



Walnut Street Church of Christ
306 Walnut Street
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Vertical Limits – Lesson Two

Mount Sinai

The Way To Obedience – The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20, Exodus 32)

Theme: Vertical Limits: God both made and used Mountains and we are using Mountains during our Vacation Bible School for 2013 to gain some great Bible Lessons. God said, “And I will make all my mountains a way, and my highways shall be exalted.” (Isaiah 49:11) This “Vertical Limit” lesson deals with learning the way to obedience through a study of the Ten Commandments.

Most people have the idea that all God desires is for people to keep the Ten Commandments. They have no concept of people living under different dispensations or different laws. It is shocking to people to be told, “We are not under that Ten Commandment Law.” The Ten Commandments were a part of God's Law for Israel, and as such, were a binding covenant between that nation and God. The Ten Commandments were given from Mt. Sinai; they were designed to last only until the New Covenant began, following the death of Jesus on the cross. No one today is "under" the Ten Commandments or any other part of the Law of Moses. In the Christian age, in which we live, the entire world is subject to the Law of Christ. In each of the three periods of Bible history, the Patriarchal, the Mosaic and the Christian ages, God gave laws that encompassed certain duties both to God and to man. Jesus summed up those duties saying, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great

commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” (Matthew 22:37-40) The Ten Commandments were a part of the Mosaic Law. The Law of Moses was given only to the Jews; it was not a law for Gentiles.

The Ten Commandments are found in Exodus 20:1-17. “And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments. Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.”

While Moses was on Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments the Israelites built the golden calf. (Exodus 32) The issue was that the people failed to wait on the Lord. They did not show their faith in God, instead that reflected doubt and impatience. Moses was on the Mountain for 40 days. During that time the people completely lost sight of God. The people panicked and wanted a God that they could see. During this 40 days God wanted the people to wait on Him and trust Him by faith. “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.”

(Psalms 46:10) Sadly, their hearts had departed from the Lord. “Thus saith the LORD; Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the LORD.” (Jeremiah 17:5) God sent Moses down from the Mountain. “And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount. And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt it in the fire, and ground it to powder, and strawed it upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink of it.” (Exodus 32:19-20) If this calf “god” could not even save itself from annihilation, how could it save Israel from harm?

The Law of Moses was only temporary. The Law of Moses was guiding Israel until the time when Christ would come, and people could have obedient faith in Him. “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.” (Galatians 3:23-25) The temporary nature of that law is seen in statements like nailed to the cross, abolished the law in His flesh and done away. Paul wrote about Jesus, “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” (Colossians 2:14) Jesus abolished the Law. (Ephesians 2:15) When Jesus abolished the law he brought Grace and truth to mankind. “For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” (John 1:17) In the Book of Hebrews it was simply stated that He took away that first Law. “Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.” (Hebrews 10:9)

Christians live under the New Covenant: Remember there are three ages of Bible history, the Patriarchal age, the Mosaic age and the Christian age. Under each age there are some commands that are similar and there are commands that are different. For example, the Ten Commandments, given under the Mosaic age, prohibited the worship and service of other gods. (Exodus 20:3) It is still true that there is only one God to serve. (Ephesians 4:6) The New Covenant forbids the making of images, profanity or taking God's name in vain; it also forbids murder, adultery, stealing, bearing false witness and covetousness. The New Testament does not teach Sabbath keeping.

Instead, Christians worship on the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2) The keeping of the Sabbath was given to the Jew as a time of worship to remember their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. (Deuteronomy 5:15) The Sabbath was the seventh day of the week or the day that we call Saturday. Is Saturday binding today as the day of worship to God? No. Has God changed the Sabbath so that it is now Sunday? No. Sunday is NOT the Sabbath day. It is unmistakable from Deuteronomy 5:1-3 that the Old Covenant was for Jews only. "And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them. The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day." Christians live under the New Covenant. In Hebrews 8:13, we read God's promise of a New Covenant. "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." The covenant that God made with the Jews is the "Old Covenant." It has decayed and vanished away. The authority of the Old has ended and we are now living under the New Covenant. It took the death of Jesus to bring about the New Covenant. (Hebrews 9:15)

Lessons learned and points of interest about the Ten Commandments:

(1) The Ten Commandments teach us that our relationship with God is of utmost importance. (2) The Ten Commandments teach us that our relationship with others is likewise important. (3) The Ten Commandments teach us that our relationship with God is conditional upon our obedience. (4) The Ten Commandments exposes sin.

It is obvious from scripture that the Mosaic Covenant was only for Israel or the Jews. (Exodus 34:27-28) We live under the New Covenant. To become a Christian you must hear the gospel (Romans 10:17), believe in Jesus as the Christ (John 8:24), repent of all sins (Acts 17:30), confess Christ as Lord (Matthew 10:32) and be baptized to be saved. (Mark 16:16) After your baptism, always be looking unto Jesus. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

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