

Passover. This was instituted to remind the Israelites that they were slaves before, and if God had not purchased them, there would be no Passover to celebrate. Therefore, the Israelites should circumcise the foreign slaves and sojourners (immigrants) who desired to worship God so that they could celebrate Passover as well.

One last thing to note was that this celebration was a moment for parental instruction, vs. 8,

Exodus 13:8–9, 14: “And you shall tell your son on that day, saying, ‘It is because of what Yahweh did for me when I came out of Egypt.’ “And it will be as a sign to you on your hand and as a memorial between your eyes, that the law of Yahweh may be in your mouth; for with a strong hand Yahweh brought you out of Egypt...And it will be **when your son asks you in time to come, saying, ‘What is this?’ then you shall say to him, ‘With a strong hand Yahweh brought us out of Egypt, from the house of slavery.’**”

And this instruction was given so that for generation after generation, Israel was to celebrate and remember the work of their God, YHWH, that He performed in delivering them out of Egypt by His strong hand.

II. Israel in the Wilderness (13:17-18:27)

General Overview

In this section, God shows, once and for all, Egypt and the World that **He is supreme** by defeating Pharaoh in a final *battle*. Moreover, He shows His people **His awesome power as He fights for them** and the significance of His presence as **He is with them**, personally leading them out of Egypt.

Sadly, throughout this section, Israel will also demonstrate their unbelief as they doubt God's provision and strength to fight for them. However, God will demonstrate **His faithfulness to His promise and His covenant love for His people** by providing for them over and over again.

1. God's Wisdom (Exod 13:17-22)

After Pharaoh drives Israel out, we see God personally and physically lead His people,

Exodus 13:21–22: “And Yahweh **was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day** to guide them on the way, and in **a pillar of fire by night to give them light**, that they might go by day and by night. **He did not take away**

the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people."

Also, notice back in verse 17 that He knows the hearts of His people and prevents them from taking an easy route that would ultimately lead to their rebellion, Exodus 13:17: "Now it happened that when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not guide them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, "**Lest the people change their minds when they see war**, and return to Egypt."

2. God Delivers Israel from Egypt climatically (Exod 14:1-15:21)

A. Pharaoh's Pursuit (14:1-12)

In chapter 14, we see something interesting happen. As God is leading Israel out of Egypt, He causes the people to *turn back*, which is another way of saying turn around. From Pharaoh's vantage point, these Israelites seem hopelessly wandering in a circle and are sitting ducks camped with their backs to a large body of water. This is a trap set to draw Pharaoh into one final showdown. Verse 3,

Exodus 14:3-4: "And Pharaoh will say of the sons of Israel, '**They are wandering in confusion in the land**; the wilderness has shut them in.'

"Thus **I will harden Pharaoh's heart** with strength, and he will pursue them; and **I will be glorified through Pharaoh and all his army, so that the Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh.**" And they did so."

And in verse 5, we see Pharaoh fall into God's trap,

Exodus 14:5-7: "Then the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, and **the heart of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people**, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" So he made his chariot ready and took his people with him; and he took six hundred choice chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them."

That day, the chariot was one of the most advanced pieces of military technology. It was what made the Egyptian army so successful. Notice that Pharaoh hand-picks 600 officers with him. These 600 were similar to a special forces group. These were the best in the world regarding military strength, and these were the men Pharaoh summons on top of all the other chariots of Egypt.

When Pharaoh and his massive army arrive, what do we see?

Exodus 14:10: "Now Pharaoh drew near, and the sons of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and **they became very afraid; so the sons of Israel cried out to Yahweh.**"

Israel feared who? Pharaoh. They cry out, not for salvation, but in unbelief, Exodus 14:11–12: "Then they said to Moses, "Is it because there were **no graves in Egypt** that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? **What is this you have done against us** in bringing us out of Egypt? "Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? **For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than for us to die in the wilderness.**"

It is as if they had forgotten all that God had just done to Pharaoh and Egypt. They are dismayed that *Moses* brought them out of Egypt. They would instead leave and serve the Egyptians as slaves of Pharaoh. With the very presence of God before them in the pillar, it seems that they have *forgotten* Him.

B. God's Action (14:13-31)

In response to their unbelief, Moses commands the people, saying,

Exodus 14:13–14: "But Moses said to the people, **"Do not fear! Stand by and see the salvation of Yahweh which He will accomplish for you** today; for the Egyptians whom you have seen today, you will never see them again forever. **"Yahweh will fight for you, and you will keep silent."**

He tells Israel, be silent and watch Him fight for you!

Exodus 14:15–18: "Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Why are you crying out to Me? Speak to the sons of Israel so that they go forward. "As for you, raise up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea and split it, and the sons of Israel shall go through the midst of the sea on dry land. **"As for Me, behold, I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians with strength so that they will go in after them; and I will be glorified through Pharaoh and all his army, through his chariots and his horsemen. "Then the Egyptians will know that I am Yahweh, when I am glorified through Pharaoh, through his chariots and his horsemen."**

With this final battle - God will have glory over Pharaoh and the most enormous army in the world so that Egypt will know He is YHWH. After this proclamation, notice the movement of the Pillar of Cloud in verse 19,

Exodus 14:19–20: "Then **the angel of God, who had been going before the camp of Israel**, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them. **So it came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel**; and there was the cloud along with the darkness, yet it gave light at night. Thus the one did not come near the other all night."

