

In the Beginning...Jesus



Lesson 18

God's Law Is Given to Israel

Themes:

- God enters into a covenantal relationship with His people.
- God's law is holy, righteous, and good.
- The law described how Israel was to live as a redeemed people of God.

Scripture:

Portions of Exodus 19-20; Romans 7:12

Memory Verse:

Isaiah 53:12b (and review verses 3-12a)

Visuals for Lesson:

- Bible.
- *In the Beginning...Jesus* poster.
- Resource Packet:
 - CLUE SCRAMBLE (from Lesson 17).
 - GOD—MAN visual (from previous lessons).
 - COVENANT ARROW WITH TEN COMMANDMENTS.
 - HOLY, RIGHTEOUS, GOOD.
 - LIST #1 and #2.
 - IS ARROW.
 - MUST BE ARROW.
 - Bible Clue Card #22.
- Magnifying glass (for use in reading the clue card).
- Map of Middle East (in the back of some Bibles).
- Dirty garbage lid (or something similar)—Place junky, broken, fake jewelry on the lid and cover the lid with a cloth.

Lesson

Display the **CLUE SCRAMBLE** from the previous lesson. What important word do the letters spell out? [Covenant.] Quickly review the meaning of the word. The covenant with Israel was a special agreement that God established between Himself and His people.

Have the children turn to **Exodus 19:5-6** in their Bibles and ask:

*What three things did God agree to do for Israel in this covenant? [Make them His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.]
What two things must Israel do? [Obey God fully and keep His covenant.]
Why would it be important for Israel to obey God and keep His covenant?*

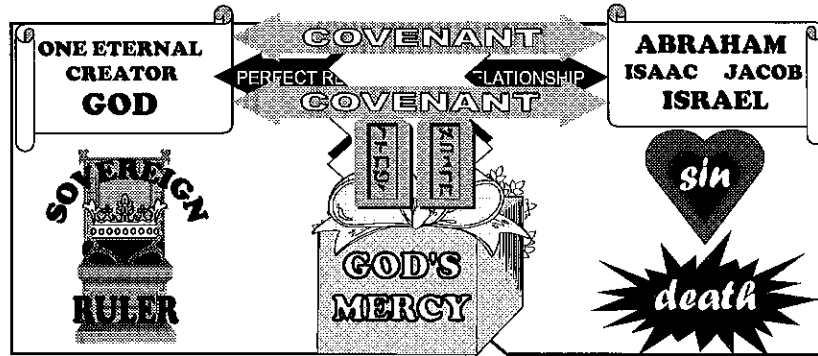
Illustration: Have the children pretend the following scenario:

Suppose your dad wanted to give your mom a gift for her birthday. You went to a jewelry store and told the owner that you were looking for an expensive and beautiful piece of jewelry. The owner says that he has a special tray displaying his best jewelry. Display the dirty (garbage lid) with the jewelry on it. Would you be impressed with him as a jeweler? Why not?

Explain that the owner's best jewelry is a reflection of the owner's character. You wouldn't think much of the owner if his jewelry was trashy. This is true with God's treasured possession also. In God's covenant with Israel, God is agreeing to make Israel *His* treasured possession. God wants His treasured people to display His own greatness and value so people would look at Israel and say, "*Wow, look at Israel! They are the LORD's people. If they belong to Him, He must be really great!*"

But how is Israel supposed to look and act like God's treasured possession? What does a kingdom of priests look like? Do they do anything special? What is a holy nation? How does a holy nation act?

Point to the clue (on the ***In the Beginning...Jesus*** poster) revealed in the previous lesson: **GOD'S HOLY LAW**. What is this picture depicting? [The tablets containing the Ten Commandments.] **Display COVENANT ARROW WITH TEN COMMANDMENTS** and *lightly* tape it so it joins **GOD** to **ISRAEL** on the **GOD—MAN** visual. It should now look like this:



Explain that, unlike the spoken covenant God made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, this new covenant with Israel would include written laws and commands.

What is so special about these laws and commands? [Allow the children to give a few responses.]

Have a **Sword Drill** with **Romans 7:12**:

So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

According to this verse, what three words describe God's law and commandments? [They are holy, righteous, and good.] (Lightly tape **HOLY RIGHTEOUS GOOD** within the Ten Commandments tablets on the **GOD-MAN** visual.) *Why is this important to know?*

(Note: We are equating the words "law" and "commandment" in **Romans 7:12** with the moral law of God as expressed in the Ten Commandments, though it may be more inclusive than that.)

Illustration: Choose two children to come up to the front. Explain to the children that you are going to give each child a short note that a parent has given to a child. Each child will read his note and then you will ask the children what they would think of each parent.

