

## LESSON FIVE 4:44—6:3

### II. THE SECOND DISCOURSE

The Law of God (4:44—26:19)

#### INTRODUCTION (4:44-49)

##### POSITION OF ISRAEL; SUMMARY OF CONQUESTS

44 And this is the law which Moses set before the children of Israel: 45 these are the testimonies, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which Moses spake unto the children of Israel, when they came forth out of Egypt, 46 beyond the Jordan, in the valley over against Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon whom Moses and the children of Israel smote, when they came forth out of Egypt. 47 And they took his land in possession, and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites, who were beyond the Jordan toward the sunrising; 48 from Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, even unto mount Sion (the same is Hermon), 49 and all the Arabah beyond the Jordan eastward, even unto the sea of the Arabah, under the slopes of Pisgah.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 4:44-49

97. What is the purpose of these verses?
98. Please notice that verses 44, 45 introduce and 46 to 49 review. What is introduced? What is reviewed?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 4:44-49

44 This is the law which Moses set before the Israelites;

45 These are the testimonies, and the laws and the precepts, which Moses spoke to the Israelites when they came out of Egypt,

46 Beyond the Jordan in the valley opposite Beth-peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the Israelites smote when they came out of Egypt.

47 And they took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, the two kings of the Amorites, who lived beyond the Jordan to the east;

48 From Aroer, which is on the edge of the valley of the Arnon, as far as Mount Sirion (that is, Hermon),

49 And all the Arabah (lowlands) beyond the Jordan eastward, as far as the Sea of Arabah [The Dead Sea], under the slopes and springs of Pisgah.

## COMMENT 4:44-49

IN THE VALLEY OVER AGAINST BETH-PEOR (v. 46)—See 1:1, 5; 3:29. Literally, the name signifies "house of Peor"—i.e. Baal-Peor. The name is in memory of the Moabite god, in whose lascivious worship Israel was earlier involved. See notes under 3:12-17.

ALL THE ARABAH (v. 49)—See 1:1, notes. Here the section of that area is specified as "beyond Jordan eastward . . ."

SEA OF ARABAH (v. 49)—That is, the Dead or Salt Sea.

UNDER THE SLOPES OF PISGAH (v. 49)—Or Nebo, Cf. 34:1. See notes under 3:17, 27.

Israel's conquests over Og and Sihon, given here in summary form, are described more fully in 2:26-3:22. You should review that section if you are not already familiar with it.

## A. THE NATURE, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE COVENANT MADE AT SINAI (5:1—11:32)

### 1. THE TEN WORDS REVIEWED (5:1—6:3)

#### a. THE COMMANDMENTS GIVEN (5:1-21)

And Moses called unto all Israel, and said unto them, Hear O Israel, the statutes and the ordinances which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and observe to do them. 2 Jehovah our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. 3 Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day. 4 Jehovah spake with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire, 5 (I stood between Jehovah and you at that time, to show you the word of Jehovah: for ye were afraid because of the fire, and went not up into the mount:) saying,

6 I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

7 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

8 Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, *nor* any likeness of *any thing* that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: 9 thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them; for I Jehovah thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and

upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate me; 10 and showing lovingkindness unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

11 Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain: for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that take this name in vain.

12 Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee. 13 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; 14 but the seventh day is a sabbath unto Jehovah thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. 15 And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm: therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

16 Honor thy father and thy mother, as Jehovah thy God commanded thee; that thy days may be long, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which Jehovah thy God giveth thee.

17 Thou shalt not kill.

18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

19 Neither shalt thou steal.

20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor.

21 Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's wife; neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbor's.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:1-21

99. Please read Exodus the twentieth chapter to give an adequate background for this text.
100. What distinction is there in "statutes, ordinances, and commandments"?
101. Who is involved in the pronoun "us" in verse 27?
102. Jehovah did give the ten commandments to the fathers of the very persons to whom Moses spoke. How are we to understand verse 3?
103. Read the account in Exodus to provide an understanding of just how we are to understand the expression "spake with you face to face . . . out of the midst of the fire."
104. What one great lesson did God want to teach Israel by their sojourn in "the house of bondage"?

