

The Egyptian Context of the Ten Commandments

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Just a small disclaimer before I start here. I'm actually suffering from a bit of a sinus infection. So if you hear me snuffle and cough and choke and gag, please bear with me.

Are you taking any antibiotics? Yes. Don't talk about the wolves. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you for this opportunity to come together and study your word, study the context of your word, and allow us to apply it to our lives.

Lord, we ask that you may just bless this time, fill our hearts with your Holy Spirit, and may the truth of God's word come out in its fullness. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, we pray. Amen. Okay. When the Israelites left Egypt, they left with a worldview and a way of thinking that made the Ten Commandments a necessity.

The Ten Commandments are more than a list of do's and don'ts we learned in Sunday school. They are ten laws that God gave the Israelites at Mount Sinai when he gave his covenant to them.

[1 : 20] I would suggest that the Ten Commandments were designed to change the way the Israelites thought and their cultural worldview. In many respects, we are more like them today than our forebears were three or four generations ago.

And like other portions of the Bible, the Ten Commandments did not arise out of a vacuum. The purpose of today's Learner's Exchange is to give you some context to the Ten Commandments. By learning about the context of the Ten Commandments, we can get more out of the scriptures and perhaps the importance of culture in our own day. To establish the context of the early Israelites, I'm going to give you a bit of a refresher.

As I do so, I'm going to need to deal with the elephant in the room. And that is the date of the Exodus. One really can't talk about the context of the Sinai Covenant without taking a position on the date of the Exodus.

This is because the two proposed dates of the Exodus, the 15th century versus 13th century BC dates, offered different contexts and different discussions.

[2 : 39] And perhaps in the subsequent lecture, I will discuss the differences between the two views. But that discussion entails an entire lecture of its own to do it justice.

Promises, promises. For the purposes of this lecture, I'm going to assume that the Exodus took place during the 13th century.

I understand that others might have an alternative point of view. However, the general and scholarly debate on this is pretty much over. Furthermore, the 13th century debate is the most consistent of the positions and is currently the majority position among Egyptologists who believe in the Bible. But if anyone wishes to discuss the issue with me, I'd be more than happy to discuss it after the question period. Now, the origin of Israel begins with Jacob and his sons.

As some of you may recall from Sunday school, Jacob's sons sold Joseph as a slave to an Ishmaelite caravan. Joseph ends up in Egypt where he is purchased by Potiphar.

[3 : 50] Joseph won the favor of Potiphar and was promoted to overseer of Potiphar's house. The household of an important Egyptian official had a variety of slaves who managed the affairs of the home.

Joseph, however, faced the sexual advances of Potiphar's wife. As we discussed in my previous lecture, ancient Egypt had a laissez-faire concept of marriage.

Culturally, either sex in a marital relationship was free to enter the relationship at will, and either could initiate an adulterous relationship.

Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph of rape, and Joseph was carted off to prison. While in prison, Joseph became known as an interpreter of dreams.

He interpreted the dream of the cupbearer and the baker in Genesis 40. The interpretation of dreams resonates with Egyptian culture. Through his interpretation of dreams, Joseph is brought before the Hyksos king of Egypt, seated at Avaris.

[4 : 59] The Hyksos were Amorites that arrived in Egypt during the first intermediate period as migrants during the end of the Neolithic wet period. They settled in the Nile Delta around the city of Avaris.

When the Egyptian 13th dynasty collapsed and lost control of the entire country, the Hyksos assumed control of the city about 30 years after centralized authority collapsed.

These foreign rulers had a culture that was essentially Semitic. They spoke a Semitic language, worshipped the Canaanite god Baal, and buried their dead in Semitic-style graves.

However, over time, they adopted Egyptian customs and made themselves the rulers of Egypt from the Mediterranean to Thebes. At the time Joseph arrived in Egypt, the Hyksos were already firmly in control over Egypt.

Joseph predicted the coming famine in Egypt, Exodus 41, 26-30, and implemented a plan for the king to stave off mass starvation, Exodus 41, 35-36.

[6 : 11] In this plan, the king taxed additional grain that was then sold back to the people.

