

February 3, 2013
“The First Commandment”
Ex 20:1-3

Then God gave the people all these instructions:

2 "I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery.

3 "You must not have any other god but me.

(v1a) Then God gave the people all these instructions:

How did God give these instructions? Look at ...

Deut 5:22 (where Moses says)

"The LORD spoke these words to all of you assembled there at the foot of the mountain. He spoke with a loud voice from the heart of the fire, surrounded by clouds and deep darkness. This was all he said at that time, and he wrote his words on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

Here it is clearly stated that these words (that we refer to as the 10 Commandments) were given by God Himself. He spoke these words from the midst of fire, clouds, and deep/thick darkness. After the people had heard, they said to Moses, “ahh... that’s enough, we’d prefer if you spoke to us instead.”

Ex 20:18-20

When the people heard the thunder and the loud blast of the ram's horn, and when they saw the flashes of lightning and the smoke billowing from the mountain, they stood at a distance, trembling with fear.

And they said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen. But don't let God speak directly to us, or we will die!"

"Don't be afraid," Moses answered them, "for God has come in this way to test you, and so that your fear of him will keep you from sinning!"

It is important to know that it was the “Lord your God” who was speaking. People in our day and age are not sure if God exists, or think of God as a power, not a person, or take lightly His authority. These verses confirm He is a person with all-mighty power and authority.

These words were given by God to His people as guiding rules for all human beings throughout the ages. They were not only relevant for the day in which they were given; they are still relevant, they are still God’s commands today. God was making it clear and wants us to clearly understand, that He Himself gave these commandments and they are to be obeyed.

(v1b) Then God gave the people all these instructions:

You may have heard that these commandments were borrowed from Egypt or some other nations; Don't believe The History Channel! These words spoken by God on Mt. Sinai were unlike anything to be found in Egypt literature or in any other culture. **GOD GAVE "ALL THESE INSTRUCTIONS;"** they were not borrowed from anyone or any place else.

God gave these words, not as a means of salvation, as a matter of fact the Israelites had already been saved from Egypt, but as rules for guidance. Salvation (being made right with God) is a gift of God's grace (God's unearned/unmerited favor), that He offers to us, but is not ours until we accept Jesus Christ by faith.

Faith, if it is real will be evident by obedience. We are not saved by keeping commandments, we are saved by believing in Jesus; but because we believe and love Jesus, we keep His commandments. Since obeying God is a condition of continuing the covenant with God, the Ten Commandments became the basis for perseverance as God's people.

Gal 2:16

Yet we know that a person is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ, not by obeying the law. And we have believed in Christ Jesus, so that we might be made right with God because of our faith in Christ, not because we have obeyed the law. For no one will ever be made right with God by obeying the law."

The law leads to Christ, but does not save.

Gal 3:24

The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith.

Even though the commands of God can't save us or earn us heaven, that doesn't mean that we can break God's commands and it doesn't matter or that we can get away with it. Keeping God's commands proves our faith. If you love God you will keep His commandments.

The Israelites had other laws besides the moral laws of the Ten Commandments. There were civil laws and ceremonial laws. However, while social and ceremonial laws may change, the moral law found in the Ten Commandments are eternal.

Matt 22:37-40

Jesus replied, "'You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

In the Ten Commandments the first four reveal our proper relationship to God (loving

God with all your heart, soul, and mind. The last six deal with human relationships (loving your neighbor as yourself).

The First Commandment

(v3) "You must not have any other god but me."

Verse 2 introduces the 1st Commandment:

"I am the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery."

Since God did this for them, proving His power, majesty, and authority they must make Him their God. There is no place for any competitor. All other gods are false gods.

There are other religions that believe in a god, but it is not the same God who spoke the Ten Commandments. The god of the Mormons is not the same as the God of the Bible. The god of the Jehovah Witnesses is not the same as the God of the Bible. They and other religions believe in a different Jesus than the Biblical Jesus. This is why other religions that do read the bible say you mustn't read it on its own; you have to read it along with their books.

Let me compare what the Bible has to say about God with what some other religions believe about God. I am not bashing these other religions, I'm just telling you the facts of what they believe, they would agree with me, because this is what they believe. I just want you to know the differences, so you will understand that it is a different god they believe in.

First let me describe the God of the Bible. He is triune (one God in three persons, Father, Son, Holy Spirit, not three Gods, one God revealed in three persons). He is personal and involved with people. He created all things from nothing. He is eternal, changeless, holy, loving, and perfect. He is the one who spoke and said, "I am Yahweh Elohiym (el-o-heem), The Lord your God, you must not have any other god but me."

Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in the trinity, but in a one-person god, called Jehovah not Yahweh Elohiym as God referred to Himself, they say His name is Jehovah; and that Jesus was the first thing Jehovah created. They do not believe Jesus is God and they do not believe that the Holy Spirit is God. They believe in an impersonal "holy spirit" as an invisible, active force from Jehovah.

Mormonism (A/K/A latter-day saints) believes that God the Father was once man, but became God. He has a physical body, as does his wife (Heavenly Mother). No trinity, Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three separate gods. They also believe that Jesus was created as a spirit child by the Father and Mother in Heaven; and His body was created through a sexual union between the Father and Mary.

In Hinduism, God is "The Absolute." People worship manifestations of gods and goddesses. They also believe that people are God, but are unaware of it.

Buddhism is mostly atheistic. Many do not believe in a god of any kind.

Scientology does not define God, but rejects biblical description of God.

When there is a discussion about religions I often hear people say, "there is only one God." That statement is meant to avoid debating religion or it's a way of saying, "Don't tell me what God is like or who God is, I will believe in my own way, the way I want God to be."

There *is* only One God, but He is not of your creation, we are made in His image, not the other way around. People are free to believe whatever they want about God, but they are breaking the first commandment.

Even those who do believe in the God of the Bible can have additional gods. When God says, "You must not have any other god but me" He means "side by side with me" or "in addition to me." It means that it is possible to not give up believing in God but have other mental, and earthly, idols in addition. How is it possible to have additional gods along side with God?

Well, what do we trust in or depend on?

Other people; money/finances; position; drugs/alcohol/or some other way of escaping and not dealing with reality; trying to get other people to like us; trying to make it so that no one can have anything against us; trying to be perfect; using anger, self-pity, manipulation to get what you want or protect yourself.

Whatever strategy you have adopted to try and make life work without depending completely and totally in God alone is breaking the first commandment.

It is a destructive addition to add anything to Christ.

Richard Sibbes

Whenever we put our trust for our security and significance in something other than or along side with God we break the 1st Commandment; and end up in misery and tragedy. For these other things can't replace God. Here is what God said through Jeremiah:

Jer 2:13

"For my people have done two evil things:

**They have abandoned me—
the fountain of living water.**

**And they have dug for themselves cracked cisterns
that can hold no water at all!**

God is the Fountain of all joy, to seek joy elsewhere is to break the 1st Commandment; God is life, to seek your value elsewhere is to break the 1st Commandment; God is love to seek your security elsewhere is to break the 1st Commandment; and end up in misery and tragedy.