105. Examine carefully every word of the first commandment as an example: "Thou"—who is involved here? Is this just a commandment for the nation of Israel? "shalt have" does this mean they had formerly worshiped more than one God? etc.
106. Is there some difference between an "image" and a "likeness"? Just what is a *graven* image?
107. Is the second commandment a prohibition against all sculpture? Discuss.
108. How is iniquity associated with idol worship?
109. Is verse nine natural or supernatural in the promise of punishment?
110. Someone said, "I do not even know when I am cursing; it has become such a part fo my vocabulary that I use it unconsciously." Is this a violation of the third commandment?
111. Why did God command Israel to keep the Sabbath day?
112. Does the Christian have any reason for keeping the Sabbath day? Discuss.
113. How could longevity possibly be linked with honoring parents?
114. Does God forbid killing under any and all conditions?
115. Are all forms of stealing condemned?
116. What is a briefer form of stating commandment number nine?
117. It would be interesting to list these same ten commandments in a positive form; instead of "Thou shalt not" try "Thou shalt."
118. Does the tenth commandment forbid lustful thoughts concerning thy neighbor's wife?
119. Which commandment would be the easiest to observe?

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 5:1-21

And Moses called all Israel, and said to them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and ordinances which I speak in your hearing this day, that you may learn them, and take heed and do them.

2 The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.

3 The Lord made this covenant not with our fathers, with us, who are all of us here alive this day.

4 The Lord spoke with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire.

5 I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to show you the word of the Lord; for you were afraid because of the fire, and went not up into the mount. He said,

6 I am the Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

7 You shall have no other gods before Me or besides me.

8 You shall not make for yourself [to worship] a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in the heavens above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;

9 You shall not bow down yourself to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,

10 And showing mercy and steadfast love to thousands and to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.

11 You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in falsehood or without purpose.

12 Observe the sabbath day to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you.

13 Six days you shall labor and do all your work;

14 But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son, or your daughter, or your manservant, or your maidservant, or your ox, or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the stranger or sojourner who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you.

15 And (earnestly) remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe and take heed to the sabbath day.

16 Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

17 You shall not murder.

18 Neither shall you commit adultery.

19 Neither shall you act slyly or steal.

20 Neither shall you witness falsely against your neighbor.

21 Neither shall you covet your neighbor's wife, nor desire your neighbor's house, his field, his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's.

### COMMENT 5:1-21

This section cannot properly be appreciated without reviewing the first giving of these commandments at Sinai, as recorded in Exodus 20.

Much of what we could say by way of comment (on the ten commandments, particularly) belongs more correctly, perhaps, in a study of Exodus. However, these words have particular significance *in view of Israel's present condition and location*, (See the Introduction, II.), and it is with this in mind that the remarks below are offered.

**JEHOVAH . . . MADE A COVENANT WITH US IN HOREB (v. 2)**—The reference is primarily to the ten commandments, 4:12, 13. Along with these were "statutes and ordinances" (2:14, 5:1)—a more inclusive term (See Ex. 21:1). In what way was it "with us"? The previous generation of numbered Israelites had died (2:14). The covenant nevertheless applied to *all Israel*. Israel was assembled at Sinai, Israel was assembled on the plains of Moab.

**JEHOVAH MADE NOT THIS COVENANT WITH OUR FATHERS (v. 3)**—What fathers? Obviously, the law *had* been given to their literal fathers, for most of those now hearing Moses' words were the sons and daughters of those who had died in the wilderness. "Fathers" sometimes refers to "forefathers" in the scripture, and it could have such significance here. Moffatt and Meek translate "not with our forefathers . . ." The law given at Sinai had *not* been given to their progenitors—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.\* "Fathers" *can* refer back several generations and often does in Deuteronomy. See 1:8, 4:37, 9:5, 10:22, 29:13, 30:20 (where note that the Abrahamic covenant *was* made with their "fathers"—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. That covenant was made with their forefathers; this one was not). See also such passages as Josh. 24:15 and Jn. 8:39. Moses then is saying, God made this covenant with *you* (Israel)—and not with your forefathers. You were its first recipients. See Neh. 9:13-15, and notes below.

Another explanation, however, is preferred by many. That is, to understand v. 3 to be simply saying, "Jehovah *not only* made this covenant with your own fathers, but with *us*, even *us*—we who are all here alive this very day." The covenant was, indeed, *made* with their literal fathers and mothers. "But," Moses is saying "not just with *them*. It was also made with every one of you!" The covenant was with

\*This is obvious in scripture—in spite of the insistence of some that such commandments as keeping the sabbath were given long before the exodus. ". . . the sabbath was kept by Adam in his innocense in holy Eden; by Adam, fallen yet repentant, when he was driven from his happy estate. It was kept by all the patriarchs, from Abel to righteous Noah, to Abraham, to Jacob. When the chosen people were in bondage in Egypt, many, in the midst of prevailing idolatry, lost their knowledge of God's law . . ." (*The Great Controversy*, by Ellen G. White, p. 51 Pacific Press, 1944 edition.)