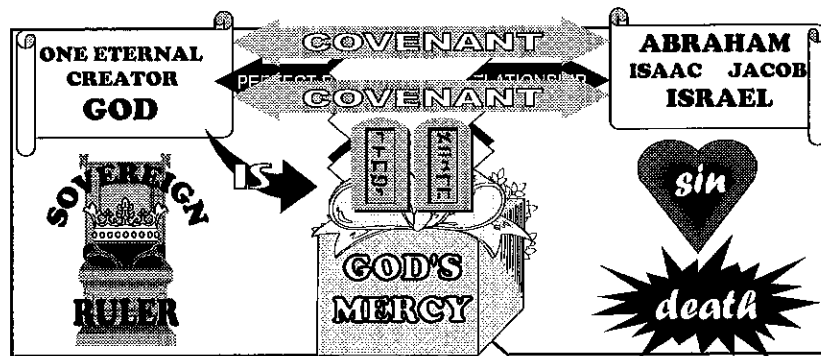
LIST #1: Get up and find something to eat. I'll be sleeping, so don't bother me. Wash the dirty clothes and fix me something to eat. Walk to the store later and try to sneak me a few candy bars. If anyone calls for me, tell them I'm not home.

LIST #2: Get up and make your bed and get dressed. Be in the kitchen at 9 a.m. for your breakfast, and then we will study our Bible verses and pray together. Remember to call Grandma and wish her a happy birthday today. After lunch we'll sit down and work on your school work so that you

will be ready for your math test. Let's go to the park and play together after we finish!

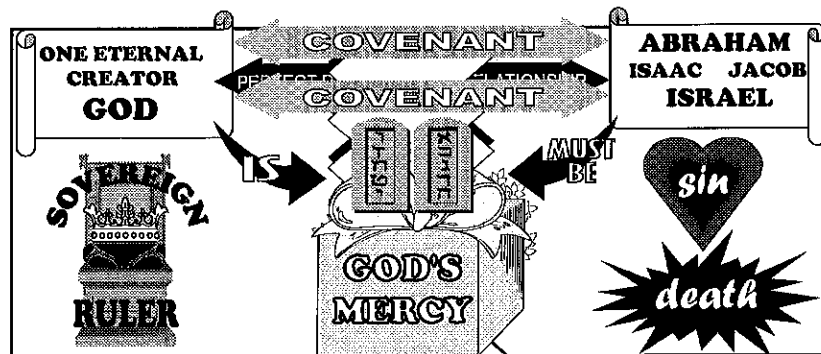
Would you say that the first parent is a good parent? Why not? What about the second parent? How does the second parent show that he is a good and loving parent?

Explain that the better and more loving parent in this example can be seen through the types of instructions each gave. In a similar way, people can also see what God is like by the laws and commands He gives. The Bible says God's commandments are holy, righteous, and good. Why? Because the One giving them, God, is holy, righteous, and good. That is the first reason these laws and commandments are so special. Tape the **IS ARROW** so that it joins the **ONE ETERNAL CREATOR GOD** sign to the **TEN COMMANDMENTS** on the **GOD—MAN** visual. It should now look like this:



*What does this mean for Israel? Since God is holy, righteous, and good would He want His treasured possession, Israel, to look like this? (**Display** the garbage lid again.) Why not? What should the Israelites be like if they are to be God's treasured possession?*

Point out that the second reason God's written laws and commands are so special is because they showed that the Israelites must be holy, righteous, and good. Tape the **MUST BE ARROW** to join the **ABRAHAM** sign to the **TEN COMMANDMENTS** on the **GOD—MAN** visual. The visual should now look like this:



God's written laws instruct God's people about what kinds of desires, thoughts, words, and actions are holy, righteous, and good.

Remember the pretend illustration of buying your mother a very special gift? Suppose you actually did find something very beautiful and precious. How would you give it to her? Would you simply put it in a paper bag and hand it to her? Or, might you want to think of a special way to present it to her?

What about God giving His holy, righteous, and good laws and commands to His people? Do you think God simply said, "Here they are"? Or did He plan a special way to give them to Israel?

Choose children to read **Exodus 19:10-12:**

The LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments and be ready for the third day. For on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death.'"

Does God want the people of Israel to treat receiving His commands as something ordinary—no big deal? How do we know this? What was the first thing God told Moses the people should do? [Consecrate themselves.] What does that mean? (Explain that it means to set yourself apart for something very special. Prepare your heart and mind to meet with a holy God.) What warning did God give to Israel in these verses? [Not to go up the mountain or even touch it.] What does this tell us about what Israel's attitude toward God should be? Here is what happened next:

Read **Exodus 19:16-20:**

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

Was it an ordinary thing when God's presence came down on the mountain? What wasn't ordinary? Why do you think that God did it this way? [Allow the children to give some responses.]

Do you think the Israelites were giving God their full attention at this point? Do you think that anyone said, "I'm bored. I think I'll go home now"?

