

THE MOSAIC COVENANT

THE SETTING FOR THE MOSAIC COVENANT

- God's kingdom program with Abraham was seen in the fact that God promised that kings would come forth from him

Genesis 17:6 ~ I have made you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings will come forth from you.

Genesis 35:11 ~ God also said to him [Jacob], "I am God Almighty; Be fruitful and multiply; A nation and a company of nations shall come from you, And kings shall come forth from you.

- Although a dynasty of kings would ultimately issue from Abraham, the ultimate fulfillment of this promise is found in Jacob's statement about a coming ruler from the tribe of Judah, a statement that has great significance concerning the kingdom

Genesis 49:8-12 ~ Judah, your brothers shall praise you; Your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; Your father's sons shall bow down to you. 9 Judah is a lion's whelp; From the prey, my son, you have gone up. He couches, he lies down as a lion, And as a lion, who dares rouse him up? 10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes, And to him shall be the obedience of the peoples. 11 He ties his foal to the vine, And his donkey's colt to the choice vine; He washes his garments in wine, And his robes in the blood of grapes. 12 His eyes are dull from wine, And his teeth white from milk.

- Just as the blessing Abraham received in the AC was transferred to Isaac in Gen 26:3-6 and to Jacob in Gen 35:9-12, so Judah received it from Jacob's blessing in Gen 49
- The oldest son, Reuben, lost his birthright because he dishonored his father's marriage bed (Gen 35:22)
- Simeon and Levi (Jacob's 2nd and 3rd sons) were bypassed because of their revenge on the Shechemites (Gen 34:13-29)
- So the mantle of leadership fell to Judah...National prominence and kingship belonged to Judah's line...from which came David, Solomon, and ultimately the Messiah
- The "lion" language of vs. 9 indicates royalty...anticipating Jesus Christ who is the "Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev 5:5)
- In vs. 10, Jacob predicted that a kingly rule would come with Judah and Judah's descendants
- The focus of vs. 10 is on one called "Shiloh" (NASB) or "until he comes to whom it belongs" (NIV)...a veiled reference to the Messiah
- This points forward to Someone to whom the weapons of military victory ("staff") and the emblems of royal authority ("scepter") belong
- "The Man of promise would be overwhelmingly successful; He would reign over all the peoples of the earth because it was His right and destiny so to do. Furthermore, He would originate from the tribe of Judah in Israel!"¹
- This "warrior-king" will culminate in the person of Jesus Christ
- His kingdom program includes blessings in the physical realm, described in vs. 11-12
- The material blessings are similar to the conditions in Eden prior to the fall
 - "he ties his foal to the vine" = vines will be so common that they could be used as hitching posts
 - "he washes his garments in wine" = wine will be so prevalent that clothes could be washed in them
 - "his teeth which from milk" = teeth will be whiter because of all the milk consumed

¹ Walter Kaiser, *Toward an Old Testament Theology*, 97.

- All these images communicate great prosperity...a kingdom with lavish physical prosperity, like the restoration of Eden
- Physical prosperity is linked with the Messiah's reign in the Millennial kingdom
- So Genesis concludes with 70 of Jacob's descendants living in Egypt and the promise of a coming warrior-king in the line of Judah...and with favorable conditions for the multiplying of the Hebrew people in Egypt

The book of Genesis, written presumably on the eve of Israel's conquest of Canaan, serves at least two clear canonical and theological purposes. First, it satisfies Israel's immediate need to know of her origins, her purpose, her prospects, and her destiny. These questions are explicitly or implicitly addressed in such a way as to leave Israel in no doubt that she came into existence in fulfillment of divine purpose and promise. **But that purpose and promise are hinged to a more ultimate design, an overarching plan of which Israel is not the object but the means: namely, the creation and domination of the earth and all things by God through His image, the human race.** Israel thus came to see herself as important to the purposes of God but not coextensive to these purposes. Man, having sinned and so having forfeited his privileges as regent, was brought back to fellowship with God by sovereign grace so that he could resume his privileges as spelled out in the Adamic mandate. In that condition, with its liabilities and imperfections, the believing remnant community would model before the world the meaning of dominion and would proclaim and mediate the saving blessings of the Lord to it. The patriarchal seed, Israel herself, was that remnant, a nation that would exist as a microcosm of the kingdom of God and the vehicle through which the messianic king would come to reign over all creation (Gen 49:10).²

