

# Journey Through the Bible

## Exodus

### Message 8: God's Engagement Covenant

#### Outline:

- I. God's Speaking and Leading**
  - A. Into Fellowship
  - B. Into True Worship
  - C. Into the Revelation of Him (Knowing God)
    - 1. Jealous (Exo. 20: 4-6; cf. 2 Cor. 11:2.)
    - 2. Holy (Exo. 20:7-11)
    - 3. Loving (vv. 12-15, 6; cf. Rom. 13:8-10; Gal. 5:14)
    - 4. Righteous (Exo. 20:5)
    - 5. Truthful (v.16; cf. 1 John 1:5-6)
    - 6. Pure (Exo. 20:2-3, 17; cf. Psa. 119:140.)
- II. The Divine Romance**
  - A. The subject of the entire Bible and the secret of the entire universe is the divine romance between God and His chosen and redeemed people (Isa. 54:5; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25; Rev. 19:7)
- III. The Engagement Covenant**
- IV. The Terms of Engagement**
- V. Not Law Keepers But Loving Seekers**
  - A. God Seeking Lovers
  - B. Breathing Him In (2 Tim. 3:16)
  - C. True worship
    - 1. The reality of keeping the law is to live God and express God.
- VI. Becoming The Testimony of God**

#### **READING EXCERPT**

Four prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Hosea—spoke of God as the Husband of the children of Israel and of God's people as His spouse, His wife. Even though these four prophets lived at different times and in different places, they all had the same concept concerning this matter. To those who are religious, it may sound very strange, even offensive, to say that God has a wife. Nevertheless, the Bible clearly speaks of God as a Husband. How can God be a Husband unless He has a wife? All believers know that God is the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Savior, but many do not realize that God is also a Husband and that His people are His wife. God and His people are a wonderful, universal couple. This is revealed both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament. Addressing the church in Corinth, Paul says, "I betrothed you to one Husband, to present a pure virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). According to the New Testament, the church composed of all the believers is the wife of Christ. Likewise, Israel in the Old Testament was espoused to God, betrothed to Him. Jeremiah 2:2 speaks of "the love of thy betrothals" (Heb.). Hosea 2:19 and 20 say, "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord."

In Jeremiah 2:2 the Lord specifically mentions "the love of thy betrothals." This expression denotes the love of Israel at the time of her engagement to the Lord. In this verse the Lord seems to be saying to Israel, "I betrothed you unto Me, and you and I were engaged. From the time of our engagement, you had a special love for Me. I could never forget the love of your youth, when you became engaged to Me and followed after Me in the wilderness." Here the Lord speaks of four things He remembers: His people, the kindness of their youth, the love of their betrothals, and how they followed after Him in the wilderness. Jeremiah 2:2 , therefore, clearly speaks of Israel's engagement to God.

Where and when did this engagement take place? Ezekiel 16:8 says, "Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine." According to the context of the chapter, this verse refers to the exodus and the time thereafter. Out of a deep love for the people, the Lord entered into a covenant with them. This covenant was enacted at the mountain of God, through the giving of the law (Exo. 20:1-12). Have you ever realized that the giving of the law was a transaction in which God's people became engaged to Him?

As we shall see, the law is an engagement covenant, an engagement paper. Jeremiah 31:32 indicates this: "Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they broke, although I was a husband unto them, saith the Lord." The covenant here is that mentioned in Ezekiel 16:8, made at the mountain of God, after God had brought the people out of the land of Egypt. Notice that in Jeremiah 31:32 God speaks of Himself as a Husband taking them by the hand. This indicates that when God gave the law, He was courting His people. We have seen that both Ezekiel 16:8 and Jeremiah 31:32 use the word covenant, a word which refers to the law given in Exodus 20. The law was an engagement paper, an engagement covenant. When God gave the law, He betrothed Israel unto Himself, and Israel became engaged to Him. By means of the law as an engagement paper, God officially betrothed the children of Israel to Himself and became their Husband, as indicated in Jeremiah 31:32.

### **Revealing to Them What He Is by Giving Them His Law in a Courting Way**

We have pointed out again and again that God's law was given in a courting way. By giving His people the law in such a way, God made known to them what kind of God He is. In each of the first five commandments, He referred to Himself intimately as "Jehovah thy God." Revealing Himself as a jealous God, He requested that they have no other god, no other beloved, besides Him. He was seeking their love so that they would keep His commandments to express Him. The same concept is found in John 14:21 and 23 . Verse 21 says, "He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him." As in Exodus 20:1-12 , here we see the Lord's love in courting us and in seeking a people to love Him. In John 14:23 the Lord continues, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him." In the New Testament as well as in the Old Testament, God is

courting man. The commandments in 20:1-12 were given not in a legal way, but in a courting way. In giving the law to His people, God wanted them to become His lovers.

