

# The Law (Torah)

Read Exodus 20-24.

In the third month after their release from slavery in Egypt, the Israelites arrived at the foot of Mt. Sinai, the mountain of God. In many instances, mountains in the Bible represent a kingdom or a king's rule. In this case, God was on the mountaintop, and the twelve tribes camped below. The Lord is King; the Israelites were His subjects.

## Talking Points

- Israel arrived at Mt. Sinai in the third month following their release from slavery in Egypt. Moses returned to the mountain where he first spoke with God to speak with Him again.
- God offered a conditional covenant to the Hebrew people. With its 613 individual commandments, the Mosaic covenant was the governing constitution of a new nation, Israel.
- The Law was one single law code comprised of many commandments. But, if someone broke only one rule, the offender was guilty of breaking all 613 Torah commandments.
- At the heart of the Mosaic Law was the sacrificial system. The blood of innocent animals temporarily covered the sin of those who sinned... if they believed.

## Background

After the Israelites had set up camp, Moses climbed the mountain where God had first commissioned him. Moses acted as the "go-between," the mediator between God and His Chosen People. Can you think of someone else who is the mediator between the Father and His children today? Moses' positional role in Exodus prophetically pointed to the position of Jesus, both in His earthly life and now in Heaven. Moses was a "type" that hinted at Jesus' ultimate mediatorial work.

On the mountain, the Lord told Moses to return to leave the mountain, return to the people below, and make them an offer they couldn't refuse.

***If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine, and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exodus 19:5-6).***

The Israelites thought, "that's a pretty sweet deal." With one voice, the people declared, "***All that the Lord commands we will do!***"

## Mosaic Law – a Conditional Covenant

Look closely at the sentence structure of the verses quoted above. Notice the words "if" and "then." ***If*** Israel obeyed the commands of the covenant God was giving

her, **then** they would possess a privileged position over all the earth's people, including the Egyptians. God's Chosen People had no idea what they had just agreed to.

## **Rule Keepers?**

Think back to the one command given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (see Genesis 2:16-17). How did they do? Not so good. They failed miserably! While they deserved immediate death, God solved the problem of their broken relationship with Him. The death of innocent animals and the covering He made from their skins was God's gracious solution to the first couple's sin problem.

The covenant God established with Israel contained not one, not ten, but 613 specific commandments. Bundled together, they are known as "**the**" Law. If someone broke one of the commandments, they were guilty of breaking them all!

Theologians have divided the 613 commandments into three categories. The moral commandments instructed the people on how they were to maintain personal purity. Social commandments instructed them on how to live together as a community. How they were to worship their Creator was the object of the ceremonial commandments. The Ten Commandments are a summary of the other 603 commandments.

Just like God knew that Adam and Eve would fail in keeping their one rule, He knew Israel would never be able to obey the 613 rules of the Law. His solution? God sacrificed animals to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve. God provided the sacrificial system in the Law.

## **Context, Context, Context**

When studying a portion of the Bible, one of the first questions everyone should ask is, "Who was it given/written to?" In the case of the Mosaic Law, that was the people known today as the Jews. The Sinai Covenant commandments, another name for the Mosaic Covenant, were given to Israel, not the other people of the world. They apply to Israel and no one else. For that, we all should be grateful.

What was the purpose of a law code that no one could keep? Only one person could fulfill all the Law demands in all of history. Who was He?

## **Missing Pieces**

Think about this series like the box top of an 80-piece puzzle. If you have been casually skipping through what interests you in the Talk Thru the Bible lessons, there are likely some missing pieces in your overall Bible knowledge. That's OK. But don't move forward until you correct the problem. All you have to do is go back and start over. Don't skip a single lesson thinking you know it all. Nobody knows it all!

The accompanying video details how the Law was given to Israel. Watch it now.

## **Bible Conversations and Questions**

- Read Exodus 21-23. List the things God commanded the people to do, followed by what they were not to do.

- Try to summarize the main points of Exodus 24.
- Who was mentioned by name in Exodus 24? Why are they important?
- How could you illustrate that breaking one law of the Mosaic Covenant amounted to breaking all 613 commandments?