Exodus 32:1 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him."

1. While Moses was up on the mountain getting the Ten Commandments, the people began a rebellion of epic proportions that threatened the very existence of the nation. They made an idol, a golden calf.

Ex. 32:4 They said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt."

Exodus 32:7 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt.⁸ They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.'⁹ "I have seen these people," the LORD said to Moses, "and they are a stiff-necked people."

Exodus 32:21 He (Moses) said to Aaron, "What did these people do to you, that you led them into such great sin?"²² "Do not be angry, my lord," Aaron answered. "You know how prone these people are to evil."

2. The verses for today give us different facets of our sin nature. Rather than let God be God in our lives we turn away from Him to fashion life for ourselves, all the while claiming to be religious. What strikes you about human nature in the phrases above that are bold and underlined?

3. The entire enterprise of God's purpose looks like it hangs on the precipice of disaster!

Exodus 32:10 (God) "Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them. Then I will make you (Moses) into a great nation."

¹¹ *But Moses sought the favor of the LORD his God. "O LORD," he said, "why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand? ¹² Why should the Egyptians say, 'It was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains and to wipe them off the face of the earth'? Turn from your fierce anger; relent and do not bring disaster on your people.*

¹³ *Remember your servants Abraham, Isaac and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self: 'I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and I will give your descendants all this land I promised them, and it will be their inheritance forever.'"*

4. Underline each of Moses' arguments not to start all over, like God did with Noah.

Exodus 32:30 The next day Moses said to the people, "You have committed a great sin. But now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." ...³³ The LORD replied to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me I will blot out of my book."

DAY 3: The Tabernacle. God wants to dwell with us.

1. From the very beginning, God's plan was to share His love with all of creation. He made us for fellowship, a kind of fellowship that touches the deepest parts of our hearts. Its source can only be found in Him, but then we are to reflect that love to others. (See Matthew 22:37-40)

2. But, as you can tell, that message seems to be, as we say, a "hard sell." Humans don't naturally gravitate to God, nor even want Him. If you've ever loved someone who hardly gave you the time of day, you have some idea of an ache in the heart.

3. God's next move is to "move in" with the new nation! He becomes, as we'd think of it, a "neighbor," living "down the street" in His house, called the Tabernacle.

4. The purpose of the Tabernacle is not to set up more regulations and items over which to be religious. He is pursuing relationship with His people. He is inviting them to value Him over every other area of life.

*Exodus 25:8 "Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them.
9 Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you."*

5. The instructions for the building the Tabernacle and moving it are elaborate. Why?

a. Each of the pieces, items, colors and cloths have a purpose that sends a message about the nature of who God is,

b. Each of the pieces also indicates the kinds of responses that are acceptable if people are going to rightly relate to God and enjoy Him.

c. A relationship with God must always be on His terms, never on ours.

d. God needed a place where the people could atone for their sins.

6. How does it strike you that the eternal, sovereign, all-powerful God wants to move in with you? Do you sense the yearning He has for you, to love you and be loved by you?

DAY 4: Leviticus: “Be holy as I am holy.”

1. If you have endeavored to read the bible through in a year, you may have gotten bogged down in the book of Leviticus. At first reading you may wonder why God has so many procedures for so many different and seemingly minute situations in life.

Leviticus 19:2 "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.'"

2. To be “holy” has two meanings.

a. To be clean or pure as opposed to being sinful.

b. To be set aside for *God’s* purposes.

3. Where does your mind go with the two meanings of holiness?

4. If you read through the book of Leviticus, you realize that God is surrounding them with signs of what it means to be holy, from the most important decisions they make, to their most important relationships, down to what appear to be the most minute of things. The message is something like this:

a. “I desire to make you holy, but you have no appetite to become holy.”

b. “So I will surround you with reminders so that you might begin to appreciate the value of being holy.”

c. “As you try to be holy, you will discover it is virtually impossible for you to be holy and to act in holiness.

d. “It is also one of the hardest things for Me to do: to make you holy.”

e. “It will be the costliest thing to Me, that I ever do for you.”

5. As you think about the five “messages” about holiness, above, which one strikes you the most? Why?

DAY 5: The sacrificial system. Atonement; covering of sin.

1. How can sinful man remain in fellowship with a holy God? Sin must be judged for what it is and rightly punished.
2. But if every sinner had to pay for his own sin with his own blood, the human race would be wiped out in short time, indeed!
3. God stepped in to create a way for sin to be punished without the loss of blood by the sinner. He instituted several “offerings.” Here are a few:

a. The sin offering:

A lamb is killed, its blood spilled out on the altar as payment for sin. The sin offering foreshadows the day when the sinless Lamb of God (Jesus Christ) will shed His blood for the sins of all those who call to Him in repentance and faith.

b. The trespass offering:

An animal was offered up in place of the sinner who “trespassed” against God, doing what he should not have done.

c. The peace offering, also called the fellowship offering:

This offering reminds the worshipper that because of the sacrifice of an innocent animal, the sinner can be at peace with God, and can be at peace with people.

4. Every offering was made at the altar, symbolizing the coming death of Christ on the cross.

5. Leviticus 16 gives instructions for the Day of Atonement.

a. One goat is offered for the sins of the people, like the other offerings for sin.

b. But a second goat is used...

*Leviticus 16:21 He (the priest) is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites--all their sins--and put them on the goat's head. He shall **send the goat away into the desert** in the care of a man appointed for the task. ²² The **goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert.***

6. The image symbolizes the *removal of sins* from the presence of the Lord and from the presence of the sinner!

7. God went to elaborate detail to make it possible for you to walk with Him, by the removal of your sin. What strikes you most about today's study?