

LUTHER'S WORKS

VOLUME 62

SERMONS ON EXODUS

Chapters 1–20

Edited by

BENJAMIN T. G. MAYES

ISBN 978-07586-1391-2



RELIGION/Christianity/
Lutheran
155162



Copyright © 2022 Concordia Publishing House
3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
1-800-325-3040 • cph.org

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without the prior written permission of Concordia Publishing House.

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations in this volume are translated from Luther's writings or from Luther's German Bible.

Quotations marked LW are from *Luther's Works*, American Edition: volumes 1–30 © 1955–76 and volumes 56–61, 67–69, 73, 75–79, Companion Volume © 2009–21 Concordia Publishing House; volumes 31–54 © 1957–86 Augsburg Fortress.

This work uses the SBL Hebrew Unicode font developed by the Font Foundation, under the leadership of the Society of Biblical Literature. For further information on this font or on becoming a Font Foundation member, see <http://www.sbl-site.org/educational/biblicalfonts.aspx>.

Manufactured in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Luther, Martin, 1483–1546.

[Selections, English. 2018]

Luther's works : Sermons on Exodus 1–20 / edited by Benjamin T. G. Mayes.

p. cm. — (Luther's works ; v. 62)

Includes indexes.

ISBN 978-0-7586-1391-2

I. Brown, Christopher Boyd, 1972–. II. Title. III. Series.

BS2615.54.L8813 2009

226.5'07—dc22

2009011458

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 31 30 29 28 27 26 25 24 23 22

CONTENTS

General Introduction	vii
Abbreviations	ix
Introduction to Volume 62 by Benjamin T. G. Mayes	xv
Sermon and Introduction to Genesis (1523) <i>Translated by Kevin G. Walker</i>	3
Dr. Martin Luther's Exposition of Several Chapters of the Second Book of Moses [Exodus 1–18] (1524–25/1564) <i>Translated by Kevin G. Walker</i>	
Preface	17
Chapter 1	19
Chapter 2	45
Chapter 3	59
Chapter 4	81
Chapter 5	93
Chapter 6	99
Chapter 7	105
Chapter 8	119
Chapter 9	129
Chapter 10	141
Chapter 11	149
Chapter 12	153
Chapter 13	195
Chapter 14	205
Chapter 15	223
Chapter 16	249
Chapter 17	271
Chapter 18	289

Sermons on Exodus 19–20 (1525/1528)	
<i>Translated by Kevin G. Walker</i>	
Foreword by Martin Luther	311
Chapter 19	317
Chapter 20	333
Preface to Volume 1 of <i>Lectures on Genesis</i> (1544)	421
<i>Translated and Edited by John A. Maxfield</i>	
Indexes	431

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME 62

THIS volume presents the edited form of Martin Luther's sermons on Exodus 1–20 from 1524–25, along with his 1523 introduction to the sermons on Genesis and his preface to the first volume of *Lectures on Genesis* from 1544. Over the course of the 1520s, as he published his German translations of the books of the Old Testament, Luther preached through the five books of Moses to the Wittenberg congregation, taking the pulpit at Vespers on Sundays and festival days.¹ Luther began preaching on Genesis in 1523 (WA 14:97–488; cf. WA 24:24–710) and continued with Exodus starting in 1524 (WA 16:1–646 [LW 62–63]). By 1527 he was engaged with Leviticus (WA 25:411–36 [LW 63]), continuing with sermons on Numbers in 1528 (WA 25:436–517 [LW 63]). The following year he completed the series on the books of Moses with sermons on Deuteronomy (WA 28:509–763). Throughout this preaching, Luther was concerned both to impress upon his congregation the proper role and limits of Moses and his Law and to show ordinary Christian believers how to “[seek] Christ and the Gospel in the Old Testament.”²

The sermons on Genesis and on Exodus 1–20 were delivered during the years 1523–25, years in which much of Luther's attention was directed toward disturbances sparked by Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt, Thomas Münzer, and the Peasants' War.³ Both Karlstadt and Münzer claimed that

¹ See *German Mass and Order of Worship* (1526), LW 53:68. Luther's translation of the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch) appeared in print in the summer of 1523: WA DB 8:xix–xxi.

² *Preface to the Old Testament* (1523), LW 35:248. Cf. below, *Sermon and Introduction to Genesis* (1523), p. 3.

³ See below, *Exposition of [Exodus 1–18]* (1524–25/1564), pp. 60, 122, 123, 237; *Sermons on Exodus 19–20* (1525/1528), pp. 345–46. On the career and theology of Karlstadt (1486–1541), see the introduction by Conrad Bergendoff to *Against the Heavenly Prophets* (1525), LW 40:75–76; LW Bio:154 n. 90, 196 n. 66, 238 n. 39, 217–18 and the notes there; Brecht 2:157–72. On Münzer (ca. 1489–1525), see the introduction by Carolyn Schneider to Luther, preface and afterword to *Terrifying Story of Münzer* (1525), LW 59:120–21; LW Bio:217–18 and the notes there, 221–25 and the notes there; Brecht 2:146–57. On the Peasants' War, see LW Bio:221–25; Robert W. Scribner, “Peasants' War,” *OER* 3:234–37; Brecht 2:172–94.

the Law of Moses remained binding upon Christians to some extent, especially the prohibition of images found in the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:4–5). Not only were “fanatics” and “new prophets” influenced by this idea, but in 1524 Duke John of Saxony, brother of Elector Frederick the Wise (r. 1486–1525) and father of Duke John Frederick I, had been persuaded that he should govern his territory according to the Law of Moses.⁴ The same thing was being taught by Jacob Strauss, a pastor in Eisenach, and court preacher Wolfgang Stein in Weimar.⁵

Luther thus took the opportunity in his sermons on Exodus to clarify the role of the Law of Moses for Christians. In the sermons on Exodus 20 in particular Luther often speaks of how Moses really has nothing to do with Christians except as a prophet and evangelist. The Law of Moses has been abolished for Christians, including the moral Law.⁶ Sometimes Luther seems to say that the Law *per se* has been wholly abrogated,⁷ though he means that the Law of *Moses* has been abrogated. The *moral* Law (i.e., natural law), on the other hand, continues and is still God's will for human life and behavior. The natural law (which Luther explains is the Law of God written on human hearts at creation [Rom. 2:15]) remains in effect.⁸ Despite his teaching here about the abrogation of the Law of Moses, Luther continued to teach people the moral Law from the Ten Commandments, just as he had done previously.⁹ He explained the ongoing relevance of the Ten Commandments: “Thus we read Moses not because he applies to us, that we must obey him, but because he agrees with the natural law and is conceived better than the Gentiles would ever have been able to do. Thus the Ten Commandments are a mirror of our life, in which we can see wherein we are lacking, etc.”¹⁰

⁴ Letter of Duke John Frederick I of Saxony to Luther, June 24, 1524, WA Br 3:309–11.

⁵ See the introduction by E. Theodore Bachmann to *How Christians Should Regard Moses* (1525), LW 35:157–58. On Stein, who also served as Duke John's chaplain, see LW Bio:216 n. 96. On Strauss (ca. 1480–before 1534), see Brecht 2:141–43; Gustav Bossert, “Strauß, Jakob,” ADB 36:535–38.

⁶ See below, e.g., *Sermons on Exodus 19–20* (1525/1528), pp. 335–41. See also *How Christians Should Regard Moses* (1525), LW 35:164–74.

⁷ See below, e.g., *Sermons on Exodus 19–20* (1525/1528), pp. 339–40.

⁸ See below, *Sermons on Exodus 19–20* (1525/1528), pp. 311, 335, 352–53, 415; cf. *How Christians Should Regard Moses* (1525), LW 35:164–65, 168, 173.

⁹ See below, *Sermons on Exodus 19–20* (1525/1528), pp. 333–418; *Treatise on Good Works* (1520), LW 44:21–114, esp. pp. 23, 30–31; *Personal Prayer Book* (1522), LW 43:14–24; *Small Catechism* (1529) I (Kolb-Wengert, pp. 351–54; *Concordia*, pp. 316–27); *Large Catechism* (1529) I (Kolb-Wengert, pp. 386–431; *Concordia*, pp. 359–98); *Simple Way to Pray* (1535), LW 43:187–211; *Against the Antinomians* (1539), LW 47:109–10.

¹⁰ *How Christians Should Regard Moses* (1525), LW 35:172–73. See the introduction by Benjamin T. G. Mayes to *Sermons on 1 Timothy, on God's Law* (1525), LW 56:89–90.

In his effort to reject the binding nature of the Old Testament civil and ceremonial laws for Christians, Luther distinguishes in his sermons between the signs given to Israel by which they could recognize God and those given to Christians. Here he emphasizes the differing divine commands and vocations given to different people and groups throughout history.¹¹ While this distinction may seem to conflict with 1 Cor. 10:1–6 and Rom. 2:29, Luther is not denying that the marvelous works of God to Israel should be taught to Christians, nor does he claim that they have lost their meaning and importance for Christians. As he said in *How Christians Should Regard Moses*: “I want to keep Moses and not sweep him under the rug”¹² for three reasons: the examples of good civil laws, the promises of Christ, and the examples of virtues.¹³ So while Christians should no longer use the covenantal practices of the Old Testament as signs to recognize God and His saving will (such as circumcision was), they should still learn them as promises pointing forward to Christ.¹⁴

A second contemporary provocation behind Luther’s preaching on Exodus was the appearance of the humanist scholar Desiderius Erasmus’ *Diatribē or Discourse concerning Free Choice* in the fall of 1524.¹⁵ Luther’s exposition of Exodus 9, discussing God’s hardening of Pharaoh’s heart, which was preached on December 25 and 26 at the end of the calendar year, can be seen as a kind of rough draft of important arguments which would appear in Luther’s own published response to Erasmus, his 1525 *Bondage of the Will*.¹⁶ In particular, Luther argues that, although God is the source of the Law which binds His human creatures, God is not Himself subject to the Law in such a way that human reason could presume to determine rules for God or to judge Him. The Law is good because God gives it, but God is good not because He keeps the Law; rather, whatever God does is good because God who is righteous wills it. In this respect, Luther can call God “beyond the law” [*exlex*] (in Aurifaber’s version) or “without the law” [*sine lege*] (in

¹¹ See below, e.g., *Sermons on Exodus 19–20* (1525/1528), pp. 339–40.