Emphasize that something extraordinary was happening. The presence of the holy God was coming down to His people. This was something very extraordinary and should be treated very seriously.

Now that God had the people's full attention, what happened when Moses went up the mountain?

Choose children to read **Exodus 20:1-2**:

And God spoke all these words, saying,

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

Before God gives the first commandment in verse 3, what does He do in verses 1 and 2? [Reminds Israel of who He is and what He has done.] Why do you think God reminded them of this before He began to give the commandments? [Allow the children to respond.]

Illustration: *Suppose your six-year-old brother comes up to you and gives you a list of things he wants you to do. Would you necessarily do what he says? Why not?*

What is different about the Person giving Israel these commands?

Explain that through the sending of plagues, the parting of the sea, and the exodus from Egypt, God had proven to the people of Israel that He was indeed the one, true, almighty God. Israel belongs to God, and He proved Himself to be faithful, merciful, and good to them. They owe everything they are and have to God.

What would the right response to verses 1 and 2 be? [Hint: Look at verse 3.] What does this verse mean? [Allow the children to respond.]

Emphasize that because of who God is, what He is like, and what He has done for His people, He alone is worthy of all of their worship, trust, and obedience. God, and God alone, is to have first place in their hearts and minds.

Tell the children that the rest of the Ten Commandments begin to explain how the first commandment is to be lived out. The children will be spending more time going through each commandment and its meaning in their application and workbook time.

But, before the end of the lesson there is an important clue to be revealed.

Display Bible Clue Card #22. Choose a child to come up to the front and insert the card behind the red paper of the **JESUS IS THE KEY** visual to reveal:

Next time look for a SEAL.

What does this mean? A seal is a sea animal isn't it? What does a seal have to do with God's covenant with Israel and the Ten Commandments? Maybe this week you can think about this and come to our next class with an answer.

Note: Before the next lesson, carefully remove the tape from the visuals on the **GOD—MAN** visual and glue them in place.

Application

- **WORKBOOK**—Have the children turn to Lesson 18 in their workbooks and to **Exodus 20** in their Bibles. Have them look at their workbook page. A summary of the commandments is listed on the left side of the page. On the right side, there are simple contemporary examples of the application of each commandment. Read through the commandments in verses 3-17 (or portions of some of the longer passages) one by one. Talk about what each means and how it might be lived out (in thought and deed). Have the children draw a line matching the commandment with a corresponding application on the workbook page. Discuss how each commandment shows the holiness, righteousness, and goodness of God. For example, God says to worship Him alone. How is that good and right? God says to honor your father and mother. How is that good and right?
- **Note:** These contemporary examples are not meant to lead to a debate about the place of the Ten Commandments in the life of a Christian. The examples are meant to give children a current context in which we see how God's commands instruct a person in righteousness, holiness, and goodness. Lessons 20 and 35 will help to clarify the value of the law in making us conscious of sin and condemnation, and its value in guarding God's people until the coming of Christ (**Romans 3:20** and **Galatians 3:23-24**).
- Explain that one meaning of holiness is to be "separate" from other things or to be "set apart." How would obedience to God's commands set Israel apart from other nations—for example, Egypt? In general, what does God want Israel to be "separated" from? (Read **Habakkuk 1:13** for a clue: separate from sin.) Do you feel "holy" to the Lord? What might your life

look like if you were truly living as one who is “holy” to the Lord? Do you think that if you work really hard at it, you could please God and become His treasured possession by obeying all of His commands? Why or why not? Can you think of any verses that would answer this question?

- Ask the children if their parents have ever given them instructions to obey. Did their parents say something like: *If you do these things, then I will love you?* Why not? What had God already done for Israel? Did He do this because they deserved it? Was God’s promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob dependent on their earning God’s promise? Was God giving Israel the commandments so they could to earn His favor? What two things was He showing them through the commandments? [That He is holy, righteous, and good and He wants them to be that way, too. The commandments show how God’s people are to live as His chosen people.] *Do you want to obey your parents because you love them for who they are and what they are like and want to please them? Or do you want to obey them because you feel you have to earn the right to be their child by your behavior? Would your parents want the first kind of obedience or the second kind? What kind of obedience do you think God wanted from Israel? Why? Do you think God wants this kind of obedience from you? Do you always obey God in this way? Why not?*
- Remind the children that in a covenant there are two parties agreeing to do something. Recall that God is promising to do three things for His people. What are they? Can God be trusted to keep His part of the agreement? (Turn to the Lesson 18 workbook page.) What is Israel agreeing to do? Can they keep their part of the agreement? Does God want them to *completely* obey His commands, or is obedience most of the time good enough? Read **Habakkuk 1:13** and **James 2:10**. Will Israel want to do this? Will they be able to do this? How many times did Adam and Eve disobey God’s command before God punished them?

Send Home

- Parent Resource Page