

# The Ten Commandments Before Sinai?



I am sure it comes as no news to anyone today when I say that the religious world is full of confusion. It seems there are so many voices beckoning for the floor, so many causes seeking our allegiance. One church says, "We have the truth." Another church says, "No, we do! It reminds me of the story of a little girl who was invited to go to church with a neighbour. She replied by saying, "I'm sorry, I can't go to church with you. You see, we belong to a different abomination!" While we can smile, friend, we are discussing an issue that is a very significant one in the Christian world. While we have one Book as our guide, one Lord as our God, there are some 250 or 300 different denominations.

It is not God's plan that the Christian church should be so fragmented. As a matter of fact, we discover just exactly what God's plan is for His church in Ephesians. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto

the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." Ephesians 4:11-14. God's plan is that we come into the unity of the faith and that we not be blown about by "every wind of doctrine." But, friend, God's purpose is that His people be unified in the truth, not simply united in some great super-church, but rather joined together in the truth of Scripture.

This is the dilemma that faces us. As we walk down the street and knock on the church doors of this city or any other city, and ask them some questions, we get surprisingly different answers. The layman says, "If the clergy can't understand these passages of Scripture and come to a knowledge of God's will and truth, how can the layman ever come to understand?" That is a very valid question.

As we go down the street and ask one church, "What do you believe about baptism?" we could get any one of a dozen different answers. The Bible says, however, in the chapter we just read that there is "one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Ephesians 4:5. We ask one church, "What do you believe about the ten-commandment law of God?" The church says, "We believe that it is ever binding upon all Christians." We go down the street a little further and ask another group; and they say, "Well, that has been done away with and nailed to the cross. We are no longer under that law. We are under grace now, you see." We ask another church, "What do you believe about the second coming of Christ?" One will say, "Well, we believe that Jesus is going to come and bring an end to the reign of sin and that we will see Him with our eyes." Another church says, "We believe that Christ is going to come at the end of a long period, a thousand years of peace and happiness." Then another church says, "We believe Christ has come already, quite a few years ago. He is already here."

We ask one church, "What do you believe happens when a man dies?" The first church tells us, "Well, we believe that when a man dies, he goes immediately to the grave, and there he awaits the call of the Lifegiver." We talk to the folk from another church, however; and they tell us, "We believe that when a man dies, he goes immediately to his reward, either heaven or hell." We ask one church, "What do you believe about what God is going to do with the wicked?" One says, "We believe that God is going to destroy them, burn them up, leave them neither root nor branch." Another group says, "We believe that He is going to torment them forever and forever, throughout eternity." How can we know the truth for the world when preachers can't agree, when theologians misunderstand? They can't all be right, that is obvious. That is the point I wish to make right now. They cannot all be right.

You have heard it said, "All the churches are roads leading to the same place." How can that be true if one of them, if some of them, are teaching error? Do you see how important it is for us to understand the truth of Scripture, the "truth as it is in Jesus"? Do you see why it is that we must have a "Thus saith the Lord" for everything that we believe? Friend, I don't know of any other safeguard! We are not concerned with what a church teaches, but rather with what the Bible teaches. Remember this, truth is progressive. We have referred to this text a number of times, and I want us to read it again today, "But the path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Proverbs 4:18. Now, keep this text in mind, because we will have occasion to refer to it later on in our study.

You know, it is interesting to ask people why they belong to a certain church. This is a great age for surveys. Not long ago I heard that they are going to take a survey of the surveyors to see what things are being most surveyed! Some months back somebody took a survey of a cross section of American people because they wanted to discover the reasons people

give for belonging to the church to which they belong. I thought the results were interesting. You know what was number one on the list? You might guess. "I belong to that church because my parents did, and I was reared in it." The second reason was, "My friends go there." Not much theology in that, is there? Number three, "I attend the church I do because it's nearby." Number four, "I attend the church I do because I like the pastor." That is good, but really it isn't too much to anchor to as far as a belief is concerned, is it? Number five, "I attend the church I do because I believe what they preach." Number six, interestingly enough, "I attend the church I do because I like the beautiful building." Way down at position number five on the list was the reason, "I believe what they preach."

There is no doubt that God wants us to join a church. For Jesus told his disciples, in Matthew 16:18, "...I will build My church: and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." While the floodgates of hell have been loosed against God's true church through the centuries, we are thankful to God that His true church still stands. In Ephesians 5: 23, 25 we are told, "...Christ is the head of the church... Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." If Christ loved the church so much, should we not also love the church and desire to be a part of it?