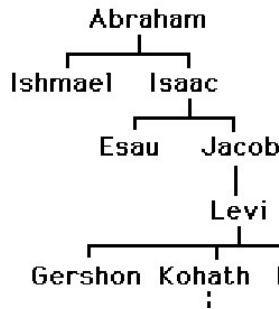
- As Exodus opens, and in accord with the Abrahamic Covenant, God greatly multiplied the Israelites so that "the land was filled with them"
- Exodus 1:7**~ But the sons of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly, and multiplied, and became exceedingly mighty, so that the land was filled with them.
- Notice the 7 words deliberately piled one on top of the other
 - These proved the fulfillment of God's promise that Jacob's seed had indeed been fruitful and had multiplied
 - But the seed was now more than a mere family; it was a people, a nation
 - But Exodus opens with a new Pharaoh who felt threatened by the large number of Israelites living in his land
 - This Pharaoh enslaved the Hebrew people and brought great hardship upon them (Ex 1, 5)
 - But this was no surprise since God had told Abraham this would happen to his descendants (Gen 15:13)...that they would be slaves in a land not theirs for 400 years
 - So Exodus picks up with the deliverance of the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt
 - And the rest of the books of Moses describe God's kingdom plan which would involve the establishment of a nation that would be the means through which universal blessing would occur
 - But first, that nation needed to be set apart unto God for service...It must be different from other nations
 - Israel needed to worship God alone and live righteously so that other nations would be drawn to God
 - So God raised up Moses (Ex 2-4) to deliver His people out of Egypt

² Roy Zuck, *Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, 30.

of the prominent position they were assuming as representatives of Israel and explain why the genealogy is given: It was this same Moses and

(BKC [OT] p. 117)

Moses' Ancestry of Abraham



Acts 7:20 -22 ~ And it was at this time that Moses was born; and he was lovely in the sight of God; and he was nurtured three months in his father's home. And after he had been exposed, Pharaoh's daughter took him away, and nurtured him as her own son. And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds.

- Moses had the advantage of receiving what was probably the best education of the time
- Evidently Moses had made a choice not to merely enjoy life as an Egyptian, but rather to do what he could to ease the suffering of his people

Hebrews 11:24-27~ By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt

- God had heard Israel's groanings in Egypt and His interest in them and action on their behalf were summed up as a "remembering" of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

Exodus 2:24 ~ So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.











Exodus 3:5-6 ~ Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Exodus 3:13-16 ~ Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. 16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt.

- God delivered His people from Egypt through the 10 plagues and destruction of Pharaoh's army (Ex 7-12)

THE PLAGUES ON EGYPT EXODUS 7-12

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|---|---|---|----|---|---|
| 1 |  | BLOOD (7:14-24)
The Nile, along with all of the water in Egypt, turns into blood. But Pharaoh does not let the Israelites go. | 6 |  | BOILS (9:8-12)
Festering boils break out on the Egyptians and their animals. But Pharaoh does not let the Israelites go. |
| 2 |  | FROGS (7:25 - 8:15)
Frogs cover the land of Egypt. Pharaoh promises to let the Israelites go, but changes his mind. | 7 |  | HAIL (9:13-35)
Hail strikes down everything in the fields - humans, animals and trees. Pharaoh asks for forgiveness and promises to let the Israelites go, but changes his mind. |
| 3 |  | GNATS (8:16-19)
The dust turns to gnats, which cover the people and animals of Egypt. But Pharaoh does not let the Israelites go. | 8 |  | LOCUSTS (10:1-20)
Locusts devour every tree and plant in the land of Egypt. Pharaoh asks for forgiveness but does not let the Israelites go. |
| 4 |  | FLIES (8:20-32)
Flies fill the houses and land of Egypt. Pharaoh promises to let the Israelites go, but changes his mind. | 9 |  | DARKNESS (10:21-29)
Darkness covers the land of Egypt for three days. Pharaoh promises to let the Israelites go, but changes his mind. |
| 5 |  | LIVESTOCK (9:1-7)
All of the livestock of the Egyptians die. But Pharaoh does not let the Israelites go. | 10 |  | FIRSTBORN (11:1-10; 12:29-32)
Every firstborn son and firstborn of the cattle in Egypt dies. Pharaoh finally lets the Israelites leave Egypt, only to change his mind and pursue them to the Red Sea. |