The people traded their gold to the king, their livestock, and their lands, so that the king ended up owning everything in the land of Egypt, Genesis 47-20.

During this time, Joseph was promoted to the position of vizier, which is second to the king. The famine extended to Canaan, and the sons of Jacob were forced to go to Egypt to buy grain.

Jacob and his family leave Canaan, and Jacob had an audience before the king of Egypt. The king allotted the land of Goshen to Jacob and his descendants. Up to this point, the biblical text gives us enough clues that we can start to piece some things together.

Here in this picture, we see Semitic Asiatics who migrated to Egypt during the reign of Thutmose III. After the death of Joseph, we are told that there is a regime change in Egypt.

[7 : 24] Exodus chapter 1 gives us the summary of what happens. Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. He said to his people, Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we.

Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply, and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us, and depart from the land.

Exodus 1, 8-9 This passage tells us that a new king took over Egypt that didn't know Joseph.

Around 1550 BC, King Akmosa I of Thebes went to war against the final Hyksos king.

But before King Akmosa could complete his conquest, the Hyksos hightailed it out of town, taking a lot of wealth of Egypt with them. But they left the Israelites and other Asiatic groups who lived in Avaris to take their chances with the Egyptians bent upon vengeance.

King Akmosa seized the land from the Asiatics and redistributed the land to his commanders. We find reference to this redistribution theme in the tomb of Mes.

[8 : 43] During the Ramesside period, Mes, a scribe of Thaw, son of Hui, had to establish his claim to a parcel of land and titles of rank by tracing his ancestor Neshi back to his support of Akmosa I.

Akmosa I, when he conquered the Hyksos in 1550 BC, seized all the lands and people of Avaris and redistributed them to his soldiers as a reward for their support.

We have the biography of General Akmosa, son of Ibana. Now this is a different Akmosa than the king. You have to realize that at this point in time, Akmosa was an extremely common name.

Kind of like John. You know, it's just everywhere. But this general records the conquest of Avaris. Now General Akmosa was rewarded with four slaves, one man and three women, taken from the conquest of Avaris.

This is the first time in Egypt where we find a domestic population enslaved as a result of military conquest. This also shows the point when the Israelites become enslaved to the Egyptians.

[9 : 54] Despite the enslavement of the population, the city of Avaris continued to grow and thrive during the early New Kingdom. And during the early 18th Dynasty, the Egyptians made their presence in the city known.

And in general, these early kings had a kind of hands-off policy. Thutmose III built a palace at Avaris, however, he probably did not spend much time there. He much preferred being on the battlefield.

He hated the whole court life thing. Oh yeah, yeah, this character here. If you can think of *Apocalypse Now*, this is the sort of guy who says, I love the smell of burning olive oil in the morning. This is just the sort of guy he was. He spent more time on campaign than at home. Heck, that's supposed to mean I love the smell of burning olive oil. You'd have to see the movie. Okay. See the movie.

There's a smell of gay palm in the morning. Exactly, that's the reference. It's a fumes, you know. Exactly. Whatever that is. Fire. Fire. Yeah. Fire. This was normal since Thebes was the traditional seat of power for the kings of the Theban dynasty.

[11 : 38] His father, Amenhotep III, had initiated many religious reforms during his reign as king. Akhenaten intended to accelerate his father's reforms.

But while the largesse of Amenhotep III brought grudging tolerance from the priesthood, Akhenaten's swift changes brought intransigence. In the face of a powerful Theban priesthood unwilling to change, Akhenaten relocated his capital from Thebes to a virgin site near Elamarna in Middle Egypt.

And at least three rulers called this new capital of Akhenaten home. Akhenaten, Smenkare, and King Tut. But when Akhenaten established Akhenaten, he emancipated himself from the Theban priesthood with its ominous hold on religious life.

Akhenaten was high priest of every cult in Egypt, in rank and title. Yet, he probably realized that his reforms still required the ascent of the religious establishment.

Those reforms had a political component to concentrate power within the royal prerogative.

Contrary to popular opinion, Akhenaten was not a monotheist.