If we do not love God, we shall not be able to keep His commandments, and thus we shall not be able to express Him. The goal of engagement is to bring two people into oneness. In marriage a man and his wife become one flesh. In like manner, God and His chosen people became one through the engagement which took place in Exodus 20. This oneness both between God and His people and between husband and wife is a basic principle in the Scriptures. However, many Bible teachers neglect this aspect of the giving of the Ten Commandments. Instead, they emphasize the distance between God and His people and the fact that God wanted them to keep the commandments. But we cannot deny the fact that the Ten Commandments served as an engagement paper and that the engagement of God and His people brought them into oneness.

In a proper marriage, a man and his wife become more and more one as the years go by. Gradually they become one in habit, characteristics, and expression. Likewise, eventually God's chosen people will become the same as He is and thus will truly express Him. We need to be infused with the Lord as our Husband, becoming more and more like Him. Then we shall become His expression. According to the Bible, this basic principle applies both to human marriage and to the love relationship between God and His people.

The function of an engagement paper is to make the two parties, the man and the woman, one. In the same principle, the function of the Word of God is to make us one with God. For God to say that He betrothed Israel unto Himself means that He has caused His people to become one with Him as a wife is one with her husband. God's words cause His spouse to be one with Him. The highest function of the law is to bring God's chosen people into oneness with Him. The Ten Commandments are not simply regulations decreed by God as the highest authority in the universe. The law is an engagement paper which brings us to God and makes us one with Him. This is also true of the Bible. The primary function of the Bible is to bring us to God and make us one with Him. Because we love God, we also love His word. As His words infuse Himself into us, we become one with Him in life, nature, and expression. This understanding of the law as God's living word and of the Bible shows forth the intrinsic function of the law and of the Bible, the Word of God.

### **Questions:**

1. God has a heart's desire and a purpose. As God's chosen people who love Him, how do we fit in His divine purpose? Discuss.
2. If the law defines who the lawmaker is, how does the law that the Lord has given to His people reveal who He is? Discuss.
3. What is the primary function of the Word of God and how does that apply to you? Discuss.
4. If the law on the stone tablets testified concerning who God was, and in Jeremiah 31:33 He has engraved the law in the hearts of His people, then in this current dark age, who is the embodiment that testifies concerning God?

### **Scripture Reading:**

**Jeremiah 2:2** Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus says Jehovah: / I remember concerning you the kindness of your youth, / The love of your bridal days, / When you followed after Me in the wilderness, / In a land that was not sown.

**Ezekiel 16:8** Then I passed by you and saw you; and then was your time a time of love. And I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness; indeed I swore unto you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord Jehovah, and you became Mine.

**Jeremiah 31:32** Not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by their hand to bring them out from the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was their Husband, declares Jehovah.

**John 14:21** He who has My commandments and keeps them, he is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him.

**John 14:23** Jesus answered and said to him, If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make an abode with him.

**Exo. 19:1** In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

**Exo. 19:2** And when they had journeyed from Rephidim and had come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped in front of the mountain.

**Exo. 19:3** And Moses went up to God, and Jehovah called to him out of the mountain, saying, Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel:

**Exo. 19:4** You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.

**Exo. 20:1** And God spoke all these words, saying,

**Exo. 20:2** I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the slave house;

**Exo. 20:3** You shall have no other gods before Me.

**Exo. 20:4** You shall not make for yourself an idol, nor the form of anything that is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water beneath the earth.

**Exo. 20:5** You shall not bow down to them, and you shall not serve them; for I, Jehovah 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,

**Exo. 20:6** Yet showing lovingkindness to thousands of generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

**Exo. 20:7** You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain, for Jehovah will not hold guiltless him who takes His name in vain.

**Exo. 20:8** Remember the Sabbath day so as to sanctify it.

**Exo. 20:9** Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

**Exo. 20:10** But the seventh day is a Sabbath to Jehovah your God; you shall not do any work, you nor your son nor your daughter, your male servant nor your female servant, nor your cattle nor the sojourner with you, who is within your gates.

**Exo. 20:11** For in six days Jehovah made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.

**Exo. 20:12** Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be extended upon the land which Jehovah your God is giving you.

**Exo. 20:13** You shall not kill.

**Exo. 20:14** You shall not commit adultery.

**Exo. 20:15** You shall not steal.

**Exo. 20:16** You shall not testify with false testimony against your neighbor.

**Exo. 20:17** You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor.