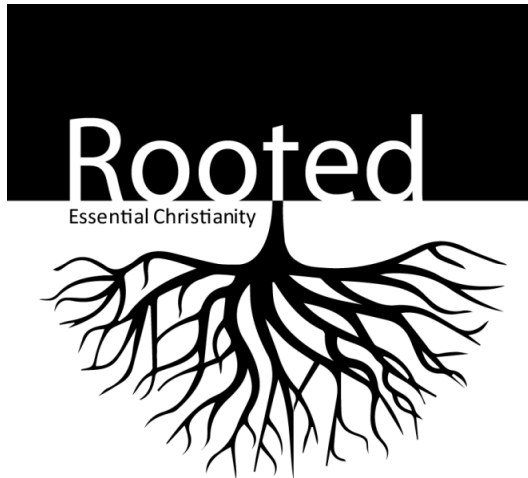




The Ten Commandments

Part 1 – Preamble of the Christian Life

Exodus 20:1-2

The events described in Exodus 20 occur many generations after God made his Covenant of Grace with Abraham; a covenant which would eventually be fulfilled in Christ. God delivered his people from 400 years of captivity in Egypt and brought them to Mt. Sinai in order to receive his moral law; the Ten Commandments. This moment is often referred to as the Mosaic Covenant or the Covenant with Moses. It is one of the administrations of the Covenant of Grace. In the Mosaic Covenant God announced to his people the obligations which belonged to them in this divinely instituted relationship. God tied the people's experience of blessing or cursing directly to their

faithfulness (or lack thereof) to the moral law. Later, God revealed to the people a means for atonement to cover their sins when they inevitably failed to keep the law. This means of atonement centered on the sacrifice of an innocent party on behalf of the guilty; a practice which culminated in the cross of Christ.

The Three Types of Law

1. **The Civil Law** – While these laws were temporary in governing Israel during the days when they possessed the land, they do reflect certain principles which make for a well-ordered society.
2. **The Ceremonial Law** – The laws which governed Israel's worship prior to the work of Christ. These laws were never intended to be permanent but were typological in that they pointed beyond themselves to eternal realities.
3. **The Moral Law (The Ten Commandments)** – The law which reflects God's character and represents his righteous and eternal standard for all people.

The Three Uses of the Law

1. **The Civil Use** – The moral law acts as a means to restrain sin in society.
2. **The Theological Use** – The moral law acts a tutor leading us to faith in Christ.
3. **The Moral Use** – The moral law teaches God's people how to live lives pleasing to him.

The Two Tables of the Law

1. Our obligations to God

Commandments 1-4:

- The first four commandments deal with our relationship with God. Specifically they teach us what it means to love God as we ought.
 1. You shall have no other gods.
 2. You shall not make any images of God.
 3. You shall not misuse the name of God.
 4. You shall keep the Sabbath holy.

2. Our obligations of our neighbor

Commandments 5-10

- The second table of the law teaches us how to love our neighbor.
 5. You shall honor your mother and father.
 6. You shall not murder.
 7. You shall not commit adultery
 8. You shall not steal.
 9. You shall not lie.
 10. You shall not covet.

- The Ten Commandments are about loving God with all of our heart and loving our neighbor as ourselves. Our Lord was asked what was the greatest commandment. Jesus' answer is drawn directly from Deuteronomy 6.
- So, the moral law represents heart obedience generated by a concern to love God and neighbor. The Ten Commandments do not prescribe ritualistic ceremonies which ultimately pointed beyond themselves. The moral law of God is aimed directly to the heart and seeks to shape our lives so that we become living expressions of love.

The Two Great Motives for Obeying the Law

1. God is our covenant Lord.

Vs. 1 – “And God spoke all these words saying...”

- The Ten Commandments were given directly by God to the people. They were given to Moses by God in order to read word-for-word to the people. The moral law represents God's expectations for all people. While all people throughout time are accountable to God's moral law, he announces it to his covenant people.
- Vs. 2a – “I am the Lord your God...”
- Not only did the moral law come directly from God, it came from the God who had made covenant with the people of Israel, the descendants of Abraham. God made the Covenant of Grace with Abraham (Genesis 12, 15, 17). It was a covenant in which God promised to save a people made up of those from all the nations and this entirely by grace through faith. It was a covenant which culminated in the atoning work of Jesus.
- God's covenant with Moses is one administration of the Covenant of Grace first established with Abraham. The fact that law is introduced in the Mosaic Covenant does not alter the fact that this is an administration of the gracious covenant. The Mosaic Covenant illustrates the relationship between covenant and command:
 - Exodus 19 – God offers the covenant to Israel.
 - Exodus 20 (21-23) – God announces his law (covenant obligations).
 - Exodus 24 – The covenant is ratified.
- Notice that God is the sovereign actor in all of this. He offers the covenant. He determines the terms. And, in the end, God will ultimately keep the obligations on behalf of his people.
- The Purpose of a covenant is to institute a relationship between two parties. God established his covenant with Abraham entirely by grace. But the law still plays a role in the Covenant of Grace. The law functions like marriage vows. Far from diminishing the role of love in marriage, the vows formalize that love in a way that is meant to bless each spouse. In relation to God's Covenant of Grace with his people, the law serves as a means to bless the people with rewarding, wholesome and God-pleasing lives.

2. God is our Savior.

Vs. 2 – “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

- Before God announces the moral law he first reminds the people that he has made a gracious covenant with them. Before giving them the law which they are expected to obey he first delivers them from slavery. In God's covenant of grace, salvation always comes before command. What God said to Israel is essentially what he says to all of those he saves: “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of your destruction, out of the bonds of your slavery to sin.”
- In this God gives his people a blessed motive for obedience: love. We are to obey not only because God commands it but out of love and gratitude for grace received.
- Throughout their checkered history, God announced his disdain for the ritual conformity of Israel to the ceremonial law while they withheld obedience to the standard of love reflected in the Ten Commandments.