Israel as a nation, not just its original recipients. "He [Moses] means, Jehovah made a covenant not with our fathers only, or specially, but with us also" (McGarvey). (Clarke's rendering is almost identical.) Instructions or commandments to their fathers were instructions or commandments to *them*. So in v. 15 he could say to the *present* generation, "thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt" etc. And 6:20-24 ". . . We were Pharaoh's bondmen" etc.

JEHOVAH SPAKE WITH YOU FACE TO FACE IN THE MOUNT (v. 4) —A figurative expression for God's miraculous manifestations to Israel at Sinai (Ex. 19:9-11, 16-19; 20:18-21. Cf. Deut. 4:33, 36). No other nation had such a privilege.

NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME (v. 7)—Margin, *besides me*. Not no other gods ahead of me, for that infers that Jehovah God tolerates others, just so he is first. "Ye shall not make *other gods* with me; gods of silver, or gods of gold, ye shall not make unto you" (Ex. 20:23). It might be well to note here that the New Testament forbids making a god or object of worship of *anything earthly*: Philip. 3:18, 19; Col. 3:5, I Tim. 6:10, 17; I Cor. 6:12-14.

VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS UPON THE CHILDREN, AND UPON THE THIRD AND UPON THE FOURTH GENERATION OF THEM THAT HATE ME (v. 9)—Cf. Ex. 34:6, 7. This passage is not speaking of *final* or *eternal* guilt. It is speaking of the effect of one's sin through several generations. It was a civil law in Israel that "The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin" (24:16). Will God have a less equitable sense of justice in the final day? Our Righteous Father judges as we *should* judge—individually. This is abundantly taught in such passages as Ezek. the 18th chapter, and in the New Testament, in Matt. 16:27, II Cor. 5:10, Eph. 6:7-9, Col. 3:22-25, I Pet. 1:17, Rom. 14:10-12.

How, then do we explain the righteousness of God in such cases as his commanding Israel to execute Achan's entire family (Josh. 7:22-26), including "his sons and his daughters"? We do not know, in that case, but that his family was an accomplice in his crime. The "loot" was hidden in the family tent—rather hard to conceal!

God, however, *did* sometimes punish entire groups with death. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were destroyed with "their wives, and their sons, and their little ones" (Num. 16:25-35). And we have just read how Israel was commanded to destroy the native tribes "with the women

and the little ones" (2:34). These latter verses, I believe, form a parallel to the passage now under consideration. Many who were destroyed in Korah's rebellion and in the extermination of the Canaanite tribes were probably *innocent* themselves—but suffered *physical death* because of their parent's sin. The Canaanite tribes were being banished for their *own* evil, as well as "making way" for Israel (Gen. 15:16, and under 9:4).

We conclude that through the ages and even to the present day, children and other innocent parties may suffer physical death as a result of their parent's or other's sins. This may be the will of God. But final and eternal judgment is on a strictly individual basis, and no one will be in hell eternally who has not gone there *on their own volition*. See further under 24:16.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF JEHOVAH THY GOD IN VAIN (v. 11)—Not here a prohibition of swearing by or to Jehovah's name *per se*, but of using his honorable name with lightness, levity, or without keeping an oath made to him. See 6:13, 10:20. But Jesus taught "Swear not at all . . ." (Matt. 5:33-37), and James taught, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment" (Jas. 5:12).

The Hebrew word for "vain" (*SHAV*) is rendered by Baumgartner's Lexicon here as meaning "name a name without reason, vainly; misuse a name," and by Gesenius' Lexicon as "specifically *falsehood, a lie*," translating here: 'utter not the name of Jehovah upon a falsehood,' do not swear falsely, compare Psalms 24:4, Isa. 1:13.

This commandment, of course, has broad and far-reaching implications relative to our use of the name of God. Adam Clarke's comment, made many years ago of conditions in Britain, is still very much in order: "Is it necessary to say to any truly spiritual mind, that all such interjections as *God! my God! good Heavens! & c., & c.*, are formal positive breaches of this law? How many pass for *Christians* are highly criminal here!"

OBSERVE THE SABBATH DAY, TO KEEP IT HOLY (v. 12)—a law that had the most severe punishment if broken, Ex. 16:29, 30; 31:14-17, 35:2, 3; Num. 15:32-36. Present day sabbath-day advocates must, of necessity, keep the sabbath *as the Bible directs*, or not keep it at all. Anything less is inconsistent. See below.