¹² *How Christians Should Regard Moses* (1525), LW 35:166.

¹³ *How Christians Should Regard Moses* (1525), LW 35:166–73.

¹⁴ See also *Sermons for Easter* (1526), LW 56:174–77.

¹⁵ *De libero arbitrio diatribe* (Basel: Froben, 1524) [VD16 E3147] (in *Luther and Erasmus: Free Will and Salvation*, trans. and ed. E. Gordon Rupp and Philip S. Watson, LCC 17 [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969]). Cf. Brecht 2:219–25. On Erasmus (ca. 1467–1536), the leading northern humanist scholar of his day, see LW Bio:xix n. 16.

¹⁶ See below, *Exposition of [Exodus 1–18]* (1524–25/1564), pp. 129–40, and in Georg Rörer’s notes, p. 140 n. 26. Cf. *Bondage of the Will* (1525), LW 33, especially pp. 164–84, 289–92; cf. *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–45/1544–54), LW 5:43–50; FC SD XI 84–86 (Kolb-Wengert, p. 654; *Concordia*, p. 614).

Rörer's notes).¹⁷ However, Luther urges that, instead of trying to "climb or pry into the Godhead" to investigate a God who cannot be measured or judged by reason, the Christian should look instead to God's will, revealed in the Law and the Gospel and above all in the incarnate Christ.¹⁸

In these sermons on Genesis and Exodus, Luther regularly set forth allegorical readings of the stories (or particular elements within them) after giving an historical, literal reading of the text—an interpretive and homiletical approach which can also be seen in Luther's early sermons for the *Church Postil*.¹⁹ In medieval exegesis, the literal or historical sense of the biblical narrative was the foundation for three additional senses of "spiritual" exegesis: moral, allegorical, and tropological. Luther was critical of this approach when it displaced the historical sense of the text,²⁰ but he approved prophetic and typological readings of the Old Testament narratives that pointed to "Christ, the church, faith, and the ministry of the Word"²¹ and that were in conformity with the literal sense of Scripture.²²

¹⁷ See below, *Exposition of [Exodus 1–18]* (1524–25/1564), p. 136 and n. 18 (Rörer's notes).

¹⁸ On the issue of the relation of the moral Law to God, see also FC SD III 57; II 50 (Kolb-Wengert, pp. 572, 553; *Concordia*, pp. 545, 529); Johann Gerhard (1582–1637), *On the Law of God*, § 14, trans. Richard J. Dinda, ed. Benjamin T. G. Mayes and Joshua J. Hayes, *Theological Commonplaces* 15 (St. Louis: Concordia, 2015), pp. 15–16; *On Providence*, §§ 113–14, trans. Richard J. Dinda, ed. Benjamin T. G. Mayes and Joshua J. Hayes, *Theological Commonplaces* 9 (St. Louis: Concordia, 2013), pp. 90–91.

¹⁹ See below, *Exposition of [Exodus 1–18]* (1524–25/1564), pp. 32–43, 56–58, 76–80, 90–91, 166–93, 214–22, 244–47, 262–69, 282–88; and *Predigten über das erste Buch Mose* (1523–24/1527), WA 14:192, 203, 207, 215, 244, 248, 288, 306, 313, 330, 353, 363, 399, 424, 457, 468, 472, 478.

²⁰ For Luther's criticism of the quadriga, see *Babylonian Captivity* (1520), LW 36:110; *Lectures on Galatians* (1531/1535), LW 26:440; *[First] Lectures on Galatians* (1516–17/1519), LW 27:311–13; *Table Talk* no. 335 (1532), LW 54:46–47; no. 5285 (1540), LW 54:406. Cf. *Predigten über das erste Buch Mose* (1523–24/1527), WA 14:192, 306.

²¹ *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–45/1544–54), LW 2:164.

²² For Luther's endorsement of an allegorical reading of biblical histories, see *Church Postil* (1540–44), sermons for Advent 1 on Matt. 21:1–9, LW 75:50–63, paras. 62–100; Advent 2 on Luke 21:25–33, LW 75:110–112, paras. 59–68; Advent 4 on John 1:19–28, LW 75:184–86, paras. 44–54; Christmas Day on Luke 2:1–14, LW 75:215–25, 228, paras. 23–60, 76; Second Day of Christmas on Luke 2:15–20, LW 75:254–55, paras. 25–30; St. John's Day on John 21:19–24, LW 75:360–63, paras. 31–45; Sunday after Christmas on Luke 2:33–40, LW 75:399–402, 404, 417–27, 434–37, paras. 10–18, 24–26, 65–104, 88–93; Epiphany on Matt. 2:1–12, LW 76:107–37, paras. 113–344; Epiphany 2 on John 2:1–11, LW 76:245–49, paras. 22–39; Epiphany 4 on Matt. 8:23–27, LW 76:286–88, paras. 10–17; *Lectures on Deuteronomy* (1523–25), LW 9:7, 25–26; *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–45/1544–54), LW 5:88; "Concerning Allegories," in *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–45/1544–54), LW 2:150–64. See Heinrich Bornkamm, *Luther and the Old Testament*, trans. Eric W. Gritsch and Ruth C. Gritsch, ed. Victor I. Gruhn (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), pp. 87–96.

SERMON AND INTRODUCTION TO GENESIS

Luther began his sermon series on Genesis on March 22, 1523, and concluded it on September 18, 1524.²³ The first of these sermons was published separately in 1524 as *An Introduction to the First Book of Moses*.²⁴ The entire sermon series on Genesis was published in 1527 in both Latin and German.²⁵ Because of limitations of space, and because of Luther's monumental later work on this biblical text in his *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–45), already translated in LW 1–8, we present here a translation of only the first, introductory sermon from the 1524 German edition as edited in WA 12:438–52.²⁶

DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S EXPOSITION OF SEVERAL CHAPTERS OF EXODUS AND SERMONS ON EXODUS 19–20

Almost immediately after finishing his series of sermons on Genesis, Luther continued by preaching on Exodus. The sermons covering the first twenty chapters of Exodus began on October 2, 1524, and ended on November 12, 1525.²⁷ The sermons were recorded by Georg Rörer²⁸ and others, including Philipp Schmidt and Johann Bugenhagen.²⁹ For Rörer, this was toward the beginning of his career as a stenographer for Luther. While recording

²³ Paul Pietsch (1895) in WA 14:92, correcting the dating he gave in 1891 in WA 12:435.

²⁴ *Ein Sermon vn[d] eingang yn das Erst buch Mosi/ das ist/ ynn das buch der Schöpfung/ daryn gruntlich anzeygt wirt/ der Artickel des glawbens. So wir sprechen/ Ich glaub yn Got vatter almechtige[n]/ schöpffer hymel vnd erdtrichs* (Erfurt: Johann Loersfeld, 1524) [VD16 L6253 (cf. VD16 L6250–6252, L6255); Benzing 1831 (cf. Benzing 1832a)].

²⁵ WA 14:92; 24:xiii. In *Genesin, Mosi Librym Sanctissimvm, D. Martini Lutheri Declamationes* (Hagenau: Johann Setzer, 1527) [VD16 B2987; Benzing 2459]; *Vber das Erst buch Mose/ predigete Mart. Luth. sampt einer vnterricht/ wie Moses zu leren ist* (Wittenberg: Georg Rhau, 1527) [VD16 L6827–6828, 6825, 6826; Benzing 2460–61].

²⁶ Aland 519.

²⁷ Paul Pietsch in WA 16:xi, xxvi–xxvii; 12:435.

²⁸ On Rörer (1492–1557), see the volume introduction by Christopher Boyd Brown, LW 58:xxv–xxviii; Reinhold Jauernig, “Magister Georg Rörer: Im Dienst der ‘Werke Luthers,’” in *Luthers Freunde und Schüler in Thüringen*, ed. Karl Brinkel and Herbert von Hintzenstern (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), 1:155–61. Rörer's extant notes are described in WA Br 14:175–282.

²⁹ Schmidt (Fabricius) matriculated at Wittenberg in 1522 and recorded many sermons of Luther, including his sermons on Exodus 1–18 (WA 16:xvii). His ministry was marked by conflicts with his congregations, often because of his harsh application of church discipline. In 1555 he became parish rector [*Pfarrer*] of Ringleben but was dismissed from office in 1564: see Enders 14:81 (on no. 3057), 14:115 (on no. 3074); WA Br 13:300 on 9:552. Enders 14:115 claimed that in 1565 Aurifaber had spoken of Schmidt as deceased and refers for this claim to WA 33:1. No such claim is made there, however. Thus Schmidt's life dates remain uncertain. Bugenhagen (1485–1558) arrived in Wittenberg in 1521, becoming pastor of the Wittenberg church in 1523 and aiding in the reformation efforts especially through the preparation of church ordinances: see LW Bio:xxxvi–xxxvii and the notes there.

Luther's sermon on Exodus 12 on May 14, 1525, Rörer wrote that he had been ordained as deacon of the church of Wittenberg on that day.³⁰ For some sermons, Rörer lacked his own notes, and for these he obtained copies of the notes made by Bugenhagen.³¹ For one of the sermons, we have notes from both Bugenhagen and Rörer.³²

Some of the sermons on Exodus surrounding Luther's discussion of the Ten Commandments were published already during Luther's lifetime. Luther's sermon of August 27, 1525, which served as an introduction to Exodus 19–20, was published in 1526 as *How Christians Should Regard Moses*.³³ Because this work is translated in LW 35:161–74, we have omitted it here and direct readers to that volume.

The following sermons of September 10 to November 12, 1525, dealing with Exodus 19–20, were published in 1528 as *An Exposition of the Ten Commandments . . . and Instruction concerning How Moses Should Be Taught*.³⁴ The printed version stays true to its sources, as is clear from Rörer's notes.³⁵ Our translation of the sermons on Exodus 19–20 is from the 1528 edition as edited in WA 16:394–528, with annotations on significant variations in the notes of Rörer and Bugenhagen.³⁶ The material on the Ten Commandments shows many parallels with other writings of Luther.³⁷

While the printed sermons on Exodus 19–20 passed into the Wittenberg and Jena editions of Luther's collected works,³⁸ the rest of the Exodus sermons, on chapters 1–18 and 21–40 (LW 63), remained unpublished

³⁰ WA 16:226, apparatus on line 6. On the preservation of Rörer's notes on these sermons, see Paul Pietsch in WA 16:xi.

