

EXODUS 20: 1 -11

BECAUSE I DELIVERED YOU

In Germany there is a memorial for a man who was loved by an entire people. (Schindler)

Ever have someone just blow into the room making demands for which you have no context?

Today we have a story within a story. The delivery of the Decalogue within the storm theophany.

1 And God spoke all these words, saying:

2 "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Verses one and two are the foundation upon which the balance of the chapter rests. There is something of a progression here, as we shall see. God makes a foundational statement: He is the God who has delivered Israel out of bondage. And

because of that He is making a covenant with His people whom He has delivered. They are specifically His people. They are His family and they are to be seen as a new creation that He has brought through the waters of chaos. God is now codifying what it is like to be His people. Israel is to exemplify the traits, characteristics – the holiness of God. And they are to do this well. Of course, as we shall see, they don't do it well. And neither do we – at least not all the time. Therefore, in order that they learn who God is and what He is like, He gives them what we know as the 10 Commandments. Actually, the Hebrew states that these are the 10 Words. But they are basic building blocks on which to construct an idea and a worldview, and they are clues to just who God is and how He is SO different from His creation. Because He is so beyond His creation, there is no way to get a total grasp of who He is and what He is like other than this special revelation. Natural theology can only take you so far.

So God begins with the fact that He, and He alone has delivered Israel from bondage and because they are His people, who are now free from bondage, there is a standard and responsibility

that must be met in order that He be reflected to the other nations, all of whom are pagan.

3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.

Because I have delivered you – because I have destroyed the maat, (order and pantheon) of Egypt, you shall have no other gods before Me. YHWH doesn't deny the existence of other gods. Notice they are spoken of with a lower case “g”. This is because they are created spiritual beings. YHWH is the only uncreated creator. He had no cause. He has always been. There is none above Him. He has demonstrated this in the creation account in Genesis and also with the destruction of Egypt and now by bringing Israel through the Red Sea. He is now manifesting Himself on top of this quaking, heaving mountain. Because of all this, there are none who can stand before Him and there are none who are worthy of worship. Israel is different from all the nations in this sense.

God didn't just show up and arbitrarily demand obedience. He has proven Himself to be the only one worthy of worship.

***4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;
5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.***

Therefore, because God has delivered them and because they are to have no other gods before Him, He is the only one to be worshipped, (that is a logical statement) the Israelites are not to make any graven images (for worship) of anything in the heavens, earth or under the earth.

- The Three tiered cosmology. This ties up all loose ends. There is nothing in existence that doesn't fit into one of these three tiers.
- The pagans had gods who were worshipped as images that looked like things of this earth or some “spiritual being” that looked somewhat like things of this earth. They had

to have a more natural theology, (yes, they believed in the supernatural) but they could only relate to more natural figures because they didn't know YHWH.

- God can't be likened to anything because HE is so far above His creation. Can you look at a car and know the engineers who designed it? You may be able to catch a few clues, but you can never know the person/ persons who designed it. They are so far above the car that they literally don't resemble it in any way.
- There are lessons to be learned about God and His character from the storm cloud atop the mountain, but they weren't seeing God.
- Later God/ Jesus will manifest as a man to Abraham and others, but this is through something of a filter. No one ever fully sees God in all His glory. We simply can't handle it.
- You shall not bow down to any image. There is no way they can represent God. We demean God when we do this. (Yes, you can have a picture of Jesus as long as you're not worshipping it.)
- What about images in the Temple? (Ark, cherubim, bronze serpent). Images of these things are allowed as long as they are not

worshipped. The bronze serpent had to be destroyed because of this very thing. We only worship the uncreated creator.

- God is a jealous God. This isn't a petty jealousy. The word actually means, "red-faced." God has so much invested in His people that He is pained when they/ we show loyalty, allegiance or love which should be directed towards Him to anyone else. Marriage is the metaphor here. (spousal jealousy)
- Generational curses? Absolutely not. (Elaborate)
- Read the entire verse. Three or four generations living in the same household.
- Sin does have immediate consequences that can affect our families, but there is a difference between this and our eternal destiny.
- (A family member is an undesirable.)
- Shame and honor culture. Your family name.
- This became something of a superstition in Israel.
- **Lamentations 5:7**
- **7 Our fathers sinned and are no more,**

- **But we bear their iniquities.**

Verse is often used to support the idea of generational curses. But...

