

## Prologue to the Law

Exod. 20:1-2 And God spake all these words, saying,

<sup>2</sup> I *am* the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

1. God spoke in words. This is grace. He did not leave us to our imaginations but has condescended to tell us in simple words what he requires of us (See Deut. 6)

Deut. 4:5-8 <sup>5</sup> Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.

<sup>6</sup> Keep therefore and do *them*; for this *is* your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation *is* a wise and understanding people.

<sup>7</sup> For what nation *is there* so great, who *hath* God so nigh unto them, as the LORD our God *is* in all *things that we call upon him for*?

<sup>8</sup> And what nation *is there* so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?

2. The law was given for two reasons (See Heidelberg 3-11; 91-115):
  - a. First, to teach us the true nature of our sin and misery. Men live a lie – that they really are loving, kind and good people; the law strips this away.
    - i. This also is mercy and grace, for Jesus did not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.
    - ii. Therefore, the law can NEVER be used to establish our own righteousness, for all this does is add hypocrisy and deceit to our sins.
  - b. Second, it teaches us the nature of God. When we have been born again, we long to do those things which please God, having been given a new nature by the Holy Spirit
    - i. Therefore, God has instructed us what pleases him
    - ii. There are three marks by which our good works may be known
      1. Those done to the glory of God
      2. Those done in faith
      3. Those done according to his commandments

God's nature does not change; therefore his law does not change. Jesus did not come to do away with the law, but to do away with the curse of the law, to sanctify his people. It is the purpose of our calling by God that we should bring forth much fruit. The new covenant is not an abrogation of the law, but a writing this same law on our hearts by the Holy Spirit (Jer. 31:31-34)

3. He is our God and we are His people
  - a. It is a great privilege to say that God is our God and we are his people.
  - b. But God cannot dwell with sinful men. Obedience to the law was necessary for a people to dwell with a holy God
  - c. At the same time, the law showed the impossibility of obedience – this is our misery.
  - d. God is not unjust for requiring of us that which we cannot perform, for it is our fault that we have rendered ourselves incapable. The punishment for disobedience is hardening.
  - e. But in Christ, we are righteous, and we can say that God is our God and we are his people, because "Their iniquities I will remember no more" (Jer. 31:34)

- f. The continuation of this covenant is clear in Rev. 21:3
- 4. He is our liberator and saviour
  - a. We are God's people because he has delivered us. The deliverance from Egypt was a pattern or a type of our true deliverance from the power of the curse – sin, and all the power of the devil (HC 1)
  - b. The power of the curse must be understood before any ethical question can be answered.
  - c. When the curse is denied as a myth, then the pattern of what is right and what is wrong is determined by the way that things are NOW, rather than the way that God had created.
    - i. Ethics are then determined by polls rather than God's word
    - ii. The world then is evolving and struggling through the best they can – since struggle is in the very nature of things, rather than cursed by God and in need of repentance.
- 5. He is our lawgiver
  - a. But if the world is truly cursed, as God has said it is, then we are in desperate need of repentance
  - b. The moral standard, in a cursed world, can only be taught by God, since in experience it does not exist. Men know that they ought to do right, but there is no one who can say that they have done what is right.
  - c. Fallen man therefore has only two options:
    - i. Try to convince himself that God really isn't angry with him. But this always involves making an idol
    - ii. Or repent and believe the gospel. But this can only come by a new nature. It is completely contrary to that which we inherited from Adam.