[13 : 03] On the surface, the religious system seems like a simple monotheism. But the reality of the belief system is much more complex than early Egyptologists anticipated.

Prima facie, Atenism followed the trajectory of many solar cults. After relocating to Akhenaten, Amenhotep IV inaugurated his reforms by changing his name to Akhenaten.

Quote, he who is the manifestation of the Aten, end quote. Unfortunately, how he arrived at the conclusion that the Aten was the true god is not revealed in his public deliberations.

However, some of his theological reflection can be found in the albeit formulaic phrasing of the hymns to the Aten. Atenism differed from classical Egyptian thought in the belief of creation.

Traditional Egyptian belief focused on creation myth as foundational, as do many religions. But Atenism disregarded physical creation altogether while maintaining Aten as creator.

[14 : 15] The Aten was extolled as, quote, creator of all who makes them live, great falcon, bright a plume, a beetle who raised himself, he who was self-created, he who was never born, end quote.

Atenism accepted the idea of imminence, that is, God being present in the act of continuous creation.

That act made every living being come alive by sharing the substance and breath of Aten. Quote, You are one, yet a million lives are in you.

To make them live, you give the breath of life to their noses, end quote. Aten was bidirectionally eternal.

That is, the Aten was in eternity past, the same as he is today, and going forward will remain the same. Thus, the answer to the question of origins always centered upon manifestations of the Aten.

[15 : 25] Time to abandon the lecture, everyone. This sort of divinity was not quite Henotheism in the classical sense.

Henotheism is defined as an allegiance to only one God, while acknowledging that many gods exist. Nor was Atenism any kind of monotheism per se.

We would define monotheism as the worship of only one God, and a belief that there is no other deity. Atenism popular is the one and many theology.

Atenist Akhenaten's religious reforms transformed Egyptian religion from a plurality of gods to one God, radiating from a single source, incorporating the substance of all other gods.

Atenism believed that only the Aten was to be worshipped. This is called monolatry. You may notice that monolatry is very similar to both Henotheism and Monotheism.

[16 : 33] And the two kinds of beliefs are, previous kinds of beliefs, are both varieties of monolatry. So then, how does Atenism with its monolatry differ?

Akhenaten believed that everything was a manifestation of the Aten. This is called pantheism. That is the belief that everything is God.

Other gods existed, but they were manifestations of the Aten. Everything, all creation was the Aten manifest. Everything was the Aten. So Atenism combines these last two concepts, monolatry and pantheism.

Now, here we have a map of Egypt and the Sinai. Now, when the Semitic Asiatics from the Levant and Canaan travel into Egypt, the route they generally take is they come, if Israel and Canaan are up here, Thebes and Akhenaten are way down here.

Typically, your Asiatic would... Actually, you can't use a pointer on this screen. How interesting. It disappears.

[17 : 50] Alright, I'm going to have to use my finger. Or my cane. They will come down and they will come across this road at the north point of the Sinai called the Way of Horus.

They will then sort of cut down the side of the Sinai here and take this route here during what's called the Wadi Tumulat. And they will enter the Nile Delta through that means.

Now, when the Israelites leave Egypt, in some ways they're going to sort of reverse this classical path. They're here at Avaris.

P. Ramesses is the new capital that Ramesses II constructs right next door to keep an eye on them. So when the Israelites leave, they're going to leave Avaris.

They're going to head down to Sukkot at the mouth of the Wadi Tumulat, cut across Pithong and the Wadi. Then they're going to cut back up as if they were going on to the Way of Horus.

[18 : 50] And they're going to pretend to be lost in the desert. Pharaoh is going to marshal his chariots from probably Charu and Migdal to engage them.

And the Red Sea of the Bible is going to be right about there, right near the P of Pihahiot. After the destruction of Pharaoh's chariots, by the way, it's just his chariots, not his land forces.

So his infantry survived this. But his chariots are all destroyed. The Israelites are going to cut down the west side of the Sinai all the way down to Wadi Faron.

