

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Moses brought the children of Israel to Mt. Sinai where they were to meet face to face with the God that had delivered them from Egyptian bondage. **Exodus 19 & 20** and **Deuteronomy 5** tell this glorious and fearful story; Yahveh told Moses *"Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, and let them be ready for the third day. For on the third day Yahveh will come down on Mt. Sinai in the sight of all the people. Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightning, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the shofar was very loud, so that all the people in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain."* Here face to face with the one true God they were about to enter into a sacred relationship. Moses was bringing the bride forth to hear the terms of the marriage covenant.

The prophets bear witness that Israel is married to Yahveh. **Isaiah 54:5**, *"For your maker is your Husband"* and **Jeremiah 3:20**, *"Surely, as a wife treacherously departs from her husband, so you have dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel,"* says the LORD. **Jeremiah 31:31-32**, *"Behold the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah-not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand and lead them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them."* These are just a few of the many examples found all through the Bible.

As in any marriage relationship, sacred vows are given and received. The words spoken by God from the mountain are better understood from this context. Yahveh is presenting Himself to Israel as a husband to be. He wants to clearly state who He is; and how He is. Also, He states what kind of conduct He expects from His bride.

And God spoke all these words, saying *"I am Yahveh your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **You shall have no other gods before me.**"*

"You shall not make for yourselves a carved image-any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, Yahveh your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love me and keep my commandments."

This is a straight forward statement of introduction. I am Yahveh, I am the same God who destroyed all the Egyptian gods and lead you here. I am a jealous God,

so don't put anything before me. No other gods, no idols, no bowing down or serving anyone but me. Because I am jealous, I will visit your iniquity upon your children, all the way to the fourth generation of those who hate me. This is not unconditional love. I am also merciful to those who love me.

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

When a marriage takes place the two become one. The bride takes the name of her husband. The central meaning of this command has to do with the seriousness of the relationship with Yahveh. If you take my name, don't do it lightly. I won't overlook your guilt if you treat our relationship as vanity.

The Hebrew word "take" has a great variety of meanings, some of which are: accept, advance, bear, carry, lift or hold up, marry, magnify, respect and regard. The word "vain" means guile, as uselessness, falsely, a lie. Moses said in **Duet. 28:58** "... *fear this glorious and awesome name Yahveh your God,*" To take His name is to be married to the Holy One. He is reality, not vanity.

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"

The first command after our fearful decision to "take the Name" is to remember the Sabbath. Yahveh has sanctified a day for those in relationship with Him to rest and spend time with Him. As in all His commands He is very specific and clear. In order to be the people of the God speaking from Sinai we must remember He is the Creator. He worked for six days and on the seventh entered into rest, knowing that what He began, He was able to finish. The rest of the Sabbath is an acknowledgment of His sovereignty.

"Honor your father and your mother that your days may be long upon the land which Yahveh your God is giving you"

While this commandment is universal in its scope, it also is specific in the context of the special relationship between Yahveh and His people. Honoring parents brings peace in the family and creates an atmosphere where heritage can be meaningfully passed on from generation to generation. Yahveh's Torah is to be taught by the parents to their children. This command is intended to be a bridge; so the ancient can be passed on, into the future.

The next five commandments are given as a foundation for the moral purity Yahveh requires for His bride;

"You shall not murder"

God reveals Himself as the "I AM." He is the source of all being. Life's wellspring

issues forth from Him and flows like a river to all His creation. Murder is the unlawful and unjust intrusion of man into this river.

God is also the origin (head) over His creation. He has ordered the expression of His life as follows: God is the head of Messiah, Messiah is the head of man, man is the head of woman (wife). Yahveh commands His bride to honor life and humbly yield to its established flow.

Murder can also be a condition of the heart. "He that hates his brother is a murderer." God's people must have a clean heart where love can flourish, first for God and also for one another.

"You shall not commit adultery"

Yahveh God is a covenant making and a covenant keeping God. He is loving, faithful, true to His word, forgiving, long-suffering, trustworthy and many other attributes necessary for lasting relationship. He would have His bride to be no different.

God can only be known within the bounds of covenant. In Messiah we are brought near to God and are no longer strangers to the covenants of promise. Through our trust in Messiah we experience an entrance into these the sacred bounds. Once inside Yahveh commands a life of single hearted faithfulness to Him, as to a husband . To commit adultery is a breaking of covenant. Therefore, it is impossible to know God if we have a covenant breaking heart.

"You shall not steal"

Stealing is to take something that belongs to another. Yahveh says through the prophet Malachi "*Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed me...in tithes and offerings.*" In bringing to God what he commands the heart stays free from greed.

Yahveh as a good husband desires to be a provider. Those who would have intimate fellowship with Him must be able to trust His provision. With our hearts free from the love of money, there will be no root of evil springing up and hindering our relationship with God. When we keep back the better part, we take that which belongs to God and break His command.

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor"

The key word here is "false". Yahveh is true and there is nothing false in Him. It is impossible for God to lie. His holy nature demands veracity. We are called to be His witnesses and to speak the truth in love. We cannot give a false witness about our brother and hope to give a true witness about God.

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

Yahveh wants a bride that is content. Contentment is a condition free of covetousness. All our desires, needs, and passions, are met in the One God of Israel. If we have Him then nothing else is important. To covet anything that is our neighbor's reveals a lack in our relationship with God.

After this terrifying encounter the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. Today Messiah Yeshua is leading us to an encounter with the same God. We have been called to draw near, not to shrink back. If we put our trust in Messiah, He will lead us into the thick darkness where Yahveh dwells. As we begin to ascend the mountain we experience something we didn't expect. Inside the burning, the blackness, and tempest, we find the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, angels, a community of the firstborn, to a Judge who is the God of everyone, to Yeshua, the mediator of the new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood.

Our God is a consuming fire and as His bride we are able to dwell with the continual burning.