³¹ WA 16:446–99, 519–28; cf. below, pp. 351–95, 410–18. These are identified in WA 16 as text "BR."

³² WA 16:500–519; cf. below, pp. 395–410.

³³ LW 35:161–74. See the introduction by E. Theodore Bachmann, LW 35:157–59; Paul Pietsch in WA 16:xii–xiv.

³⁴ *Auslegung der Zehen gepot/Durch Mart. Luther gepredigt zu Wittemberg/Aus dem. xix. vnd xx. Capitel des andern buchs Mosi/ sampt einer vnterricht wie Moses zu leren ist* (Wittenberg: Hans Weiss, 1528) [VD16 L4031 (cf. VD16 L4030, 4032–4033); Benzing 2536 (cf. Benzing 2537–39)]. This edition also included a version of the previously published *How Christians Should Regard Moses*.

³⁵ Paul Pietsch in WA 16:xiv.

³⁶ This printing does not have its own Aland number but is considered part of Aland 520. The sermons on which it is based are cataloged as Aland Pr 531–538.

³⁷ See, e.g., *Treatise on Good Works* (1520), LW 44:21–114; *How Christians Should Regard Moses* (1525), LW 35:161–74; *Large Catechism* (1529) I (Kolb–Wengert, pp. 386–431; *Concordia*, pp. 359–98).

³⁸ Witt Ger 5 (1552), fols. 203r–244v; Jena Ger 4 (1556), fols. 515r–562r. *How Christians Should Regard Moses*, however, was not included in the Wittenberg and Jena editions with the sermons on Exodus 19–20.

during Luther's lifetime. Then, in 1564, in the first volume of the supplementary Eisleben edition of Luther's works, Johann Aurifaber brought forth his adaptation of the sermon notes available to him as a smoothed-out commentary on the first eighteen chapters of Exodus.³⁹

In much of his work on the Eisleben edition, Aurifaber had also received Rörer's own shorthand manuscripts, which he interpreted with the assistance of Rörer's apprentice Andreas Poach.⁴⁰ In the case of the sermons on Exodus, however, Aurifaber had access only to copies of Rörer's notes, made by others (among them Luther's preferred editor Caspar Cruciger).⁴¹ Moreover, Aurifaber possessed these copied notes only for Luther's sermons on the first half of Exodus. Rörer's notes on the remaining chapters had been in the possession of the Berlin provost Georg Buchholzer but were inaccessible to Aurifaber for his work on the Eisleben edition.⁴² Therefore, Aurifaber edited only the sermons on Exodus 1–18 and referred his readers to the previously published editions of the sermons on Exodus 19–20. Only later were Rörer's original notes on Luther's complete preaching on Exodus found, and they were printed for the first time in WA 16.⁴³ Luther's sermons on Exodus 21–34 will be translated from the Weimar edition of Rörer's notes in volume 63 of *Luther's Works*.

On the whole, Paul Pietsch characterizes Aurifaber's editorial adaptation of the notes he possessed as adequate. Although Aurifaber expanded on what is recorded in Rörer's notes and tended to repeat himself, he knew how Luther spoke. Sometimes one gains the impression that Aurifaber

³⁹ *Der Erste Theil Der Bücher/ Schrifften/ vnd Predigten des Ehrwürdigen Herrn/ D. Martin Luthers deren viel weder in den Wittenbergischen noch Jhenischen Tomis zufinden . . . jtzzt nach ordnung der Jarzal/ als vom M.D.XVI. bis in das M.D.XXIX. jar . . . zusammen getragen* (Eisleben: Urban Gaubisch, 1564) [VD16 L3357], fols. 279r–392v. On Aurifaber (1519–75), see the volume introduction by Christopher Boyd Brown, LW 58:xxvi–xxvii; Reinhold Jauernig, "Johannes Aurifaber: Lutherischer Prediger und Sammler von Lutherschriften," in *Luthers Freunde und Schüler in Thüringen*, ed. Karl Brinkel and Herbert von Hintzenstern (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 1961), 1:147–54.

⁴⁰ On Poach (1515–85), see the introduction by Christopher Boyd Brown to *Sermons on John 18–20* (1528–29/1557), LW 69:137–38; Reinhold Jauernig, "Andreas Poach," in *Luther in Thüringen* (Berlin: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, [1952]), pp. 198–206.

⁴¹ Paul Pietsch (WA 16:xviii) cites a letter from Aurifaber to the counts of Mansfeld, dated January 8, 1564, in which Aurifaber explains his reliance on Cruciger's transcriptions. On Cruciger (1504–48), see LW Bio:xx n. 19.

⁴² See Aurifaber's colophon to his edition of Exodus 1–18 (below, p. 307), quoted by Paul Pietsch in WA 16:xvii–xviii from Eisleben vol. 1, fols. 392v–393r. Buchholzer (1503–66) studied in Wittenberg. After serving as a pastor in several parishes, he was made provost at St. Nicholas in Berlin in 1539. Having earned the elector's displeasure, however, Buchholzer was deposed from office in 1565. See Johannes Schultze, "Buchholzer, George," *NDB* 2:702.

⁴³ See WA 16:xi.

borrowed Luther's idioms from elsewhere to use them here.⁴⁴ Having compared Aurifaber and Rörer's notes, it seems to us that Aurifaber bases the commentary on the thoughts present in the notes, but at the end of many sections he adds his own summary and application before moving to the next section. Most of the text is based conceptually, but not verbally, on Rörer's work.

Despite Aurifaber's freedom of expression compared with Rörer's notes, we present a translation of his text, as we have for other documents found in his Luther editions.⁴⁵ We have added footnotes indicating where the sense in Aurifaber is clearly different from Rörer's notes, the sections that have no basis in Rörer, and the sections that may have some words and phrases in common with the notes but are not clearly based on Rörer. In some places, Aurifaber (or the copyists who furnished his notes) seem to have made errors of transcription or interpretation which can be corrected on the basis of Rörer's original notes. Aurifaber's edition also included many marginal notes and Bible references. Some of the Bible references have been incorporated into our edition, but those that lack clear connection to the text have been omitted. Aurifaber's marginal notes also do not illumine the commentary and so have been omitted. Aurifaber's edition also includes boldface type in many places, but this, too, was applied inconsistently and thus has been omitted in our edition.

Luther did not always preach the chapters of Exodus in strict order, omitting Exodus 11 and skipping Exodus 13 in sequence but returning to it after preaching on chapters 12, 14, and 15. Luther's allegorical interpretations were often preached together after several chapters of historical exegesis: after chapters 1–4, after chapters 12–15, and after chapters 16–17. However, Aurifaber reorganized this material so that exposition of each chapter would be presented together and in canonical order. Our version follows Aurifaber's arrangement. Because we are not presenting a translation of Rörer's notes, and Aurifaber has added words and rearranged the sermons, we have not indicated the dates of the individual sermons in the text nor where they start or stop. For this, readers should consult our chart below (p. xxiv) (cf. WA 16:xxvi–xxvii).

As part of his edition, Aurifaber included a very free adaptation by Buchholzer of Luther's sermon on Exod. 3:1–6, preached on Easter Tuesday, April 3, 1526.⁴⁶ Buchholzer's version departs significantly from the notes

⁴⁴ Paul Pietsch in WA 16:xviii.

⁴⁵ E.g., *Four Sermons Preached in Eisleben* (1546), LW 58:410–59; *Sermons on Matthew 18–24* (1537–40/1796–1847), LW 67:329–422; 68:3–341.

⁴⁶ WA 20:356–63; *Eisleben* vol. 1, fols. 304r–307v; cf. WA 16:54.

taken by Rörer;⁴⁷ its inclusion in volume 1 of the Eisleben edition is considered in the judgment of Pietsch to be an ill-considered blunder—like most of Buchholzer’s editorial efforts.⁴⁸ Therefore, we have omitted it here and direct interested readers to our translation of the notes of this sermon in LW 56:174–77.

Our translation of Luther’s sermons on Exodus 1–18 is from Aurifaber’s 1564 edition as edited in WA 16:1–363, taking into account Rörer’s notes as described above.⁴⁹

PREFACE TO VOLUME 1 OF *LECTURES ON GENESIS* (1544)

As an appendix to this volume we are pleased to bring forth John A. Maxfield’s translation of Luther’s preface to the first volume of his monumental *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–45/1544–54), which was overlooked in LW 1–8. The introduction and notes for this text are by the translator.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With the exception of the appendix, the translation for this volume was provided by Kevin G. Walker, who also contributed to the annotations, especially many of the linguistic explanations. Joshua Dub and Christopher Durham contributed research for the annotations, aided by the librarians at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Christopher Boyd Brown guided the selection of contents for the volume and contributed to some of the annotations and to the volume introduction. Dawn Mirly Weinstock again served as production editor and brought all the disparate parts together into a whole. Numerous other colleagues at Concordia Publishing House contributed to make this volume possible. The undersigned bears responsibility for any errors in the final form of the translation and annotations. To God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be all glory.

B. T. G. M.

⁴⁷ WA 20:353–55.

⁴⁸ WA 16:xix.

⁴⁹ Aland 520.

