



Provided by the Church of the Lutheran Confession - Board of Missions

## Old Testament Survey

### Lesson 10 – The Lord Makes a Covenant with His People at Mount Sinai (Exodus 19-40)

#### The Covenant of Grace and the Covenant of Law

God had made a covenant of grace with all men already in Genesis 3:15 when He promised the woman's Seed (**JESUS**) to defeat Satan. God made a covenant of grace with Abraham in Genesis 15 when He passed through the halves of dead animals as a smoking oven and a burning torch. This was a one-sided covenant of grace in which God alone made promises. This covenant of grace was fulfilled when Jesus came and carried out His work of redeeming the world. We are living under this covenant of grace still today, for God forgives our sins for Christ's sake by pure grace, that is, by His love that is totally undeserved by us.

God also made a special covenant of law with His chosen people of Israel. This was a two-sided covenant in which both God and the children of Israel made promises. This covenant was a *temporary* covenant with the children of Israel. It served as a mirror to show them their sins, as a hedge to separate them from other nations, and as a shadow to picture the coming of their Savior. The two-sided nature of this covenant is illustrated by the fact that half of the blood of the covenant sacrifice was sprinkled on God's altar and the other half was sprinkled on the people (Exodus 24).

When the children of Israel broke the covenant of law (which they often did), their only hope was to remember the covenant of grace that God had made with Abraham and his children over 400 years earlier. In Leviticus 26:40-44 God said: **"If they confess their iniquity..., then I will remember My covenant with Jacob, and My covenant with Isaac and My covenant with Abraham I will remember... I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break My covenant with them; for I am the LORD their God."**

The laws God gave to Israel can be divided into three kinds: moral law, ceremonial law, and civic law. God's moral law is summarized in the Ten Commandments, and it is repeated in the New Testament. It is still God's standard for our behavior today. But the ceremonial and civic laws were intended only for the Israelites, and we are not obligated to observe them. For example, we are not obligated to keep the laws concerning sacrifices or food or even the sabbath. For us, God's moral law serves three purposes: as a curb to be used to beat down our sinful flesh, as a mirror to show us our sins, and as a standard of behavior so that we know what is God-pleasing and what is not God-pleasing.

When we transgress God's moral law (as we do every day), our only hope is God's covenant of grace in Christ Jesus. We cannot be saved by our obedience to God's law, but only by Christ's perfect obedience in our place. Christ was obedient even to the point of taking our punishment in our place on the cross.

Read Exodus chapters 19-40 along with the notes below. If you have any questions, please ask them.

#### Exodus 19 - The LORD Appears in Smoke and Fire on Mount Sinai

The LORD through Moses prepared His people for His covenant (vv. 1-8).

**"If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people... You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation"** (vv. \_\_

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The LORD through Moses commands His people to prepare for His appearance (vv. 9-15).

The LORD appears in great glory on Mount Sinai (vv. 16-25).

**“thunderings and lightnings, a thick cloud, the sound of the trumpet, all the people trembled, like the smoke of a furnace, the whole mountain quaked greatly”** (v. \_\_\_\_

#### Exodus 20 - The Ten Commandments (Words) of God from Mount Sinai

The LORD Himself speaks the ten commandments (literally “words”, see Exodus 34:28) (vv. 1-17).

His introduction: **“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Commandment One: **“You shall have no other gods before Me”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Commandment Two: **“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Commandment Three: **“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy”** (v. \_\_\_\_

*The first three commandments are the First Table of the Law; they are summed up in the command: **LOVE GOD**.*

Commandment Four: **“You shall honor your father and your mother that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Commandment Five: **“You shall not murder”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Commandment Six: **“You shall not commit adultery”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Commandment Seven: **“You shall not steal”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Commandment Eight: **“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Commandment Nine: **“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house”** (v. \_\_\_\_

Commandment Ten: **“You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his workers, nor his animals, nor anything that is your neighbor’s”** (v. \_\_\_\_

*The last seven commandments are the Second Table of the Law; they summed up in the command: **LOVE NEIGHBOR**.*

Notice: The Bible does not indicate which is the First Commandment, and which is the Second, etc. Different groups number them in different ways. This makes no difference in their meaning or force.

The children of Israel are afraid of God’s voice (vv. 18-21).

**“Let not God speak with us, lest we die”** (v. \_\_\_\_

God begins to give Moses “the book of the covenant” (vv. 22-26, see Exodus 24:7).

#### Exodus 21-23 - God Gives Moses the Book of the Covenant

This includes rules of worship, slavery, murder, theft, feast days, etc.

God repeats to Moses the promise concerning the land of Canaan (23:20-33).