The Pillar of Cloud moves from the front of the camp to its rear to separate the Israelite camp from the Egyptian army. Similar to Creation and the 9th Plague, The cloud separated darkness from light, causing the Egyptians to live in pitch-black darkness and the Israelites to have a night filled with light so they might move. But where?

Exodus 14:21–22: "Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and **Yahweh swept the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea into dry ground**, so the waters were split. So the sons of Israel went through the midst of the sea on the dry land, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left."

Again, as He did in Creation, God caused the sea's waters to separate and dry the ground at the bottom so that Israel and all their livestock could cross between two walls of water. After Israel was guided safely across the sea, God allowed the Egyptian army to enter the dry sea ground. But in verse 24, we see Him intervene,

Exodus 14:24–25: "Then at the morning watch, **Yahweh looked down** on the camp of the Egyptians **through the pillar of fire and cloud** and brought the camp of the Egyptians into confusion. And **He caused their chariot wheels to swerve**, and **He made them drive with difficulty**; so the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from Israel, for Yahweh is fighting for them against the Egyptians."

See that at this moment, even the Egyptian army knows that YHWH is fighting for Israel. At that moment, God caused the sea to return to normal, thus finally destroying the strongest men of the greatest army of the world's first superpower.

Exodus 14:30–31: "Thus Yahweh saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Then Israel saw the great hand which Yahweh had used against the Egyptians; and the people feared Yahweh, and they believed in Yahweh and in His servant Moses."

This war began with Pharaoh mocking God by declaring, "who is YHWH?" and ended with YHWH humiliating and destroying Pharaoh with His incredible power. That day began with Israel fearing Pharaoh, ignoring YHWH, and blaming Moses for the Exodus. It ended with Israel fearing YHWH and believing Him.

C. Worship to the Lord (15:1-21)

When the Israelites reached the other side of the sea, Moses led them in worship in what is called the Song of Moses. The theme of the *Song of Moses* is that **God has unstoppable power, and He is supreme over all the gods.**

It is here that we find the second and final use of the word for salvation, in verse 2,

Exodus 15:2 **"Yah is my strength and song, And He has become my salvation; This is my God,** and I will praise Him; My father's God, and I will extol Him."

This word was first used to describe Moses' salvation of Jethro's daughters from some bullies at a well. Here, we see that that moment was a type and foreshadowing of God's salvation of His entire nation from the world's greatest army by a far larger body of water. In verse 11, Moses ascribes to God's ultimate supremacy, saying,

Exodus 15:11: **"Who is like You among the gods, O Yahweh?** Who is like You, majestic in holiness,

Then, in verse 13, He praises God for His love,

Exodus 15:13: **"In Your lovingkindness You have guided the people whom You have redeemed; In Your strength You have led them to Your holy habitation."**

God is to be praised for His wrath against Israel's enemies *and* His love in leading Israel to their promised land. Then, in verse 14, see that the nations will know the news of this salvation of God,

Exodus 15:14: **"The peoples have heard, they tremble;** Anguish has seized the inhabitants of Philistia."

Moses ends his song by looking forward to the final end of God's saving work,

Exodus 15:17–18: **"You will bring them and plant them in the mountain of Your inheritance,** The place, O Yahweh, which You have **made for You to inhabit,** The sanctuary, O Lord, which Your hands have established. **"Yahweh shall reign forever and ever."**

Moses anticipates God's fulfillment of His promise to return Israel to the promised land and establish them on His mountain, where He will abide with His people and reign over all the world forever and ever.

Christ Connection

Moses anticipates the glorious and final outcome of Israel's salvation. God will plant them on His Mountain, where He will live and reign forever over them. This alludes to Eden, the capital of God's Creation. Which was a source of four rivers streaming from it, implying that it was a garden on top of a mountain. And it is where God walked with Adam and Eve. But ultimately, this points forward to the final dwelling place of God and His people, the New Heavens and New Earth.

There, the trees of the Garden of Eden will be planted again, and a river will spring forth from it. Where Christ will dwell with us and rule over us forever and ever. As the martyrs who overcame and stood before the throne of God in Heaven, awaiting the defeat of the Anti-Christ and Satan and the final deliverance of Christ, John writes that they sing a song,

Revelation 15:2-4: "Then I saw something like a sea of glass mixed with fire, and those who have overcome the beast and his image and the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. And **they sang the song of Moses, the slave of God, and the song of the Lamb**, saying, "GREAT AND MARVELOUS ARE YOUR WORKS, O LORD GOD, THE ALMIGHTY; RIGHTEOUS AND TRUE ARE YOUR WAYS, KING OF THE NATIONS! "WHO WILL NOT FEAR, O LORD, AND GLORIFY YOUR NAME? For You alone are holy; For ALL THE NATIONS WILL COME AND WORSHIP BEFORE YOU, FOR YOUR RIGHTEOUS ACTS HAVE BEEN REVEALED."

3. God Provides Water (Exodus 15:22-27)

Sadly, just three short days later, the Israelites are filled with unbelief and a heart of complaining.

