

# Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai

Exodus 19:1 - 20:21

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## Bible Memory Verse

Psalm 1:2 NIV

*But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

## Bible Story

The Israelites were journeying across the desert on their way to the long-awaited Promise Land, when the Lord had them stop and camp at Mount Sinai, the mountain of God. This was THE MOUNTAIN that God had appeared to Moses in a burning bush and commissioned his adventure to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. Well, it has come full circle. Moses is back to this mountain and God wants to do business with the people that he loves. This is where the God of the universe makes an eternal, binding promise with the people of Israel:

*"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6).*

This is where the law, the torah, was given to the people and they were to obey. This is where they were metaphorically married to the Lord. This is where they were officially made into a nation. This law was the constitution of their State. Just like what the Constitution of the United States and its Bill of Rights is to Americans, the Ten Commandments and the Levitical Law are to the Israelite people. The Lord established them as a nation, "his treasured possession." What is utterly amazing about this is that the all-powerful God of the universe chose to bind Himself to such a people and work through

them to accomplish worldwide redemption. Wow! God is unfathomable. He is huge and His ways are mysterious.

But why ten commandments? Well, they were the basic summary of the whole law:

(1-3) They were to have no other gods before them or idols of any sort or misuse the Lord's name. This was to keep them faithful and obedient to the God who "married" them.

(4) Remembering the Sabbath was to keep the workaholics from working the people to death, and for reminding humanity that rest is important to both our bodies and to our routines. Sabbath rest re-introduced what was from the beginning: "by the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work" (Genesis 2:2). Rest brings back our strength and restores our hearts.

(5) Honoring parents sought to uphold the basic fabric of life—the family. This is also the first commandment with a promise attached to it: "so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you" (Exodus 20:12).

(6-10) These are all the one-liners. No murder; no adultery; no stealing; no lying against your neighbor; and no coveting your neighbor's things. These commandments kept the peace between people. They are very basic statements meant to enforce very general things.

God used the law as a sort of "master" over the Israelite people. The "master" set the people of God apart from all the other nations of the world as a different, unique group of people. God also wanted the law to set a high standard for morality, relationships and renewal amongst His chosen people. After all, Israel's mission now is to be a light to all the nations; a light that shines what God is all about—love.

## Life Application

Paul, in his letter to the Romans, said that the one statement to sum up all the law is to “love your neighbor” (Romans 13:9-10). Love. By simply loving one another we fulfill all the law of God because when Jesus was asked to sum everything up, he said the same—love God, love your neighbor. Love. God is love. We are to love one another and that is how the world will know that we are different. If we love then we will do good. If we do not love, then evil is not far behind.

Obedience is a major factor in the application of this law. All throughout Scripture, the command is to obey the Lord your God. In the Gospel of John, obedience to the commands is equated with love and vice versa. Love and obedience to God are synonymous. You will obey because you love. Deuteronomy illustrates this with its restatement of the law in obedience and love terms. Furthermore, Jesus illustrates this with his death. He demonstrated his love toward us by being obedient to death on a cross. Amazing. Even Jesus Christ, the God-Man himself had to obey, but he did this because of his love for the Father and his love for us. Obedience to our parents is not just because we are supposed to, but because we should want to. Illustrated love is obedience.

## Review Questions

1. Where did the LORD God have the Israelites set up camp for a while? Mount Sinai
2. What did the LORD God give to the people at Mount Sinai? The Ten Commandments
3. What was so special about the Ten Commandments? What did it do for the Israelite people? They literally made the Israelites into a nation, bound to God as His vehicle for worldwide redemption. The Israelites, by following the Ten Commandments (the Law, torah), were tasked to show the world what God was like.
4. Name the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17)

## Coloring Sheet

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## Mount Sinai : Ten Commandments