

Bi121 Old Testament

Lesson Bi121- 24 Giving of the Ten Commandments (Ex 19-20)

When you were growing up, your parents, other family members, and leaders taught you rules to live by. Your culture permits certain behavior and forbids other behavior. These rules are often based on past experiences of people, their beliefs, and ways of viewing the world. It was the same for the people of Israel. In this lesson, however, they hear from God about His rules for living. His rules are still in effect today, so that we may live pleasing Him.

Three months after they left Egypt the Israelites reached Mount Sinai which is called the mountain of God. They set up camp in front of the mountain, and Moses went up to talk with God. The Lord said, “Tell the people, ‘If you obey me and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. You will be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’”

When Moses told this to the people, they all agreed and said, “We will do everything the Lord has said!”

So Moses went back up the mountain and told God that the people would obey. Then the Lord said, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you. Tell them to spend two days cleansing their hearts, washing their clothes, and avoiding uncleanness. Then I will come down on the mountain and talk to them. Until then, no one is allowed to go up the mountain, or even touch the foot of it.”

So the people did as they were told. After Moses consecrated them, they washed their clothes and prepared themselves. On the third day there was thunder and lightning and the people heard what sounded like trumpets that grew louder and louder. Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the Lord descended on it in fire. The ground shook violently. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him, calling him to come to the top of the mountain.

Then God said, “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt with a mighty hand! These are the commands for you, my people:

You are not to worship any other gods.

You are not to make any idols, or to worship an image of anything in heaven or on earth.

You are to keep my name holy and not misuse it.

You are not to work on the seventh day, but instead keep it holy. It is the Lord’s Sabbath set apart for Him.

Honor your father and mother and you will live long in the land I am giving you.

You are not to murder.

You are not to commit adultery.

You are not to steal.

You are not to lie or give false testimony.

You are not to desire to have anything that belongs to someone else.”

The first half of the law concerns relations with God; the second half concerns relations with people. Then Israel trembled with fear and said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.”

Moses said, “Do not be afraid. God has come to enter into covenant with you as your heavenly king. He wants you to stand in awe of him, so the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.” He instructed the people to reverence God because of His holiness.

Then Moses went up the mountain. The Lord gave him detailed instructions on how the people were to live their lives; how they were to treat one another. God explained the proper way to offer sacrifices, their obligation to attend festivals, and how to protect property. A second time Moses came down and repeated all God’s instructions to the people. They responded, “Everything the Lord has said we will do.”

Moses built an altar at the foot of the mountain and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the Lord. He sprinkled half of the blood of the sacrifices on the altar. Then he read to the people all the words God had spoken. He had written them down in the Book of the Covenant. The Israelites promised to obey all the Lord had said, so Moses sprinkled the other half of the blood on the people, saying, “This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you.”

This story is **important** because it tells us how God’s holiness and His commandments were related when they were given to the people on Mount Sinai.

The main **truth** of this story is that God gave the Ten Commandments and many other instructions to the people to maintain God’s holiness in their lives, so He could have fellowship with them. They agreed to obey everything the Lord had said, so He entered into covenant with them.

To **review** this lesson, answer these questions.

1. Why did God give His people commands to live by?
 - A. [Pause for 5 seconds]. God said, " If you obey me and keep my commandments, then you will be my treasured possession," you are correct.
2. What did the people have to do before approaching God’s mountain?
 - A. [Pause for 5 seconds]. If you said, “Moses had to consecrate them and they spent two days cleansing their hearts and washing their clothes,” you are correct.
3. Why did God appear on the mountain?
 - A. [Pause for 5 seconds]. If you said, “God wanted them to stand in awe of him, so the reverential fear of God would keep them from sinning,” you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to the story at least three times. As you hear the story each time, imagine how it happened; see the events in your mind. Then tell the story in

your own words as you remember it. Then listen to the story again and retell it until you feel sure you are repeating the circumstances and actions correctly. You should spend at least 45 minutes in learning the story. You may need to have someone check that you are telling the story correctly. Tell this story to a fellow believer and ask them, “Why should we be afraid to break God’s commands?” (When we sin and break His laws, it means we have not remembered the covenant and have become separated from Him.)