They're going to travel the Wadi and camp at the foot of what's now today St. Catherine's Monastery or Mount Sinai. Now, when the Israelites finally arrive at Mount Sinai, they brought various customs with them.

Previously, when the Hyksos settled the Nile Delta during the Middle Kingdom, they brought with them deities that they worshipped in the Levant. Deities that are known from the archaeological and textual record include Baal, Reshef, and Astarte.

[20 : 11] The worship of these deities quickly trickled down into local religious practice, and the early Israelites probably worshipped these deities among a host of other gods.

Papyrus Salier 1 suggested that one of the high crimes of the Hyksos was that the king Apophis took Seth as his god and did not serve any other god.

Seth was the Egyptian identity for the Canaanite god Baal. This papyrus dates to the Ramessi period and was written hundreds of years after the Hyksos expulsion.

So it is possible that the writer may have transferred upon the Hyksos resentment towards Atenism. Nevertheless, the Hyksos bringing Henotheism to Egypt as part of West Semitic tradition is also conceivable.

The integration of West Semitic tradition with Atenism created a complex religious milieu. That milieu led to the development of monotheism proper. This can be seen in the precepts of early Israelite thought that counterbalanced the culture from which the Israelites emerged.

[21 : 22] William F. Albright recognized that deities becoming manifest stations of a single god ultimately yields a kind of practical monotheism or pantheism.

After the Israelites leave Egypt, they camp at Mount Sinai where they built the Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant, and received the Ten Commandments. The Israelites leaving Egypt had a broad range of religious practices and beliefs that included henotheism, pantheism, and even Egyptian paganism.

And this potpourri of thought is reflected in the Ten Commandments. Now, the Pentateuch has two canonical versions of the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20, 2-17, and Deuteronomy 5, 6-21. And there are minor textual differences between the two versions. The version that we find in Exodus is the one that was given to the children of Israel at Mount Sinai.

The version from Deuteronomy is the version that is reinforced to the Israelites after 40 years in the wilderness and just before they enter the Promised Land. The Ten Commandments was not the

first time a society used a law code.

[22 : 43] Mesopotamian cultures had used law codes for over a thousand years by this point. And the experiences of Abraham and Sarah show that they lived by the laws of Mesopotamia when they sojourned in Canaan.

However, the Ten Commandments are specifically colored by the Israelites' experience in Egypt. When the Ten Commandments are viewed in a context to a population emerging out of Egypt that was not monotheistic, its role in the establishment of counter-cultural ethos becomes apparent. Quote, The beginning of the Ten Commandments assumes the Exodus' preamble, setting its context as out of Egypt.

And the first of the four commandments present an unfolding of monotheism, even though the first commandment, when taken in isolation, is not explicitly monotheistic.

The first commandment to have no other gods, but for my presence, presents an injunction that some have suggested is a statement of monolatry or henotheism.

[24 : 07] The suggestion is that the first commandment accepts the prima facie existence of other gods. I don't agree with this suggestion, but you should be aware that this suggestion is out there being discussed in the academic community.

But the nuance becomes clearer when it is contextualized with the second commandment. Quote, You will not make for yourselves an idol, nor any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

You will not bow down to them, nor serve them. For I, Yahweh, your God, am a jealous God, visiting the guilt of the fathers upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generation, of those who hate me, and showing goodness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

The implication from the second commandment is that idols are a part of the creation. Idols are images of the things in heaven, on earth, and in the sea.

This commandment makes an idol, by definition, something taken from the creation, but it also implies the converse, that God is not like any of these things.

[25 : 30] Thus, another God before Yahweh's presence brought a created thing and equated it to a being that was not of creation. The expectation from the two commandments was fidelity to the one God that brought the Israelites out of Egypt, and to forsake all other forms of deity.

This new monotheism, expected that God, as a sovereign entity, could not be manipulated, and that one could not love this deity while serving a counterfeit.

This, of course, did not prevent the Israelites from worshipping other gods en masse. Just see Joshua 24:15. It is one thing to make a law.

Adherence to a law is a whole different matter. This commandment, though, is also important when considering that the Israelites emerged from a religious culture that was highly visible.