Exodus 15:23-24: "And they came to Marah, but they could not drink the waters of Marah, **for they were bitter**; therefore it was named Marah. **So the people grumbled at Moses**, saying, "What shall we drink?"

This prompts Moses to cry out to God to provide - verse 25,

Exodus 15:25: "Then he cried out to Yahweh, **and Yahweh showed him a tree**; and he threw it into the waters, and **the waters became sweet**. There He set for them a statute and a judgment, and there He tested them."

This is significant because the word translated "show" is the Hebrew root word for *Torah*. The word *Torah* describes the Law of God that will soon be revealed. *God is here to establish the nature of His Law*. The *Torah* is given to Israel to show or *point to that which will provide healing and life* instead of judgment and plagues. Note that God also uses a tree to provide life, like He did in the Garden of Eden.

Christ Connection

From this, we can connect the Law points to how God's people can return to Eden. Ultimately, this moves us forward to the tree on which the Son of God was killed. It is by the sacrifice on this tree that all who believe would have eternal life. Hear the Words of Jesus recorded in John 7:37-38:

"Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, **"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.**" He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, 'From his innermost being will **flow rivers of living water.**"

If we tie this all together, we see that the Torah - the Law is given to point to how people can return to Eden and experience the eternal relationship with God that Adam and Eve once had. This is what Paul says in Galatians 3:24:

"Therefore **the Law has become our tutor unto Christ**, so that we may be justified by faith."

See here that The Law was never intended to give eternal life. Its purpose was and is to point to the One who can.

4. God Provides Food (Exod 16:1-36)

In chapter 16, we see that even after God had provided for His people with the water at Marah, the Israelites continued to complain and doubt God.

Exodus 16:2-3: "And the whole congregation of the sons of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness. And the sons of Israel said to them, **"Would that we had died by the hand of Yahweh in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full;** for you have brought us out into this wilderness to put this whole assembly to death with hunger."

See that they again say that they wish they were still slaves in Egypt, where they could eat as much meat and bread as they wanted. Despite their unbelief, God miraculously provides them bread from heaven and meat as quail.

In verse 19, God set instructions for how the Israelites should eat this food to test them and see if they would obey His command as faithful slaves.

Exodus 16:19-21: "And Moses said to them, **"Let no man leave any of it until morning."** **But they did not listen to Moses, and some left part of it until morning**, and it bred worms and became foul; and Moses was angry with them. So they gathered it morning by morning, every man as much as he should eat; but the sun would grow hot, and it would melt."

Israel's grade for Test #1: Fail. In verse 23, we find another test,

Exodus 16:23: "And he said to them, "This is what Yahweh has spoken: **Tomorrow is a sabbath observance, a holy sabbath to Yahweh.** Bake what you will bake and boil what you will boil, and all that is in excess put aside to be kept until morning."

Here, we see the beginning of the institution of the Sabbath, a day set apart to rest and worship YHWH. And in verse 27, what do we see? Israel working to disobey Him,

Exodus 16:27–28: "Now it happened on the seventh day, that some people went out to gather, but they found none. Then Yahweh said to Moses, "**How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?**"

Israel's grade for test #2: Failure. God demonstrated His power and His control over all Creation when He sent the ten plagues on the Egyptians. He showed His might and His desire to fight for and protect His people. And in all this, He has shown His faithfulness to fulfill the promises that He has made to return them to the Promised Land. And yet, Israel doubts and disobeys God. They grumble and complain against Him. They are discontent with the places He has them go and the things He makes them do, and they wish that they were slaves of Pharaoh instead of slaves of God, and they act accordingly.

5. God Continues to Provide (Exod 17:1-7)

Sadly, as the camp continues to move, they grumble and complain against God because they run out of water. And yet God continues to provide miraculously - 17:5,

Exodus 17:5–7: "Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Pass before the people and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. "Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. So he named the place Massah and Meribah because of the contending of the sons of Israel, and **because they tested Yahweh**, saying, "Is Yahweh among us or not?"

In the previous chapter, God declared that He was testing Israel. Just as a teacher has the authority to test his students, so does God have the authority to test the faithfulness of His slaves. But see how disrespectful it was for Israel to test Him, to see if they were still with him or not.

Christ Connection

Later in Deuteronomy 6:16, God gives this command, "16 You shall not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah." This is the very verse that Jesus quoted to Satan when Satan tempted Him in the *wilderness* in Matthew 4:7 as He resisted Satan's temptations, demonstrating that He was the true Israel, the true Son of God.

The Apostle Matthew constructed His gospel narrative to demonstrate that Jesus was God's ultimate and faithful Son. Remember that in Exodus 4, God called Israel His firstborn Son. He delivered them out of Egypt, baptized them through the waters of the Red Sea, guided them through the wilderness, and finally brought them to the mountain where He was to give the Law. In Matthew 2, he records that Jesus was taken down to Egypt to avoid the mandate to kill the firstborn. In Matthew 3, Jesus is taken into the river Jordan to be baptized. In Matthew 4, the Spirit takes Jesus up in the wilderness, where He passes the test. In Matthew 5, we see Jesus on a mountain, giving a new teaching, not filled with the curses of the Law, but with declarations of blessing. As the centurion declared at the Cross in Matthew 27:54, "truly this is the Son of God."