Christ is the head of the church, and His church is the body. He wants us to be members of that body. How do we become members? In apostolic days, those who heard the Word were pricked in their hearts, and asked, "...What must we do?" Then Peter answered them, "...Repent and be baptized..." Then what was the very next step? In verse 47 we read, "...And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Jesus loved this church so much that He gave minute instructions in dealing with the erring, to prevent them from straying.

Having settled the necessity of belonging to a church, the next question is, "Which church?" Some join a church because it is a popular church or near where they live. Some join a church because they like the preacher, or the choir, or the congregation. But we are told, in 1 Peter 3:15 "...Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you."

We should have a good Bible reason for joining a particular church. Paul advises us in Ephesians 4: 14, 15 "That we henceforth be no more...carried about with every wind of doctrine... But speaking the truth in love..." Jesus tells us what truth is, in John 17:17 "...Thy word is truth." So if we know what the Bible says, we will not be carried about with false doctrines. We should join a church because we endorse its teachings. Therefore, we should discover which church preaches the Bible truth. The church is to be God's representative on earth, demonstrating His power to save men and women from sin.

Many people ask me, "How can I know for sure which is the true church." There are so many churches. Is there a Bible guide to direct my search? Is it possible to really know? To all of these questions I would say emphatically "Yes". If you really mean business with God. And if you are willing to follow when God shows you from the Bible His true church. Then you can know. And it is not hard. In fact God puts down a very simple way to know. So easy that many people look right over God's answer without ever realizing it. Revelation 14:12 "Here is the patience of the saints; here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." God says to start with, just find a people who keep all of the Ten Commandments and have faith in Jesus and it will take away a lot of confusion. But now let's get a little background of God's church and how it started back at the creation of this world.

There have been seven great religious movements in the history of our world. All of them were established by God. The Lord made it clear right after sin entered into this world that He would have a church, and that that church would be in direct conflict with Satan and his work. So, down through the ages God has always had a church, a special church, to carry on His work.

The very first church was the church of Adam, 4004 B.C., was founded by God in the Garden of Eden. At creation it was a pure church, and God committed a lot of truth to our first parents in that Garden Church. The Bible teaches us to protect in every way possible the purity of that original truth once delivered to the saints. Here is the text on it in Jude 3:4 "...Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares...turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." Notice the word "once." The true faith of God is unchangeable, and it was delivered by God Himself to the saints, once and for all. Through the ages it has been the great objective of the enemy of all righteousness to corrupt or pervert this faith "Once delivered to the saints."

What kind of doctrine did God give to that first church? Was it the same we read about in the book of Revelation, keeping the commandments of God and having the faith of Jesus? Yes, it most certainly was. They did have faith in a Saviour. That faith was put in operation as soon as sin entered that beautiful world. And they did have the commandments of God from the lips of the Creator Himself. Notice that even though man was made with freedom of choice, we are told in Genesis 2:16, "And the Lord God commanded the man, saying..." The religion of Eden was implicit obedience to the commands of God.

And please notice, friends, that the Sabbath commandment had to be one of those included in that original faith once

delivered to the saints in the Garden of Eden, because God blessed it and sanctified the very next day after creating Adam and Eve. (Genesis 2:2, 3). Now if God saw that the Sabbath was vital to man's happiness before sin entered, how could it be possible that in a world of sin it should be discarded? The Sabbath was made free from local restrictions, national boundaries, racial characteristics and peculiarities.

Thus, we see that the religion of the Garden of Eden was the keeping of the Commandments of God and Creator worship. Satan soon succeeded in getting man to disobey the commandments of God. In eating of the forbidden tree, Adam and Eve broke nearly all the commandments found in the law given at Sinai. They stole that which was not theirs. They put another god before the God of Heaven. They really committed a slow suicide, and tried to hide and deceive God Himself. God made it clear that it was the transgression of His commandments that caused the entrance of sin and sorrow.

However, immediately after the fall of man, God revealed the wonderful plan of salvation. The hope of man was to center in the coming Redeemer. Thus was added to the commandments of God, the promise of the Saviour, or the faith of Jesus. This plan of redemption is the same now as it was then. It has been the same since the beginning of time, and will be till the end of time. And it included the Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. God's true Church on earth, whether the first or the last, the Edenic or the Remnant Church, will be built upon the same foundation.