EXODUS 1–18: ORDER OF SECTIONS
(Listed in the order of Aurifaber's text in Eisleben vol. 1)

SECTION	LW 62	DATE	MANUSCRIPTS (WA 16)
Preface	pp. 17–18	October 2, 1524	WA 16:1–2
Exodus 1	pp. 19–32	October 2, 1524	WA 16:2–18
Exodus 1 Allegory	pp. 32–43	November 13, 1524	WA 16:67–80
Exodus 2	pp. 45–56	October 2 and 9, 1524	WA 16:19–28, 28–30
Exodus 2 Allegory	pp. 56–58	November 20, 1524	WA 16:80–83
Exodus 3	pp. 59–76	October 9 and 16, 1524	WA 16:31–40, 40–54
Exodus 3 Allegory	pp. 76–80	November 20, 1524	WA 16:84–89
Exodus 4	pp. 81–89	October 30, 1524	WA 16:54–67
Exodus 4 Allegory	pp. 90–91	November 20, 1524	WA 16:89–92
Exodus 5	pp. 93–97	November 27, 1524	WA 16:92–97
Exodus 6	pp. 99–103	November 27, 1524	WA 16:98–103
Exodus 7	pp. 105–18	December 11 and 25, 1524	WA 16:103–19, 119–22
Exodus 8	pp. 119–27	December 25, 1524	WA 16:122–32
Exodus 9	pp. 129–40	December 26, 1524	WA 16:132–48
Exodus 10	pp. 141–47	December 27, 1524	WA 16:148–56
Exodus 11	pp. 149–51	December 27, 1524	WA 16:156–59
Exodus 12	pp. 153–66	January 1 and 8, 1525	WA 16:159–66, 166–77
Exodus 12 Allegory	pp. 166–93	April 30, May 14 and 21, 1525	WA 16:213–26, 226–40, 240–52
Exodus 13	pp. 195–204	May 25, 1525	WA 16:252–64
Exodus 14	pp. 205–14	February 19, 1525	WA 16:177–90
Exodus 14 Interpretation	pp. 214–22	May 28, 1525	WA 16:264–77
Exodus 15	pp. 223–40	March 25 and 26, 1525	WA 16:190–205, 205–13
Exodus 15:22–26	pp. 240–44	June 5, 1525	WA 16:277–82
Exodus 15:22–26 Allegory	pp. 244–47	June 5, 1525	WA 16:282–86
Exodus 16	pp. 249–62	June 6 and 11, 1525	WA 16:287–300, 300–304
Exodus 16 Allegory	pp. 262–69	June 11, 1525	WA 16:304–14
Exodus 17	pp. 271–82	July 2, 1525	WA 16:314–30
Exodus 17 Allegory	pp. 282–88	July 30, 1525	WA 16:330–38
Exodus 18	pp. 289–307	August 13 and 20, 1525	WA 16:338–55, 355–63

SERMONS ON EXODUS 19–20 NOT IN AURIFABER'S EDITION

HOW CHRISTIANS SHOULD REGARD MOSES

Exodus 19–20	LW 35:161–74	August 27, 1525	WA 16:363–93
Introduction			

AN EXPOSITION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Exodus 19–20	LW 62:311–418	September 10, 17, 24; October 1, 22, 29; November 5, 12, 1525	WA 16:394–528
--------------	---------------	--	---------------

DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S
EXPOSITION
OF SEVERAL CHAPTERS
OF THE SECOND BOOK
OF MOSES

[EXODUS 1-18]

1524-25/1564

Translated by
Kevin G. Walker

DR. MARTIN LUTHER'S EXPOSITION
OF SEVERAL CHAPTERS
OF THE SECOND BOOK
OF MOSES

[Exodus 1–18]

*Preached in Wittenberg
in 1524, 1525, and 1526¹*

PREFACE [TO EXODUS 1–18]

Up² to this point we have expounded the first book of Moses and have heard about many fine, comforting passages containing the chief articles of our Christian faith.³ We have also been shown all kinds of excellent examples and models of a pious and Christian life from the patriarchs. From the same book we have also learned that God is the almighty Maker of heaven, earth, and all creatures, and that we are to honor, love, and fear Him alone and trust in Him above all things. Likewise, we have learned that all things are in God's power and hand and that He must still be governing, protecting, and preserving everything. Again, we have learned that the human race should multiply and grow [cf. Gen. 1:28]. We have also learned how Adam and Eve became subject to the power of sin, death, the devil, and hell through the fall, but, in turn, have obtained righteousness, eternal life, and salvation through the promised Seed [cf. Gen. 3:15].

We have also heard how the two generations of mankind, the God-fearing and the godless (that is, the right, true Church of God and the false

¹ Aurifaber's edition includes the following note: "These sermons on Exodus never appeared in print before. They began to be preached at Vespers on the Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity in 1524." While Aurifaber's title includes the year 1526, in fact the sermons covering Exodus 1–18 were preached from October 2, 1524, to August 20, 1525.

² The following section (pp. 17–18) appears in WA 16:1–2 and Eisleben vol. 1, fol. 279r–279v. See the comparison chart above, p. xxiv.

³ See the volume introduction above, pp. xv, xviii–xix, and p. 4 n. 3.

church, the devil's bride), have lived in the world, grown, and carried on. That book also shows us comforting examples of divine grace and benefactions, how God has blessed the righteous and done good to them, and contrary examples of His wrath, ¹how He has punished the wicked. Thus that book is quite worthy of having us study it and become well-versed in it so that we know from it how to prepare ourselves for and draw ourselves to Christ's kingdom and to a Christian, repentant life.⁴

Now we will take up exposition of the second book of Moses, which discusses the departure of the children of Israel from Egypt, when they were delivered from their enslavement and harsh captivity under Pharaoh. It also shows us fine, excellent examples of how God truly keeps His promises. Again, [it shows us] examples of divine grace and kindness toward distressed, afflicted, and tormented Christians, and, on the contrary, [it shows us] examples of His wrath, punishment, and disfavor toward the stiff-necked and unrepentant.

And because the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were to become an independent people and kingdom, in this book God also gives them laws and rules, sets up their worship and religion, and establishes authorities, such as Moses, who was a commander and chief magistrate of this people, who was to lead them out of Egypt, and He divided the people into twelve principalities or tribes, over which He set twelve princes. Thus He equipped this people with laws and rules so that everyone (seeing as this people was very great in number) knew quite well how to behave.

⁴ Instead of this sentence, Röser's notes read: "This book is worthy of being known, as Paul wants especially the man who preaches to know Scripture and to apply it to faith, rightly dividing the Word [cf. 2 Tim. 2:2 and 15], etc." (WA 16:1.6-2.2).

CHAPTER 1

IN¹ this chapter we hear about many things, particularly about how God begins to help His people out of the enslavement they were in under Pharaoh in Egypt, and how He establishes Moses as the leader over the children of Israel and brings him, who sought all kinds of excuses to turn down this calling, into this office in a miraculous way. But first, the text says:²

1–7. *These are the names of the children of Israel who came to Egypt with Jacob; each came with his household: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher. And all the souls that had come out of the loins of Jacob were seventy. But Joseph¹ was already in Egypt. Now when Joseph had died, and all his brothers and all who had lived at that time, the children of Israel grew and produced children and multiplied, and they became very great in number so that the land was filled with them.*

In the first book of Moses we heard about how God extended and preserved a line from Adam and all the other patriarchs until Jacob. God made it look like He was concerned only with the line that went from Adam, Seth, Noah, Shem, Abraham, and Isaac up until the patriarch Jacob, acting as if He did not know the other peoples in the world and had no knowledge of them, seeing as He hardly touches upon all the others who lived alongside this line. Now although this line of the human race was very small (for it had gotten no further than Jacob and his twelve sons and those who were born to them, namely, seventy souls, who had moved to Egypt [Genesis 46]), the beginning of this first chapter describes how this people of Israel had grown in Egypt, produced other children, multiplied, and increased so much that the land had become quite filled with them, and afterward they received their own government and kingdom, both spiritual and secular.

In this masterfulness of our Lord God we see how wonderfully He rules and keeps His promises. God makes a small and weak beginning when He sets out to fulfill the promise He made to Abraham and his offspring, for

¹ The following section (pp. 19–32) appears in WA 16:2–18 and Eisleben vol. 1, fols. 279v–285v. See the comparison chart above, p. xxiv.

² This paragraph does not have a clear textual basis in Röer's notes.

He had promised to him that his offspring would become a great people, as countless as the sand of the sea and the stars in the sky [cf. Gen. 15:5; 32:12]. Kings and princes were also to come from his loins [cf. Gen. 17:6], but the promise looks as if it would not be fulfilled. Abraham and Sarah, as well as Isaac and Rebekah, are solitary people, ¹who died having few children. Where does that leave the promise? God makes a small and humble beginning; things only start moving a little with the patriarch Jacob, to whom God gave twelve sons, from whom seventy souls were soon produced, and then the promise makes itself somewhat visible.

These are the great nations that the patriarch Abraham is supposed to have. He dies and departs, believing that God would honor the promise made to him, even though he and his Sarah would see no more than just Isaac, for God is true to His Word and promises. At the same time, however, He acts in such a strange and unusual way, just as if He did not intend to keep the promise, and then does so after all. This ought to move us to believe God's promises, trust in them firmly, and rely upon them in the midst of all trials and tribulations, as well as wait patiently for His help, trusting that God will finally come, comfort us, and rescue us from our adversities.

The text continues:

8. *Now there arose a new king in Egypt, who knew nothing about Joseph.*

How that happened, whether perhaps the land of Egypt and the previous king were overthrown, is beyond my knowing. It is clear, however, that the good Pharaoh who lived and ruled in Joseph's time had died, and a new king, who knew nothing about Joseph, was chosen in his place. Joseph had lived about 110 years, and he was about 39 years old when his father, the patriarch Jacob, came to him in Egypt. After that, he lived seventy more years, and he ruled at least fifty years after his father's death. So much had changed in fifty years that one or two new kings ruled in Egypt after the death of Jacob and Joseph.

Egypt was a beautiful land and kingdom and was in its prime at the time that Joseph, full of the Holy Spirit, governed in it. ¹That is when it was the most beautiful and fruitful kingdom under the sun, but when Joseph died, and [thus] the true chief and primary person was gone, the situation was quite different, as often happens with the rising and falling of governments and kingdoms.

This is how God acts with all kingdoms and governments. He gives each land its time to grow and rise, so that it increases and expands its riches, authority, honor, and power, so that it can flourish and bask in honor and glory. But, in turn, when our Lord God deems it time for such a land to fall again and go to ruin, then all of a sudden it falls again, and no one can stop

it. Therefore, the prophet Daniel rightly says, “God is the one who sets up and changes kingdoms” [cf. Dan. 2:21].