AND THOU SHALT REMEMBER THAT THOU WAST A SERVANT IN THE LAND OF EGYPT, AND JEHOVAH . . . BROUGHT THEE OUT . . . THEREFORE JEHOVAH THY GOD COMMANDED THEE TO KEEP THE SABBATH DAY (v. 15)—One of many scriptures which shows this law was only given to *Israel*. See also v. 2 and notes. The sabbath was *in commemoration of their deliverance from Egypt*. Thus, its observance by the Patriarchs (v. 2) was *impossible*—for the historical event it commemorated had not yet come to pass! Nor would its observance have any significance to *any other* nation! The sabbath was a *national* law of Israel “made known” at Sinai as an institution (Neh. 9:13, 14) and *never* observed before Exodus 16 in the wilderness of Sin. Cf. also 4:12, 13. To Israel, and Israel alone was this law given—Ex. 31:13, Ezek. 20:10-12. The word “sabbath” is not mentioned before the 16th chapter of Exodus, and it is obvious from the above phrase that no people were commanded to keep it who were not Israelites! How could the sabbath commemorate deliverance from Egypt before such a deliverance was a fact?

In Genesis 2:3, Moses, writing from somewhere in the wilderness or perhaps on these very plains of Moab, can say that “God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God had created and made.” *When* was it hallowed? Some (Alexander Campbell was among them) think it was hallowed *then*—that is, at creation. But in the light of *this* verse, as well as v. 2 and what is said in Exodus, such a position becomes untenable. Genesis 2:3, we believe, is a literary prolepsis. The statement made by Moses in Genesis was written after it had become historical fact at Sinai. It was now a fact—a very recent and prominent one in Israel’s history. And Moses tells us the seventh day was chosen because God rested on that day or epoch when the world was being formed. (See C. C. Crawford’s first volume on Genesis, pp. 362-370 in this very series). The Jewish people needed to know why God chose to memorialize the seventh day of the week rather than one of the other six days. And it was to be observed as a *memorial* of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. Crawford puts it “We have in Genesis *the reason why the particular day of the week was chosen!* We have in Deuteronomy *what the day was chosen for*, that is, what it was divinely intended to memorialize.” In regard to the phrase, “And thou shalt remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and Jehovah brought you out . . . Therefore Jehovah thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day” (v. 15). McGarvey states, “The motive presented for

keeping the sabbath, that Jehovah had delivered them from servitude in Egypt, was an appeal to their sense of gratitude. It was not given as the reason why God had sanctified the seventh day, but as a reason why *Israel should observe it*: 'therefore Jehovah thy God *commanded thee* to keep the sabbath day.' The reason why God had *ballowed* the seventh day, because in creation he had rested on the seventh day, had been given in Exodus [Ex. 20:11] and so far as it furnished a reason for keeping the sabbath, it was a reason applicable to all men. Moses, without repeating that, gives Israel a special reason why they should keep it, whether others did or not; and the reason is, gratitude to God for giving them rest from the servitude in Egypt. It was easy for every one who heard him, and who had ever heard or read the original commandment [as given at Sinai], to see that at this point he was not quoting the commandment, but adding a motive for its observance."\*

And, as we have just seen, Israel was, in fact, the only *nation* divinely instructed to keep the sabbath. If others (strangers or foreigners) *joined* Israel, they, too, would be under Israel's law—the law of God. See 31:12, 13, but especially Num. 9:14, 15:14-16, 29, Lev. 24:22. This would, of course, include the keeping of the sabbath. But other nations, as such, were never given the sabbath. *They could not commemorate a miraculous deliverance from Egypt*, as Israel could.

No other nation had been dealt with as Israel had; no one been given the laws he had been given. See 4:7, 8; 32-39, II Sam. 7:23, I Chron. 17:21.

"He showeth his word unto Jacob,  
His statutes and his ordinances unto Israel.  
He hath not dealt so with any nation:  
And as for his ordinances, they have not known them.  
Praise ye Jehovah.

—Psalms 147:19, 20

"So I caused them to go forth out of the land of Egypt, and brought them into the wilderness . . . Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am Jehovah that sanctifieth them" (Ezek. 20:10, 12).

HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER (v. 16)—Cf. Eph. 6:2. "Honor" (Hebrew, *kabed*) literally signifies *heavy* or *weighty*—i. e., their parents were not to be regarded *lightly*, *carelessly*, or with indifference. Rather, proper respect, reverence, thoughtfulness, and obed-

\*Authorship of Deuteronomy, pp. 80, 81.

ience should be rendered them. This law carried with it the severest punishment if broken—21:18-21; 27:16, Ex. 21:15, 17; Lev. 20:9. Let us, as Christians, not forget that the Son of God was in subjection to his earthly parents as a child, Luke 2:51.

Today, more perhaps than any other time in all the history of the western world, parents are not honored. Rather, there is disrespect, back-talk, scowls, sneers and contradiction. But what is being done about it by the *parents themselves*? By their *own* lives and conduct, they frequently encourage rebellion and disrespect! When there is no regular teaching in the home, (both by *word* and by *example*) and when parents so flaunt the law of Christ *themselves*, how can they expect respect, reverence, and obedience from their children? As the homes go, so goes the nation. Disrespect of parents becomes, in the minds of a youngster, the spawning ground for disrespect in *all* walks of life—of school teachers, law enforcement officers, Christian leaders, and, worst of all, of Christ and his word.

Before leaving the ten commandments, we must ask the question, what is a *Christian's* relationship to this covenant? In what way or manner are these laws binding on the child of God today? What is his responsibility to them? Is he bound to some, and not bound to others?

The answer is simply this: We are no longer bound *in covenant relationship* to ANY of the Mosaic law—including the ten commandments. This law was given to Israel *alone* (v. 3, 15) and the covenant was between God and that nation only. This answer may come as a shock to many, but it is plainly taught in the New Covenant scriptures.

Jesus taught that he came to fulfill the law and the prophets, and that "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished" (Matt. 5:17-19). "I came not to destroy, but to fulfill." What does that mean to you? Christ was the very *essence* of the Mosaic dispensation, keeping the law perfectly—the only one who ever did. He lived and died under that economy. How, then, could he say he came to "destroy" it? He came to bring it to its *culmination*, to *completion*, and hence to its termination! "I did not come to abolish but to complete . . ." (Berkeley). Thus, Jesus taught that *while he was yet alive* the law (including the ten commandments) should be *kept*. Note Luke 10:25-28, where loving God (Deut. 6:5) and your neighbor (Lev. 19:18) are both cited as a part of "the law." (In fact, "On these two commandments the whole law hangeth, and the prophets" [Matt. 22:40]—

i.e., love for God and one's neighbor was at the *center* and *core* of *all* the writings in the law and prophets.)

Again, in another instance, a certain ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus' answer was a reference to the ten commandments as well as an exhortation to sell all he had, distribute it to the poor, and follow Christ (Luke 18:18-22).

Jesus' teachings (whether promulgated by himself or his inspired apostles) were being spread while he lived. But his new covenant could not be officially binding on all mankind until after his death, "For where a testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him that made it. For a testament is of force where there hath been death: for it doth never avail while he that made it liveth" (Heb. 9:16, 17). The new covenant is not some kind of hodge-podge combination of Old Testament and New. Not at all. To think of it as such is only to confuse and befuddle the mind. Rather, it is a BRAND NEW covenant, and it is only *binding* as a testament between us and its testator. It has certain stipulations and demands to qualify for its promised rewards—*these* must be met. ". . . he [Christ] is the mediator of a NEW covenant" (Heb. 9:15). Trying to mix or combine our covenant responsibilities is like putting a piece of undressed cloth [not shrunk] upon an old garment, or putting new wine in old wineskins. So taught Jesus, himself, Matt. 9:16, 17. Yet this is the very position (and an *awkward* position it is!) that those who propose to keep the decalogue today find themselves. The law, of course, must be kept *as given by God*, or not kept at all. Let us suppose, then, that we were to keep the sabbath, the seventh day, as specified in the law of Moses. (" . . . the law is good, if a man use it lawfully," I Tim. 1:8). Here are a few things that we would have to keep in mind:

1. Not to boil or bake (Ex. 16:23)
2. No fires to be built (Ex. 35:3) (A rather difficult command to keep in cold or Arctic climates! But *not* impossible for Israel to keep.)
3. Two male lambs, a year old, to be offered (Num. 28:9)
4. A meal-offering and drink-offering to be given (Num. 28:9, 10)
5. Not to pick up sticks. Those doing so to be stoned to death (Num. 15:32-36)
6. ". . . the seventh day there shall be to you a holy day, a sabbath of solemn rest unto Jehovah: whosoever doeth ANY work therein shall be put to death" (Ex. 35:2). ". . . in it thou shalt not

do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates" (Ex. 20:10).