After Adam and Eve sinned, the Lord spoke to Satan in their presence and said: "And I will put enmity between thee (Satan) and the woman (the church), and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel (referring to the death of Christ, which was not lasting)."

Gen. 3:15. Christ was slain, but He rose again. When Satan is finally destroyed, he will never rise again.

God made it very clear to Adam and Eve that there would always be enmity between the church and the devil and that God was going to fight Satan. God also indicated that there would be a way of escape for Adam and Eve and all their descendants. In the fourth chapter of Genesis we find that God immediately instituted a round of religious services for Adam and Eve and their children. Sacrificial ordinances were given to them, pointing to the death of Jesus on the cross. By performing these sacrifices, they recognized that there was to be a Saviour who would die for them and their sins.

They looked forward in faith to the death of Jesus of the cross. Today, we look back in faith to the death of Jesus on the cross. Genesis 4:4 says: "And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering." This makes it clear that the family of Adam were offering sacrifices to God as He had directed them. It also indicates that they knew something about the plan of salvation for the sacrifices of animals was a type of the death of Jesus on the cross.

Adam and Eve soon saw the results of sin, that the wages of sin is truly death. They saw the falling leaves, the thorns, the thistles, and the briars; they saw the fading flowers, and all the evidences of death and sin that surrounded them. It was not long after the Church of Adam was founded that corruption began to eat out its moral fibers. In fact, there was even a murder in Adam's own family. Abel was slain by his brother Cain.

The Church of Adam started to go down, down spiritually, until finally it had become so sinful that God looked upon the earth and saw that it was corrupt in every way. So God decided He must start another religious movement to call out

His true saints from the Church of Adam and organize a new church. And this was the church of Noah 2348 B.C.

## **Were the Ten Commandments Known Before Mount Sinai?**

Sometime around 1400 to 1500 B.C., God spoke directly to the Israelites from Mt. Sinai, located in a desert region south and west of modern-day Israel. Exodus chapters 20 through 24 chronicle the establishing of a covenant, or agreement, between God and the descendants of Abraham; his son, Isaac; and grandson, Jacob.

God gave the Ten Commandments, and He spoke from the mountain directly to the people. They were so frightened by the sound that they pleaded with Moses for God not to speak to them, but that they would hear from Moses what God wanted.

When God spoke the Ten Commandments, did He reveal something entirely new to the Israelites, and through them, to the gentile nations and peoples of the world? Or did God "codify," or write down and then include in a specific covenant with Israel, preexisting definitions of sin and righteousness?

Many say that the Ten Commandments were simply the "old covenant." They also say that when the old covenant passed away, so did the need for obeying the Ten Commandments, unless they were specifically repeated in the new covenant.

Others say that God has had a standard of righteous conduct that began at the time of the creation of Adam and has not changed since. Let's study this together and see what we can discover about God's intention for how His people should act toward each other and toward Him, and whether His standards of sin and righteousness have changed through the years.

## **Exodus 20:1-20**

### **Discussion: Why are the Ten Commandments important?**

Who decides what is right and wrong?

- Who has the right to decide what is right and wrong for everybody to do?
- Are there any books or writings other than the Bible that define for us what God says is righteousness and what is sin?
- Which of the Ten Commandments reveal information that man cannot understand except by revelation from God? Which could be understood through scientific study or contemplation?

### **What are the general definitions of sin given in the Bible?**

**Discussion: What do these scriptures teach us about what sin is?** (How do these define sin. Are there other scriptures that define, in general terms, what sin is)?

- **Romans 14:23** Whatsoever is not of faith
- **James 4:17** Not doing the good we should
- **1 John 3:4-10** Transgression of the law (lawlessness)
- **1 John 5:17** All unrighteousness
- **James 2:19** Having respect for persons

**Discussion: What conclusions can we draw about what defines sin?** (In what ways does God use definitions that

relate to physical conduct and definitions that relate to attitudes to define sin?)

Was there sin before God spoke the Ten Commandments to the Israelites on Mt. Sinai?

**Discussion: What examples are there that specifically define sin, wickedness or other lawless conduct before Exodus 20?** (Look up the following, read the passage and identify which Commandments were broken.)