Thus He helped the Roman kingdom to its feet so that it subjugated many other kingdoms, oppressed them, and became a mighty empire, but it fell to pieces again. Likewise, God also made the Jewish kingdom magnificent and large, but now it is lying in the dust again. Similarly, the Babylonian Empire was a mighty power on earth, but it, too, did not stand for long before it fell to ruins again. Thus God also gives every city its time of growth and blossoming, but then, when the time of its growth is past, the government is suddenly at an end, and it falls back into decline.

This is how our Lord God acts. He can turn nothing into everything; surely He can expand a little kingdom and make it large. Likewise, He can easily topple a large empire so that all the world has ample opportunity to sate its anger on it. And if He has begun to bring down a kingdom, there is no use trying to obstruct or stop this. Indeed, even if it were hanging by iron chains or standing on iron posts, it would [still] have to fall to the ground and be destroyed.

Thus Egypt was a blessed, Christian, magnificent kingdom and principality, which had God’s Word in abundance, preached by the high patriarchs ¹Jacob and Joseph, as well as by the twelve sons of Jacob, who planted quite a fine church there for our Lord God. Accordingly, God also gave this kingdom laudable kings and regents, who granted the church a haven, shield, and protection and were its nourishers, wet nurses, and guardians [cf. Isa. 49:23], who housed and sheltered the patriarchs.

The secular government was also fine and excellent so that judgment and justice were to be found in this kingdom. Thus God also provided it with great wealth and industry. There were great people in the spiritual and secular government, and this kingdom stood upon strong and steady legs, but when the time comes for this kingdom to suffer want and to fall, then everything will lie in ruins in an instant so that religion and worship vanish, and justice, judgment, discipline, and order cease and come to an end.

But when does this happen? The text tells us:

6, 8. *Now when Joseph had died, and all his brothers and all who had lived at that time, there arose a new king in Egypt who knew nothing about Joseph.*

The downfall of the church and religion and the destruction of the secular government takes place when the God-fearing patriarchs, preachers, bishops, and pastors, as well as the good Christian kings, princes, and

competent regents, have been removed. This is also what is written in the Book of Judges 2 [:8, 10–12]:

When Joshua, the son of Nun, the servant of the Lord, had died, being 110 years old, and also all who had lived at that time were gathered unto their fathers, there arose another generation after them which knew neither the Lord nor the works He had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and served Baals and abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods.

This is what happens when the pillars and supports that had borne the church and secular government are gone: it falls to ruin. When the kernel of the nut has been eaten, you're left holding nothing but shells; only the husks or froth remain. The greater God's blessing had been before, the greater His curse, execrating, and disfavor afterward [cf. Matt. 11:20–24]. And if the people in that land used to honor God's saints,¹ then afterward they think about killing them, as happened with the children of Israel in Egypt. Thus the land is turned around, and the people become ungrateful toward God, stray from His Word, and lose the true worship.³

9–11. *And Pharaoh said to his people: "Behold, the people of the children of Israel are great and more than we. Come, let us subdue them with craftiness so that there may not be so many of them. For if a war were waged against us, they might also join our enemies and fight against us." And he set taskmasters over them to afflict them with labor. For they were building for Pharaoh the cities of Pithom and Raamses as treasure houses.*

Learn here to recognize the world's ingratitude; even if one does everything well for it and serves it for a long time, in the end it rewards this with a knock on the head. The world repays good deeds with evil deeds. Up until then the Egyptians had received much good from Joseph and the children of Israel, such as the true knowledge that they had been freed from their abominable heathen idolatry and now knew of the true and right worship of God and could take the path to eternal salvation. Thus they also had a well-ordered secular government that was Christian and God-pleasing. Again, they had good authorities, fruitful years, many years of good peace, and other bodily benefits. For the sake of the Israelites God had blessed the entire kingdom of Egypt. The host inevitably derived benefit from the guest. The Egyptians had the salvation of their souls, good government, general peace, nourishment and overabundance when the famines struck, and all

³ The previous three paragraphs (from "The downfall of the church and religion" to here) do not have a clear textual basis in Röer's notes.

kinds of spiritual and bodily welfare from the people of Israel (just as the godless world still derives much benefit from Christians, and often things must go well for the wicked for the sake of the righteous), but the Egyptians had forgotten all of this. Now Pharaoh and the Egyptians were thinking about how they could craftily destroy and suppress all the children of Israel.

That is how the world rewards faithful service; it pays with such ingratitude. We have to get used to that too; that's the way it goes in the world. For as the heathen have said: *Nihil citius senescit quam gratia*;⁴ "Nothing is forgotten as quickly as an act of kindness." Again: *Beneficium in pulvere scribitur, in marmore noxa*;⁵ "An act of kindness is quickly cast to the wind, but if one person does something to offend another, that can be remembered for a long time."⁶

Now, Pharaoh begins [his plan] deftly: First, he wants to obliterate the children of Israel through bitterly hard labor so that they wear themselves out through making bricks and doing other slave labor to build fortifications. He wants to restrict how much food they can get and see if he can subdue them. But what happens? The text says:

12. *The more they afflicted the people, the more they multiplied and spread.*

Here, once again, we see our Lord God's miraculous working and how He will carry out and fulfill His Word and promise. He handles it in such a way that no one can say that people would have carried it out like that. God had also promised Abraham that He would make his offspring into a great nation. Now He deals with the children of Israel in such a way that they have to be servants and slaves in Egypt, and He lets it look like quite the opposite, as if they would be totally wiped out. Nevertheless, in the end it turns out that they become a great nation, for God leads them out of Egypt in great numbers. Thus even though here Pharaoh acts against the children of Israel as a raging tyrant and severely afflicts them with slave labor and other burdens, none of that helps. He has to let this people stand.

God also mocks the tyrants when they act against Christians this way with their raging and persecuting. In order to mock, irritate, and, indeed, even to spite them He protects and preserves His people. It is as if He said, "Dear fellow, come on and try to stop Me! Still, I will let My people grow and become great so that all of you will have to confess that it happens through no human might." For God allows the children of Israel in Egypt to be subdued, afflicted, oppressed, and weakened, and yet makes them so fruitful

⁴ "Nothing becomes old faster than gratitude."

⁵ "A favor is written in the dust; an offense, in marble."

⁶ The previous two paragraphs do not have a clear textual basis in Röser's notes.

to suffer loss and persecution from him. As St. Paul has also prophesied: “All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution” [2 Tim. 3:12]. The Lord Christ also says this: “If anyone wants to be My disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me” [cf. Matt. 16:24]. The Lord Christ Himself definitely had to suffer persecution from the devil and the world. Why, then, would we have it better than He did?

But we have also heard about God's great miracles, which He has performed for those who trust in Him and believe His Word and promise. For even if at first He behaves toward them as if He would totally abandon them, so that they would be ruined and perish, He surely comforts them again and helps them out of the persecution; He interferes with the tyrants' game, messes up their dice, tears up their cards, and puts them to shame with all their plans and persecutions.²⁶

ALLEGORY OR SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF CHAPTER 1

[At²⁷ other times we have often told you, beloved, and particularly those who study Holy Scripture and want to become preachers, that they should be wary of spiritual interpretations or allegories (as they are called).²⁸ Up until now I, too, have sought to expound the historical accounts with a mystical understanding. Those who undertake such a task ought to be careful, and they must be properly instructed.

[One cannot prohibit people from taking up the historical accounts and drawing mystical interpretations, which Paul calls “mysteries” [1 Cor. 4:1], from them. I'll give you a simple example: Isaac is sacrificed on the altar and yet remains alive, which means that Christ must die and rise again and come back to life. One has to permit people to do this because Paul says, “The Holy Spirit speaks mysteries” [1 Cor. 14:2]. That is His office; He can also do it right and interpret the mysteries. St. Paul also does this [in his Epistle] to the Galatians with the two women, Sarah and Hagar, who signify the two testaments [Gal. 4:21–31]. Again, with their two sons, Isaac and Ishmael, who signify two peoples. If he had not explained and interpreted these himself in this way, then there probably would have been sows who barged in and interpreted them in a wild and unbridled manner.

Therefore, it is not right for everyone to stick his head into Scripture and dig around and grub in it as he will. No one should attempt this, unless he

²⁶ No basis for the previous six paragraphs can be found in Rörer's notes.

²⁷ The following section (pp. 32–43) appears in WA 16:67–80 and Eisleben vol. 1, fols. 285v–289r. See the comparison chart above, p. xxiv.

²⁸ On allegorical interpretation of Scripture, see the volume introduction above, p. xviii and the notes there.

has the Holy Spirit. And St. Paul said in Romans 12 [:6], if anyone sets forth prophecies, they ought to be in accordance with the faith, *analogia fidei*.²⁹ If anyone wants to set forth mystical interpretations, let him see to it that he applies them to the faith, that they agree with the faith.

I say this because I myself have wasted and lost a lot of time in [reading the allegorical interpretations of] Gregory, Jerome, Cyprian, Augustine, and Origen.³⁰ In their days, the fathers had a special penchant and love for allegories. They carried them everywhere they went and spilled a lot of ink filling their books with them. Origen was practically a prince and king of allegory and filled the whole Bible with such mystical interpretations,³¹ which really aren't worth a turd.³² The reason is this: they have all followed their own views, thoughts, and opinions, as they considered proper, instead of following St. Paul, who wants to let the Holy Spirit³³ work through these or to have the allegories be in accordance with the faith.

And I would not preach about this either, if not in order to familiarize you with the proper way to set forth allegories and to neutralize the expositors and teachers who go astray with allegories, to refute them and to

²⁹ See above, p. 5. n. 6.