6. God Protects His People (Exod 17:8-16)

After these tests and failures, we come to a significant story in Israel's history and international impact, their first battle - verse 8,

Exodus 17:8-10: "Then Amalek came and fought against Israel at Rephidim. So Moses said to Joshua, "Choose men for us and go out, fight Amalek. Tomorrow **I will take my stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.**" And Joshua did as Moses told him, to fight against Amalek; and Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill."

Now, Amalek was a descendant of Esau, the brother of Jacob. So then it is not surprising that the first *struggle* that the descendants of Jacob enter into after leaving Egypt is with the descendants of Esau. See here how God uses Moses to stretch out his hand and staff like he did with the Red Sea. The point is this: even though Israelite men are engaging in battle with the Amalekites, it is God who is fighting for Israel just as He did against the Egyptians.

In verse 14, God makes this promise for the future,

Exodus 17:14: "Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Write this in a book as a memorial and recite it in Joshua's hearing, that **I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.**"

This promise plays a pivotal role in the failure of King Saul in 1 Samuel. But it finds its ultimate fulfillment in the story of Queen Esther and her anti-semitic enemy, Haman the Amalekite.

7. God Confirms His Greatness to the Nations (Exod 18:1-27)

In the previous section, God cursed the nations who condemned Israel. However, on the flip side, we see in chapter 18 that God will bless the nations who bless

Israel, just as He promised Abraham. In verse 1, we see Moses reunited with his father, Jethro,

Exodus 18:1: "Now Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, **heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel His people, how Yahweh had brought Israel out of Egypt.**"

We see that God's fame is spreading throughout the surrounding region. Moses' father-in-law did not visit Moses because he wanted to see his grandsons. He came because he heard of the mighty acts of God. Testimony of YHWH's salvation spread fast, and Midian came to experience the blessing of God's people.

Upon hearing the acts of God from Moses, we see Jethro respond - in verse 9, Exodus 18:9–11: "And **Jethro rejoiced over all the goodness which Yahweh had done to Israel**, that He had delivered them from the hand of the Egyptians. So Jethro said, "**Blessed be Yahweh** who delivered you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, and who delivered the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. "**Now I know that Yahweh is greater than all the gods**; for in this matter they acted presumptuously against the people."

See how God uses His people to show the World around Him that He is the One true God. This is Israel's purpose, and it is how they become a blessing to all the world, as God promised to Abraham.

Upon declaring supremacy to YHWH, we see Jethro responds with worship, Exodus 18:12: "Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God, and **Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses' father-in-law before God.**"

As we will see in Leviticus, the burnt offering represented the complete consecration of one's life to God. After making this sacrifice, Jethro the Midianite sits down with Moses, Aaron, and all the representatives of the tribes of Israel for a fellowship meal.

In this story, we see what it looks like for Israel to fulfill its mission. They declare the salvation and supremacy of YHWH to the nations. The nations are blessed with faith to see and know that YHWH is supreme, and they respond with worship and consecration. And then there is a feast of fellowship between the nations and the Israelites. As we will see, Israel fails miserably in its mission. However, the prophet of Isaiah foretells of a day when Israel will not forget, and they will share a fellowship meal with all the nations and with the Lord,

Isaiah 25:6–7: "And Yahweh of hosts will prepare a lavish banquet for all peoples on this mountain; A banquet of aged wine, choice pieces with marrow, And refined, aged wine. And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, Even the veil which is stretched over all nations."

Christ Connection

In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he walks the church through the history of the Exodus to teach them a lesson about their salvation and identity in Christ.

Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10:4:

"And all drank the same spiritual drink, for they were drinking from a spiritual rock which followed them, **and the rock was Christ.**"

In our text, YHWH stands before the rock so that when Moses strikes the rock, He is implicitly striking YHWH, which results in life-saving water. From this point forward, God is often identified as the Rock. Moses himself makes this connection first in his song found in Deut 32. He calls God the Rock five times in that song. And in verse 13 of that song, Moses remembers this moment in Exodus 17, of how God provided sustenance for Israel out of the rock, Deuteronomy 32:13:

"He (YHWH) made him (Israel) ride on the high places of the earth, And he ate the produce of the field; And **He made him suck honey from the rock, And oil from the flinty rock,**"

In the Gospel of John, the apostle records Jesus' teaching while celebrating the Feast of Booths, commemorating how God provided for and led Israel to the Promised Land through the wilderness. It is at this feast that John records, John 7:37–39:

"Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, **"If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink."** He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, **"From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water."** **But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him would receive;** for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified."

III. Israel at Sinai (Exodus 19:1-40:38)

General Overview

We saw that Israel has a role in God's plan for the world. Israel was to bless the nations by testifying God's salvation and supremacy. But for Israel to fulfill this role, they must live out God's Law to accurately point to God's salvation.

The main point of this section is to show how, in the Mosaic Covenant, God officially and legally establishes the people of Israel as His nation and revealed His holy and gracious name through His Law and His Nation.

1. Preparation for the Meeting on Sinai (Exod 19:1-17)

A. Purpose of the Nation (19:1-6)

In the ancient Near East, when a neighboring king conquered a people, they became that king's slaves. When this happened, there was a customary ceremony where a *covenant* was formed in which the king would declare his demands from his new slaves and their blessings for obedience and their curses for disobedience.

