

TEN COMMANDMENTS GIVEN AT MOUNT SINAI

Exodus 19:1 - 24:3

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: Moses and the Israelites

Key-location: Sinai

Key-repetitions:

- Israelites unanimous in responding, “We will do everything the Lord said” (Ex 19:7; 24:3).
- The Lord spoke to Moses (Ex 19:3, 9, 10, 20, 24; 20:1, 22; 24:1).
- Distance: God told the people to put boundaries around the mountain and to not touch it (Ex 19:12-13); the Israelites backed a distance from the mountain (Ex 20:18); they kept their distance from the mountain (Ex 20:21).
- Eight of the Ten Commandments begin with a negative order, “You shall not” (Ex 20:3-17).
- God emphasized that he brought the Israelites out of Egypt (Ex 19:4; 20:2).

Key-attitudes:

- God’s feeling that the Israelites were indebted to him since he liberated them from slavery.
- God’s predominance expressed in everything that happened.
- Israelites’ fear of the phenomenal happenings on the mountain.
- Israelites’ firmness when they proclaimed, “We will do everything the Lord said.”

Initial-situation:

Israel’s descendants became slaves in Egypt. The Lord used Moses to confront Pharaoh and demand that the Israelites be allowed to leave Egypt. After 430 years in Egypt, the Israelites left Egypt, and started on their way to Canaan. They traveled to the Red Sea. Pharaoh chased after them. God split the water, the water forming a wall to their right and to their left. The Israelites walked through the sea on dry ground. Pharaoh’s army chased them into the sea, and the water flowed back and destroyed the entire army.

After crossing the Red Sea, the Israelites traveled in the desert where God provided for their basic needs: he guided them with the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire by night. God provided them with water, food, and protection from their enemies.

Initial-problem:

The Israelites came to the Desert of Sinai and camped facing the mountain. The Lord told Moses to tell the Israelites, “You saw what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. If you obey me and keep my covenant, then out of all peoples you will be my special treasure.”

Final-situation:

The Israelites answered, "Everything the Lord said, we will do."

BIBLE STORY

Three months after the Israelites left Egypt, they came to the Desert of Sinai. They camped facing the mountain. The Lord told Moses to tell the Israelites, "You saw what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. If you obey me and keep my covenant, then out of all peoples you will be my special treasure."

The people responded, "We'll do everything the Lord said" (Ex 19:1-9).

The Lord told Moses, "Get the people ready to meet the Holy God. Have them wash their clothes. Put boundaries around the mountain and tell the people: `Warning! Don't climb the mountain; don't even touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall die. Whether man or animal, he shall be put to death" (Ex 19:10-15).

The people saw lighting and heard thunder. A dark cloud covered the mountain and smoke billowed up. They heard a loud trumpet blast and the mountain trembled. Everyone in camp trembled with terror. Moses and Aaron went up the mountain (Ex 19:16-25).

God said, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery (Ex 20:1-2).

1st "You shall have no other gods before me (Ex 20:3).

2nd "You shall not make for yourself an idol. You shall not bow down to them or worship them (Ex 20:4-6).

3rd "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God (Ex 20:7).

4th "Observe the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy (Ex 20:8-11).

5th "Honor your father and your mother (Ex 20:12).

6th "You shall not murder (Ex 20:13).

7th "You shall not commit adultery (Ex 20:14).

8th "You shall not steal (Ex 20:15).

9th "You shall not give false testimony (Ex 20:16).

10th "You shall not covet" (Ex 20:17).

The Israelites saw the thunder and lightning, heard the trumpet blast, saw the smoking mountain, and they trembled with fear. They backed a distance away. They told Moses, "You speak to us and we'll listen, but don't have God speak to us or we'll die."

Moses replied, "Don't be afraid. The fear of God within you will keep you from sinning."

The people kept their distance, while Moses approached the thick dark cloud where God was (Ex 20:18-21).

After giving the Ten Commandments, the Lord gave Moses other laws and regulations the Israelites were to obey (Ex 20:21 - 24:3).

The Lord promised rewards if the Israelites obeyed his laws (Lv 26:3-13) and punishment if they disobeyed them (Lv 26:14-17).

The Israelites answered, "Everything the Lord said, we will do" (Ex 24:3).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did God set boundary limits around Mount Sinai?
2. Why did God give the Ten Commandments to the Israelites?
3. What right did God have to demand that the Israelites obey his Ten Commandments?
4. Which commandments make demands on a person's relationship with God?
5. Which commandments place demands on a person's relationship with other people?
6. What was the Israelites' reaction when they first heard the commandments?
7. How did the Israelites react to the thunder, lightning, the trumpet blast, and the smoking mountain?
8. What good did Moses say would come out of their fear?
9. How do the Ten Commandments apply to us today?
10. What should you change in your life as a result of the story about the Ten Commandments?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **The Legislator of the Ten Commandments demands that people control tendencies they have that would offend God.** It may be that a person does not commit the offenses that the Ten Commandments prohibit, but each person has the tendency or the desire to disobey each commandment.
 - Youths have the tendency of thinking that they know more than their parents.
 - Human nature has the tendency of wanting to kill those who mistreat them.
 - People have the tendency of thinking that sex outside of marriage would be exciting.
 - People have the tendency of wanting to lie in order to take advantage of others.
 - People have the tendency of desiring to take for themselves what belongs to others.

2. **God establishes absolutes for his people.** Anyone who crossed boundaries established by God would be put to death (Ex 19:12-13). The Ten Commandments establish absolutes; God determines which things are right and which things are wrong (Ex 20:1-17).
3. **The Legislator of the Ten Commandments is a liberating God.** God liberated the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. When God began to give the Ten Commandments, he claimed, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, and out of the land of slavery" (Ex 20:1-2).
4. **God's commandments guide the people whom he has liberated.** God redeemed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt and began to guide them to Canaan. He guided them with a pillar of cloud by day and in a pillar of fire by night (Ex 13:20-22). God gave the Ten Commandments in order to guide those he had liberated so they would know how to live. The Ten Commandments lead people to live a life guided by God.
5. **Jesus affirms that the Ten Commandments are valid for his disciples.** Jesus emphasized that he did not come to abolish the Law but to fulfill it (Mat 5:17-18).
6. **Fear of God's punishment will protect a person from sinning.** The Israelites heard the thunder and saw lightning. They heard the trumpet blast, saw the smoking mountain and they trembled with fear. Moses told them, "The fear of God within you will keep you from sinning" (Ex 20:18-21).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Chant:

Words in **bold and underlined** are stressed. Stress words by stretching them out instead of increasing volume.

All	
“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39 NIV).	
Group 1	Group 2
The first and <u>greatest</u> commandment:	Love the <u>Lord your God</u>
with all your <u>heart</u>	with all your <u>soul</u>
and with all your <u>mind</u> .	This is the <u>first</u> and greatest commandment.
And the <u>second</u> is like it:	<u>Love your neighbor</u> as yourself
The second greatest commandment:	Love your neighbor <u>as yourself</u> .
All	
“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39 NIV).	