³⁰ I.e., Pope Gregory I ("The Great," r. 590–604), who with Jerome and Augustine was numbered among the "doctors of the church"; for Luther's assessment, see *Table Talk* no. 584 (1533), LW 54:104–5. Jerome translated the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate) in addition to providing extensive biblical commentary. Cyprian (ca. 210–258), bishop of Carthage, also left behind numerous biblical commentaries; for Luther's assessment, see *On the Councils and the Church* (1539), LW 41:44–47. Particularly influential for Luther was Augustine, an African rhetorician who became the bishop of Hippo and left a monumental legacy of theological writings that served as the foundation of the subsequent Latin Christian tradition. See Friedrich Wilhelm Bautz, "Augustinus, Aurelius," *BBKL* 1:272–300; *ODCC*, s.v. "Augustine of Hippo." Augustine was particularly important to Luther's theology: see Luther, preface to the *Catalog* (1533), LW Bio:4; Philip Melanchthon (1497–1560), preface to the second volume of Luther's Latin writings (1546), LW Bio:61–62, 63, 76; Johann Mathesius (1504–65), *History* (1566), LW Bio:455; Luther, preface to Augustine, *On the Spirit and the Letter* (1533?), LW 60:35–44. Origen of Alexandria (ca. 185–253/254) was a prolific but controversial biblical scholar who promoted the allegorical interpretation of the Scriptures as well as a Platonizing speculative approach to theology. See Eusebius (ca. 263–339), *Ecclesiastical History* 6.1–39 (PG 20:519–602; FC 29:3–67; NPNF² 1:249–81); *ODCC*, s.v. "Origen." For Luther's criticism of Origen, see, e.g., *Babylonian Captivity* (1520), LW 36:30; *Answer to Emser* (1521), LW 39:175; preface to Menius, *Commentary on 1 Samuel* (1532), LW 60:9; *Lectures on Genesis* (1535–45/1544–54), LW 2:150–64.

³¹ The words "In their days, the fathers" to here do not have a clear textual basis in Rörer's notes.

³² No basis for the words "which really aren't worth a turd" can be found in Rörer's notes.

³³ Instead of "instead of following . . . Holy Spirit," Rörer's notes read: "they did not follow what the Spirit here directed" (WA 16:68.10).

hold fast to the proper understanding.³⁴ Origen did a lot of harm to Christ with [his allegories]. The Jews mocked teachers who interpreted Scripture using allegories and who expounded Christ's Word for Him by saying that everything written about Isaac is to be understood as referring to Christ. Capricious spirits, who had had their fill of the divine Word, devoted themselves entirely to seeking lots of allegories, and one simply could not grasp God's Word properly because of these interpretations.³⁵

These [allegorical interpretations] were highly regarded and captivated the people's attention. When they hear something new and [you] share something unknown, people want to know all about it. [You] write [about it] and spill lots of ink, but nothing good comes of it, because when you get tired of the historical accounts, you look for what the world regards. One seeks fame, another seeks something else in Scripture, and they only preach to captivate the people and make them look and gasp in amazement so that they say, "Now that is a scholar!" By doing this, however, they lose the true foundation and understanding of Scripture and lead people down nothing but wrong paths.³⁶

Look at the books of St. Jerome.³⁷ I have also read them. He thinks he is on target [and] produces magnificent words, but it is no good. Those are only the shells from the nut, the pods from the peas. You have to bite or break open the shell; then you find the nutmeat. Failing to do that means you end up with an unpleasant mouthful. A young teacher may well come across this and think it is good and right. Yes, there is a mystery¹ concealed within it, just as nutmeat is hidden in its shell. They regard the historical accounts as the shells, which are of no interest and useless. [But]³⁸ I have treated the historical accounts in such a way that the best part is how one ought really and truly to lead a Christian life in faith, love, and patience, and how one ought to pray under the cross and conduct oneself.³⁹

For this reason, I ask that those of you wanting to study Holy Scripture not satisfy your curiosity and desire [to use allegorical interpretation] on

³⁴ Instead of this sentence, Rörer's notes read: "Wherefore I would not teach allegories except on account of those who are learning Holy Writ, and [since] they might encounter those holy fathers" (WA 16:69.1–2).

³⁵ The words "and one simply could not grasp" to here do not have a clear textual basis in Rörer's notes.

³⁶ Instead of this paragraph, Rörer's notes read: "The common people follow them, and the true sense of Scripture is lost" (WA 16:69.6).

³⁷ Before this word, Rörer's notes add: "Origen" (WA 16:69.7).

³⁸ This word is included in Rörer's notes (WA 16:70.1).

³⁹ Instead of this sentence, Rörer's notes read: "But I have treated the histories, as there is nothing better than them; through them one learns faith and honorable behavior" (WA 16:70.1–3).

Holy Scripture but instead take up Homer, Ovid, Virgil, or some other poet and try your skill there, rather than stumbling into Holy Scripture, unless you have first washed your feet, so that instead of just getting the shell you get the nutmeat out of the shell. Therefore, turn it around and seek the best part. They [the fathers using allegory] also call the shell without the nutmeat the main part and the foundation or best part in Scripture, for example, reading and knowing the historical accounts superficially. You, however, let your best part be to study so that we know how the historical accounts progress, how Abraham lived in the Word of God and faith, and what happened with him.⁴⁰

That edifies people, encourages and comforts consciences that are caught in great fear and tribulation, and provides an example of how to live properly so that they also remain in the simple understanding. Fine examples of faith and love⁴¹—indeed, the lives of [biblical personages]—are presented in the historical accounts. It is not good if you seek and dig for something else in them because then you are on the wrong path, a path of error, and have already opened the back door and front door for the devil, and you have a careless spirit that disdains Holy Scripture. Then [your] devil-head becomes so full of ^lallegories that you could pour them out and fill bags with them, and you will become a complete fool because of them, even though you think you are very smart.

Now, I do not want to proscribe this, but I ask that you would retain the nutmeat, the true treasure and foremost part in Holy Scripture, namely, that you learn Holy Scripture well by way of the historical accounts. I am warning you because you will find that it is much different in the [writings of the] ancient teachers; they are completely full of allegories. Origen led himself, his disciples, and the whole world astray with these. St. Jerome boasted in regard to Origen that, next to the apostles, he would rely on none of his teachers except Origen.⁴² I, however, would not want to cough up this skill of St. Jerome and St. Origen because any sharp mind could do it as well. When they are supposed to explain to me the historical accounts, how we

⁴⁰ Instead of this paragraph, Röser's notes read: "What they make the nutmeat, you should call the shell. Do this, so that you may know the histories according to the word" (WA 16:70.5–6).

⁴¹ Röser's notes add: "and the cross" (WA 16:70.8).

⁴² In his *Preface to the Book on Hebrew Names*, Jerome says: "I wished also in this to imitate Origen, whom all but the ignorant acknowledge as the greatest teacher of the churches next to the apostles" (NPNE² 6:485; cf. PL 23:772; CCSL 72:59–60). However, one should also take into account his letter to Pammachius and Oceanus, where he qualifies his praise of Origen and states: "I have made a collection of his books, I admit; but because I know everything that he has written I do not follow his errors. I speak as a Christian to Christians: believe one who has tried him. His doctrines are poisonous; they are unknown to the Holy Scriptures—nay, more, they do them violence" (Letter 84.3 [NPNE² 6:177; cf. PL 22:746; CSEL 56:124]).

are to live in God's Word, and how we are to practice our faith and love, then they are totally silent, willfully passing over that.

These masters of Christianity have not properly expounded a single historical account. Here it is necessary to show what life in faith looks like and how one holds fast to faith and ensures that his wife and children do too. That ought to be what is foremost. That is what we should be filled with.⁴³ Therefore, adhere to the rule that whoever wants to treat the prophets ought to do so in accordance with the faith and refrain from using allegories. For [the fathers] have made foolish thoughts out of [the historical accounts]. And whoever is studying, let him take heed, because these doctors are as dangerous to read as any poet. Indeed, Virgil is far less dangerous than they are. We know that Virgil and other poets are fools and have erred, but these [fathers] make it appear with their teaching that everything they claim is good while in fact they are smearing crap in your mouth.

You who are studying, take heed that you do not learn in reverse and forget more than you have learned. That is what happened to me too. When I went to school, I lacked a true master to teach me that, but it is being said to you now. Take heed and remember it. You must take from Scripture the true treasure, the nutmeat, power, might, juice, and taste—that is, the example of faith and of love.⁴⁴ That is what you are to look at. Here you are not allowed to dig deep for why God has written it. Afterward, when you have this foremost part, you can introduce a mystical interpretation alongside the clear text, adorn it, and attach [your mystical interpretation] to it as beautiful jewelry.

St. Paul does this, too, when he has preached a long while in his Epistle to the Galatians about how faith justifies and not the works of the Law. After this he comes to allegories, or [mystical] interpretations, and leaves it at that.⁴⁵ By doing so, he shows that one may indeed use allegories, but in such a way that they coincide with and serve the foundation. I also know quite well that mystical interpretations do not stand the test, neither should they be the foundation upon which we rely because that should and must be only the clear, express, and manifest Word of God. For example, one is saved

⁴³ Instead of the previous three sentences, Röser's notes read: "Origen never said, 'See how strongly Abraham clung to the Word of God'" (WA 16:71.8–9).

⁴⁴ Instead of "that is, the example of faith and of love," Röser's notes read: "which is in the histories" (WA 16:72.1–2).

⁴⁵ Instead of the previous two sentences, Röser's notes read: "Just as Paul, when he has treated [the text] with the manifest words and topics, that faith alone justifies, adds something like a light about the two women in Galatians" (WA 16:72.2–4).

believing in Christ and loving one's neighbor.⁴⁶ Let go of other teachings and allegories,⁴⁷ such as when St. Paul says that the two sons of Abraham mean the two testaments, because if such [allegories] were to have no foundation, then my heart would waver, and I would always be thinking about how I might become certain of them. Somebody would say, "Who knows if this is what it means, if it is really like this?" Then the heart must tremble and cannot be certain, neither can it stand firm or rely on the allegories. I must have the clear text and page of Holy Scripture.

Therefore, be prepared to regard spiritual interpretations as the ^least important part of your studies, and take hold of faith, love, and the Word of God, which the patriarchs had and through which they were sustained. Let this be the most important part of your studies, and afterward can come the other, which the doctors of old regarded as the principal part.⁴⁸ Then you will preach and study usefully. You have to turn it around, throw the allegories to the back, and not interpret it as Origen did. I interpret and set forth all of them [my allegories] so that they serve the preaching office and faith.⁴⁹ You do likewise. Here you will hear a bad example from the third chapter, when Moses saw the burning bush. This green bush, in which were flames of fire and God Himself, was interpreted as referring to the Virgin Mary and sung worldwide during Advent.⁵⁰ The world was later pleased that it meant this. [This interpretation] that it should apply to the Virgin Mary stumbles right in and has to be a good thing.

