

# "The Law of God"

## Exodus 20

**September 5, 2010**  
**by C.W. Powell**

A few moments ago we read Exodus 20, the account of the giving of the Ten Commandments, the Law of our God. The Ten Commandments were given to the Children of Israel through Moses, the lawgiver. They were at the Mountain of God, the Mount that could be touched, and burned with fire. God's words shook the world.

Last week I spoke of three mountains, or rather One Mount with two Mounts in the One. We saw from the book of Galatians that what was revealed at Mt. Sinai was really two Mounts contained in One. Both of the two mounts did not begin at Sinai and are eternal and will never pass away until the last day of judgment. Mount can mean city, nation, kingdom, nation, covenant for these ideas are all connected with the figurative meaning of the word in Scripture. The two mounts that were contained in Sinai are the flesh and the spirit. Included in your bulletin this morning is a chart. I am not going to comment on this chart, but it will help make what I say more meaningful to you.

	<b>Flesh</b>	<b>Spirit</b>
Mountain	Mount that could be touched: Sinai in Arabia with regard to the covenant of works. Gal. 4:19ff.	Mount that could not be touched: the Promises of God, received by faith. The covenant of grace. Heb. 12
City	Jerusalem below, in bondage with her children [fleshly children of Abraham].	The Jerusalem Above, the mother of us all [all of us of faith].
Family	Israel after the flesh, born of the seed of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob; but also Ishmael and Esau, who received earthly blessings. No heavenly blessings were ever promised to anybody because of the flesh..	Israel after the spirit, born of the word of God through faith in Jesus Christ the Seed of Abraham, blessed of God.
Nation	Israel after the flesh, born of the literal seed of Abraham.	Israel after the Spirit, born of the word and promise of God
Kingdom	Mt. Zion in Jerusalem; David's earthly kingdom.	The Kingdom of God/Heaven. The heavenly Mt. Zion; Christ's heavenly

		kingdom
Covenant	Works.	Grace
Typical Individual	Ishmael, born of the flesh.	Isaac, born of the Spirit
Mediator	Moses, Aaron, Angels	Jesus Christ
Essence	Commandments and Obedience as a condition of blessings.	Promises and Faith as a condition of blessings.

Both the mount that could be touched and the mount that could not be touched were evident at Sinai. There were many things that could be touched and handled, and many things that could not be touched or handled and great warnings were given for the people to keep their distance.

The Scripture uses a number of figures to teach that there are different aspects to the same thing: what we are in the flesh, and what we are in the Spirit. It is a mistake, I think, to reduce the substance to one figure. Just as God is a Father, a King, a Spirit, a Judge, a Flaming Fire, so there are a number of figures that describe the relationship of man to God and some of these are included in the chart I gave you.

So both the flesh and the spirit are represented at Sinai. That is why I said last week that two mountains are represented at Sinai: the flesh and the spirit. The flesh in the commandments and the requirement of obedience as a condition of blessing, and curses for disobedience. "Cursed be he that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." But Promise was also included at Sinai, the promise of the coming Redeemer, the call to faith, the provision for forgiveness of sins and mercy, as Isaiah wrote, "Come now, let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

I want to say three things about this concept this morning. This is an integrative message in which I try to put things together. Expository messages include some integration, but sometimes you need to integrate, depending upon exposition that has already been done, although every message must include exposition and explanation of Scripture.

I preached a series of message on the Ten Commandments, and these are on the church website. I am teaching the Ten Commandments from the explanation of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount on Wednesday nights. There is careful explanation in the Heidelberg Catechism, so their content is not unknown to you. But there are three things that need said about the Ten Commandments this morning in terms of our study in the context of the Exodus and the nation of Israel: They restated nothing; they are requirements for men who think, not robots; they reaffirmed the curse and were not given as a second chance for men to find acceptance with God by their works.