- **Genesis 4:1-16** Cain
- **Genesis 6:1-12** Noah
- **Genesis 18:17-22** Sodom and Gomorrah
- **Genesis 20:1-20** Abimelech and Abraham
- **Genesis 26:5-11** Abimelech and Isaac

**Did God have a different standard of sin for a gentile nation than He did for His chosen people?** ( Was Abimelech, the gentile king in Genesis 20, subject to the same commandments defining sin and righteousness as was Abraham?)

**What are the consequences of sin?**

- **Romans 6:23** Eternal death
- **Ezekiel 20:7-43** Being cut off from God
- **1 Samuel 15:7-31** When leaders reject the commandments, it causes them to be rejected by God as leaders, and new leaders to be put in their place (example of Saul)

**Discussion: What other consequences are there for sin?** (What the physical and psychological consequences are when people sin. Also, what happens to relationships when there is sin? How are families, communities or even nations weakened by sin? Does righteous conduct strengthen relationships?)

## **Has God always wanted obedience from the heart?**

- **Genesis 4:1-12** Did God want Cain to master the temptation before it mastered him? Is temptation a matter of the letter of the law or the spirit of the law?
- **Hebrews 8:7-13** What laws were to be written on the "new heart" of a Christian? (This is cited from Jeremiah 31:31-34.)
- **Matthew 15:1-9** Did Jesus want obedience that was "lip service," or did He want heartfelt obedience?
- **Ezekiel 36:24-36** Was this new heart free from commandment-keeping? What was this new heart supposed to do? What will God's attitude be in the Millennium toward commandment-keeping? What will God's Spirit cause people to do?

**Discussion: What kind of obedience did Jesus want from His people?** ( Was keeping the "letter of the law" enough? What does the phrase "keeping the spirit of the law" mean to you? Can we keep the intent of the law and break the letter of the law? Should the intent or spirit of the law guide us in how we can best keep the letter of the law?)

**How many of the Ten Commandments can you find mentioned before Exodus 20?** (Look for either a specific statement about them, like the Sabbath in Genesis 2, or the scriptures showing a sin, like murder in Genesis 4:6. A concordance will help with this study.)

**Why is sin, or unrighteousness, bad? Why is righteousness, or obedience to God's commandments, good? Who is hurt when any of the Ten Commandments is broken? What happens when the Ten Commandments are obeyed?** ( You might go through each of the Ten Commandments individually and ask the same questions for each: "What happens when this Commandment is broken? What happens when this Commandment is obeyed?")

**Does the New Testament teach commandment-keeping?  
Will there be commandment-keeping for all people after  
the return of Jesus Christ?**

- **Matthew 5:19-32** What did Jesus teach about obedience to the commandments?
- **1 John 2:3-6** What did John say about those who do not obey the commandments?
- **Revelation 22:10-21** At the end of all things, does Jesus Christ want commandment-keepers?

Today it's my desire to take you with me on an imaginary journey back across the centuries of time to visit two very important historic gardens. The story of each of these gardens is found in the Bible although their history is separated by four millenniums. Each has important memories of the past that speak to us today with important lessons for our own lives.

The first garden is brought to our attention in Genesis 2:8, where it is recorded that God planted a garden in the midst of the beautiful world He had just created. This garden, called Eden, was to be the home of Adam and Eve, our first parents. On every hand the beauties of the creative power of God were manifest. The third chapter of Genesis records the fall of Adam and Eve in sin when they listened to and followed the temptation of Satan. And suddenly the joy in the hearts of the early parents was gone. Somehow the beauty of the garden seemed dimmed. They felt alone and sad, which was a new experience for them.

Then came another experience which they had never known before. Verses 8 to 10 reveal the story. The Lord God came walking among the trees of the garden. Adam and Eve had communed daily with God face to face. The joy of these occasions is beyond man's ability to describe, but on this day Adam and Eve hid themselves from the presence of the Lord. Surely all nature is stunned. The entire universe looks upon

this scene. What will God do with the sinful pair? He has created them, thus He has the power to slay them if He will or will He wink at the sin? Will He overlook it? Will He make some change that will destroy Satan and forget about the sin of Adam and Eve?

