

## The Redeemer

### Ex 20:1-2

(Series on Ten Commandments Begins)

About three months after leaving Egypt, Israel arrived at Sinai as God had predicted to Moses when he was living in the desert for 40 years.

When they got there –

**19:3-6** - *There Israel encamped before the mountain,<sup>3</sup> while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel:<sup>4</sup> 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.<sup>5</sup> Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;<sup>6</sup> and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'*

Peter echoes this theme when he says,

**1 Peter 2:9** - *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession,*

*'for' = eis = it stands in front of nouns to mean 'into'*

Peter is saying the same thing with one distinction. Whereas Israel stood apart from Mount Sinai, the church has been brought into Mount Calvary.

Sinai is one of the most important events in the history of Israel. It is here:

- a) They met God face-to-face (his face being clouds, thunder and lightning).
- b) They received the Ten Commandments
- c) They received the blueprint for the Tabernacle.

### **First: The Decalogue as a Suzerain Treaty**

A suzerain is a sovereign of a state, a feudal overlord. It is based on the French word "*sus* = "up, above."

A suzerain treaty or suzerainty details the rights and obligations of the suzerain. The Egyptians, Hittites and Assyrians all established suzerain treaties with Israel, so Israel was very familiar with them.

- a) Preamble – Identifies the parties involved, the author and title of the Suzerain.

Exodus 20:2a – *I am the Lord your God...*

- b) Prologue – A list of deeds performed by the Suzerain on behalf of the vassal.

Exodus 20:2b – *...who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

- c) Stipulations – Terms established by the Suzerain to be upheld by the vassal.

Ten Commandments = vs 3-17

- d) Witness –

Exodus 30:19 - *I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.*

Jeremiah 2:12-13 - *Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate, declares the LORD, <sup>13</sup> for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

- e) Blessings and Curses

V 5b – *...visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation to those who hate me.*

V 6 – *but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.*

7 - *...for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.*

11 – *Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

12 - *...that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.*

Deuteronomy 28 – Blessings = 1-14 / Curses 15-68

f) Sacrificial Meal (Exodus 24:11)

Exodus 34:27-28 - *Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.*"<sup>28</sup> *So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights.....And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.*

In much the same way, we participate in communion as a reminder of what God has done for us in Jesus.

Bottom line: The Ten Commandments are God's suzerain treaty with Israel, but this also means that calling it, 'the ten words' falls short of what's happening at Sinai. God is making a covenant with Israel.

### **Second: The God Who is Our God**

v 2 – *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

a) The covenanting God is the creating God.

Israel's God is not an Egyptian god. The God of Genesis is the God of Exodus. The God of Genesis and Exodus is the God of Matthew and Mark.

He alone is God. He alone created the heavens and the earth. In the decalogue, God wanted Israel to learn Who He is, before He presented them with His covenant. He wanted Israel to learn about His essential nature, His righteous character, and His never-failing faithfulness. We will see Jesus in each of these commandments because they reflect God's character.

Earlier, we sang, "*Savior, he can move mountains. My God is mighty save.*" This is what God wanted Israel to remember. He is the Creator and Redeemer who cares for them, protects them, rescues them, and provides for their needs. He wanted them to understand that He alone is the Holy One of Israel who is full of goodness and grace. They needed to know that the Lord was very different from the false gods their pagan neighbors worshipped - gods that neither see, nor hear, nor understand.

- b) God chose Israel out of the sea of humanity and made them his own, a privileged position among the nations.

*Genesis 18:19 - For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice, so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what he has promised him.*

The Lord had a very special plan for Israel - a unique purpose. They were to be the nation through whom the Savior of the world would be born. They were to be 'the people of God' who would be His witnesses throughout the world. They were to be a light to lighten the Gentiles. They were to be a principled people with godly values and exemplary behavior, teaching their pagan neighbors about the God of their fathers and bringing them into the camp of Israel so they could also worship the Lord. They were to be used to circumnavigate Satan's evil plan by proclaiming the gospel of God,

- c) God saved them from Egyptian bondage; the most serious part of which was worshipping other gods.

Israel was never to forget what God had done for them. He instituted festivals to remind them; not for his benefit but theirs.

The same thing is true of our disciplines: Scripture, prayer, fellowship, etc. Each of these remind us who God is so that we will remain faithful to him.

### **Third: One Last Thing**

We all know that Moses broke the original two tablets and had to re-write them. But what happened to the new tablets?

- 1 – Moses made a second (third) recording of the Ten Commandments for Israel

Deuteronomy 31:24-26 - When Moses had finished writing the words of this law in a book to the very end, <sup>25</sup> Moses commanded the Levites who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, <sup>26</sup> "Take this Book of the Law and put it by the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against you.

The purpose of this copy was to warn Israel, reminding them of their obligations, blessings, and curses. The public proclamation of it was designed to teach the fear of the Lord to all Israel, especially to the children.