This is how suzerain-vassal covenants began. This is the language of the covenant. But in verse 3, we see something uniquely different from any other covenant introduction on that day,

Exodus 19:3–6: "Now Moses went up to God, and Yahweh called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: **'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I lifted you up on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself.** 'So now then, if you will indeed listen to My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be **My treasured possession** among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me **a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.**' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."

Instead of violence and harsh subjugation, God introduces His covenant by declaring that the Israelites are His slaves *because He saved them* and brought them to Himself. God says that He bore them up on eagle wings, demonstrating that he saved them from their enslavement in Egypt with swift and awesome power. And in light of God's mighty act of salvation, God lays out the primary conditions of His covenant. He declares that if they obey Him and keep His covenant, they will be His most valuable possession. This carries the idea of a sacred treasure you would protect at all costs. In this, we see the love of God behind His act of salvation. God has saved people unto Himself so that they would be *His treasured possession*.

God also declares that He will make them a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. They are to be a priestly kingdom, meaning that they, as a nation, are to act as priests between the world and the King of Kings. As we saw in chapter 18, their purpose as a nation is to mediate a relationship with the world's other nations and God. They are to fulfill this role by being a Holy nation. Their holy actions were to point to the Holy God whom they serve so that the nations will declare and know, like Jethro, that **YHWH is greater than all gods**

Lastly, It is important to note that this covenant is conditional. This is unlike the Noahic and Abrahamic covenants before, where God made unconditional promises that He was bound to fulfill. Here, God's promises are conditioned on Israel's obedience to the Law. This is where we begin to see a *tension* arise. God's plan for His people must be accomplished. However, we saw a few chapters before this that Israel is incapable of following God's Law.

Christ Connection

We must grasp this tension, for it makes Christ's work on the Cross much more climactic. Christ was the only One who fulfilled the Law perfectly. He met its standard, and His sacrificial death started the New Covenant. In this New Covenant, those who believe in Christ are seen by God as if they have Christ's perfect righteousness according to the Law. Therefore, those in Christ may now experience the vertical relationship God promised and fulfill the horizontal relationship God called Israel to here in Exodus 19. This is the logic of Peter when he declares to us saints,

1 Peter 2:9: "But you are A CHOSEN FAMILY, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;"

B. Meeting God on His Mountain (19:7-15)

After completing the Preamble, God instructs Moses to prepare to meet Him on Mount Sinai,

Exodus 19:10–11: "Yahweh also said to Moses, "Go to the people and **set them apart as holy** today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; and let them be ready for the third day, for **on the third day Yahweh will come down** on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people."

See here that before God descended upon Mount Sinai, He required the people of Israel *to consecrate* themselves. This carries the idea of making oneself holy

because of God's holiness. God commands that they also do not touch the mountain's edge. To disobey this command leads to punishment by death, thereby establishing that the ultimate punishment for disobedience to God's Law is death. In verse 16, we see God's descent,

Exodus 19:16–20: "So it happened on the third day, when it was morning, that there **were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud** upon the mountain and a **very loud trumpet sound**, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And **Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God**, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Now **Mount Sinai was all in smoke because Yahweh descended upon it in fire**; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and **the whole mountain trembled violently**. And the sound of **the trumpet grew louder and louder**; then Moses spoke **and God answered him with thunder**. And Yahweh came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and Yahweh called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up."

When God descends upon Mount Sinai, smoke rises from the rocks, and the mountain shakes. This demonstrates the immense power of God. His presence causes that which does not burn to burn. His presence causes the most immovable object in Creation, a mountain, to be one of the most constant things in the world. But here, God's presence shakes the most constant things in the world. And here is the message: God is so mighty that He will shake that which is unshakable, He will move that which is unmovable, and the Law Moses is about to receive is coming from this God. Question? What makes a law authoritative - why must you obey a law? A law is as authoritative as the power behind that Law to execute justice. At Sinai, God demonstrates the power and authority accompanying God's Word to Israel. Disobey His Law, and you will be met with His awesome judgment. To add to this scene, God communicates His Law to Moses with the sound of thunder.

2. Giving of the Covenant (Exod 20:1-23:33)

A. The 10 Commandments- the First Table (20:1-17)

i. Preamble (20:1-2)

This chapter begins in verse 1 with a specific phrase,

Exodus 20:1–2: "Then **God spoke all these words**, saying, "**I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt**, out of the house of slavery."

God spoke all these words - this is done intentionally to point back to the ten times God speaks in Genesis 1 when He creates the universe. It is critical to see

the 10 commandments in light of the Creation story of Genesis 1-3. They are principles for how the creature must live in light of the Creator's authority, and they point back to the truths that God revealed about Himself in the act of Creation.