Of course, Adam and Eve were ashamed. Already they're experiencing the promise of Satan when he told them if they would eat of the fruit, their eyes would be opened and that they would have new experiences. They feel condemned, and now their Creator is come into the garden. Will He condemn them? Suddenly the sound of the voice of God is heard calling, "Adam, where art thou?" This is the cry of the Saviour as He tenderly seeks the lost to bring them back to the fold. This is the call of God's love that was to be heard all the way to Calvary as He called to men everywhere to come, repent, and live anew in Christ. This call was to be heard down to the end of time, down to the very last moment before the door of mercy shall close eternally, calling men and women to come and accept of His love. Not in condemnation does God call, but in love and forgiveness. "Adam and Eve, come forth." Ashamed and heart-broken, they confessed their sin. God does not kill them for God is a God of mercy. Already a plan has been laid in heaven that provides a ransom for their sins. Neither does God condemn them. The Son of Man will descend in their place and will die to pay the penalty of sin which is death. But God can't excuse them either. The wages of sin is death. There must a death for the sin that has been committed but the only death that will suffice to pay the penalty once and for all would be the death of the Son of God. No other death will do. Thus the promise is made in Genesis 3:15.

One day Satan will be destroyed. One day, again, the Kingdom of Righteousness will reign throughout the Universe. All trace of evil will be gone forever. In the meantime Adam and Eve can't live in the Garden of Eden. They must leave it. We read in Genesis 3: 22-24 that God

drove them out of the garden and placed an angel at the East gate to keep the way of that gate from man's eating of the tree of life and living on forever. If sinful man would be permitted to eat of this tree, then God would never be able to destroy sin, for man would live forever and sin would thus live in man forever.

Today we stand at the gate of the empty garden. We look in past the angel with the flaming sword in his hand and we ask, "What does this garden teach me?" In the first place, the empty garden reveals anew that God means exactly what He says. It seems such a little thing to eat the forbidden fruit from that tree, but oh, what trouble it caused. Paul tells us in Romans 5:12 that the single sin of Adam and Eve has caused all of us to be sinners, for all the children of Adam would be born in sin and sinful natures. But just what was it that drove Adam and Eve out of the garden? Surely, it was God that drove them out actually, but really, now, was it not sin that actually did drive them out? Sin, what a little word. But just what is sin? The Bible defines it in 1 John 3:4. "Sin is the transgression of the law." In Genesis 3:17 we read where God told Adam he had broken a direct command of God by eating of that tree. Adam transgressed the commandments, thus he sinned and was cast out of the garden.

But somebody says, "I don't believe really that there were commandments back there at that time. I believe the commandments began when God gave them to the children of Israel." Let me ask you something, friends, do you believe Adam and Eve sinned when they took the forbidden fruit? I'm sure you agree with me that they did sin; in fact, the empty garden proves that they sinned, otherwise God would not have driven them out. He wouldn't have had a right, even, to drive them out of the garden. Thus, we must admit that they surely did sin in the garden of Eden. Now listen to what Paul says in Romans 4:15. He says, "Where there is no law, there is no transgression." If there had been no law then, there would have been no transgression of the law and thus

no sin and thus no empty garden. Listen again to Paul in Romans 3:20 where he says, "For by the law is the knowledge of sin." The only way man would know sin is by the existence of a law. Here he even quotes some of the Ten Commandments to illustrate his point more emphatically.

Listen, friends, according to the Bible principle of sin, every single sin committed by man before Mt. Sinai proved the existence of the Law of God. The empty garden standing there for perhaps centuries was mute testimony to mankind that God's law was exact and that God's law had been broken. When Cain, years after his parents had been driven from the garden, killed his brother, he committed sin. He transgressed the commandment that said, "Thou shalt not kill." When the world was consumed with evil thoughts and actions to the point that God determined to send a flood and destroy all men, they were destroyed because they had broken the Ten Commandments and turned to their own ways, away from God. Our human reasoning may lead us to wonder if God did not want to change something when Adam and Eve sinned so that He would not have to drive them from the garden. But God could change nothing, for the Ten commandments had been broken and the sin which was in the human flesh now was the sin against the very character of God. The Ten Commandments are but a revelation of the character of God and it's impossible for God to change His character. Thus, He could not change the law to accommodate sin when Adam and Eve broke the law.

