

third commandments. At this the Lord was angry enough to wipe them off the face of the earth, but Moses successfully entreats God to forgive them, Exodus 32:7-14. Then as Moses heads down the mountain to admonish and correct the straying idolaters, carrying the two stone tablets of the Covenant, he throws them down in anger and breaks them in a symbolic act of significance. Here see that Israel was quick to “break the Covenant” that the Lord made with them, and along with the breaking of the tablets comes the destruction of the idol and false God they had made.

The Renewal of the Covenant

After a lengthy discourse with the Lord, they replace the stone tablets with new ones in a symbolic act of “renewing the Covenant.” This takes place in Exodus 34:1-28.

Exodus 34:27-28 - 27 Then the Lord said to Moses, "Write down these words, for **in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.**" 28 So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And **he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.** NASB

At this time, God reaffirms His command for the Israelites to go up and conquer the land of Canaan, and commands the Israelites to move forward with the plans to erect the tabernacle and consecrate the Priests and implement the Ceremonial worship. From this time forward in the narrative, from the latter chapters of Exodus all the way through Deuteronomy, the Scripture traces Israel’s journey up to the east side of the Jordan, before entering into Canaan. Many more precepts and regulations for Ceremonial worship and civil government are given in the texts of Leviticus and Numbers, and then Deuteronomy is really a reiterating or repetition of the Law. In fact, the word Deuteronomy means, “repetition of the Law.” In Deuteronomy the Covenant of the Law is restated and clearly set forth.

Deuteronomy 26:16-19 - 16 "This day the Lord your God commands you to do these statutes and ordinances. You shall therefore be careful to do them with all your heart and with all your soul. 17 **You have today declared the Lord to be your God, and that you would walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments and His ordinances, and listen to His voice. 18 And the Lord has today declared you to be His people, a treasured possession,** as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments; 19 and that He shall set you high above all nations which He has made, for praise, fame, and honor; and that you shall be a consecrated people to the Lord your God, as He has spoken." NASB

This restating of the Covenant is to charge Israel from this generation forward to always obey the Lord and walk in His ways. All of this happens on the on the east side of the Jordan before they cross into Canaan. It is there where Moses dies and Joshua leads them into the promised land of Canaan.

Moral, Ceremonial, and Civil Law

As we have stated, the Bible nowhere deliberately makes distinctions in the different aspects of the Law, but rather the Law is seen as one whole body of precepts. Nevertheless, it is obvious from an overview of the Law, the Mosaic Covenant contained in the Torah, that there are three major categories of precepts addressing **Moral, Ceremonial, and Civil** aspects of God’s Covenant with Israel. These threefold precepts are:

- **Moral Law** - as summed up in the Decalogue, the 10 Commandments, Exodus 20:1-17
- **Ceremonial Law** - prescribing the ritual and all the typical (shadow) enactments associated with the Tabernacle and the Priesthood explaining how God was to be worshipped through Ceremony and Rite

- **Civil Law** – precepts relating to and governing the people in their national, political and social life for the purpose of establishing justice and order in their society

Since these distinctions are not deliberately pointed out, they simply serve as a way to understand and categorize the Law for purpose of study and close examination. Having already discussed this at length earlier in this study, we will only briefly look at some texts which bear these distinctions out, and discuss the general application of them.

Moral Law – Eternal moral principles from an eternal and moral God

The Moral Law outlines what God requires of His people who are to be “*holy*” and set apart unto Him. It gives specific guidelines about how Israel is to relate both to God and to their fellow man. All of these moral requirements are eternal moral principles and an expression of God’s nature in such a way that they define holiness in a practical way. As such it sets forth fundamental and universal moral principles.

Exodus 20:7 - 7 "**You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain**, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. NASB

Leviticus 19:1-4 - 19 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "Speak to all the congregation of the sons of Israel and say to them, '**You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.** 3 '**Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father, and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the Lord your God.** 4 '**Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods;** I am the Lord your God. NASB

Exodus 22:20-24 - 20 "**He who sacrifices to any god, other than to the Lord alone, shall be utterly destroyed.** 21 And **you shall not wrong a stranger or oppress him,** for you were strangers in the land of Egypt. 22 **You shall not afflict any widow or orphan.** 23 If you afflict him at all, and if he does cry out to Me, I will surely hear his cry; 24 and **My anger will be kindled, and I will kill you with the sword;** and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless. NASB

These laws would many times also set forth a punishment for the violation of them. These punishments, (which could range from a simple restitution or blood sacrifice to the death penalty), typically show the severity of the crime.

Ceremonial Law - The Tabernacle and the Temple

The Ceremonial Law put forth regulations for the worship of God which was to be a continual and perpetual tradition and formal custom among them from generation to generation. These were to be carried out at a **Tabernacle**, a “*tent of meeting*” where the people would meet with God. This Tabernacle was built according to specific instructions and ornate features and furniture that God had given instructions for the creation.

Exodus 25:1-9 - 25 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "**Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise My contribution.** 3 And this is the contribution which you are to raise from them: gold, silver and bronze, 4 blue, purple and scarlet material, fine linen, goat hair, 5 rams' skins dyed red, porpoise skins, acacia wood, 6 oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense, 7 onyx stones and setting stones, for the ephod and for the breastpiece. 8 **And let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them.** 9 **According to all that I am going to show you, as the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furniture, just so you shall construct it.** NASB

In the Ceremonial Law God directed certain daily, weekly, monthly, and annual rites and ceremonies which were to be observed as a matter of ceremonial worship unto God. This was both for the glory and fame of God’s name and the good and well-being of the people.

Exodus 29:38-46 - 38 "Now **this is what you shall offer on the altar: two one year old lambs each day, continuously.** 39 The one lamb you shall offer in the morning, and the other lamb you shall offer at twilight; 40 and there shall be one-tenth of an ephah of fine flour mixed with one-fourth of a hin of beaten oil, and one-fourth of a hin of wine for a libation with one lamb. 41 And the other lamb you shall offer at twilight, and shall offer with it the same grain offering as the morning and the same libation, **for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the Lord.** 42 **It shall be a continual burnt offering throughout your**