The 10 commandments have a specific structure. There are two separate sections in the Law - the first and second tables. The *First Table* of the Law contains commands 1-4 and deals with how man relates to God - they are vertical in their orientation.

ii. Commandment 1: No Other gods before me- vs 3

The first Commandment is found in vs. 3,

Exodus 20:3: "You shall have **no other gods before Me.**"

God is the Creator, and in creating the world, He demonstrated He is the Supreme Being in the universe. He is exclusive as God, for He alone existed before all He had made. He is the I AM. If He did not create the universe and did not exist before its Creation, He would not be God. Therefore, because of this, His creatures must worship Him alone, for He is the only God. He is supreme, and He is central.

iii. Commandment 2- Do not make images or likeness- vs 4-6

The second Commandment begins in verse 4,

Exodus 20:4–6: "You shall not **make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.** "You shall not worship them or serve them; **for I, Yahweh your God, am a jealous God,** visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

In Genesis 1, we see that God made man in His image. Man was created in God's likeness. Therefore, for man to return the favor and make God into an image would be to reverse the Creator/creature paradigm. God must not be brought down to the level of the creatures He created. This command also demands that they not make an image of another creature to worship it. This goes back to the theology of Commandment 1: God alone is to be worshipped. As we see in verse 5, to worship an idol instead of YHWH is an act of hatred towards Him.

iv. Commandment 3: Don't take His name in vain- vs 7

The third command is found in verse 7,

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

Remember that God's Creation was a revelation of who He is. As we have seen in Exodus, God's Name is the essence of His Person. So then, to take God's name in vain is to violate who He has revealed Himself to be as Creator God. He is sovereign over Creation, He is holy, and He alone is judge. Commonly, this Commandment is related to making promises and oaths based on God's name. However, as God's Holy Nation, Israel was to represent God's name to the surrounding nations. This command demands that they honor God's name in the oaths they made AND in the way that they lived.

iv. Commandment 4: Remember the Sabbath- vs 8-11

The final command of the 1st table of the Law begins in verse 8,

Exodus 20:8–11: "**Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy**. "Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of Yahweh your God; in it, you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female slave or your cattle or your sojourner who is within your gates. "For in six days Yahweh made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore Yahweh blessed the sabbath day and made it holy."

The connection between this command and Genesis 1 is clear: God rested after creating the world in 6 days. This rest wasn't just a break. It was a moment of perfect enjoyment between God and all His Creation. It was a moment in which God's Creation was declared "very good," meaning that all that God had made was perfectly existing for the purpose that He made it. So then, by *remembering* the Sabbath, Israel was pointing back to this moment of rest that existed in Eden. Furthermore, such an act of resting from work demonstrated submission to God's agenda for their daily life.

B. The 10 Commandments: the Second Table (20:12-17)

The *Second Table* of the Law contains commands 5-10 and deals with how man relates to his neighbor. These commands are horizontal. As we will see later, commands 5-10 expound on and are linked to commands 1-4.

i. Commandment 5 Honor Father and Mother- vs 12

The fifth Commandment is found in verse 12,

Exodus 20:12: "**Honor your father and your mother**, that your days may be prolonged in the land which Yahweh your God gives you."

This Commandment parallels commandments 1 and 2. Because God is supreme and the ultimate authority, you must honor the human authority that He has sovereignly placed over you. This is the logic of the Bible's teaching on human authority and government (see Romans 13).

ii. Commandment 6: Do not Murder- Preserve human life- vs. 13

The following four commandments parallel commandment 3. Remember that to take God's name in vain was to live in such a way that directly contradicted who He revealed Himself to be at Creation. Commandment 6 is found in verse 13,

Exodus 20:13: "You shall **not murder**."

God is the author of all life. Therefore, to destroy life is to contradict who He is directly. Furthermore, As we saw in Genesis 3 and 4, death and murder are a result of the Fall. By upholding life, Israel is demonstrating to the world that they are an anti-fall nation.

iii. Commandment 7: Do not commit Adultery- Preserve human marriage- vs. 14

Commandment 7 is seen in verse 14,

Exodus 20:14: "You shall **not commit adultery**."

In Genesis 2, God blessed Creation and made it Holy. He is Holy and pure, and in the beginning, He made marriage a holy union between Adam and his wife. Therefore, to commit adultery is to make unholy that which God made holy. It is not only a violation of one's spouse but a violation of God's name.

iv. Commandment 8: Do not Steal- Preserve human possessions- vs. 15

Commandment 8 is found in verse 15,

Exodus 20:15: "You shall **not steal**."

Because God created all things, He then owns all things. In Genesis 2, God gave man access to all of Creation except for the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam and Eve violated the command of God and *stole* a fruit from this tree and ate it. In stealing, one performs the same act that caused the Fall, but in honoring human possessions, Israel demonstrates that it is an anti-fall nation.

v. Commandment 9: Do not bear false witness- Preserve human integrity- vs. 16

The final Commandment in this set of four is found in verse 16,

Exodus 20:16: "You shall **not bear false witness** against your neighbor."

In Genesis 1, God declared what was good and not good. In doing so, He demonstrated that He is the ultimate Judge over Creation. Furthermore, in Genesis 3, He exacted just punishment on Adam, Eve, and the Serpent for their actions in the Fall. To bear false witness is to pervert justice, which is a direct contradiction to the name of God.

vi. Commandment 10: Do not Covet- Be content- vs. 17

If you look back at the language of Commandment 4, you will see mention of male servants, female servants, and livestock. In Commandment 10, these things are repeated to indicate the connection to remembering the Sabbath - look at verse 17,

Exodus 20:17: "You shall **not covet** your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male slave or his female slave or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Remember that honoring the Sabbath is a submission to God's agenda for your daily life. By coveting what God has not given you, you demonstrate that you do not wish to be submissive to God's rule over your life. This Commandment's link back to Genesis is found in Genesis 3, where this exact word was used to describe Eve's desire for the forbidden fruit is used here for *covet*.

