

## For GC Discussion

- What place does the law of God have in our lives today?  
How can we foster the obedience that Jesus calls us to?
- How can we learn to have a proper fear of God?
- What principles for life do we learn from the laws God gives His people regarding slaves and also in other areas of life?

**Next Week:** we will look at the continuation of the giving of the law and it's confirmation by the people.

### *Notes and Questions*



## Week 8: Moses on Mount Sinai

### Exodus Chapters 19-21

#### **This Weeks Summary**

This week we see the beginning of God giving His law to His people. He displays His power and glory to them so that they might learn to fear Him and walk in the statutes that He is giving them for their good.

#### **For Study:**

The verses below relate to one of the major subjects in this weeks text:

##### **The Law of God:**

Deuteronomy 11:1-32	1 John 2:1-11
John 14:15-24	Matthew 7:12, 24-27
Matthew 5:17-48	1 John 5:1-5
Galatians 5:1-26	Joshua 1:1-9

##### **The Fear of God:**

Psalms 33:18-19	Psalms 34:1-22
Proverbs 14:26-27	Ecclesiastes 8:12-13

##### **Slavery:**

Colossians 3:22-4:1	Titus 2:9-10
Proverbs 22:16	Philemon 8-16
Corinthians 7:20-24	Ephesians 6:5-9

**For Worship:** Listen to *'Awesome God You Are'* by Matt Redman. You can find it on YouTube, or on the Hill City Church blog on the website.

This week in our text we moved on to look at the beginning of the law that God gave to His people to govern their worship. Here are a few more things that we can learn:

### **Obedience at the Heart of Worship**

As God begins to lay out His law for His people beginning with the 10 commandments and then moving on to regulations governing many areas of their life as a nation He begins with this assertion - if you'll listen to me and obey me then you will enjoy all the privileges of being 'my treasured possession'. For the people back then it was extremely serious as the consequences of disobeying God being were sometimes being cut off from His people (e.g. Leviticus 18:29). It isn't quite the same for us as we haven't been born into God's family in a natural sense but a Spiritual one, and the Bible confirms that we have been born of incorruptible seed (1 Peter 1:23) and cannot be separated from the love of God (Romans 8:39) (whereas not everyone born into the nation of Israel had true faith so not all were truly part of God's kingdom (Romans 9:6)). However the importance of obedience cannot be overstated. The New Testament asserts that real faith will always bring obedience (James 2:17), Jesus tells us that the motivation for our obedience should be love, and not duty (John 14:23), and it is also made clear that disobedience will bring discipline into our lives for our correction and growth (Hebrews:12:11)

What we must not do is to reduce obedience down to something dry, uninspiring and just hard work. Yes, the Old Testament law may sometimes make it seem heavy, but in that God was showing us just how impossible it is for us to earn righteousness by law keeping. Jesus proclaimed to us that actually His 'yoke is easy' and His 'burden is light' (Matthew 11:30). True obedience, though difficult should bring joy and freedom in the knowledge that to obey God's commands is to enjoy abundant life (John 10:10) - why wouldn't you follow the Creator's instructions when seeking to live the best life possible?

### **A Healthy Fear**

It's a pretty crazy picture you get of the display of power that God puts on for His people as He prepares to tell them what He wants them to do. Thick cloud, thunder and lightning; loud trumpets, fire and smoke; and not least the threat of death if anyone came too close to God - all must have gone together to form a pretty impressive scene. You can't really blame the people for being pretty scared and telling Moses - you talk to God and we'll just stand over here and watch! It all culminates though in

this strange verse that at first glance almost seems contradictory. In chapter 20 verse 20 Moses tells the people 'do not fear' - your terror at God is not justified - He's not here to harm you or punish and condemn you. If He wanted to do that He could have just left you to suffer in Egypt, but He loves you, He's rescued you and He wants you to belong to Him as His 'treasured possession'. You don't need to be terrified of someone like that. However Moses goes on to say that what God was showing the people on that day was for the purpose that 'the fear of Him may be before you' What this tells us is that there are different types of fear - there's a dread that comes from the fear of judgment that is cast out by perfect love (1 John 4:18), and then there's a proper fear - a reverence for someone who we can't control, who holds our lives in His hands, and to whom we belong. We need not be terrified of Him because He loves us and He's good, but that doesn't mean we take Him lightly, or take Him for granted Rather we honour Him and give Him the ultimate respect from our lips, our lives and our hearts. That kind of vision of God will, as Moses says keep us from sin, and give us healthy motivation not to treat our relationship with Him flippantly but with the seriousness it deserves.

### **Biblical Justice & Slavery**

The way the Bible treats slavery is a huge issue that we can hardly touch on here. Some people would be horrified that God never condemns slavery in the Bible, and that probably comes from a view of slavery that is far more informed by the more recent racially-motivated and horrendous treatment of slaves that Wilberforce and others fought so hard to abolish. However, the whole point of the Biblical instruction on slavery is that it would never be carried out like that. Slavery for the people of Israel was actually a means of rescuing the poor and destitute rather than creating them, and that could lead you to conclude that slavery in itself isn't intrinsically wrong - it's how you work it out that matters. After all, the Bible describes us who have trusted Christ as His slaves, but we don't need to be bothered by that because our Master is the most compassionate and kind master you could ever have - in fact we're slaves who have been adopted as sons and daughters. That's the purpose of laws like those in this passage and others - slaves shouldn't be treated harshly, no-one should be kidnapped into slavery, and all slaves should be set free after 6 years, released back to the life they had before they fell into hardship. Ultimately what God desires from His people is justice - they were to govern their affairs fairly and everyone treated with the dignity that flows from their identity as one of God's chosen people, loved by Him and individually created in His image.