

AM Exodus 19,20 Introduction to 10 Commandments - God's Law

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[0 : 00] We have the Word of God, the Bible, with you to turn to the book of Exodus and to chapter 20, the book of Exodus and chapter 20.

In Exodus we have, in Exodus chapter 20, we have Moses writing the Ten Commandments that were given to him on Mount Sinai.

And it's my intention to speak this morning and this evening as really an introduction to these Ten Commandments. And then, hopefully as I come on later with you, in later months, to delve into the commandments themselves.

However, we're going to read down to verse 18 from Exodus 20. Hear the Word of God. And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness, or anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath.

[1 : 24] Or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them, or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me.

But showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

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. You, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

[2 : 56] Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God has given you. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his donkey, or his ox, or anything that is your neighbor's. Now when all the people saw the thunder, and the flashes of lightning, and the sound of the trumpet, and the mountains smoking, the people were afraid, and trembled.

And they stood afar off, and said to Moses, You speak to us, and we will listen, but do not let God speak to us, lest we die. Moses said to the people, Do not fear.

For God has come to test you, That the fear of him may be before you, That you may not sin. The people stood far off, While Moses drew near, To the thick darkness, Where God was.

[4 : 25] Amen. Amen. And may God give us good understanding of his written and inspired word. Now before we come to...

Now let's turn back to God's word, to Exodus chapter 20. And just as we do so, let's ask God's blessing, As we come to his word.

Father, Father, We thank you for your word. We thank you that, As we have just sung, The righteous man, Ponders your law, And meditates upon it day and night.

The blessed man, The happy man. So Father, We pray that, As we come to your word, We might listen, That you might give us ears to hear, And hearts to obey, Your word.

And Father, That we might have an increasing interest, In what you have to say to us. So be with us.

[5 : 31] We pray, Where your word is preached elsewhere this morning, That you will give it success, And be a help to all preachers. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Now folks, I'm due to be with you over, The next couple of months, At least once a month. And I thought it would be good for us, To do something, At least consecutive, Or, At least semi-consecutive, On the Lord's days, That I'm due to be with you.

So my plan, As I thought about it, Was to look at, The book of Exodus, And particularly, These ten commandments, That God gave to Moses, For the children, For the children, Of Israel, Back, Many years ago.

There are a number of reasons, For doing, This study, Or this proposed study. But principally, Because, The law of God, As contained in the ten commandments, Is foundational, Is foundational, And, Fundamental, To understanding, The gospel, The good news, Of Jesus Christ, That we have, In the new testament.

John Bunyan, Who was, A Puritan man, Who lived many years ago, Said, These words, And I think, They're very, Very important for us, And they encapsulate, Why, I believe, We should study, The ten commandments, Today, In 2021, Listen carefully, To what he says, The man, Or woman, Who does not know, The nature, Of the law, Cannot know, The nature, Of sin, And he, Who does not know, The nature, Of sin, Cannot know, The need, And nature, Of a saviour, I'm going to read that again, Because it is so,

[7 : 59] So important, The man, Who does not know, The nature of the law, Cannot know, The nature, Of sin, And he, Who does not know, The nature of sin, Cannot, Know, The need, And nature, Of a saviour, In other words, Before, Any of us, Can understand, The gospel, Of God's grace, We need to understand, What sin is, And the only way, That we can understand, What sin is, Is to understand, The law of God, And I submit to you, Contained in the ten, Commandments, The apostle John, In the new testament, Says that sin, Is the transgression,

Of the law, The apostle Paul, In the new testament, Writes these words, He says, Indeed, I would not have known, What sin was, Except, Through, The law, For I would not have known, What coveting really was, If the law, Had not said, Do not covet, Romans 7, Verse 7, And so, I want to speak to you, Firstly about, The necessity, Of understanding, The law, Of God, That's why, We sung, In Psalm 19, In those verses, The importance, Of meditating, On God's law, You may disagree, With me, But, There was a time, When the ten commandments, Were the cornerstone, Or foundation,

Of western law, And society, There was a time, In our land, Perhaps even, In your lifetime, If you're of a certain age, When biblical knowledge, Was greater than it is today, People, Knew, The commandments, They were conversant, With the Bible, You may recall, The person, That's recorded for us, In Luke chapter 18, The person, Who came to Jesus, One day, The Lord Jesus, And he asked him, A very important question, He said, Good master, What must I do, To inherit eternal life, How can I be saved, How can I, Have my sins forgiven, How can I be redeemed, How can I, We would say, Become a Christian, As it were, And it was for good reason,