7. Must be kept according to Jewish time (sunset Friday to sunset Saturday). How would our brethren in Fairbanks, Alaska keep this law in mid-summer? The sun doesn't go down! *Israel*, to whom this law was exclusively given, would not be faced with such a problem.

8. Death penalty for profaning the sabbath (Ex. 31:14). (I have yet to witness a blackslidden or careless sabbath-keeper executed or punished in the manner specified. Yet the very law that teaches sabbath observance also teaches that those who defile it must be put to death). Is it the duty of Christians to put to death those who "desecrate" the seventh day? If yes, who will be the public executioner? Shall it be by stoning, as commanded in the law? If no, what do we do with the law just cited (Ex. 35:2)?

9. The weekly sabbath is not the only sabbath to be kept, but also the sabbath of the seventh year, and the year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:1-22). If Christians are required to keep the weekly sabbath as Israel did, why are they not also required to keep *these* "sabbaths"? By what authority do we keep the law in one instance and relegate it to obscurity in another?

No, the sabbath, and all old-covenant laws are *done away* in Christ. Read carefully II Cor. 3:1-18, Col. 2:13-17, Gal. 3:7-14, 23-27; 5:1-4. Christ was the perfect essence, the very embodiment of the law itself, and his death signified the death of the law.

When Christ was alive, he could say to one, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," or to another, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." But when he died, his new covenant was sealed—ratified by his own blood. Now, if we are to be the beneficiaries of his "last will and testament," we must comply with its stipulations.

Some one will now ask, but are we not bound to keep such commands as "Thou shalt not kill," etc. The answer is still no—not as a covenant. I do not kill, not because the Old Testament forbids it, but because *Christ* forbids, not only killing, but its source, hate. We have in the New Covenant a higher standard all the way through:

#### Mosaic Law

1. No other gods before me

#### New Covenant

"... there is no God but one" (I Cor. 8:4) "... to us there is one God, the Father, of whom all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ" (I Cor. 8:6)

Mosaic Law	New Covenant
2. No graven image	"My little children, guard yourselves from idols" (I Jn. 5:21) "Neither be ye idolators" (I Cor. 10:7) "flee from idolatry" (I Cor. 10:14) See also Rom. 1:21-23, Col. 3:5
3. Not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain	"Swear not at all" (Matt. 5:34) "Let your speech be Yea, yea; Nay, nay; and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one" (Matt. 5:37) ". . . every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment" (Matt. 12:36)
4. Observe the sabbath day	"There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest [heaven] for the people of God (Heb. 4:9) (Sunday, "the Lord's day" of Rev. 1:10 is not commanded to be a day of rest, but is a day of worship: Acts 20:7, I Cor. 16:1, 2.)
5. Honor thy father and mother	"Honor thy father and mother" (Eph. 6:2) "let them learn first to show piety towards their own family, and to requite their parents" (I Tim. 5:4)
6. Thou shalt not kill	". . . every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire" (Matt. 5:22) "Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him" (I Jn. 3:15)

## Mosaic Law

## New Covenant

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 7. Not commit adultery                         | “. . . every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart” (Matt. 5:28) “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are <i>these</i> : fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness . . .” (Gal. 5:19) “. . . <i>men</i> that count it pleasure to revel in the daytime, spots and blemishes . . . having eyes full of adultery” (II Pet. 2:13, 14) |
| 8. Not steal                                   | “Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have whereof to give to him that hath need” (Eph. 4:28)  |
| 9. Not bear false witness against thy neighbor | “Wherefore, putting away falsehood, speak ye truth each one with his neighbor” (Eph. 4:25). “. . . lie not one to another . . .” (Col. 3:9)  |
| 10. Not covet                                  | “Put to death . . . covetousness, which is idolatry” (Col. 3:5). “But godliness with contentment is great gain . . . having food and covering we shall be therewith content” (I Tim. 6:8)  |

We could, of course, extend the New Testament list considerably; but the above references are sufficient to illustrate the point: By observing the *new* covenant, (whose standards are always higher) the old law is no longer *observed as a covenant*.

Why then study the Old Testament? I Cor. 10:11, Rom. 15:4, and II Tim. 3:16 have the answer. Inasmuch as the Mosaic law supplied God's *will* to God's *people* of a past age, there is much there for learning, instruction, comfort, and example, for us. And one can continually ask himself, "Are my standards *as high* as these standards

God's people had under the OLD covenant? (A good test on this one is found in Deut. 6:4 and Lev. 19:18). Further, *much* in the old (both by way of *type* and *prophecy*) foretells the new. "Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of the feast day or a new moon or a sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's" (Col. 2:16, 17). See also Heb. 8.

