

The Ten Commandments: No Other Gods

Today we begin a study of the Ten Commandments. These laws summarize the moral law of God in both the Old and New Testaments. It is vital for us that we give due consideration to this word from God's mouth. From our text today, we can see that God is our Law-giver, our Liberator, and the Love of our lives.

Exodus 20:1-3

1 And God spoke all these words, saying,

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

3 "You shall have no other gods before me."

I. God is our Law-giver (v.1)

The validity and urgency of any law is based on its rootedness in the moral law of God. It is significant, therefore, that Exodus 20 begins with, "And God spoke all these words..."

II. God is our Liberator (v.2)

In verse 2 God introduces Himself as the Liberator of His people. This verse is known as the preamble to the Ten Commandments, in which God identifies Himself, His people, and what He has done for them. He reminds us that He has redeemed us out of slavery, and therefore He brings us to Mt. Sinai to make covenant with us. The Ten Commandments are given to us not to enslave us, but rather to enable us to maintain our freedom. James 1:25 calls the law of God, "the perfect law, the law of liberty." God announces Himself as Liberator, and then gives us the laws by which we can continue to be liberated. The Gospel is always announced to us first and then the walk with God is described (see the outline of both Romans and Ephesians).

III. God is the Love of our lives (v.3)

In the first commandment, which summarizes all of the commandments in one sense, God explains to us that we must make a choice. It is the choice of love. God has chosen us. We must choose Him. The Israelites had come out of Egypt where there were many gods. God had triumphed over them all. They are now headed to Canaan, where there are many other gods. They must choose God above them all, renouncing any god that seeks to compete with Yahweh. This exclusive devotion to the one true and living God is expressed in our worship, our profession of our faith, and our ethical choices.

Discussion Questions

1. Why is Exodus 20:1 important to us? What practical difference does it make that God is our Law-giver?
2. What are the three uses of the Law of God? Which use is being emphasized in Exodus 20? How do you know? (see vs. 2)
3. What does verse 2 teach us about God's intentions in giving us His Law?

4. Why is the first commandment the first commandment? (see vs. 3)

5. How does keeping God's commandments secure our freedom?

6. What are the most common idols of our own time and place? How can we break the alluring power of these idols in our lives?

Going Deeper

1. What idols are alluring you?

2. What do you need to do to destroy these idols that are competing with your love for God alone?