That the Lord Jesus himself, Pointed that rich, Young ruler, Back to the law, Back to the ten commandments, And he says, You know the commandments, There was a time, In this land, And in western society, At large, When the church, Had a much louder, Public voice, And a greater influence, Than it has today, And there's an urgent need, To recover that, To recover that voice, And that moral influence, In our society, There was a time, In our educational systems, When school children, Were taught the bible, And were taught, The ten commandments, At least in some sense,

As the rule, Of their life, That was no bad thing, There was a time, In our churches, When the ten commandments, Were taught, As the minimum code, Of conduct, That God expected, Of his people, It was taken as read, It was normative, That the decalogue, The ten commandments, Were God's summary, Of how his creatures, And his people, Were to live, And behave, In 2021, Today, In Dumfries, In Glasgow, In Scotland, In the UK, We don't live in those times, We are no longer known, As a nation, Of the book,

[13 : 04] Of the bible, We live at a time, In western world, When the church, Is under increasing pressure, From atheism, And paganism, It's not just that, Christian truth, As outlined in the bible, Has been removed, From the mainstream, Of our society, To the margins, On many issues, That we believe, Or at least, We should believe, From the bible, Those views, Are not seen, Those views, Are only seen, As outdated, And irrelevant, Not only, Are they seen, As outdated, And irrelevant, But they're seen, As actually, Immoral,

And offensive, But that shouldn't, Make us silent, Should it, We need to trumpet, God's, Law, God's, Righteous, Demands, God's, Rule, For holy living, As outlined, In the law of God, But further, Ignorance, And darkness, Abounds, Not only, In our society, But in the church, I wonder, If I was to ask you, Do you know, The ten commandments, There was a day, When people could, Rhyme them off, From memory, Because they were important, And held in esteem, But in the church, There is ignorance too, And darkness,

Listen to the words, Of Jim Packer, Who wrote these, Thirteen years ago, In 2007, He says these words, About half a century ago, Churches generally, Ceased teaching, The commandments, Either from the pulpit, Or in Sunday schools, Or anywhere else, I don't mean, That none of the moral, And spiritual principles, Of the Decalogue, Were taught, In any way at all, But as a unified, Code of conduct, And a grid for behaviour, The Decalogue, Dropped out, Now that is a, Frightening indictment, Isn't it?

On our churches, So my guess is, If you are over 40, And I am, You may know, The ten commandments, You may have been taught them, You may have, Memorised them, But if you are younger, My guess, Is you probably, Don't know them as well, As you ought to know them, Now that may be, A pretty dismal, And dark outline, Of, Where we are at today, That's not meant to, Depress us, This morning, The church in every era, Is always called, To face, The issues, Of the day, To be recovering, And proclaiming, The truth, And I submit to you,

That in 2021, Today, There are foundational truths, That we as a church, Need to be, Confirming, And recovering, If we want to see, People truly saved, And made right, With God, We need to be truthful, With them, And tell them, Of their obligations, To their creator, And their duties, That they are obliged, To render, To a righteous God, As outlined, In the Ten Commandments, The Ten Commandments, Are a key, Foundational, And fundamental, And necessary, Area, To recover, In both the church, And in society, Righteousness, The psalmist says, Exalts, Righteousness alone, Exalts,

[17 : 58] A nation, And righteousness, According to the Bible, Is defined, In the law of God, And in the Ten Commandments, And so the reason, For wanting to do, A series on the Ten Commandments, Is that by and large, It's only as we recover, These truths as a church, In our pulpits, And in our lives, And in our families, With our children, That we will be able, To live well, That we will be able, To live optimistically, And positively, In the face of rising, Hostility, Around us, Now when we come, To chapter 19, Through to chapter 24, Of the book of Exodus, Now I know that I'm, Not pointing you to any, Verses of the Bible, Specifically this morning, And I know that we've read,

From the Ten Commandments, But we're not going to look, At them specifically, Because this sermon, And this evening's sermon, Are really introductory, To the Ten Commandments, So bear with me, I'm trying to give, A big picture, Of why we're doing this study, Now when we come, To chapter 19, Through to 24, We're coming to a critical section, In the life, Of the nation, Of Israel, And the book of Exodus, Itself, We're coming to the law, The Ten Commandments, In chapter 20, And then, It's associated rules, And regulations, That God made with his people, At Mount Sinai, Those associated rules, Are found in chapters 21, To 24, But these laws, Are at the heart, Of the Old Testament, Revelation, Of God, They are very, Very important,

