

## What's the Message – Lesson 27

Our study today explores the significance of God's moral and civil law given at Mt. Sinai.

Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Savior. We pray that God will use this study to help you see that God's ancient moral law is still as pertinent and applicable to our lives today as it was over 3000 years ago. Amen.

In our last lesson we saw one of the major themes that we set forth in our study of Genesis being repeated, the theme of learning to trust completely in God. It is a theme that we will see often in our studies throughout the entire Bible, since it is a lesson that each generation needs to learn over and over again.

Our story begins in Exodus chapter 19 as the Israelites came to Mt. Sinai. The scene is set for us as God speaks to Moses: Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

So Moses spoke to the people and gave them instructions to prepare themselves, to be clean and pure, for the Lord was coming to them. In an awesome display of thunder and lightening on the mountain they saw the power of God; and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain where He gave Moses the Ten Commandments written on tablets of stone.

Different churches have divided these ten with slight variations into two different groups: the first group, or table, concerning mankind's relationship with God, and the second table dealing with mankind's relationship to each other. And so the familiar commandments are briefly; the first table: Have no other gods, do not take the name of the Lord in vain, and keep the Sabbath day. The second table: honor you parents; do not kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, or covet your neighbor's property.

When the people saw and heard the majestic display by God, they were afraid and stood back, and said to Moses: You speak to us and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die. Then Moses replied Do not fear; for God has come to prove you, and that the fear of Him may be before your eyes, that you may not sin.

Then in chapters 21 through 23, God gave Moses further instructions on the civil law that the Israelites would need to follow to survive the stress of the desert and their early years in the promised land. And we see their response in chapter 24, verse 3: Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice, and said, "All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do."

And with that brief summary we have this magnificent and wonderful story of one of the major turning points in the life of early Israel. But, Teacher, what does it mean to us. Can this still apply to our lives today?

Yes, this is an ancient story, and the Ten Commandments are ancient law, so it is a fair question to ask if they might still apply today.

Several years ago I wrote a Bible study on the Commandments and asked that same question. The sub-title to the study was: are they still relevant today? In answer, I used articles from today's newspapers to show that they are relevant indeed, that mankind has not changed at all in the thousands of years since, only the culture and technology associated with it. Some of the people in our audience today have taken that course and have seen how broadly these commandments cover our lives; that they are as pertinent today as they were then.

Naturally, the civil law that was given for the Israelites to deal with their situation at that time no longer applies, and they have been replaced, but the Commandments are eternal in their application. So we go back to the verse you cited in the opening, chapter 19, verse 5. Now, therefore, if you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my possession among all peoples.

Once again, the sum of it all is obedience. It is a theme we set forth several times in our study of Genesis. It began in the Garden of Eden, and it continues today. God is our creator, and He alone knows what is best for His creation. He sets the rules of life and its boundaries. There are such things as absolute rules, in spite of what our society may try to tell us today.

If we obey we can be in a proper relationship with God and be His "possession among all peoples." If not, we will be at cross-purposes, and He will cast us out, just as He did Adam.

In our next study we shall explore God's instructions to Moses to build the Ark of The Covenant, and the Tabernacle.

This series has been developed and written by our director of teacher training, Mr. D. A. Senter, and is copyrighted by Lamb of God Lutheran Church in Flower Mound, Texas. Your narrator is Dale Gaus.

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