- God's loyalty to His people became evident in the plagues and the Exodus
- Israel was to be released from servitude to Pharaoh so that she might serve the Lord
- However, when Pharaoh refused, God's power was unleashed in increasing degrees of severity
- But the objective was never mere punishment for Pharaoh's obstinacy
- The plagues had a salvific purpose for both Israel and Egypt...they were to convince Pharaoh that God indeed had spoken and had to be feared (8:22; 9:14; 9:16; 9:29-30)

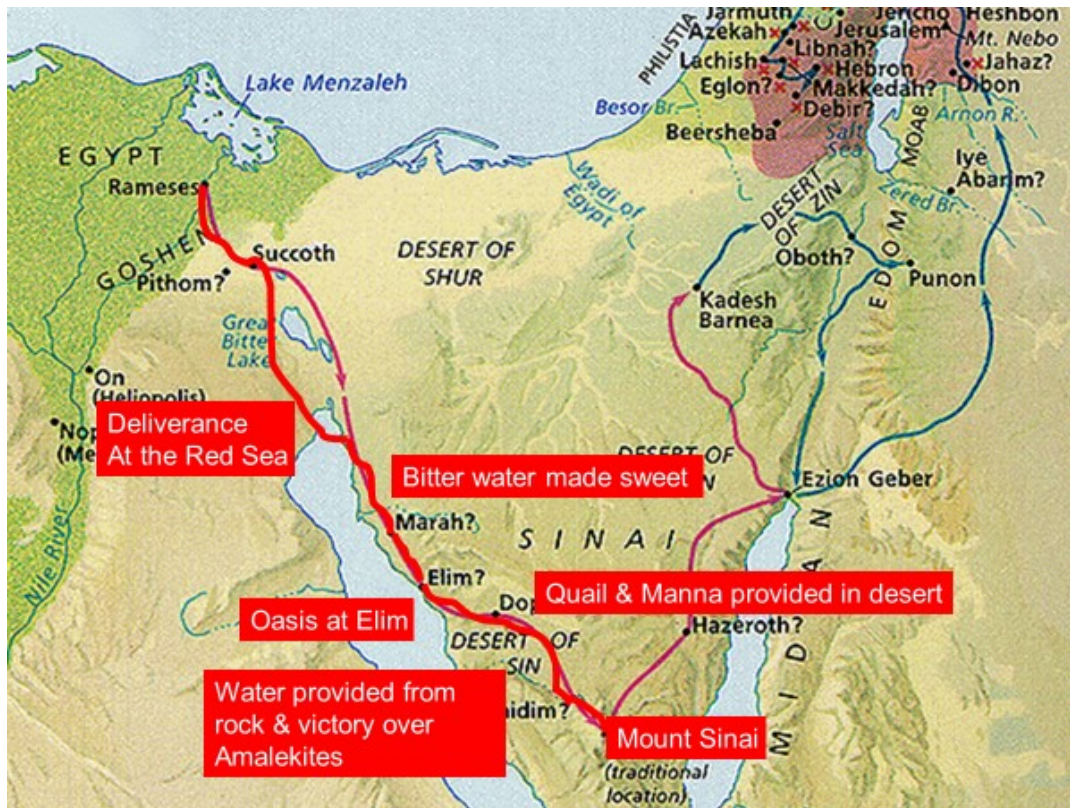
Romans 9:18 ~ So then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires.