In the book of Exodus, If you were to read, Through the book of Exodus, God has, In grace, Intervened, In the lives, Of the children, Of Israel, He has intervened, In history, To release them, From the bondage, That they were in, The slavery, That they were in, In the land, Of Egypt, He has shown, His power, By leading, The children of Israel, Out, Of Egypt, Through the Red Sea, And through the wilderness, And now, We come to this point, In chapter 19, And 20, Where God, Where God, The relationship, Or the covenant, With, The nation,

As a whole, In this part, Of the Bible, That we're going to be, Looking at, It's called, The Mosaic Covenant, God sets, Before, The nation, Of Israel, The nature, Of the bond, That exists, Between himself, And them, And then, He outlines, The response, And the behavior, And the morality, And the lifestyle, That he expects, From them, In chapter 20, He will give them, The ten commandments, We sometimes call that, The moral law, And then he gives, A whole series, Of ceremonial laws, And judicial laws, After chapter 20, That they are to live by, As a nation, In the Old Testament,

So there is a real need, There is a real necessity, For us, As Bible believing Christians, To recover, The preaching, And the teaching, And the understanding, Of the law, Of God, It's very, Very necessary, The necessity, Of God's law, But then, Secondly, I want us, This morning, To look at the, Nature, Of God's, Law, Now it's a big subject, But all I want to say, Is a couple of things, And the first thing, That I want us to think about, This morning, Is that the law, The ten commandments, Is not, A means, Of salvation, The law of God, And the ten commandments, Is not, A means, Of salvation, There's a common, Misconception, That God, That God, Gave the ten commandments, So that we could,

[23 : 05] Live by them, As sinners, The fact, Of the matter is, That none of us, Can live, Out the ten commandments, In our lives, Because, We are full, Of sin, What we need to remember, Is the context, In which, The ten commandments, Are given, We need to remember, That Israel, As a nation, Had already, Been freed, Had already, Been redeemed, From Egypt, By God's grace, And by God's power, When they receive, The ten commandments, God didn't save them, Or take them, Out of Egypt, Because, They had kept, The ten commandments,

They were to keep, And uphold, And obey, The ten commandments, Because, God, Had taken, Them out, They were not, Given the law, As a means, To save themselves, Absolutely not, The law, The ten commandments, Can never, Save, Anybody, So if you're here, This morning, And you think, That one day, You're going to stand, Before God, And God is going, To say to you, Well why should I, Allow you, Into heaven, And you say, Well I've kept, The ten commandments, Well at least, I've kept some of them, As my minister, A pastor in Glasgow, Says, That's not going to, Cut it with God, Because, God, And his law, Demands, Absolute,

Obedience, Perfect, Obedience, To his commandments, And not one of us, Is able, To render to God, Absolute, Obedience, Paul in writing, To the church, At Rome, In the new testament, Says these words, Therefore, No one, Will be justified, In his sight, That is in God's sight, By the works, Of the law, For the law, Merely, Brings, Awareness, Of sin, Romans 3, Verse 20, You see, As sinners, The law, Of God, Only, Condemns us, It points out, Our sin, And when we come, Face to face, With God's law, And those commandments,

If we're honest, With ourselves, And truthful, With ourselves, We're undone, Because the very, First commandment, And we'll see that, Later on, You shall have, No other gods, Before, Me, Anything that gets, In the way, Or takes priority, Over God, Is an idol, And there's not, One of us, In this hall, This morning, In this church, This morning, That can say, Truthfully, That God, Is their number one, Priority, 24, Seven, You see, The law, Defines, Righteousness, It demands, Righteousness, And no one, Can keep it, My wife, Works in schools, In the educational system,

We hear, Lots about, The levels, Of attainment, Nicola tells us, So often, About, The poor levels, Of attainment, And we must get, Attainment up, We must get, Achievement up, The pass rates, Need to go up, In God's law, 100%, Adherence, And obedience, Is the pass mark, That is what, We must attain to, If we want, To be counted, Righteous, In God's sight, No, Here, It's as a redeemed, People, They are given, The law, They are given, The law, Not as a means, Of salvation, But they are given, The law, So that they might, Continue, To enjoy, The relationship, And the salvation,