But Moses put the second set of the two tablets in the ark of the Covenant (Ex 25:16). Why? It was traditional for the original suzerain treaty to be placed under the throne, at the feet of the Suzerain to remind him of his relationship to his vassal nation. Imagine, God being reminded of his relationship to Israel, his former actions and responsibilities to them, each time the Shekinah glory of God rested on the Tabernacle.

### Conclusion:

Two important things to know:

1 - The Ten Commandments do not begin with what God expects Israel to do but what He has done.

In the same way, our obedience flows out of Calvary's obedience. Christ in us, enables us to obey the Father.

Example: *Philippians 2:12-13 - Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.*

When Moses finished his speech on God's behalf the people of Israel responded,

*Exodus 24:7 – All that the LORD has spoken, we will do, and we will be obedient.*

Then...*v 8 – And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words.'*

2 - God requires blood to establish the covenant and will require blood if it is broken

*Ruth 1:16-17 - Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. <sup>17</sup> Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.'*

But what Moses and Israel didn't know is that the blood required would not be their own but Christ's.

Hebrews 9:18-22 & 26b- *Therefore not even the first covenant was inaugurated without blood. <sup>19</sup> For when every commandment of the law had been declared by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, <sup>20</sup> saying, "This is the blood of the covenant that God commanded for you.".... <sup>22</sup> Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins....**26b** - But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

Indeed, the covenant has been broken, and continues to be broken, but, thanks be to God, Jesus has come and covered our brokenness with his own blood.

### Community Groups

- 1 – Read the text
- 2 – Review the various ways in which the Sinai covenant resembles a suzerain treaty.
  - a) Preamble
  - b) Prologue
  - c) Stipulations
  - d) Witness
  - e) Blessings and curses
  - f) Sacrificial meal
- 3 – How does God introduce himself and why is this important?
- 4 – What had God done for Israel?
- 5 – How did the exodus prove God was the God he claimed to be in the introduction of the suzerainty?
- 6 - Why did God establish the annual festivals (for whose benefit) and how did they do this?
- 7 - What 'festival' do we celebrate to remind us of God's work on our behalf?
- 8 – How do the Ten Commandments actually begin?
- 9 – Why is this important? (Think on Phil 2:12-13).
- 10 – When Israel pledged their fidelity to God in Ex 24, what did Moses do?
- 11 – What did 'throwing' blood toward/on the people signify?
- 12 – How has Jesus satisfied this?

## Daily Devotion

**Monday, July 31<sup>st</sup>.** 1 Peter 2:9. Think about the phrases, chosen race, royal priesthood, holy nation, his own possession. How do each of these phrases elevate your place in the world? How do you live out each one, chosen, royal, priest, holy, etc.? As you walk and talk today, ask yourself if you are living out 1 Peter 2:9 in your actions, attitude, words, etc.

**Tuesday, August 1<sup>st</sup>.** Read Exodus 20:1-8. What is the significance of the phrase, "*I am the LORD your God?*" What other gods vie for lordship in your life: peer pressure, insecurity, wealth, pornography, pride? The Ten commandments are given to help Israel live in the freedom God won for them at Passover and the Red Sea. Any other god only enslaves you. What can you do to combat the influence of false gods in your life? Are there scriptures you could memorize? Are there barriers you need to build? Are there people with whom you could talk for support? Do something today.

**Wednesday, August 2<sup>nd</sup>.** Read Exodus 20:5b, 6, 7, 11 & 12. Each of these verses stipulate blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. Take a moment to review God's blessings in your life. Introduce God's blessings into a conversation you have today with someone outside of your family. Is there an area of your life in which you are disobedient? If so, what will you do about this? Take the same tools discussed yesterday and employ them in your defense against sin.

**Thursday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>.** Read Genesis 18:19. God chose Abraham so that he might bless the world through him as he had promised in Genesis 12:1-3. You too are 'chosen,' and for the same reason God chose Abraham. Not, of course, to birth the Messiah as Abraham's line did, but so that he might bless the world through you. How is that working out? Who did you 'bless' yesterday? And remember, the blessing is directly tied to the Gospel so this is a matter of blessing in Jesus and not just being kind to someone. So, who will you 'bless' today by remind them of God and his blessing to the world in Jesus?

**Friday, August 4<sup>th</sup>.** Read Exodus 24:7-8 & Philippians 2:12-13. Sunday, we sang, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom." Israel was sincere in their desire to follow God, but we are bound by our flesh and the Christian life is supernaturally powered by the Holy Spirit. As you live today, ask the Holy Spirit to live Christ's life in you. This should be something you do daily, if not moment-by-moment; in a conversation with co-workers, in caring for family, in stressful moments, etc. If you haven't already, make dependence on the Holy Spirit a regular discipline and he will free you to live the Christian life.

*O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer  
Greatest treasure of my longing soul  
My God, like You there is no other  
True delight is found in You alone  
Your grace, a well too deep to fathom  
Your love exceeds the heavens' reach  
Your truth, a fount of perfect wisdom  
My highest good and my unending need*