Now, if one had asked the person who claimed this⁵¹ and made this interpretation: "How can it be right that the bush is supposed to be the

⁴⁶ *Als, an Christum glauben und den Nehsten lieben, also ist man selig.* Instead of "because that should and must be" to here, Rörer's notes read: "There must be a clear text, not an obscure one. For example, 'I believe in Jesus Christ'" (WA 16:72.5–6).

⁴⁷ The words "Let go of other teachings and allegories" do not have a clear textual basis in Rörer's notes.

⁴⁸ The previous two sentences do not have a clear textual basis in Rörer's notes.

⁴⁹ Instead of the previous two sentences, Rörer's notes read: "I, too, will search for allegories in order to cast those [men] back who have not applied them well; apply everything to the duty of preaching" (WA 16:72.10–73.2).

⁵⁰ See, e.g., the antiphon for the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ (octave of the Nativity of Christ, January 1) in *Breuiarium. Moguntinens. Nouissime Impressum. emendatum: ac plurimis luculentissimis additamentis congestum et absolutum* (Mainz: Johann Schöffer, 1509) [VD16 ZV27829], fol. CXXXVIv: "Rubum quem viderat moyses incombustum conseruatam agnouimus tuam laudabilem virginitatem dei genetrix intercede pro nobis [In the bush which Moses saw unconsumed, we acknowledge your praiseworthy virginity preserved: Mother of God, intercede for us]." The same antiphon, in the breviary for the collegiate church of St. Severus, Erfurt: *Breuiarium dicendarum Canoniarum horarum: ad morem Seuariani Collegii Erphordiensis* (Mainz: Johann Schöffer, 1518) [VD16 B8139], fol. XXXVIIv; and Gregory the Great, *Liber responsalis sive antiphonarius* (PL 78:741).

⁵¹ Rörer's notes add: "Origen" (WA 16:73.5).

CHAPTER 20

1. *And the Lord spoke all these words.*

Now, when Moses had reported to the people what the Lord had commanded him (namely, that they should stay at the foot of the mountain [Exod. 19:24–25]), and when he had set up the boundary, ¹etc., he was silent, and God alone spoke with the people. You can well imagine what a resounding, great voice it must have been—not the voice of a simple man, to enable such a large amount of people to hear it, for there were 600,000 men, not including women and children under twenty years old. They took up a large amount of space, probably two or three miles, but at least one mile.¹ In addition, Mount Sinai was a very large mountain. One of us can barely project his voice over six thousand people—if it is really strong, over ten thousand. But this voice was clear, resounding over all the people, and each of them could hear it well. Thus it must have been a mighty, strong voice. They saw nothing but the storm clouds and fire, from which was coming the voice they heard. What follows is the voice, namely, the Ten Commandments:

[THE TEN COMMANDMENTS]

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

- 2–6. *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods beside Me. You shall not make for yourself an image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth below or that is in the water under the earth. Do not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am intensely jealous, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, and showing mercy to many thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

¹ wol zwo odder drey meilen, auffs wenigst ja ein meil; i.e., 7.4–11.1 miles (11.8–17.7 km), or at least 3.7 miles (5.9 km). See above, p. 211 n. 7.

THE SECOND [COMMANDMENT]

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

THE THIRD [COMMANDMENT]

- 8-11. *Remember the Sabbath Day to hallow it. Six days |you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, [neither you] nor your son nor your daughter nor your male servant nor your female servant nor your livestock nor the sojourner who is within the gates of your city. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day and hallowed it.*

THE FOURTH [COMMANDMENT]

12. *You shall honor your father and your mother, that you may live long in the land that the Lord your God will give you.*

THE FIFTH [COMMANDMENT]

13. *You shall not kill.*

THE SIXTH [COMMANDMENT]

14. *You shall not commit adultery.*

THE SEVENTH [COMMANDMENT]

15. *You shall not steal.*

THE EIGHTH [COMMANDMENT]

16. *You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.*

THE NINTH [COMMANDMENT]

17. *You shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that your neighbor has.*

THE TENTH [COMMANDMENT]

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

This is the sermon that God Himself preached to all the people of Israel with a physical voice in the cloud and fire on Mount Sinai, although by God's command an angel carried the voice, as it says in another ¹passage of Scripture [Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; cf. Heb. 2:2], in God's stead with great splendor, but the people saw nothing; they only heard the voice, etc.

We will briefly run through the Ten Commandments. First, we need to note that the Ten Commandments do not concern us Gentiles and Christians, but only the Jews. That is affirmed and compelled by the text when it says:

2. *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.*

After all, it is true and clear enough that we Gentiles have not been brought out of Egypt by God, but only the Jewish people of Israel have been. Therefore, Moses applies the Ten Commandments only to the people who have been brought out of Egypt by God. However, the fact that we also acknowledge, worship, and glorify the same God whom the Jews glorify, who brought them out of Egypt, is something we know not from Moses or from the written Law but from other texts and from the law of nature. I say this again to guard against the false spirits who want to force Moses upon our neck, to keep him with all his commandments. We want to dismiss that, however, and not accept even the slightest iota from him, except for where he is in agreement with the natural law. We do, of course, want to read him freely and voluntarily as another teacher, but we do not want to have him as our lawgiver, for we had enough of the Law before, in the New Testament. Therefore, we do not want to have him in our conscience, but to keep that pure for Christ alone. Thus it is surely clear that the Ten Commandments have been given only to the Jews and not to us—despite all the sectarian spirits, for they truly say otherwise.

THE SIGN BY WHICH THE JEWS ARE TO GRASP GOD

Now God the Lord, as is His divine nature, gives the Jews a certain sign by which they are to grasp, perceive, and recognize Him. This is how He always acts when He deals with us. He does not leave us gaping up toward heaven because He ¹does not want us to serve Him in a way of our own choosing or according to our whim, as our nature and reason tend to do, neglecting God's command and choosing their own form of worship. Instead, God wants to be served, perceived, and recognized according to

His own Word and command. That is why He gives us signs by which we may perceive Him with certainty. He has given the sign to the Jews and put in their mouth the words with which they should call upon Him. Which ones? “I call upon You, my God and Lord, who brought us out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.” Again, more words, as follow later: “who miraculously brought us through the Red Sea, through the wilderness, fed us with bread from heaven, gave us [water] to drink from a hard rock, led us through the Jordan into the Promised Land,” etc. Those were their words, their signs, through which they recognized God.

THE CHRISTIANS’ SIGN BY WHICH TO GRASP GOD

What is it by which Christians recognize and grasp Him since the Jews’ sign does not apply to them? Do they not also have a sign or word by which to grasp God? Yes, they also have their own sign and word, namely: “O God, Creator of heaven and earth, who sent Your Son, Jesus Christ, into the world for me, to be crucified, die, and rise again on the third day for me, to ascend into heaven in order that He should sit there at Your right hand and have all things in His hand and send His Spirit, that we may wait for His coming to judge both the living and the dead and thus with Him obtain the eternal kingdom, our inheritance, which You want to give us through Him.” In addition: “O Lord God, You have instituted and given us Baptism and the Sacrament of the body and blood of Your Son,” etc. For He has bound us Christians to these,² His sacraments, and reveals Himself to us in them. If we grasp Him there, then we have surely met Him. All of the other things, however, which have not been commanded us, we should abandon; otherwise we would miserably fail [to grasp] Him. Thus this is the title we should bear, just as the Jews bore their title because they were brought out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

¹The first to turn against this title was Jeroboam, the king in Israel, and then all the Jews. This same Jeroboam made golden calves; he put one in Bethel and the other in Dan, wanting thereby to bind God to them and use these to grasp Him. For he said, “Behold, Israel, this is your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt” [cf. 1 Kings 12:28]. But it was the devil. Why? And did he really think that he was talking about the true God? However, God cannot tolerate this. Indeed, there is no god either in heaven or on earth who would want to have such self-chosen service. Now, this king paints this picture of God within his heart and chooses his own sign by which he wants to grasp God as he sees fit. God does not want this; instead, He portrays Himself and gives the Jews a sign, saying, “This is where you

² Instead of the start of the sentence to here, Röser’s notes read: “For He has bound Himself to these” (WA 16:425.4).

will find Me. This is how I want to be sought and called upon: ‘I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, the house of slavery.’ This is [the sign] by which you are to grasp Me. This is where I am with certainty; this is where you will find Me. You are mistaken, however, in that you bind Me to the calf, to the altar, to this place, and you will not find Me. Indeed, you will utterly fail to find Me because I am not there.”

This is also what happened with us. We have a sign by which we can find God with certainty and not fail. The sign, as stated earlier, is this: “Lord God, heavenly Father, who for me allowed Your Son to become man, die, be buried, etc., in whose name I call upon You,” etc. Then I cannot fail, but must find Him. My prayer is also certainly heard, provided that I can say it with a sincere heart and believe, for this is how He commanded us to call upon Him. Thus He wants to be found, grasped, and perceived through the sign and to give what we ask for, provided that we ask in Christ’s name and in faith.

¹However, what if I were to make a special sign at my own discretion (as Jeroboam and other impious people did) and say, “O God, my Lord, I call upon You so that You would observe that I have built a church; endowed a Mass [and an] altar; donated a chasuble to the church; gotten a tonsure; put on a cowl; diligently prayed the seven hours: Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, Nones, Vespers, and Compline;³ beaten myself with whips; worn wool and gone barefoot;⁴ worn a cincture made of hair and a hair shirt; slept on a bench; slept on the ground; fasted; prayed; suffered great poverty; maintained virginity, obedience, and poverty;⁵ have been a monk, nun, or priest.” What should He say to that? He will not ingratiate Himself with them on account of this. Instead, He will say to this: “Is that how I have portrayed Myself for you? Have I commanded you anywhere to recognize Me through such works? I do not know either you or your works. I did not give you that sign; it is the devil’s sign and notion. There is no god either in heaven or on earth who would be inclined to be gracious to you on account of such self-chosen works. I have not commanded you to do them. That is not how I want to be grasped. What devil told you to do this?” The tonsures, cowls, monkery, [and] priestcraft fail; they all go to the devil. They cannot stand under God’s judgment. They melt away like the snow. God says, “I have given you a sign and a way. Hold fast to that, and abandon the other things. They do not avail before Me. You have invented your own way. The devil has inspired you to do it.”

