

Exodus 2

Read Exodus 2:1-10: Moses was a Hebrew baby born in Egypt, who was rescued from Pharaoh's infanticide policy in around 1400 BC. He was adopted by Pharaoh's daughter and raised in the highest learning. He had the best training in the world. One day he would realize who he really is, and act accordingly. God sent an ambassador and shepherd to help them escape. God used Moses to free the Hebrews from Egyptian slavery. Moses is synonymous with God's Laws given to the children of Israel. Moses is called the law giver.

Moses is one of the central figures in scripture. The role of Moses and the Commandments is greatly misunderstood. In Exodus, Israel had just transformed from a family in a foreign land, 400 years later, into a nation. Now they needed a penal code and a constitution to live as a separate society. Moses had to go through some life changes to become fully prepared for his task as the national shepherd. That took 80 years. Eventually, he was ready to meet God and obtain his assignment.

We will see in future chapters how Moses spoke to God face to face; and then repeated what he had been told to the people. Moses tells the people that keeping the Law will keep you alive. We serve a God of order and peace. The Devil is the author of anarchy and confusion and hatred. Breaking the Law will result in penalty or death. It was especially necessary for reluctant and unwilling people. The Hebrews were not inclined to listen to God or Moses. The Hebrew people seemed to only respond to pressure and pain. In America today, we can see the impact of counter-culture demonstrators who are being asked to abide by the laws of the land for the common good. Invariably, force is required to maintain peace and prevent anarchy.

You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD. (Leviticus 18)

The Hebrews knew of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but they did not really know him. The spectrum of following God can be either at a great distance, or up as close as possible. That is comparable to the difference between religion and faith. Are you just trying to stay out of trouble, or do you want to know and experience God?

The less you know God, the more you are likely to relate to his restrictions. To the Hebrews, God was their Highway Patrolman in the sky. They made an effort to appear to be compliant; but their hearts were far from God. The Law was established to keep the Hebrew society sustainable. You have to control murder and theft for any nation to survive. It was like our U.S. Constitution and penal

code. They are not designed to provide eternal life in heaven. They are there to protect the innocent.

But we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, ⁹ knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, ¹⁰ for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers, and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, ¹¹ according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust. (1 Timothy 1)

The Law provides a standard of perfection. People think that it establishes minimum punishments, but much of it is a limitation on the applicable maximum punishments. It even goes beyond our physical acts; and it addresses our intentions and desires. The Law is not only to cause the lawbreakers to think twice. It also serves as a reminder of how far we all are from God's heart. The Law is only needed where people do not love God, and they do not love their neighbor. Otherwise, a law would not be needed. For the true *Eagle Scouts* and solid citizens, it even addresses their secret selfish desires.

²¹ "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.' ²² But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire. ²³ Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny. (Matthew 5)

Beyond this, even the enforcement in the Law requires some level of anonymity to mete out the most justice. It cannot be used as an instrument of revenge. It is not a sin to be a good policeman. It is good. It is evil to accuse others of the things that you do secretly. Our Democratic congressmen who are assassinating the character of our President by using intellectual dishonesty to mask their hatred are clearly violating the 10 Commandments.

Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. (Romans 2:1)

Today, the Jews think that Moses offers a path to righteousness and ultimately salvation. The idea was not how righteous you become when you sacrifice a bull. God offered a substitutionary system, where you could pass the blame. Each animal sacrificed included laying your hand on its head. It essentially was a transfer of guilt from you to this harmless animal. It was just a blinder or cover to my failure. Every time that I fail my fellow man another bull dies or I die. The idea was that it is a tragic thing that my behavior has ruined the lives of others. That is supposed to afflict our conscious and ultimately get us to see how our sins were the cause of Jesus crucifixion as our final sacrifice. Jesus is called the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. God wanted the Law to produce a contrite (broken) heart. God only wanted intellectual honesty and ownership and regret for our failure.

For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. (Romans 10)

All said, Moses brought in the law of the land. If you are righteous, you will want to love God and love people by keeping the elements of the Law as best as you can. Followers God are not just seeking to be perfect citizens; they are seeking to meet God, just like Moses did. Being a straight arrow will not save you.