I. The Ten commandments restated nothing that was not known before Moses for the law is written on every man's heart.

A. Every one of the commandments was known to the world before the coming of Moses and the Law from Sinai.

B. Examples.

1. Enoch condemned the world for their ungodly speeches and idolatry First Commandment.

2. Cain's offering was rejected because it was not according to God's word: Second Commandment.

3. Jacob took an oath at Bethel; Third Commandment.

4. Sabbath was from Creation; the Lord rested on the Seventh Day

5. Ham disgraced his Father: 5th and the 9th commandment

6. Cain killed his brother; 6th Commandment

7. Abimelech reproved Isaac for lying about Rebecca being his sister and putting the king in danger of committing adultery with another man's wife: 7th and 9th commandment. Same thing with Abraham and Pharaoh.

8. Joseph's brothers were condemned for stealing Joseph's cup. 8th commandment

9. Esau coveted the blessing that belonged to Jacob and hated him for it. 10th commandment.

C. We could also say that not only the works of love that God required were from the foundation of the world and known to men; but we also could say that the promises of mercy through faith were also known because the Promise was given from the foundation of the world and men had the knowledge of mercy through faith, forgiveness of sins, and blessings apart from works. But that is another message.

D. So the Ten Commandments restated nothing that was not known from the foundation of the world. This is also affirmed in Romans 2 where it is said that the law of God is written on the hearts of all men.

II. The Ten Commandments required men, not robots, to understand and obey the good precepts therein.

A. The Word of God everywhere speaks to men as intelligent beings, created in

the image of God. We are to think about His commandments, understand them, and meditate on them day and night.

B. The love that we are to have toward men is not to be a blind, senseless, destructive love, but a sensible and real love. Illustration: chipmunks at Crater Lake. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. If you love your dog, you will not feed him human food. If you love your children you will spank them and make them behave. If you love people you will seasonably warn them of the wrath of God if they do not repent and trust Christ.

C. We are not to be blind leaders of the blind. If an application of the law is unloving and unfair, we better take another look at it. Illustration: the daughters of Zelophehad. Two applications: inheritance; and marriage. Both needed clarification and God showed us the way.

D. Illustration of the Talent. Why didn't you put it out to usury? WHAT!!!!!!!!!!!!

III. The Ten Commandments reaffirmed the curse upon men who, lost in Adam, could not find mercy except in the faith of Abraham.

A. Both the law and the promises did not add anything to what had been before as to content; it only added by way of explanation and clarity

B. This was necessary because of the sinfulness of men, who could not be trusted to preserve true knowledge by oral tradition. Moses was commissioned to write it down and Israel was chosen as a special vessel to preserve the ancient knowledge of creation and the curse upon man and the promise of God in Christ.

C. Hence, the law served to emphasize the impossibility of salvation and blessing by means of works. Sin by the law becomes exceedingly sinful. Sin is energized by the law, when it is used unlawfully, in order to receive a blessing, for the blessing of the law can only come by perfect and complete obedience. "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them." The righteousness that must prevail with God must be a perfect righteousness. His eye are too pure and holy to look on sin and filthiness. Nothing unclean or impure can ever enter into His holy Presence.

D. The earthly kingdom of the sons of Abraham could not but fail, no matter how many outward and material blessings were showered upon them of an earthly nature. God gave them great wealth, peace in their borders, wise rulers, and wholesome laws, but it all came to naught because of sin.

E. The strength of sin is the law, and this comes because of guilt, for God must punish sin and the man guilty of sin.

F. Hence, if man is ever to find mercy, it must be on another foundation than the

Ten Commandments. The blessing is by grace, and this grace is through Jesus Christ alone. What was hidden in part in Moses is revealed in blazing glory in our Lord Jesus. "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John 1:17

Conclusion: There was nothing new in substance given at Mt Sinai that was not known in principle from the Creation of the world. What was given was by way of amplification and illustration. What was given was given to men, created in the image of God for their mediation and understanding. The Bible does not profit if it is not understood, so we must labor to know and understand its words, not be as blind leaders of the blind. The prophets understood this and searched their own writings to try to understand the message of God. The precepts of Moses did not constitute another chance for man to gain by obedience what Adam had lost by disobedience. The precepts reaffirmed the curse and shows us our sin and misery, for this is known out of the law of God. The promises of Moses rightly were given to men of faith who looked for the coming of the Promised One who would put away sin and pour out His Spirit.

Amen and Amen

God bless you.