The 10 Plagues - Jehovah Versus the Gods of Egypt		
PLAGUE	GODS OF EGYPT	INTERESTS
1 WATER TURNED TO BLOOD Exodus 7:14-25	• Khnum - Guardian of river's source. • Hapi - Spirit of the Nile. • Osiris - Nile was his bloodstream.	• Duplicated by the Egyptians • Occurs in Goshen where Israelites lived • Dead fish — putrid smell
2 FROGS Exodus 8:1-15	• Hapi } Frog goddess to Egypt. • Heqt } Both related to fertility	• Duplicated by the Egyptians • Occurs in Goshen where Israelites lived
3 LICE Exodus 8:16-19	• Seb - The earth god of Egypt	• Not duplicated by the Egyptians • Occurs in Goshen where Israelites lived • Attributed to the "finger of God"
4 FLIES Exodus 8:20-32	• Uatchit - The fly god of Egypt.	• God now makes a separation between the Egyptians and the Israelites • No more plagues will be sent
5 DISEASE ON CATTLE Exodus 9:1-7	• Ptah } Egyptian gods associated • Hathor } with bulls and cows. • Mnevis } • Amon }	• Affects property. • Death of livestock.
6 BOILS Exodus 9:8-12	• Sekhmet - Egyptian goddess of Epidemics • Serapis } Egyptian gods of healing. • Imhotep }	• Affects physical bodies • Pharaoh's magicians are frustrated
7 HAIL Exodus 9:13-35	• Nut - Egyptian sky goddess. • Isis & Seth - Egyptian agriculture deities. • Shu - Egyptian god of the atmosphere.	• Historical uniqueness • Pharaoh confesses his sin
8 LOCUSTS Exodus 10:1-20	• Serapia - Egyptian deity protector from Locusts	• Pharaoh offers a compromise • The compromise is rejected • Pharaoh again confesses his sin

- Egypt's gods were no gods at all...only Yahweh was God
- Each of these plagues focused on one of the revered deities of the Egyptians and demonstrated God's sovereign power and glory
- "Each plague was an assertion of the sovereignty of Yahweh over the deity (or deities) responsible for the area of nature particularly under attack... [they were] unique but genuinely historical outpourings of the wrath of a sovereign God who wished to show not only Egypt but also his own people that he is the Lord of all of heaven and earth, one well able to redeem his people from the onerous slavery they knew under Pharaoh and to make them, by covenant, his own servant people."³

³ Eugene Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*, 81.

- In a journey that lasted 3 months, God brought them through the Red Sea (Ex 14)...sustained them in the desert with water and food (Ex 15-17)...helped them defeat the Amalekites (Ex 17)...and brought them to Mt. Sinai where they received their covenant with God (Ex 19)



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MOSAIC COVENANT

- “There is no way to describe adequately the canonical implications of Exodus 19-24. Everyone from Moses (Deut 5:6-21), to Jeremiah (Jer 7:1-15), to Jesus (Mt 5-7), to Peter (1 Peter 2:9), and every other biblical writer who has anything to say about covenant, morality and relationship to God reflects directly or indirectly upon this passage.”⁴
- A correct understanding of the Mosaic Covenant, which summons Israel to its vocation, is vital
- The history of Israel from this point on is really just a commentary on the degree to which they were obedient /disobedient to this covenant
- In fact, most of the OT covers the time the Jews were living under the Mosaic Covenant...so a proper understanding of the OT is dependent on a knowledge of the way of life God gave His people under the Mosaic Covenant

THE STATEMENT OF THE MOSAIC COVENANT

- God’s encounter with Moses and the Hebrew people at Mt. Sinai was a strategic moment in the kingdom program

⁴Paul R. House, *Old Testament Theology*, 117.