[28 : 15] That they have also, Already received, From God, It is the redeemed, The person, Who can say, Oh, How I love, Thy law, Now the law, Is not given, As a means, Of salvation, But secondly, The law, Is presented, Here before us, As a covenant, As a covenant, Covenants, Or agreements, Were common, In ancient, Near eastern, Countries, They existed, Covenants existed, Between kings, Or emperors, Or rulers, And their subjects, The people, That they were over, In those covenants, Very often, Or those agreements, Between two parties, Blessings, Were promised, For obedience, And curses, Were incurred, For disobedience,

Covenants, Were made, In the bible, Between God, And his people, In which, God makes, Promises, To his people, And usually, Requires, Certain conduct, From them, In the old testament, For example, There are probably, Five covenants, God made a covenant, With Noah, And with Abraham, And with Moses, You remember, That to Noah, He promised, That he would never again, Destroy the earth, With water, And he sealed, That covenant, With the sign, Of a rainbow, He made a covenant, With Abraham, He promised Abraham, That he would be, A father, Of a great nation, Provided that Abraham, Went to the place, God showed him, And he sealed, That covenant, With the sign, Of circumcision,

Of all the males, In that nation, Now here, To Moses, God makes, A covenant, With his people, God said, That the children, Of Israel, Would, He would promise, The promised land, To them, But they must obey, The laws, Of God, To enjoy, That relationship, God, Further made, A new covenant, Didn't he?

God promised, Salvation, To all those, Who believe, In Jesus Christ, That is the new covenant, That is sealed, In Jesus's, Blood, Covenants, As we shall see, We'll see this, In the covenant, The ten commandments, Were often accompanied, By oaths, And signs, And ceremonies, As I've said, They contained, Obligations, And commitments, They are a relationship, Between God, And his people, Now the question arises, When we come to, This covenant, That we're going to be looking at, As to whether, This covenant, The Mosaic covenant, Is a national covenant, That applies to the whole nation,

Rather than, With individuals, Well the answer, Is that it is both, You see, God has a specific purpose, For the nation, Of Israel, It was through, The nation of Israel, That the world, Would be brought, God's salvation, But also, The nation, Comprised of individual people, Individual believers, Who were dependent, On God, And who had faith, And belief, In him, Well is this law, For us, Today, Who does it apply to?

[32 : 46] Two areas, That I just want to touch upon, Because I see, That time has gone, The law, Is a schoolmaster, To bring, People, To Christ, That is one of the uses, Of God's law, Using Paul's language, That we have, In Galatians 3, Verse 24, The law performs, The function of leading, Or pointing people, Ultimately, To Christ, To Christ, In Roman culture, Of the day, The pedagogue, Big word, Was the slave, Who took, The child, To school, And the law, And its demands, Are like a pedagogue, The law, And its demands, For absolute, Righteousness, And perfection,

When preached, Should show men, And women, That they are, Unrighteous, And disobedient, And sinful, And hopeless, And that they, Need, To be pointed, To Christ, As a saviour, Martin Luther, Martin Luther, Said these words, About the use, Of the law, As long, As a person, Is not a murderer, Adulterer, Or thief, They would swear, That they are righteous, How is God, Going to humble that person, Except by his law, The law, Luther says, Is the hammer, Of death, The thunder of hell, And the thunder,

Of God's wrath, To bring down, The proud, And shameless, Hypocrites, As long, As you believe, You are right, You are going, To be proud, And you are going, To dismiss God, You are going, To despise, His grace, You are going, To despise, His mercy, And ignore, The promises, Of Christ, The gospel, The good news, Of free forgiveness, Through Christ, Will never appeal, To the self, Righteous, That's, That's why people, Don't believe, They feel, That they have, A righteousness, Of their own, The monster, Of self, Righteousness, Luther says, This stiff necked, Beast, Needs a big axe, And that big axe, Is the law, Of God,

So the law, The ten commandments, When preached, Is meant to drive, You and I, If we're sinners, And we are all sinners, To despair, Of ourselves, To cut us down, In our pride, And to drive us, To Christ, For our righteousness, And for our salvation, The law, Is meant to point us, To Christ, But finally, And time is gone, The law, Is a rule of life, For all, Believers, How does this covenant, Made at Sinai, Affect you and I, For Christians, In 2021, In Dumfries, Here, This morning, Well,

We need to, Remember, And bear in mind, That there are, New Testament passages, Which emphasize, That we as believers, And Christians, Are living in a new, Environment, Under a new, Covenant, The long, Promised Messiah, The Lord Jesus, Has now come, He is the fulfillment, Of all the Old Testament, Prophecies, So there are, Differences, Between the Old Testament, And the New Testament, What I submit to you, Is that the detailed, Prescriptions, Of the Mosaic law, Are no longer, Binding, But they continue, To show us, What God is like, And they show us, The eternal,