**“I will deliver the inhabitants of the land (Canaan) into your hand”** (v. \_\_\_\_

**“If you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you”** (v. \_\_\_\_

#### Exodus 24 - God Establishes with Israel the Two-Sided Covenant of Law

God summons Moses and the elders to Him (vv. 1-2) and they come to God in v. 9.

Moses announces the words of the covenant, and the people promise to keep it (v. 3).

Moses writes the book of the covenant and prepares sacrifices (vv. 4-5).

Moses reads the book of the covenant and sprinkles the blood on both the altar and the people, which shows that the covenant is a two-sided covenant between God and the people (vv. 6-8).

Moses and the 70 elders see God and eat and drink with Him (vv. 9-11).

Moses goes into the cloud of Mt. Sinai for forty days (vv. 12-18).

Notice: It seems that Moses waited 6 days before God spoke to him (v. 16).

**“The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire”** (v. \_\_\_\_)

#### Exodus 25-31 – *Moses’ First Forty Days with the LORD*

The materials needed for God’s sanctuary (also called “tabernacle”) (25:1-9).

Plans for the ark of the covenant, the rings, the poles, the mercy seat (25:10-23).

Plans for the table for the showbread, the rings, the poles, the dishes (25:23-30).

Plans for the lampstand, the seven lamps, the wick-trimmers (25:31-40).

Plans for the linen curtains, the goats’ hair curtains, boards, and bars (26:1-30).

Plans for the veil between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place (Holy of Holies) (26:31-37).

Plans for the altar, pans, shovels, basins, forks, poles (27:1-8).

Plans for the court, the hangings, the pillars, the sockets (27:9-19).

Regulations for the olive oil for the lamp (27:20-21).

Patterns for the priests’ clothes: breastplate, ephod, robe, tunic, turban (28:1-43).

Regulations for the consecration of the priests (29:1-37).

Regulations for the two daily burnt offerings (29:38-46).

Plans for the altar of incense (30:1-10).

Regulations for the regular tabernacle payment (30:11-16).

Plans for the laver (basin) for washing (30:17-21).

The recipe for the anointing oil (30:22-33).

The recipe for incense (30:34-38).

God’s choice of artisans or craftsmen: Bezalel and Oholiab (31:1-11).

Regulations of the Sabbath (31:12-17).

The two tablets of stone **“written with the finger of God”** (31:\_\_\_\_)

#### Exodus 32 – *Israel’s Great Idolatry and God’s Judgment*

The Israelites under Aaron’s leadership picture the LORD as a golden calf in false worship (vv. 1-6).

1 Corinthians 10:7: **“And do not become idolaters as were some of them.”**

Moses pleads with God to forgive His people (vv. 7-14).

Moses is angry with the Israelites and with Aaron (vv. 15-24).

The sons of Levi kill 3,000 unrestrained Israelites (vv. 25-29).

Moses offers to substitute himself for sinful Israel (vv. 30-35).

#### Exodus 33 – *Israel’s Repentance and the LORD’s Gracious Promise*

The Israelites repent of their great sin (vv. 1-11).

**“All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped”** (v. \_\_\_\_)

The LORD promises to lead His people again (vv. 12-17).

The LORD promises to show Moses His back, but not His face (vv. 18-23).

Exodus 34 – *The LORD Renews His Covenant with Israel (the second period of forty days)*

The LORD proclaims His gracious name to Moses (vv. 1-9).

**“The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering”** (v. \_\_\_)

The LORD repeats His covenant with Israel, rewriting the ten words (vv. 10-28).

Moses’ face shines with God’s glory on his return from Mt. Sinai (vv. 29-35).

Exodus 35-39 – *The Israelites Gladly and Willingly Build the Tabernacle*

Exodus 40 – *God Himself Enters the Tabernacle in Glory*

**“The glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle”** (v. \_\_\_)

**“The cloud of the LORD was above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night”** (v. \_\_\_)

**Questions**

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1. What is the difference between the covenant of grace and the covenant of law?
2. By which covenant were Israelites saved? Why is this so?
3. Which laws that God gave to the Israelites no longer apply to us?
4. For what purpose did God give the Israelites the covenant of law?
5. What outward signs accompanied God’s giving of His law?
6. How did the people react to God’s voice speaking His law?
7. What is meant by the two tablets (tables) of the law?
8. What did God reveal to Moses during his forty days on Mt. Sinai?
9. What sin did the people commit while Moses was on the mountain?
10. What was Moses’ reaction to the sin of the people?
11. What was the name God revealed to Moses as He passed by?
12. If you can, locate an illustration of the priests’ clothing and study it.
13. If you can, locate an illustration of the layout of the tabernacle and study it.