

(Exod. 20:1-2) - The Lord God brought the people to Mount Sinai where He would give them the Law covenant which would be binding upon them from this time until the coming of the Messiah to do His great work of redemption for God's chosen people, SPIRITUAL Israel, chosen of God out of every tribe and nation. It was here that God gave the 10 Commandments to show the people that they desperately needed Him and His grace for salvation and righteousness. He set a boundary around the mountain to show the people that their sin separated them from God (*Exod. 19:12-13*). He also had the people wash their clothes to illustrate that one had to be cleansed from all filth to meet God (*Exod. 19:10*).

Moses was called by God to go up in the mountain to receive God's law. He came down and told the people what God had told him. In *Exodus 19:8*, the people vowed to obey the law of the Lord - "*all that the LORD hath spoken we will do.*" Religious people have been making this vow ever since, and if they found they did not keep the law, they have vowed to do the best that they could do. It did not take long for them to break this vow. They, like us, were sinners, and could not live up to their vow to keep the perfection of the law. The law demands perfect righteousness, and no sinner can do this (*Rom. 3:10-20; Gal. 3:10-13*). So, why did God give the law? It was to expose and reveal their sinfulness and depravity (*Gal. 3:19*). The law was given to show them their need of Christ and His righteousness for justification before God. Without a mediator, without righteousness, the only thing the law can do is condemn and kill us. The law can neither justify us nor give us life. This is the work of God by His grace through the Lord Jesus Christ as the Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of His people.

Christ alone is the perfect fulfiller of all the law (*Matt. 5:17-19*). He is the one and only righteousness of His people, because His righteousness imputed to us exceeds any human efforts to produce righteousness (*Matt. 5:20*). Christ and His obedience unto death is the very righteousness of God imputed to His people and that which God brings His people to in God-given faith. "**FOR CHRIST IS THE END OF THE LAW FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH**" (*ROM. 10:4*). The word "*end*" describes a completed and finished work of perfection - perfect obedience to God's law and justice that completely satisfies the demands of the law. So, God gave the law to Israel to show them their need of His grace and mercy which could only be found in the promised Messiah and based on HIS righteous obedience unto death. Here in *Exodus 20*, Moses returns to the mountain to receive the law in the ten commandments. The first four commandments show man's duty to love God perfectly. The last six commandments show man's duty to love his neighbor as himself.

(Exod. 20:3) - God spoke as the Creator and Deliverer of Israel. His first commandment is "*Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.*" There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus. We worship ONE God Who subsists in three distinct Persons, not three gods, but ONE God, and there are no other gods. Sinful people have no knowledge of the true God and know desire to worship Him until the Holy Spirit reveals Christ, Who is the very image of the invisible God, and what He accomplished by His death on the cross to put away our sins and establish righteousness so that God is just when He justifies His people (*Isa. 45:20-25*). All other gods are idols.

(Exod. 20:4-6) - The second commandment forbids idolatry and graven images that men claim to represent God. There is nothing compared to God. God is jealous for His glory, His holiness, His uniqueness! Unregenerate people worship a god who is like unto themselves and refuse to bow to the revelation that God gives of Himself in His Word through the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason people make idols is because they hate the true and living God (*John 3:19-20*). They do not hate their own gods, but they hate the sovereign God of the Bible. Remember, idolatry

begins in the human mind (*Rom. 1:18-23*). This is one of the reasons we need the righteousness of God for salvation (*Rom. 1:16-17*).

“And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments” -

Christ said, *“If ye love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15)*. The whole law is summarized in two commandments - love God perfectly, and love our neighbor as ourselves (*Mark 12:28-34*). No sinner by nature loves God or keeps His commandments. If we love God and keep His commandments in any way, it is the product of His grace towards us by the Lord Jesus Christ. As those who have been saved by the grace of God and who have been given the gift of spiritual life, faith, repentance, and perseverance, we do love God, but we do not love Him perfectly. How do we know this? It is because our love to God and to our neighbor and our obedience to His Word is still so pitiful and still plagued with the presence, corruption, and contamination of the flesh (*cf. Rom. 7:14-25*). The only way that we as sinners saved by grace can say we keep the commandments of God is as we plead the perfect righteousness of Christ by which we are justified before God. Christ is the Law-Keeper Who lived a perfect life of obedience and Who died for our sins on the cross. It is through God’s revelation of Himself in the glorious Person and finished work of Christ that we are brought from worshipping idols to worshipping the true and living God (*Matt. 11:25-30; John 5:23; 6:44-45; 17:1-4; Php. 3:3; 1 John 4:7-19; 5:20-21*).

(Exod. 20:7) - The third commandment forbids using His name without truth and without fear and reverence. Every time a false preacher ascends to a pulpit and preaches a false gospel of salvation conditioned on sinners, he tells a lie about God and takes God’s name in vain. They are also engaging in idolatry by telling sinners of a god who will save them, receive them, bless them, IF they will do their part. This is NOT the God of the Bible. This misrepresents the true God and dishonors His name.

(Exod. 20:8-11) - The fourth commandment concerns keeping the sabbath day. After six days of working, they were to set aside and honor the seventh day by not doing any physical labor. The sabbath was the sign of the whole Old Covenant (*Exod. 31:12-18*). This is why the penalty was so severe as to place a sentence of death upon a man who was gathering sticks on the sabbath (*ex. Num. 15:32-36*). By breaking the sign of the covenant, this man disavowed the whole covenant. The sabbath forced Israel to think about two things every week. First, the sabbath-rest reminded them of what was lost because of sin and rebellion, our fall in Adam, for which man was cursed to hard labor to make his living (*Gen. 3:17-19*). Their life of sweat and tears was a constant reminder of the life of joy they had lost because of their fall in Adam. Secondly, the sabbath was a constant reminder of the promise that one was coming who would establish a greater sabbath-rest that could not be destroyed by anything. The sabbath was a constant reminder of both the burden of sin and the hope of salvation in Christ.

As true believers under the New Covenant, our sabbath is not a day. IT IS CHRIST OUR SPIRITUAL AND ETERNAL SABBATH. We rest spiritually and eternally in Him and the work that He finished as our Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer (*Matt. 11:28-30; Heb. 4:1-11*). Sunday is not the Christian sabbath. Christ is our sabbath. Sunday, the first day of the week, is the day that we are to set aside as special for us to meet together and worship the Lord. And we are commanded to not forsake this time of *“assembling of ourselves together” (Heb. 10:25)*. The Lord tells us that forsaking our assemblies of worship could be the first step of a false professor apostatizing from the faith (*Heb. 10:26*). We are not to be bound by sabbath laws and days (*Col. 2:16-17*). Those in *Romans 14* who continue to respect holy days, but not for salvation, were called weaker brethren (*Rom. 14:1-6*).