In the 10 Commandments, we see that by obeying God's Law, Israel would live as an anti-fall nation, demonstrating who God is and why He created the world.

C. A Sight to Remember and Seal (20:18-26)

Now, as Moses was on the Mountain receiving this Law, the people of Israel were filled with fear of God's power and presence - vs 18

Exodus 20:18–20: "And all the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, and the people perceived it, and they shook and stood at a distance. Then they told Moses, **"Speak to us yourself, and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, lest we die."** And Moses told the people, **"Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may be with you, so that you may not sin."**

Notice in verse 19 that they called for Moses to mediate between them and God. They understood their lack of perfect holiness in light of the presence of a perfectly Holy God. In turn, Moses instructs them not to be fearful for their lives but to practice proper awe and reverence before a Holy God.

3. Laws and Stipulations (21:1-23:33)

A. Stipulations from Command 6: Laws on Slavery and Life 21:1-35

The following laws found in chapters 21-23 further expound on the individual commandments of chapter 20. The structure of these sections is determined by their content and the language used to introduce the commands of each section.

Chapter 21, then, deals with slave laws. This chapter aims to teach Israel a correct understanding of slavery. Israel was transferred from an unjust enslavement to Pharaoh into a wonderful Master-slave relationship with God. **It is vital to realize that slavery described here was very counter-cultural to the slavery that pervaded the Ancient Near East as well as the slavery that existed in the history of America.** Slavery in Israel was never involuntarily permanent.

Moreover, it was to pay off debts that were owed. We might have assumed that God would abolish slavery after delivering His people. However, they transformed the practice into a picture of His loving nature as Israel's Master.

Contrary to Pharaoh, the Hebrews were not to abuse their slaves - verse 12,

Exodus 21:12: "He who strikes a man so that he dies **shall surely be put to death.**"

See that master who acted like Pharaoh and treated his slaves as sub-human would be put to death. Moreover, the Hebrews who served like the slave traders who sold Joseph would also be put to death, 21:16,

Exodus 21:16: "He **who kidnaps a man**, whether he **sells him** or he is found in his hand, **shall surely be put to death.**"

Instead, God's people then, were to mirror their relationship to God with how they treated those enslaved to them.

B. Stipulations from Command 8: Laws on Stealing 22:1-22:17

This section deals with stipulations from Commandment 8 - **do not steal**. Vs. 1-15 provides punishment for one who actively or unintentionally breaks this Commandment and takes his neighbor's possessions. This demonstrates that you can violate God's Law **by intentionally disobeying or not actively obeying**.

In verses 16-17, we have a transitional stipulation that expands upon both commandments 7 & 8,

Exodus 22:16–17: "If a man seduces a virgin who is not engaged and lies with her, **he must pay a dowry** for her to be his wife. "If her father absolutely refuses to give her to him, **he shall pay money equal to the dowry** for virgins."

This deals with one who commits sexual immorality with a virgin. Sexual sin is not just a violation of the Commandment against adultery. It is an act of theft. If you sin sexually with someone else, you are taking something from them that you can not return. In the case of seducing a virgin, the guilty one is robbing that person of their virginity and their purity. They are taking that person's right to enjoy the sexual intimacy designed for marriage fully. Such a man would have to pay the price, regardless of if he received the seduced one as his wife.

C. Stipulations from Commandment 7: Preserve Holiness- Do Not Mix (22:18-27)

The laws in this section are an expansion of Commandment 7, which was **not to commit adultery**. In verse 18, there is a law against mixing God's worship with pagan worship, which often included sexual immorality with sorceresses. Then, in verse 19, there is a law against mixing between a human and an animal, which is a clear and disgusting violation of Commandment 7. But in verses 21-24, there is an exciting change in this pattern,

Exodus 22:21–24: "You shall not mistreat a sojourner or oppress him, **for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt**. "You shall not afflict any **widow or orphan**. "And if you indeed afflict him, and if he earnestly cries out to Me, **I will surely hear his cry; and My anger will burn, and I will kill you with the sword, and your wives shall become widows and your children fatherless.**"

Instead of prohibiting the mixing of Israelites and sojourners in the assembly of God, God commands Israel not to wrong them. Instead, they are to remember the mistreatment they received when they were sojourners in the land of Egypt. Then they were to reflect God's love for His people to those who were immigrants in their midst, especially the widow and the orphan, the lowest and most helpless in their midst.

D. Stipulations from Commandments 1, 2, and 5 (22:28-31)

In verse 28, we have a statute relating to respecting human authority (Commandment 5),

Exodus 22:28: "You shall not curse God, **nor curse a ruler of your people.**"

And in verses 29-31, we see commandments for worshipping God with their firstborn.

Exodus 22:29–30: "You shall not delay the offering from the **fullness of your harvest** and the juice of your wine vat. The **firstborn of your sons** you shall **give to Me**. "And you shall **do the same with your oxen and with your sheep**. It shall be with its mother seven days; on the eighth day you shall give it to Me."