But the empty garden teaches us another very vital lesson as well. God had the right to kill Adam and Eve immediately. They had sinned. The wages of sin is death. They had willfully separated themselves from God's program for their lives, and since God is life, they had chosen the opposite of life which is death. They deserved to die. Why didn't they die? Why didn't God drive them from the garden? Why did He let them live? It was because of His grace and His love. Romans 6:23 says, "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of

God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." There are some who feel that men were saved by keeping commandments, by works in the Old Testament, and by faith and grace alone in the New Testament. Friends, I submit to you today that there in the Garden of Eden the Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus met together. The commandments had been broken but the Lord stepped into that scene and offered His grace to Adam and Eve. He promised them that one day the Saviour, the Son of God, would come and die in their place. Romans 3:24 says that we're justified freely by His grace. Ever since the first sin, God's grace has been working to save men from their sins. God does not remove His character as a standard for a man; He doesn't lay aside His commandments; but rather reveals Himself to us through those commandments. But because we've sinned, He offers us abundantly of His grace and His love which is unearned and undeserved by us.

Come, we must hasten across four millenniums to catch a quick glimpse of the other empty garden. This one is situated outside the city of Jerusalem to the north of that ancient city. As we see it today, it is on a Thursday night in the year 31 AD. Twelve men, having just completed supper in an upper room in Jerusalem, have made their way down the steps from the room out into the darkened streets of Jerusalem. As they walk they're listening intently to the one who seems to be their leader. They make their way rather slowly to the little gate by the footpath that leads out the north wall of the city and down the pathway into the valley that leads across to the Garden of Gethsemane. Across the valley they go, climbing the little hill of the entrance of the garden. We can see that this is not the first time they have been here for they seem familiar with every detail of the garden, even in the night darkness.

The leader of the group asks eight of the men to remain near the entrance of the garden and to enter into a season of prayer with Him. The four men remaining make their way further

into the garden where the leader asks that they, too, pray with Him. And now the leader goes further still and there prostrates Himself upon the ground in the garden in extreme agony of soul. "My Father," He prays, "if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me." This is the darkest hour for Jesus. One of His disciples has turned against Him and is even now gathering a mob to seek Him out here in this very spot. The hour of His death upon the cross is about to come and a careless world is unconcerned. The people to whom had been entrusted the message, to tell the world of the coming Messiah, are busy tonight in preparing for the Passover, all unmindful that the true Lamb of God prays alone in the garden. Even the disciples are now asleep and all concern for the great events about to take place pass from their sleepy minds.

For three hours the agony continues, and finally the quietness of the night is broken by the sound of a mob coming through the valley, up the little hill and into the garden, led by none other than the deserting disciple. The disciples waken now, ready for flight. They stand amazed and stunned as Jesus allows Himself to be taken by this mob as though some criminal has been caught in a crime. Back down the hill and through the little gate on the North wall they go, leading their prisoner, and now the garden is empty.

Like Eden four thousand years before, this garden, too, stands silent and empty, and as we look into it today we ask, "What does this empty garden teach us?" Because the commandments of God could not be set aside or abridged or changed in any detail, it was necessary that the full penalty of breaking the law be paid. Thus, it was impossible for the Father in Heaven to answer the cry of His own Son, "If it be possible, let this cup pass." Jesus, the Saviour, was to pay the penalty of the broken law. He was to become death for all who would accept Him. The commandments would stand fast forever. They had been vindicated and now the garden was empty, standing throughout the centuries of time, a

vindication of the character of God and of His Ten Commandments. But Jesus' prayer had concluded with these immortal words. "Nevertheless, not My will but Thine be done." The grace of God had won again. Jesus would go all the way to Calvary. There He would give His own Precious innocent blood to pay the full eternal debt of sin. His blood has set men free.

	<b>GOD IS</b>	<b>THE LAW IS</b>
Good	Luke 18:19	1 Timothy 1:8
Holy	Isaiah 5:16	Romans 7:12
Perfect	Matthew 5:48	Psalms 19:7
Pure	1 John 3:2,3	Psalms 19:8
Just	Deuteronomy 32:4	Romans 7:12
True	John 3:33	Psalms 19:9
Spiritual	1 Corinthians 10:4	Romans 7:14
Righteousness	Jeremiah 23:6	Psalms 119:172
Faithful	1 Corinthians 1:9	Psalms 119:86
Love	1 John 4:8	Romans 13:10
Unchangeable	James 1:17	Matthew 5:18
Eternal	Genesis 21:33	Psalms 111:7,8