- It was there that God gave the Mosaic covenant (aka The Sinai Covenant), which contained detailed laws to govern God’s relationship with His people
- It is traditionally called the Mosaic Covenant because Moses was God’s chosen leader of Israel at that time
- “At Sinai, Israel became a nation and a kingdom. Israel received its national constitution (the Mosaic Covenant) and was *en route* to possessing a land. Free from the tyranny of Egypt, Israel was to be the realm over which God’s reign would function and the base from which God’s kingdom purposes were to expand. It would be several centuries until Israel officially had a ‘king’ like the rest of the nations, but Israel would now function as a kingdom. Moses was to be their leader.”⁵
- The Mosaic Covenant was a legal covenant, given solely to Israel, which consisted of the 10 Commandments and over 600 other commands – 300 positive and 300 negative – which were intended to regulate Israel’s relationship with God and ensure they would be the vehicle by which God would bless the world
- It was a conditional covenant that brought either God’s direct blessing for obedience or God’s direct cursing for disobedience upon the nation of Israel
- The essence of the Mosaic Covenant was stated in Exodus 19:5-6

Exodus 19:5-6 ~ ‘Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 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.

- The form of this covenant is very similar to other ancient covenants of that time because it is between a sovereign king (a suzerain) and his people or subjects (vassal)
- In the ancient near east, when a king conquered another people, he would make a covenant or treaty that would regulate the relationship between the king and his new subjects
- Theologians have noted the similarities between such treaties and the Mosaic Covenant
- The MC follows the pattern of suzerain-vassal treaties typical in the ancient Near East
- So when God revealed the MC to Israel, He choose to accommodate the form of the revelation to a format with which they were familiar

THE FORM OF THE MOSAIC COVENANT

Historical Prologue	Exodus 19:1-4
Preamble	Exodus 19:5-6
Stipulations	Exodus 20:3-23:19
Provision for Reading	Exodus 24:4-7
Blessings and Curses	Exodus 23:20-23

- 3 significant phrases in Exodus 19:5-6 demonstrate the critical role Israel was to play in God’s kingdom program:
 1. “My own possession”
 - Israel was to be God’s people so they could fulfill an important role to “all the people”
 - God had already chosen them to be the recipients of blessings and also the channel for blessings upon all peoples
 - Through one particular nation all peoples would be blessed
 - They would be His own people, highly valued by and related to Him.

⁵ Michael Vlach, *He Will Reign Forever*, 94-95.

Deuteronomy 7:6 ~ For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

2. “A kingdom of priests”

- This is the first time that the term “kingdom” is used in regard to the rule of God and shows that what God is doing with Israel is part of His mediatorial kingdom program on earth
- As God’s “priests,” Israel was to carry a priestly role to other nations by functioning as the mediator of God’s revelation to them...they were to mediate the truth of God to the other nations of the earth
- This shows that Israel is not a kingdom simply for their own sake...rather, they had a place of privilege which was to result in blessing the world
- As the nations looked upon Israel, they were to be drawn to Israel’s God
- Israel was to be God’s light to the dark world around them....This put great responsibility upon Israel

Deuteronomy 4:6-8 ~ So keep and do them, for that is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples who will hear all these statutes and say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ 7 For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as is the LORD our God whenever we call on Him? 8 Or what great nation is there that has statutes and judgments as righteous as this whole law which I am setting before you today?

Isaiah 49:6 ~ He says, “It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also make You a light of the nations So that My salvation may reach to the end of the earth.”

3. “A holy nation”

- This means that Israel was to be set apart for God’s service and be separated from anything that would defile them and hinder their divinely appointed service
- They were to be a separate and called-out nation so that everyone around them would know that they worshiped Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God
- They would be a nation morally pure and dedicated entirely to the service of God
- God redeemed Israel so that she might be in touch with and separated to Him.

- These 3 privileges, however, were contingent upon Israel being an obedient and covenant-keeping nation
- This shows that God’s commandments in the MC were not only for Israel’s good but also for others
- Failure to obey God’s commandments would have an impact beyond Israel
- If Israel failed to obey God not only will she harms herself, she will extinguish God’s witness among the nations
- “[The Sinaitic Covenant] is the vehicle by which Israel, the chosen seed of Abraham, obligated herself to be Yahweh’s servant people in mediating the salvific grace of God to His fallen and alienated creation. The election of Israel to be the people of Yahweh by promise and redemption was unconditional, but her function and capacity as a holy nation and priestly kingdom depended on her faithful adherence to the covenant made through Moses.”⁶
- The people willingly accepted the conditions of this covenant:

Exodus 19:8 ~ All the people answered together and said, “All that the LORD has spoken we will do!” And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.

