

TEXT Exodus 20:1-26; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

OBJECTIVE The students will learn that God’s first written Law was given to Moses for the Children of Israel. This directed God’s chosen people how to live in harmony with Him and with one another. They will further understand that people today must still follow God’s instructions if they desire peace with God and their fellow man.

KEY VERSE FOR ANSWER Great peace have they which love thy law.
— Psalm 119:165

KEY VERSE FOR SEARCH This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul.
— Deuteronomy 26:16

**ANSWER
TITLE:**

The Words of God

**SEARCH
TITLE:**

God’s First Written Law

REFERENCE INFORMATION

The Law, invested with divine authority and sanction, is revered because it embodies the will and wisdom of the Creator. God makes it plain that morality is not to be derived from human standards and the verdict of society, but from God himself. Right and wrong are not determined by the voice of the people, but by the voice of God. The Ten Commandments gave man the broad principles of God’s moral law, setting forth the only standard of righteousness acceptable to Him.

Originally the Law was spoken by God in a context calculated to produce unforgettable awe (Exodus 19:9-25). It was afterward “written with the finger of God” on two tables of stone (Exodus 31:18; 32:16). In fact, it was inscribed

by Him a second time after Moses in anger had shattered the first two tables (Exodus 34:1-4; Deuteronomy 10:1-4). Later the two tables of stone were placed in the Ark of the Covenant (Exodus 25:21; Deuteronomy 10:5) and thus enshrined at the very center of Israel’s worship.

Today, we no longer live under the Old Testament Law of Moses. We have a New Testament, a new covenant, given to us through Jesus (Hebrews 9:15). But while Jesus lived on earth He reiterated all except one of the Ten Commandments given to Moses. That one concerned the Sabbath Day. Most Christians chose to keep Sunday as the Lord’s Day because that was the day Christ arose from the grave.

YOUR OPENER

God's First Written Law

TEXT: Exodus 20:1-26; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

KEY VERSE: This day the LORD thy God hath commanded thee to do these statutes and judgments: thou shalt therefore keep and do them with all thine heart, and with all thy soul. — Deuteronomy 26:16

God's chosen people were the Children of Israel. His first written Law was given to them through the prophet Moses. It began with the Ten Commandments, which were later written on tables of stone by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18). All of these laws and ordinances were specific, and the people were required to know them and to teach them to their children. See Deuteronomy 6:6-9.

1. When and where did God give Moses and the Children of Israel the Ten Commandments? See Exodus 19:1,20-25.

2. Briefly write down each of the Ten Commandments.

3. Which of these commandments covered the people's relationship with God? with their fellow man?

4. What was God's promise to the Children of Israel if they kept all His commandments? See Exodus 19:5-6 and Deuteronomy 28:1-14

RESPONSES

1. God gave the Commandments on Mt. Sinai, three months after the people's deliverance from the Egyptians. Discuss with your class the fact that prior to this time the Children of Israel had been slaves. They came out of Egypt with no governmental body other than one leader appointed by God; no rules or regulations other than those given to them through Moses by the word of God. Apparently they had lived together for three months in this state. Now God calls their leader up to the mountain to establish His rules and guidelines for their conduct and worship.

2. Go over each of the Commandments with your class, showing how applicable they are even for us today. Bring out that all of them are reiterated in the New Testament except the fourth. Today, Christians keep Sunday as the Lord's Day and a day of rest from work.

3. The first four Commandments covered the people's relationship with God, and the other six, their relationship with their fellow man. Breaking any of these Commandments was a sin, and God's punishment under the Law was sure. Emphasize that today if man knows God's requirements and fails to do them, it is a sin (James 4:17). And punishment, though not always immediate, is sure to come. See Romans 6:23 and Hebrews 2:1-3.

4. He promised that they would be a peculiar treasure to Him, and that He would bless and prosper them. Bring out that God never changes. Today, to those who serve Him faithfully, He has given innumerable promises of His blessings here, and eternal life in the world to come. See Mark 10:30.

ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION NOTES

5. What did Paul the Apostle say was the first commandment with promise (Ephesians 6:2,3)? What does the phrase "with promise" signify?

6. What was Jesus' reply when He was asked, "which is the great commandment in the law?" See Matthew 22:36-40.

7. What did Jesus mean, in Matthew 22:40, when He said, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets"?

8. What was the reply of the rich young ruler when Jesus told him he would have eternal life if he would "keep the commandments"? How did Jesus answer him? See Matthew 19:16-22.

9. Today we live under the New Testament covenant through Jesus Christ, and not under the Old Testament Law of Moses. Under this new covenant, where does God tell us He will put His laws? See Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Hebrews 10:16-18.

5. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land." This is the fifth Commandment given to the Children of Israel, but it is the first one with a promise directly included as a part of it. What evidences do we see that shows how this Commandment is accepted by our society today?

6. He didn't give any of the Ten Commandments, but quoted from Deuteronomy 6:5, "thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart," and Leviticus 19:18, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." See next question.

7. These two Commandments cover all the precepts God has given. If one truly loves God and his neighbor, he will do what God requires of him. Bring out that the only way a person can love God with all his heart is to first have his sins forgiven, and then continue to walk close to God.

8. The six Commandments Jesus mentioned to the young man were the six that covered a person's relationship with his fellow man. The young man said he had kept all those from his youth up, and then asked what he still lacked. Jesus' answer showed that he lacked one thing—his relationship with God. His riches had come between God and himself. He had made idols of them and broken the first two Commandments. Explain to the students that anything in their lives that puts God in a secondary place can become the same as an idol to them and hinder their love for the Lord.

9. He said He will write His laws in our hearts and minds. When His law is fixed in our hearts and minds, we have peace with God and live in harmony with Him.

YOUR WRAP-UP

SUPPLEMENTAL QUESTIONS

Why are laws necessary?

Why did God give the Ten Commandments to the Children of Israel? Could you follow the Ten Commandments and still displease God? Why or why not?

What happens when God's commandments are broken?

What was the punishment if the Children of Israel did not follow God's Law?

What will happen if we do not live by God's Word?

How does a command differ from a suggestion?

What are some of the blessings today for those who keep God's commandments?

In the ANSWER story, what was the promise Gildeah's father said would be theirs if they kept the commandments of God?

THINGS TO DO

On a chalkboard, write the title, "Classifying the Commandments." Ask your class the following questions, and any others you might think of. Write their answers on the board.

1. Which commandments tell you to do something?
2. Which commandments tell you not to do something?
3. In which commandments does God give a reason for following? What are these reasons?
4. Which commandments govern actions which are still illegal today?
5. Which commandments refer specifically to your relationship with God?
6. Which commandments refer to your relationship with other people?

Choose one student to play the part of Moses. The other students can interview "Moses," asking questions such as: "How did you feel as you walked up the mountain?" "Were you afraid?" "Do you like the rules God made?"

Write each of the commandments on separate cards. Have the students arrange them in the order given by God to Moses. Discuss each one as you come to it.

Answers for ANSWER