#### b. ISRAEL'S REACTION; FEAR AND DEVOTION (5:22-27)

22 These words Jehovah spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them upon two tables of stone, and gave them unto me. 23 And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders: 24 and ye said, Behold, Jehovah our God hath showed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth speak with man, and he liveth. 25 Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of Jehovah our God any more, then we shall die. 26 For who is there of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we have, and lived? 27 Go thou near, and hear all that Jehovah our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that Jehovah our God shall speak unto thee: and we will hear it, and do it.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:22-27

120. Who wrote the words on the two tablets of stone?
121. Did God speak the ten commandments to the people before they were written?
122. Why did God use fire, smoke, earthquake, darkness in manifesting Himself to Israel? Is there an example in this for us today?
123. Why speak of dying, as in verses 25, 26?

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 5:22-27

22 These words the Lord spoke to all your assembly at the mountain out of the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He spoke not again—added no more. He wrote them on two tables of stone, and gave them to me [Moses].

23 And when you heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near me, all the heads of your tribes, and your elders;

24 And you said, Behold, the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we have heard His voice out of the midst of the fire; we have this day seen that God speaks with man and man still lives.

25 Now therefore why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if we hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, we shall die.

26 For who is there of all flesh, who has heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of fire, as we have, and lived?

27 Go near [Moses], and hear all that the Lord our God will say and speak to us all that the Lord our God will speak to you; and we will hear and do it.

### COMMENT 5:22-27

THESE WORDS JEHOVAH SPAKE UNTO ALL YOUR ASSEMBLY (v. 22)—It appears God *spoke* the words of the Decalogue to the congregation before they were engraven on the tables of stone. Hence their fear (v. 23, 29).

AND HE WROTE THEM UPON TWO TABLES OF STONE, AND GAVE THEM UNTO ME (v. 22)—God is said to have written the ten commandments in both instances (4:13, 10:1-4). See also Ex. 31:18, 32:15, 16 (first set). Compare Ex. 34:1 (second set—hewed out by Moses). But so is Moses: Ex. 24:4, 34:27, 28. Our conclusion is, that what God instructed Moses to write, he *did* write—He wrote precisely and exactly what he was *told* to. Thus the first tablets were said to have been written "by the finger of God" even though Moses did the writing. Regarding the statements of God writing and Moses writing, Francisco states, "How is this to be interpreted? Do the statements contradict one another? Not if it is seen that when Moses wrote, it was just as if God was writing it with his own finger. Moses wrote the Decalogue word for word as God dictated it. It has been delivered by Moses just as it came from God."

Others would explain the passages concerning the writing and engraving thus: *God* wrote the ten commandments, *Moses* wrote the words in "the book of the covenant" (Ex. 24:7) and other laws and ordinances. But Ex. 34:28 specifically tells us *Moses* wrote the ten

commandments upon the tables of stone—unless the “he” refers to God in that passage. Rotherham translates that scripture “and He [God] wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten words.” The Newberry Study Bible also refers the “he” to Jehovah, citing Deut. 10:4. If the latter translations are accurate, it would erase the difficulty. But whether God wrote *with* or *without* human instrumentality, his writings nevertheless represent his *will*.

NOW THEREFORE WHY SHOULD WE DIE (v. 25)—Such an overwhelming demonstration (fire, quaking of the mountain, God's own voice speaking) they supposed to mean death. There was apparently a widely held view in Israel that any such revelation of God's glory and might meant death to the observers.

#### c. GOD'S RESPONSE: DELIGHTED APPROVAL (5:28-31)

28 And Jehovah heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and Jehovah said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee; they have well said all that they have spoken. 29 Oh that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever! 30 Go say to them, Return ye to your tents. 31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandment, and the statutes, and the ordinances, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess it.

#### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:28-31

124. Mark verse 28: God hears us when we speak to one another.
125. Note the wonderful concern and compassion of our wonderful heavenly Father as indicated in verse 29. In what sense does fear prompt obedience?
126. Read Exodus chapters 21-23 for the commandments, statutes and ordinances God spoke to Moses.

#### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 5:28-31

28 And the Lord heard your words, when you spoke to me; and the Lord said to me, I have heard the words of this people, which they have spoken to you; they have well said all that they have spoken.