In Egyptian religion, potentially any image of an animal could be revered as a divinity. Egyptians not only portrayed their divinity in statuary and beliefs, but communicated highly sophisticated concepts of sacred space through iconography and religious furniture.

[26 : 47] This religious visual culture translated into Israelite culture. The law's anti-iconism appears to not overcome that visual sense.

Because the prohibition upon idols, the primary visual focus of early Israelite religion was the Ark of the Covenant. Rather than an idol that could be manipulated, the Ark served as a portable unit of sacred space upon which dwelt the presence of God.

The presence of the Lord, instead of being inside the chest captive, met humanity between the wings of the cherubim above the lid. This presented a visual theology where God was with the Ark, but not tied to it, near to listen and interact, but separate from humanity within sequestered sacred space.

This promoted a visual sense of being in rapport with the transcendent, a God accessible but set apart. The other thing I want to point out is the epilogue.

Quote, Visiting the guilt of the fathers upon the children, upon the third, and upon the fourth generation of those who hate me, and showing goodness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

[28 : 10] End quote. Hidden in plain sight is the consequence of merely covering up sin. The sin is not forgiven, but passed on to the next generation.

So, each generation gets a cumulative load of the sin responsibility from the previous generation. This is the Old Covenant in a nutshell.

Hence, the Jeremiah 31, 29 statement of the fathers eating grapes and setting their children's teeth on edge. Now, to get this visual picture, grapes are highly acidic fruit.

You eat too many of them and your teeth kind of feel weird. You know, you kind of get that sort of, eh. Well, that's the picture it's trying to portray. The fathers are eating the grapes, but the children are going, eh.

So, this is the Old Covenant in a nutshell. It's that, so, the way it works in the Old Covenant is, you sin, but responsibility is being deferred to your kids. So, the kids have to pay for your sin, as well as their sin.

[29 : 13] Their kids have to pay for their parents' sin and your sin. And so on, and so on, and so on. So, the debt of sin gets higher, and higher, and higher as time progresses.

Nevertheless, God is showing that despite this burden, God is even more abundant in grace and mercy. There is love that extends beyond this life and to all generations, that thousands of generations of those who love him.

So, even though there's, there's, there's, there's judgment and there's responsibility and consequences to sin, there's also abundant grace that's even more abundant than the burden.

The third commandment, you will not take the name of Yahweh, your God, is worthless. For Yahweh will not hold him guiltless, he who takes his name in vain. Now, the third commandment, an injunction from treating the Lord's name in a flippant manner, is also a prohibition against magical practice.

The belief in Egyptian magic is that the name of a deity or person carried with it the power of that person. And the Egyptians used the names of deity to gain power over their gods and control them.

[30 : 39] For those coming out of an understanding of Egyptian religion, the name of a deity could be used as magic itself. Misusing the Lord's name as a magical incantation to compel God against his sovereign will created offense by diluting God's status.

If God can be manipulated, who is really in control? This prohibition, then, is an injunction to prevent the use of the name of Yahweh that diminishes its worth.

The further implication of this law is that God cares how his name is used. He is not a passive force of nature like the many manifestations of the Aten.

The Lord knows that his name is being misused and exacts justice accordingly. Atenism reconciles the absence of the afterlife with divine justice based upon a balance of order.

On the other hand, the commandment shows that the Lord as a being that is intimately involved with humanity. Fourth commandment.

[31 : 48] Remember the Sabbath day, keeping it holy. You will labor six days and do all your work. But in the seventh day is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God.

You will not do any work in it. Know your son, know your daughter, your male servant, know your female servant, know your livestock, know your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days Yahweh made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.

Therefore, Yahweh blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. I could probably do an entire learner's exchange just on the Sabbath and the fourth commandment.

Okay? This is for us. So, there's so much going on in this one selection. It's really sort of difficult to get a grasp on it.

But I'm going to try to make an attempt here to unpack it. The fourth commandment is the encapsulation of the ritual law. It is one of two commandments that is a positive injunction, i.e., you will do the following.