³ See above, p. 327 n. 14.

⁴ An allusion to the Franciscans; see above, p. 296 n. 10.

⁵ On these traditional vows of monasticism as compared to the vows taken by bishops upon consecration, see LW 69:71 n. 258.

Until now we Christians have been just like the people of old. They invented their own way to serve God. One took this sign; another took a different one—whatever he dreamed up. They went and said, “It has been a long time since God brought us out of Egypt. But in Bethel and Shiloh—that is where the true worship of God is. That is where we want to meet God.” Indeed, they met their god, the devil. Moreover, they built churches and altars on the mountains, etc. [cf. 1 Kings 12:26–31; Ps. 78:58].¹ They thought they were right on target. Then the prophets cried out against this and said that it was wrong. That is when the strife really began: “Away with the heretics! Just kill them and beat them to death!” Then many a prophet had to lose his life. This is also what happened among us. Our dear Papists concocted many things, one after the other, none of which God had commanded them to do. Now, when anyone preaches against that, they become raving mad, condemn us as heretics, deceivers, and rioters who forbid good works, and we are all supposed to be killed and beaten to death.

The Jews should have stayed with their sign and command, with which they had grasped God and with which they also should have grasped Him again. They should not have devised new signs and ways. Now, however, that same sign has reached its end; it lasted until [the time of] Christ. We Christians, however, should not pray in that way; neither should we apply that sign to ourselves. That is now finished. The Jews were able to pray: “O Lord God, who brought us out of Egypt,” etc. Now, if He had said to me: “I have brought you out of Egypt,” then I would be right to pray “O Lord, who brought me out of Egypt,” etc.

If I do not want to go wrong, then I must grasp the word that has resounded throughout all the world, which is this: “I have given My Son for you, who has shed His blood for you, has died for you and redeemed you and reconciled you with Me, making Me to be your friend and Father.”

Thus I may pray now like this: “Heavenly Father, who created all things, who brought the children of Israel through the Red Sea, through the wilderness, and through the Jordan, who delivered them from the hand of Pharaoh, fed them with the bread from heaven, gave them water to drink from the rock,” etc. But none of that applies to me. “You, who accomplished great miracles with Noah”¹ also doesn’t apply to me. “You, who allowed Peter to walk on the sea [Matt. 14:29], who commanded the lepers to show themselves to the priests [Matt. 8:4]” also doesn’t apply to me. I must call upon Him and grasp Him with the word and sign that pertains to me, namely, like so: “Lord, who redeemed me through the blood of Your Son, Jesus Christ.” That word pertains to me. That penetrates into heaven. With that word I am certain to find God. He has bound Himself to that. Thus He determines a particular way for the Jewish people to grasp Him in this work,

in which they certainly found Him. That is why Moses writes in the First Commandment: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt,” etc. “You Jews should remember this work and recognize Me through it.” That sign endured up until [the time of] Christ, but no longer.

I want to warn all preachers here again because I see that it is necessary for them to learn well how to use Moses properly, keep from burdening the people with Moses, and no longer let him have authority except as an example and where he is an evangelist and prophet. If a preacher wants to drive you to Moses, then ask him whether you were also brought out of Egypt under Moses. If he says, “No,” then say, “Then what concern is Moses to me, seeing that he is talking to the people who were brought out of Egypt? Moses has definitely come to an end, for his office lasted only up until the time of Christ.”

Thus this text emphatically compels [us to believe] that the Ten Commandments were given to the Jews alone, and not to the Gentiles. The Third Commandment also forces this conclusion. For in fact the Gentiles were not brought out of Egypt. We have a different work and a different teacher, who does not compel and terrify as Moses did but who offers grace, comforts, gives, helps, and delivers, namely, Jesus Christ. In the times of Adam and Abel the sacrificing was valid. That was their sign, but it does not pertain to me at all. Noah had his word and command about the rainbow and other things—that does not pertain to me. Abraham had circumcision, which was given to him as a sign of his faith (Romans 4 [11]), but it does not pertain to me. Isaac and Jacob had their own command.¹ Moses, Aaron, and Joshua also had their word, but I am not told that I should lead the children of Israel out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, wilderness, and Jordan, and yet it is God’s word and command. Since He does not say, “I command you to do this and that,” I should not apply it to myself. David had a word that Christ should be born from him, as is often mentioned in Scripture [cf. 2 Sam. 7:11–13]. Paul also highlights this in Romans 1 [3–4], and in the Gospel Christ is repeatedly called a Son of David [cf. Matt. 1:1; 21:9]. That does not mean, however, that I have to be Christ’s father according to the flesh. “But it’s God’s Word!” as the fanatics and sectarian spirits babble. True, but it is not said to me. Moses also had a command to build the tabernacle and institute the priesthood [cf. Exod. 25:8–9; Leviticus 8–9], but you and I have not been commanded to do those things.

Throughout the whole of Scripture, therefore, look at all of God’s words and commands, but do not apply them to yourself unless you are sure that they have been addressed to you. Then you should do what they say. Do not concern yourself with what others have been told and commanded. The sectarian spirits will tell you: “Well, God said this to Moses; therefore, I must do

it too.” Dear fellow, you should say, “That is not what matters. Those words extend no further than to the one who received the command.” As recorded in the first book of Moses [cf. Gen. 1:20 and 24], God commands the fish to swim in the water, the birds to fly in the air, the creeping things to creep on the earth, the sun to shine—that is God’s Word too. Does that mean you want to become a fish and live in the water, glide in the air like a bird, shine like the sun, moon, and stars? Look at the predicament you will be in! Do you want to ignore the fact that Moses was given to a particular people? Therefore, do not apply him to the whole world, but only to his people.⁶

Thus we have a reason for why God bears this name: “I am your God, who brought you out of Egypt.” It is because He receives them as His special people, whom He has chosen to be His possession. Now, however, ¹it no longer applies. For I do not call upon God now as one who has brought me out of Egypt. Let that be your answer to the fanatical spirits, and use that to silence those who would force Moses upon us. Let them boldly go their way with their Moses, but you let Moses remain a lawgiver for the people of Israel instead of bringing him down on the necks of the Gentiles and Christians. For in the New Testament he is at an end and, along with his laws, no longer applies. He must crawl before Christ. We Gentiles do, however, have a law. Our own conscience and reason teach us that. St. Paul likewise says in Roman 1 [:19–21] that the Gentiles also have knowledge of God, for “God has revealed it to them because they see God’s invisible attributes, that is, His eternal power and divine nature, which are perceived in the things that have been done ever since the creation of the world. But they did not honor Him as God,” etc. With these words St. Paul shows that all Gentiles have knowledge of God, namely, that He has created all things, gives all things, nourishes and preserves all things. Therefore, their own conscience compels them to give glory to God and thank Him for all good things. Thus even if Moses had never written the Law, all people in fact have the Law written in their heart by nature. For redundancy, however, God also gave the Jews a written Law, that is, the Ten Commandments, which are nothing other than the law of nature, which is naturally written in our heart. We naturally feel in our conscience what Moses wrote in the Ten Commandments, [as we see in] Romans 2 [:14–15]. The apostle says, “For when the Gentiles, who do not have the Law” (that is, the Law written by Moses), “by nature still do what is contained in the Law, they are a law to themselves while they do not have the Law. By this they show that the work of the Law is written in their hearts while their conscience also bears witness, and their thoughts accuse or excuse one another,” etc.

⁶ Instead of the previous two sentences, Rörer’s notes read: “Moses has been preached to us in this way: we have him merely as an example” (WA 16:430.4).

¹Now although both Jews and Gentiles have a law, they have still failed to find God, for the Law cannot be fulfilled apart from God's Spirit and faith. "For God has imprisoned all under unbelief, that He may have mercy on all" [Rom. 11:32], and all the world has sinned in Adam [cf. Rom. 5:12]. Now, God has honored the Jews and granted them the privilege of redundantly giving them the Ten Commandments orally and in writing because He wanted to become man from the Jews. Yet we Gentiles, to whom God has given no written Law, ought to honor, praise, and thank Him no less [than the Jews],⁷ for He is our God as well as the Jews' God, about which we will talk more in what follows.

I am the Lord your God.

We must highlight these words alone, separately from the others (namely, from these: "who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery," etc.), and pay close attention to them because they concern all of us, the whole world in general and every single person in particular, Jews and Gentiles—not because Moses wrote this but because God has created, preserves, and governs all people. It is as St. Paul also says in Romans 3 [:29–30]: "Is God the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, indeed, of the Gentiles also, seeing that it is one God, who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith." However, God says these words ("I am the Lord your God") to the whole people no differently than if only one person were there. He does not say "I am the Lord your God," with "your" in the plural, but in the singular.⁸ Take a good look at this little word "your" in the singular, for the greatest emphasis is on this little word. He says, "I am the Lord your God," as if He wanted to say, "I want to accept all of you and each one in particular, as if there were only one and no other on earth. And I do this so that you will grasp, heed, and keep My Word all the more diligently so that no one may say, 'God has indeed given the Law, solemnly declaring that He will be gracious to people and will be their God [and that He] will act toward them as a father toward his child, but perhaps it doesn't apply to me. Who knows whether He also means me? It is addressed only to the multitude.'" For it is the way of people to cast God's Word to the wind.⁹ They just gawk at other people instead of accepting it and thinking that it applies to them. God wants to prevent this and stop them from gaping and

⁷ The bracketed text is found in Röer's notes (WA 16:432.1).

⁸ *nicht: Ich bin der HERR ewer GOTT, sondern dein gott* (WA 16:432.30). Here and in what follows the translation paraphrases *euer* ("your" plural) and *dein* ("your" singular) to express Luther's distinction in modern English.

⁹ See above, p. 108 n. 9.