29 O that they had such a [mind and] heart in them always, (reverently) to fear Me, and keep all My commandments, that it might go well with them, and with their children for ever!

30 Go and say to them, Return to your tents.

31 But you [Moses], stand here by Me, and I will tell you all the commandments and the statutes and the precepts which you shall teach them, that they may do them in the land which I give them to possess.

### COMMENT 5:28-31

OH THAT THERE WERE SUCH A HEART IN THEM, THAT THEY WOULD FEAR ME, AND KEEP ALL MY COMMANDMENTS ALWAYS, THAT IT MIGHT BE WELL WITH THEM, AND THEIR CHILDREN FOREVER (v. 29)—Have you ever heard a more beautiful outburst from the heart of God? Every command God gives is for OUR OWN GOOD—"for our good always" (6:24). And even if he proves and tries us, it is "to do thee good in thy latter end" (8:16). See Ps. 34:12-16, Jas. 3:10-13.

#### d. PURPOSES OF OBSERVING THE LAW: (5:32—6:3)

Notice these purposes as you read the verses below:

- (1) to live
- (2) to live well
- (3) to live long
- (4) to multiply

32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as Jehovah your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. 33 Ye shall walk in all the way which Jehovah your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.

Now this is the commandment, the statutes, and the ordinances, which Jehovah your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it; 2 that thou mightest fear Jehovah thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do it; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as Jehovah, the God of thy fathers, hath promised unto thee, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

### THOUGHT QUESTIONS 5:32—6:3

127. The command of verse 32 presupposes several things: (1) A personal knowledge of the law, (2) A personal desire to obey the

- law, (3) Those who would teach the law. Were these factors always present? If not who was to blame?
128. Physical life and material prosperity are here associated with obedience to the law. Is this true today? Discuss.
129. Someone said, "Democracy is the by-product of Christianity." Discuss the prosperity and danger of America as compared with Israel.

### AMPLIFIED TRANSLATION 5:32—6:3

32 Therefore you people shall be watchful to do as the Lord your God has commanded you; you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

33. You shall walk in all the way which the Lord your God has commanded you, that you may live, and that it may go well with you, and that you may live long in the land which you shall possess.

### CHAPTER 6

Now this is the instruction, the laws, and the precepts, which the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land to which you go to possess it;

2. That you may (reverently) fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, and keep all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged.

3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be watchful to do them; that it may be well with you, and that you may increase exceedingly as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

### COMMENT 5:32—6-3

THAT YE MAY LIVE, etc. (v. 33)—Note the similarity to v. 16 and Eph. 6:3. One cannot but be impressed time and again in this book that God promises happiness and joy to his children *if they will be obedient*. Afflictions and difficulties they might have on this earth (as Job did) but the promise contained here would still be theirs if they would not turn away from their God.

*Material* prosperity formed a large part of Israel's promised blessing. "The Israel of God" today, his church (Gal. 6:16) is also a "land flowing with milk and honey"—the great *spiritual* and *eternal* blessings of Christ! Every true member of the church inherits *far more* than the

blessings enumerated here. The *least* one in Christ's kingdom has more for which to be grateful than the *greatest* of those living under the Mosaic covenant (Matt. 11:11).

## SUMMARY OF CHAPTER FIVE

*God's covenant with the people in Horeb, 1-4. Moses the mediator of it, 5. A repetition of the ten commandments, 6-21; which God wrote on two tables of stone, 22. The people are filled with dread at the terrible majesty of God, 23-26; and beseech Moses to be their mediator, 27. The Lord admits of their request, 28; and deploras their ungodliness, 29. They are exhorted to obedience, that they may be preserved in the possession of the promised land, 30-33.*

## QUESTIONS, LESSON FIVE (4:44—6:3)

1. Discuss "Jehovah made not this covenant with our fathers (5:3). What conclusions can you draw?"
2. How did God "visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children" (v. 9)? Were children guilty because parents sinned?
3. What, exactly, is the prohibition of the 3rd commandment, "Thou shalt not take the name of Jehovah thy God in vain"?
4. Show from scripture that the sabbath was a *national* law, given only to Israel.
5. Show how no present-day religious group keeps the sabbath *as it was given to Israel*.
6. Where and how many times is the *sabbath* mentioned in the book of Genesis? Record the instances where Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob observed the sabbath.
7. If Jesus kept the sabbath, why shouldn't we?
8. How many of the ten commandments are now binding? Explain.
9. If the old covenant is done away in Christ, why study it?
10. What blessings are promised for Israel's obedience?