[33 : 00] It is the only commandment that prescribes a uniquely ritual practice. The Sinai covenant did not only give the Ten Commandments, but established a cessation of hostilities between God and the Israelites.

But the condition of that treaty was the establishment of the entire sacrificial system. Burnt offerings, priests, temples, etc.

But why was this necessary? The reason is the animosity between God and sin. God, being completely holy, cannot stand in the presence of sin.

God is compelled to either withdraw from sin or assert his judgment. The sacrificial system provided a workaround to mediate this dilemma.

Let me explain how this works with an analogy. Anyone here remember ribbon typewriters? Yeah. Oh, awesome. Then you'll all get this.

[34 : 05] Okay, I have an assignment for you. I have a million pages of a handwritten manuscript that I need typed out. The only condition is there can't be any mistakes.

I hear the typists in the audience snickering. No. So, you take on the job. It's the only job available. And you start typing.

It's only a matter of time before you hit the wrong key. All right, what do you do then? White out. White out. You reach into the drawer, you pull out the white out. You use the white out, you put it over the mistake, wait for it to dry, and then you type over the mistake.

The white out does not get rid of the mistake, but it does allow you to continue with the task. The mistake is still present, but the white out covers it over.

[35 : 12] The sacrificial system does something similar. Animal sacrifices do not remove sin, but it covers it over. In Hebrew, they call this *kathar*, to cover.

So that the Israelites could have relationship with God until Messiah came to actually remove the sin entirely. The fourth commandment is also a ratification of the terms and conditions of the Sinai covenant, allowing the Israelites to enter into relationship with God.

God's instructions that begin at Exodus 20 end in Exodus 31 with this. Quote, The Lord spoke to Moses saying, But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel saying, You shall surely observe my Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord who sanctifies you.

So the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbath to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual, everlasting covenant. It is a sign between me and the sons of Israel forever.

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but on the seventh he ceased from his labor and was refreshed. When he had finished speaking to him upon Mount Sinai, he gave Moses the two commandments of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God.

[36 : 41] End quote. So the reason for the fourth commandment is revealed for us within the context of the Sinai covenant. Every suzerain treaty of the ancient world had conditions to ratify its treaty.

The Sinai covenant uses the fourth commandment as its ratification clause. If you were sanctified by the Sinai covenant, i.e. in relationship with God, you kept the Sabbath and the ritual law. Moreover, the fourth commandment, the command to keep the Sabbath, established the theological cosmology that predicated monotheism. This is one point where the Ten Commandments in Exodus and Deuteronomy differ.

Exodus admonishes to remember the Sabbath, while Deuteronomy tells the Israelites to keep the Sabbath. The difference is subtle.

The former tells the Israelites to internalize the Sabbath as part of their mindset, while the latter tells the Israelites to practice the Sabbath. Right thought, then right practice.

[37 : 55] The difference between the two versions of the fourth commandment is the epilogue. The Exodus version justifies the commandment by an appeal to creation, while the Deuteronomy version justifies the commandment with God having led his people out of the land of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 5.15, You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and with an outstretched arm.

Therefore, the Lord your God commanded you to observe the Sabbath day. The Sinai covenant with Israel not only changed what the Israelites were expected to believe, but how they lived. And a key change was the work week. The Egyptian work week was 10 days with only a half day rest. Oh, yeah.

The Israelite week was reduced to seven days with a full day rest. This is a radical departure in lifestyle.

[39 : 07] The justification for this change was based upon the Israelite creation story. God created heaven and earth in six days and rested on the seventh.

Perhaps the most important aspect of this commandment is the implied transcendent relationship between God and creation. God existed before creation and created heaven and earth from outside with no other reality than his divine will.

creation. Once creation was complete, he rested from the work. He stands apart from creation and even at rest is separate. The transcendence of God from creation allowed monotheism to break out from pantheism.

Egyptian expressions of divinity were tied to the fabric of creation. even abstract conceptions of divinity such as Amun-Re that were hidden and inscrutable were anchored to concepts of nature. This is true of all the gods of ancient Egypt. For example, Happy, God of the Nile, being tied to the inundation. Atenism was more than the concept of nature manifesting as aspects of the Aten.