[37 : 54] Behavior, That God expects, From all, His redeemed people, In all generations, Now some Christians, Don't believe that, Some Christians say, There are only two laws, Today, There are only two commandments, Today, To love God, And to love your neighbor, So Christianity, Is all about love, And not law, But love, And obedience, And duty, Are two faces, Of the same, Coin, The Lord Jesus said, If you love me, Keep my commandments, The sign, That we, Are redeemed, The sign, That we are truly saved, Is that we obey, The commandments, Now God's character,

Does not change, From the Old Testament, To the New Testament, So therefore, What we learn of God, And his holiness, And his righteousness, Here, As we will go on, To look at, In the Ten commandments, Tell us what he is like, And God does not change, I am the Lord, He says, I change not, And what he still requires, From us, From his people, Is holiness, And obedience, So his character, And his basic demands, Do not change, Though the details, Of the way, In which his demands, Are to be worked out, Will change, In different eras, And cultures, So for example, And I tread carefully, Because I am in farming land here, Yeah, While I do not,

Find coveting, My neighbour's donkey, A problem, Coming from Glasgow, That doesn't mean, That coveting, Is not an issue, For me, In my life, And one that needs, To be controlled, We also must remember, That because we live after, The coming of Jesus Christ, We enjoy, A far more privileged position, Than Israel did, So with regards, To God's commands, And demands, On our life, We are not only, Confronted with the ten commandments, Written in tables of stone, But we are confronted, By the very person, And life, Of the Lord Jesus, Who perfectly, Obeyed, The law, Of God, And he, Is our guide,

And exemplar, To follow, So for believers, It is vitally important, For us to know, And live out, The ten commandments, As I said at the beginning, We do that, In the power, Of the Holy Spirit, Loving God, Loving God, And loving our neighbor, Are detailed out, In the ten commandments, These are God's laws, They are objective, And they are absolute, Not obsolete, Christ said, If you love me, And if you're a believer, Here this morning, If you love me, He says, Keep my commandments, It is, I caution, Imperative, That we are absolutely clear,

That the believer, Is free from the law, As a means, Of justification, We are not, Counted righteous, By keeping, The law, We are not, Justified, In God's sight, By keeping the law, But having, Been justified, Having been, Saved, Through the blood, Of Jesus Christ, We keep, The law, It is as we, As believers, Understand, God's love, To us in Christ, That we find, Our, Our, Our, I hope, We do, Delighting, Delighting, In God's law, Which is written, In, Our hearts, We need to preach it, We need to teach it, People, People will never, Understand the gospel,

[43 : 03] Unless they, Understand sin, They will never, Understand sin, Unless, They understand, The law, Of God, And it's righteous, Demands, I finish with a quote, From Alistair Begg, Sort of, Popular preacher, Today in America, Came from Hamilton, Outside Glasgow, He says these words, The cultural climate, Is one in which, Instead of the church, Seizing the opportunity, To proclaim God's law, And sin, As an offence against that law, It is guilty of an embarrassing, Silence, Silence, The cultural climate, In 2021, The environment, That you and I, As believers, Go into tomorrow, Is one in which, Instead of the church,

Seizing the opportunity, To proclaim God's law, To tell people, In our evangelism, What God demands of them, And expects of them, And that they cannot give to him, It's an offence, Let's not be embarrassed, Let's try to recover, And proclaim, The law, And the gospel, In our churches, We'll get into, The meat of the Ten Commandments, Over the next, Couple of months, But hopefully, That gives you some idea, Of why, The Ten Commandments, Are important, And foundational, We cannot understand, Salvation, If we do not understand, Sin, And sin, Is defined, In the law, Of God,

Let's pray together, Father we thank you, For your word, We thank you, That you have given, All of us, The details, On how, To live our lives, Father we know, That we are sinners, And that we need to be saved, Father we thank you, For your saviour, That you have provided, Your son, The Lord Jesus, We thank you that, We have come to him, Convicted, Of our sin, And Father we pray, That we might be driven back, To be obedient to him, By keeping the commands, That, He has given to us, Father we pray, For those, Who are not saved, Who are not righteous, In your sight, Who are not justified, Who have not been forgiven, Who have not been redeemed, Who are here this morning, And we pray, That you might speak,

Into their hearts, And that they might be convicted, Of their sin, And of an impending judgment, And that they might flee, To Christ, As a saviour, For time, And for eternity, We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.