Because YHWH was their God, and they were His firstborn whom He redeemed. He technically was the owner of their firstborn sons and firstborn livestock. On the eighth day, the day of circumcision, which in itself demonstrated that the child belonged to the community of God, that firstborn son was to be offered to God. He was not a child sacrifice but a dedication of each household to God alone, demonstrating that everything of theirs, even their children, belongs to their God and Him alone.

E. Stipulations from Commandment 9 (23:1-9)

In 23:1-9 we see stipulations that expand on Commandment 9 - do not bear false witness against your neighbor. Look at verse 2,

Exodus 23:2: "You shall **not follow the masses in doing evil**, nor shall you testify in a case so as to turn aside after the masses in order to **cause justice to be turned aside;**"

In verses 3-9, God makes it clear that one's neighbor includes the poor (vs. 3), one's enemy (vs. 4-5), and even the sojourner (vs 9). To pervert justice was to profane God's character and nature.

F. Stipulations from Commandments 4 & 10 (23:10-19)

In verses 10-19, we find stipulations that expand on the 4th and 10th Commandments. These laws deal with the farming calendar - stipulating when the Israelites should plant and work their fields.

Exodus 23:10–12: "Now you shall sow your land for **six years** and gather in its produce, **but on the seventh year you shall let it rest** and lie fallow, so that the needy of your people may eat; and whatever they leave the beast of the field may eat. Thus you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove. "**Six days you are to do your work, but on the seventh day you shall**

rest so that your ox and your donkey may **rest**, and the son of your maidservant, as well as your sojourner, may **refresh themselves**."

By following these laws, ceasing work on the 7th day, and letting their fields rest on the seventh year, they demonstrated that God has control over the seasons of daily, monthly, and yearly life. By observing these stipulations, Israel radically established their submission to God's rule over their life and their dependence upon Him to provide and sustain them.

G. Stipulations on Commandments 1&2 (23:20-33)

Verses 20-33 conclude the expansion on the Ten Commandments with a focus on Commandments 1&2 - verse 20,

Exodus 23:20–22: "Behold, I am going to send an angel before you **to keep you along the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared**. "Keep watch of yourself before him and listen to his voice; do not be **rebellious toward him, for he will not pardon your transgression since My name is in him**. "But if you truly listen to his voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your **adversaries**."

Notice that YHWH declares that He has sent an angel to guard and lead them. This refers to the Angel of the Lord who was in the Pillar of Cloud by Day and Pillar of Fire by Night. YHWH commands that Israel is to obey His voice. This is an apparent reference to multiple Persons in the Godhead. The Angel of the Lord is YHWH, and the God who sent Him is YHWH. They were to follow the Angel of the Lord and no one else.

Then, in verses 22-24, YHWH commands that Israel not worship the idols of the people that the Angel grants them victory over,

Exodus 23:23–24: "For **My angel will go before you and bring you in to the land** of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I will annihilate them. "**You shall not worship their gods, you shall not serve them, and you shall not do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly pull them down and shatter their sacred pillars in pieces**."

4. Ratification of the Covenant (Exod 24:1-18)

After receiving the covenant from God, Moses then presents it before the people of Israel - verse 3,

Exodus 24:3: "Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of Yahweh and all the judgments; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which Yahweh has spoken we will do!"

See that they hear every stipulation of the Law and agree to do *all the words* that YHWH commands. After this, Moses then performs a covenant ceremony with the people - verse 5,

Exodus 24:5–8: "And he sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to Yahweh. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that Yahweh has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh has cut with you in accordance with all these words."

The action of throwing the blood from the sacrifices on the people was done to demonstrate that if Israel broke this covenant, their blood should be spilled, just like in this ceremony.

After all of this, Moses, the priests, and the representative elders of the people are allowed to go up to Mount Sinai - verse 9,

Exodus 24:9–11: "Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they beheld God, and they ate and drank."

Note that it is here that they saw God very God, and instead of perishing in His presence, He preserved their lives and ate and drank with Him. In essence, this moment was a glimpse of what God had promised in chapter 19. God promised a relationship with His people where He would love them intimately as His most prized possession.

Christ Connection

Throwing the blood from the sacrifices on the people was also an act of atonement. The blood came from a sacrifice of life, and covering the people covered their sins. This is similar to what happened at Passover. The blood of the lamb covered their doorposts, and their firstborns were saved from being killed by the Angel of the Lord. Israel can enter into this covenant with God through the

spilling of blood. This will be further fleshed out in the next book of the Pentateuch, Leviticus. Ultimately, this idea of atoning blood finds its fulfillment in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the Cross. His blood covers us, making us holy and allowing us to enter the New Covenant of God.

Similarly, the meal Israel's elders shared with Israel finds its final fulfillment in Christ. Hundreds of years later, God the Son would inaugurate His New Covenant and share a meal with His 12 disciples. At this meal, He promised to drink with them and all of His redeemed at a future dinner in His Father's Kingdom. In that meal, man, and God will have perfect *communion* together, for there will be no sin in man that will separate man from God. This is the future privilege that awaits all who believe.