[40 : 21] The Aten and creation were bidirectionally eternal, with the two inextricably tied. So that means that not only was the Aten eternal, but so was creation.

Israelite religion only regarded God as bidirectionally internal. Creation was in turn an effect set at a specific point in time by a God who acted as a causal agent.

All the creation myths of Egypt held that a God who created dwelled within his own creation. For example, Atunrei created the world in which he lived and ruled.

Israelite religion was the first to posit that after creation, God remained independent from that creation. Without the innovation of cosmological transcendence, the break from polytheism and pantheism would not have been possible.

Likewise, with an imminent conception of deity, monotheism rapidly reverts back to pantheism. The fifth to tenth commandments have sometimes been termed the civil law.

[41 : 37] Now, the Egyptians had no laws. The Egyptians lived by a principle called ma'at, or order. This led to a permissive society.

If something did not upset the social order, or was not an act against the king, it was generally permitted. One could leave one's parents in poverty.

Stealing from the king was a capital crime, but stealing from your neighbor had little or no consequences. Collecting debts was next to impossible. Marriage in Egypt was a revolving door. Public intoxication was rampant. order existed was enforced by a brutal military dictatorship, so order was maintained by force and corporal punishment.

In the minds of those who lived in Egypt, sin and evil were private matters. They were not offenses against other people or the divine. If an act did not appear to hurt the social order, any wrongdoing simply didn't matter.

[42 : 42] And besides, any wrongdoing done in this life could be ameliorated by magical incantation for the next life. The Ten Commandments changed this view of sin because it showed that each sin was an offense against God.

They changed the mindset of the Israelites, where all things were permissible, even evil, to a worldview where acts were seen as inherently right or wrong.

Accordingly, the conditions of the Sinai Covenant in Exodus 31, the Ten Commandments changed the direction of responsibility from the secular towards the divine lawgiver.

God gives the tablets upon which he writes to the Israelites. God set an absolute standard of holiness that was independent of any ontological principle of order.

the problem with the principle of Ma'at was that things such as status and rank swayed the balance of justice. Corrupt magistrates rarely received justice.

[43 : 53] The Ten Commandments, at least in theory, applied to all from the king down to the lowest peasant. The law presented a kind of equality of justice all had to abide by.

In several respects, North American culture is returning to that same sort of group consensus culture that we found in ancient Egypt. Perhaps the most frightening development for me in recent years is the profound shift towards lawlessness.

Take, for example, the prosecution of Martin Scarelli, CEO of the biotechnology firm Retrofren, whose crime of securities fraud harmed no one and in fact rich those he supposedly defrauded. But his predatory price hike on EpiPens, legal but very unpopular, and his unlikable demeanor swiftly earned him several years in a federal prison.

Compare this to Elizabeth Holmes, CEO of biotechnology firm Theranos, who not only defrauded and harmed investors, but lied to regulators and falsified medical reports which caused harm to patients.

[45 : 02] Holmes avoided regulatory prosecution that Scarelli faced by being too beautiful to prosecute. While she still faces charges from a grand jury, it is unlikely she will face the same level of punishment as her co-conspirators.

And before you think this couldn't happen in Canada, I need only remind you of the Carla Hamolka plea bargain. In conclusion, as a society, we have abandoned the idea that acts can be inherently right or wrong.

Subjective morality takes no notice as to how our decisions might affect those around us. Moral matters are being relegated to private matters and personal choice. And we are once again returning to a worldview that considers how much acts disrupt the ideological consensus. Consensus thinking rewards public dogma as courage and punishes dissent upon the pyre of viral video. The fact is that our worldview is shifting just as it did for the ancient Israelites. But instead of turning towards the laws of God and Jesus Christ, we are turning back to lawlessness, back to subjective ethics, and back to Egypt. Thank you. Bruce months old and so back to E.

[46 : 30] We all are doing 3 years before the time of history, not history, but we are needing to touch into Minute with McJarney, and Pat hoping toasses, point to point to see everyone who forever seen to us nearly a little and