Read Galatians chapter 5: Galatians 5 points out that you cannot rely on the Law of Moses to save you and still be a follower of Christ. Moses represents our scorecard of failed attempts to be good. Moses witnessed 40 years of pure moral failure in the desert. In fact, Jesus is the only person to keep the whole Law.

²⁶ And the LORD spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, ²⁷ "How long shall I bear with this evil congregation who complain against Me? I have heard the complaints which the children of Israel make against Me. ²⁸ Say to them, 'As I live,' says the LORD, 'just as you have spoken in My hearing, so I will do to you: ²⁹ The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above. ³⁰ Except for Caleb the son of Jephunneh and Joshua the son of Nun, you shall by no means enter the land which I swore I would make you dwell in. ³¹ But your little ones, whom you said would be victims, I will bring in, and they shall know the land which you have despised. ³² But as for you, your^[U] carcasses shall

fall in this wilderness. ³³ And your sons shall be shepherds in the wilderness forty years, and bear the brunt of your infidelity, until your carcasses are consumed in the wilderness. ³⁴ According to the number of the days in which you spied out the land, forty days, for each day you shall bear your [k]guilt one year, namely forty years, and you shall know My [l]rejection. ³⁵ I the LORD have spoken this. I will surely do so to all this evil congregation who are gathered together against Me. In this wilderness they shall be consumed, and there they shall die.’ ” (Numbers 14)

³⁸ “This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, ³⁹ whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, ⁴⁰ saying to Aaron, ‘Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ ⁴¹ And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. ⁴² Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: ‘Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? ⁴³ You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.’ (Acts 7)

God does not grade on a curve. if you violate one aspect of the Law you are guilty of the entire code.

For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all. (James 2:10)

The 10 Commandments is the Sunday School starting point for believers. Jesus is the only means of salvation for sinners...but first we need to understand sin. We need to define sin and its consequences (both now and later). The takeaway to a maturing believer is that the Law of Moses is just impossible to keep. The rules and ceremonies are tiresome and unending. It is a slavish burden. The idea is that we should appreciate and honor and adore God...not see how much evil we can get away with. When a believer in Jesus tries to gain status by being a super-Christian they are essentially taking the free gift from God and adding merit tokens to it. That view has the opposite effect. To reopen our journal entries (good and bad) as law abiding citizens is going to reveal far more errors and sins than good deeds. Besides, all of our good deeds do not erase even one sin. God’s grace by faith in

Jesus Christ has nothing to do with how good we are. It would be like a son who inherited his father's ranch showing off how well he planted a field. So what! You should always do your best. The Law also has hidden clues about Jesus and the things he has done for us throughout the code. Every sacrifice, offering, aspect and feature of the Law vaguely or directly provide clues to what Jesus has done for us.

Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, ² of the doctrine of baptisms, of laying on of hands, of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. ³ And this we will do if God permits. ⁴ For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, ⁵ and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, ⁶ if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame. ⁷ For the earth which drinks in the rain that often comes upon it, and bears herbs useful for those by whom it is cultivated, receives blessing from God; ⁸ but if it bears thorns and briers, it is rejected and near to being cursed, whose end is to be burned. (Hebrews 6)

Read Exodus 2:11-25: Moses and the Law are also examples of the limitations of self-effort. Moses became inspired to help his people. Moses was ready to take charge and use his skills to help his people. He killed an Egyptian taskmaster to protect one of his enslaved fellow countrymen. God did not tell him to do this. Getting ahead of God or trying to do his work for him will not usually work out well. Moses did not have the support of the Hebrews; and he had been identified in the death of the taskmaster. Pharaoh sent men to kill him; so he fled to the wilderness of Midian. Throughout scripture well-intentioned men and women have taken matters into their own hands. What seems like a good idea often is not.

This once proud prince of Egypt is now living as a fugitive. He has gone from being a recognized rising star to an unknown person in a foreign land. Moses helped a Midianite priest's shepherdess daughters to run off some malicious and opportunistic competing shepherds. Reuel/Jessie the father of these fortuitous shepherdesses welcomed the idea of having an honorable son-in-law. Moses marries his daughter Zipporah.