THE CONTENT OF THE MOSAIC COVENANT

⁶ Roy Zuck, *Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, 35.

- The Mosaic Law in Exodus had three primary parts:
 1. The Decalogue/10 Commandments – Exodus 20:1-26
 2. Civil and Religious Ordinances – Exodus 21:1-24:11
 3. Ceremonial Regulations – Exodus 24:12-31:18

The Ten Commandments

- The 10 commandments are couched in the structure of **apodictic law** – this refers to their general, unconditional, principial nature expressed in almost every instance by a “you shall not”
- The rest of the Mosaic law is cast in the form of **casuistic law** – its regulations address specific instances or classes of incidents and usually consist of “if-then” (protasis-apodasis) statements...i.e. “if a person does so and so, then here is the penalty”

1. Only worship the one true God (vs. 3)

- This foundational of all the commands focuses on God not sharing His glory with anything else
- God called His people to exalt and prize Him above all things
- This command is a categorical affirmation of God’s exclusive claims to lordship and worship
- To violate this commandment is to repudiate the entire covenant relationship which is nothing short of high treason

2. Don’t worship idols (vs. 4-6)

- This command (which Israel violated many times) focused on the mode rather than the object of worship
- The immensity of God demanded that worship of Him not be limited to that which was represented in a manmade image, something which would only confuse the Creator with His creation
- To bow down and to worship such an image constitutes failure to recognize and respond properly to the sovereignty of the Lord
- It also clearly eliminated the worship of false gods through idols
- Those who practice idolatry are the “haters” of God (vs. 5); whereas, those who don’t “love” God (vs. 6)

3. God’s name was to be honored (vs. 7)

- God’s name is directly connected with who He is, and therefore it is to be treated with respect and honor
- The misuse of the divine name is tantamount to sacrilege

4. Keep the Sabbath holy (vs. 8-11)

- The Israelites were to separate the 7th day as holy to the Lord
- This was not a day of lazy inactivity, but of spiritual service through various religious observances
- This is achieved by the interruption of ordinary labor on the 7th day by the Israelite family, its servants, and even its beasts of burden

- This is the sign of the MC

Exodus 31:16-17~ So the sons of Israel shall observe the Sabbath, to celebrate the Sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant. It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed.

- In the Church Age, we do not keep the Sabbath the same way the Jews did because:
 - a. Jesus resurrection was on the first day of the week
 - b. The early church worshipped on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2)
 - c. This is the only one of the 10 commandments that is not repeated in the New Testament

d. The Sabbath was a sign of God's covenant with Israel

5. *Honor your Parents (vs. 12)*

- This command is a reminder of order and structure within the framework of God's dominion...there are spheres of responsibility and function
- To honor parents is to honor God and to dishonor them is nothing short of covenant violation and disloyalty
- Ephesians 6:2 tells us that this is the first commandment with a promise

6. *Don't murder (vs. 13)*

- This is essentially a restatement of *lex talionis* in the Noahic Covenant

Genesis 9:6 ~ Whoever sheds man's blood, By man his blood shall be shed, For in the image of God He made man.

- A man must not murder his fellow man, for such a murder is in effect a lethal attack against God Himself
- Life is sacred to God because all are made in God's image
- (Note, however, the command is "do not murder" not "do not kill")

7. *Don't commit adultery (vs. 14)*

- Adultery is unfaithfulness...an overstepping of the lines that circumscribe the trusting relationship between partners who have made mutual pledge of loyal commitment

8. *Don't steal (vs. 15)*

- To steal is to commit at least 3 sins against God:
 - a. To take from another what he has been given and needs in order to exercise stewardship
 - b. To fail to fulfill one's own assignment on the basis of what God has given
 - c. To undermine the wise purposes of God who gives to each according to his role and ability

9. *Don't lie (vs. 16)*

- To bear false witness is to stir up strife within the community and to disrupt the smooth and orderly functioning of the kingdom

