



READ: Selections from Deuteronomy 5:1-22, 28-29 (NIV)

Moses summoned all Israel and said: Hear, Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them.

And he said: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

"You shall have no other gods before me."

"You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them..."

"You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."

"Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do..."

"Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

"You shall not murder.

"You shall not commit adultery.

"You shall not steal.

"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

"You shall not covet your neighbor's wife...or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

These are the commandments the LORD proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain...and he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

The LORD heard you when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me...Oh, that their hearts would be inclined to fear me and keep all my commands always, so that it might go well with them and their children forever!

ENTER THE STORY:

These ten rules were given to a group of people who had just experienced Yahweh God in a powerful way. They saw the ten plagues and escaped in the dead of night on Passover. They were led by day with a pillar of cloud and by night with a pillar of fire, and they were there when he parted the Red Sea.

They were no longer slaves! After 400 years, they were free! God rescued them so they could be in a relationship with him! He loved them very much and he wanted them to understand what he expected of them. These rules were supposed to act like ten walls built up around them to protect them and to give them boundaries to keep them safe and happy. They would show the people of Israel what they could and couldn't do and how they could best reflect God to the rest of the world, but *EVEN MORE* than that...their relationship with God was supposed to be like a marriage.

God is the groom, and the people of Israel are his bride. God wanted his people to love him more than anything else because he knew that is what was best for them.

• But no matter how hard they tried, they could not do it. They could not obey God's laws. The good news is, just like with
• Adam and Eve in the garden, God *KNEW* that the Israelites wouldn't obey, and he also *KNEW* that you and I wouldn't be
• able to obey either. We are just as bad at keeping God's Laws, especially when Jesus says that hating your brother or
• sister is the same as killing them in your heart...YIKES~! It doesn't take very long for us to see how desperately hopeless
• our situation is.

• *But God doesn't leave us alone! Do you know who God sends to help us? It's Jesus!*

• He is the perfect human and the EXACT image of God (Colossians 1:15). Jesus is the perfect reflection of his Father, and
• he fulfilled every aspect of the law. He obeyed all of the commandments we failed to keep, and he reversed the curse of
• the fall.

• Now, those of us who follow him are his representatives so that through us, other people can KNOW God, too. Jesus, the
• perfect law-keeper, summed up the law by giving us the two greatest commandments: Love God with all our hearts,
• souls, and minds and love our neighbor as ourselves. This is how we represent him.

• *Yahweh is still the groom but now ALL who follow him and surrender to him are his bride.*

• With the first set of commandments, God used his own finger to engrave them onto stone tablets, but through Jesus
• Christ, we are, "...engraved on the palms of his hands" (Isaiah 49:16), and the law is engraved on our hearts through the
• power of the Holy Spirit. Through him, we have the power to keep the law and when we don't, we can confess our sins
• and be forgiven.

• **PRAY:** *Jesus, thank you for doing what we could not do by perfectly obeying all of the law. We long to be more like
• you Jesus, so please continue to work in us as we walk in your Spirit and do our best to follow you. Amen.*