Jer. 31: 29,30

In those days they shall say no more:

**‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge.’**

**30 But every one shall die for his own iniquity;
every man who eats the sour grapes, his teeth
shall be set on edge.**

Ez. 18: 1- 4

**1 The word of the Lord came to me again,
saying, 2 “What do you mean when you use
this proverb concerning the land of Israel,
saying:**

**‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes,
And the children's teeth are set on edge’?**

**3 “As I live,” says the Lord God, “you shall no
longer use this proverb in Israel.**

4 “Behold, all souls are Mine;

The soul of the father

As well as the soul of the son is Mine;

The soul who sins shall die.

Ezekiel attacks this very idea. There is no amount of voodoo or family culture that can overwhelm the Gospel. Daniel was in exile in Babylon because of what his nation did before him, but God still used Daniel in a mighty way. God still knows who believes. God can still sort out the sheep from the goats. He knows and has numbered every hair on your head.

7 “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

This goes way beyond saying “God” in a cuss word. It speaks of imaging – bearing God’s name before others. The verb “take” actually means to carry, not just speak. The word, “vain” means flippantly or uselessly. We spoke of being flippant when approaching God last week.

Israel is to bear, carry God’s name to the other nations so as to accurately represent Him. They are to be imagers/ reflectors of His glory. They are to be a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. They have a vocation. They can’t do this while carrying

His name about flippantly.

- (Representing your company or church in a t-shirt.)
- It would denigrate the name of the entity on your t-shirt. The same thing applies here. The name we carry must match the holiness of God. The walk and the talk have to match.

***8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the
Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you,
nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male
servant, nor your female servant, nor your
cattle, nor your stranger who is within your
gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made the
heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in
them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the
Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.***

There are many things in the OT that parallel other cultures of the time. But there is no parallel to the Sabbath. No other culture had this.

- We don't celebrate the Sabbath. Why?
- We don't see the word Sabbath until Exodus but we do have the Hebrew word for “rest”

and it goes back to the creation. God ceased His creative work on the seventh day. It was special. And now Israel is being invited to enjoy it with God.

- In the ANE context, when a god or king rested/ ceased from his work, it meant that he had taken his throne and was sitting back, enjoying looking out at all he ruled. The same thing is happening here and it was what was happening in Eden.
- It was a day that was to commemorate many things, including the exodus, (Dt. 5:15) but was to bring about thoughts of God being in one's presence.
- Amos and the fidgeting merchants.
- But now Israel is a new creation that has been brought through the waters of chaos. God had to deliver them and now that work can cease once again.
- The Sabbath is now being codified so as to commemorate this great event.
- Jesus was the death angel and the Passover Lamb, therefore He can claim to be the Lord of the Sabbath in the NT.

Because God delivered Israel, proving Him self to

be the only creator, the only uncreated being, He is the only one worthy of their worship and ours. Because of this deliverance, theirs and ours, there are to be no other gods before Him. And we cannot liken Him to anything that is created since He is above His creation. He is so invested in us and our well being, that He is actually jealous when we give what is to be given to Him only, to another so-called god.

Because of all this, we are to carry His name to others and bear it in a manner consistent with His character. We are to represent Him accurately.

And the ultimate rest, which was represented by the Sabbath, is when God is in our presence and we in His.

Now the Holy Spirit resides in the believer. This is possible because Jesus has delivered us from the bonds of sin. We are now free to reflect Him to all around us.

Schindler was loved because of his compassion for the Jews who were being sent to their deaths. People today tend to not look at sin as being sent

to death, but it is actually that very thing. God delivered Israel in the exodus and Jesus did that for the entire world, for all who believe at the cross and in His resurrection.

These commandments weren't given as a checklist in order to merit God's favor or salvation. God will never be in our debt. But we are in His. Obedience to these commandments did not acquire salvation. Rather, they were/ are a demonstration of something that is believed.

God had already delivered Israel when these commandments were given. And it works the same for us today. Our lives don't change because we want to be delivered. They are changed because we have been delivered. Through faith, we believe that Jesus has purchased eternal life for us. And because of what He has done for us, our lives are changed in order that we show the world what we believe.