10. *Don't covet (vs. 17)*

- This is the final bookend which is the "flip side" of the first command
- Coveting at its core is not prizing God above all things, but rather, replacing Him with something else that is infinitely less worthy to be worshipped
- While the other commandments inevitably manifest themselves in an outward expression to some degree or other, covetousness can theoretically exist only in the mind and heart and never betray itself in external acts

The Civil and Religious Ordinances

1. *Slavery (21:1-11)*

- This was more like an indentured servant than our concept of slavery
- Slaves were to be treated respectfully
- Slaves that were Hebrews only had to serve 6 years maximum
- But they could also choose to become "bond-slaves" and decide to remain with their masters

2. *Capital Punishment (21:12-25)*

- This was the just penalty for premeditated murder, for striking one's parents, for kidnapping, and for striking a pregnant woman and killing the fetus
- **"miscarriage"** is not the normal Hebrew term for a baby that was born dead. The term used here is primarily used of a live birth in the OT. Thus, if the baby lived, then there was only a fine. *"Further injury"* would include the death of the baby, where the death penalty would be invoked.

3. **Property Guidelines (21:26-22:15)**

- The Law clearly demonstrates some overarching principles that govern how people should treat the property of others:
 1. **Respect**-There was to be a respect for the physical possessions of others. This was not a communal state where everyone had a right to everything. Rather it was understood that through work and wise living, a person could acquire possessions that they had ownership over.
 2. **Responsibility**-It was understood that people were responsible for their actions even when something happened that was clearly unintentional
 3. **Restitution**-God's laws focused primarily on protecting the rights of the innocent party. Thus, restitution was almost always a foundational part of any sentence meted out to someone who had broken a law and harmed the property of someone else.

4. **Three Annual Feasts (23:14-17)**

- Here God gave instructions for three agricultural festivals to be held annually:
 1. The Feast of Unleavened Bread in the month of Abib (March-April), about the time of the barley harvest. The first of these great agricultural feasts was a memorial to the hasty Exodus from Egypt (12:15-20).
 2. The Feast of Harvest in the spring at the beginning of the wheat harvest when the firstfruits of the crops were to be given to the Lord. This feast, in which two loaves made of new grain were presented to the Lord (Lev. 23:15-21), was also called the Feast of Weeks (Ex. 34:22) because it was celebrated seven weeks (50 days) after the Feast of Unleavened Bread. In the New Testament (Acts 2:1; 20:16; 1 Cor. 16:8) it is called the day of Pentecost.
 3. The Feast of Ingathering in early autumn (September-October). This feast, at the end of the agricultural or civil year—was also called the Feast of Tabernacles or Feast of Booths (Lev. 23:33-36; Deut. 16:13-15; 31:10).
- These were constant reminders to Israel of God's provisions for His people
- So three times a year (Ex. 23:14, 17; 34:23) all adult males in Israel were supposed to worship at the tabernacle (or later, at the temple) with grain and animal offerings

The Ceremonial Regulations

- The final chapters of this book emphasize the design and construction of the tabernacle which will be central place of worship for the nation
- Many have sought to give the tabernacle in-depth typological significance down to the smallest of details
- Although it may be intriguing to link every item of furniture and every piece of building material to Christ, this is a questionable practice
- Basically, if NT statements and allusions do not support connections and typology then interpretive caution must be emphasized
- The tabernacle's structure and ornamentation for efficiency and beauty are valid, but looking for extensive hidden meaning and symbolism is a questionable
- Rather, the redeeming work of the coming Messiah must be left to those NT passages which clearly deal with that subject

The tabernacle plan

- The tabernacle was a large tent, surrounded by an outer court—a long, rectangular enclosure 150 by 75 feet
- It was portable, the walls of the court and the tent itself being made of curtains
- The tabernacle was a sanctuary, a dwelling place for God
- It consisted of an outer “holy place” and an inner “most holy place” into which the high priest alone could enter, and then only once a year
- During the time in the wilderness, God's presence was visible, marked by a cloudy, fiery pillar which always stood over the tabernacle
- When erected, the tabernacle always stood in the middle of the camp, with the people ranged around it on every side