<b>THE LAW OF GOD IN THE NEW TESTAMENT</b>	<b>THE LAW OF GOD IN THE OLD TESTAMENT</b>
1. "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Matthew 4:10.	1. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Exodus 20:3.
2. "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." 1 John 5:21. "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device." Acts 17:29.	2. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the

	third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments." Exodus 20:4-6.
3. "That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." 1 Timothy 6:1.	3. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Exodus 20:7.
4. "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works." "There remaineth therefore a rest ["keeping of a sabbath," margin] to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." Hebrews 4:4, 9, 10.	4. "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it." Exodus 20:8-11.
5. "Honour thy father and thy mother." Matthew 19:19.	5. "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." Exodus 20:12.
6. "Thou shalt not kill." Romans 13:9.	6. "Thou shalt not kill." Exodus 20:13.
7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Matthew 19:18.	7. "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Exodus 20:14
8. "Thou shalt not steal." Romans 13:9.	8. "Thou shalt not steal." Exodus 20:15.
9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness." Romans 13:9.	9. "Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour." Exodus 20:16.
10. "Thou shalt not covet." Romans 7:7.	10. "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's." Exodus 20:17.

MOSES' LAW	GOD'S LAW
Called "the law of Moses" (Luke 2:22).	Called "the law of the Lord" (Isaiah 5:24).
Called "law ... contained in ordinances" (Ephesians 2:15).	Called "the royal law" (James 2:8).
Written by Moses in a book (2 Chronicles 35:12).	Written by God on stone (Exodus 31:18; 32:16).
Placed in the side of the ark (Deuteronomy 31:26).	Placed inside the ark (Exodus 40:20).
Ended at the cross (Ephesians 2:15).	Will stand forever (Luke 16:17).
Added because of sin (Galatians 3:19).	Points out sin (Romans 7:7; 3:20).
Contrary to us, against us (Colossians 2:14).	Not grievous (1 John 5:3).
Judges no one (Colossians 2:14-16).	Judges all people (James 2:10-12).
Carnal (Hebrews 7:16).	Spiritual (Romans 7:14).
Made nothing perfect (Hebrews 7:19).	Perfect (Psalms 19:7).

### **Were the righteous people of the Old Testament saved by the law? 2 Timothy 1:9**

No one has ever been saved by the law. All who have been saved in all ages have been saved by grace. This "grace ... was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." 2 Timothy 1:9. The law only points out sin. Christ alone can save. Noah "found grace" (Genesis 6:8); Moses found grace (Exodus 33:17); the Israelites in the wilderness found grace (Jeremiah 31:2); and Abel, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and many other Old Testament worthies were saved "by faith" according to Hebrews 11. They were saved by looking forward to the cross; we, by looking back to it. The law is necessary because, like a mirror, it reveals the "dirt" in our lives. Without it, people are sinners but are not aware of it. However, the law has no saving power. It can only point out sin. Jesus and He alone, can save a person from sin. This has always been true, even in Old Testament times. (Acts 4:10, 12; 2 Timothy 1:9).

### **How did the Israelites have moral standards before the Ten Commandments? How did they know how to behave?**

Before the Ten Commandments were written down in

stone, the Bible tells us that the law was written in the hearts of the people. In addition, it was transmitted orally from father to son.

However, by the time of Moses, after the people had been in slavery under Egypt, and thereby under the influence of the Egyptian pagan religion, their memory had been corrupted somewhat.

That's why Moses wrote the first five books of the Bible, so his people would not be confused. Of course, God ultimately wrote the Ten Commandments so there would never have to be any guessing about what is right and wrong.

To prove this point: Long before Moses wrote the Ten Commandments onto scrolls, the Bible says, "Abraham obeyed my laws and statutes and commandments" (Genesis 26:5). And not only did Abraham obey God's law, statutes, and commandments, Joseph knew it was a sin to commit adultery with Potiphar's wife. He said, "How can I sin against God?" How did he know that before the Ten Commandments were written on paper or stone? It had been passed on, so he knew what God's law was.

Originally, it came from Adam orally straight out of the Garden of Eden and became part of the oral tradition. In addition, Adam and Even were created in the image of God, so they knew their Father's character, which is revealed in the Ten Commandments. They passed this knowledge to their offspring, and eventually had to write it down.

God rested the 7th day at creation. He blessed and sanctified it. What do these 2 words mean. Just because it doesn't specifically say that Adam & Eve rested that first 7th day, as you have stated, what did God leave earth and celebrate the Sabbath. Or did Adam & Eve do their own thing while God sat there and observed the Sabbath without them. I John 3:4 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law' if no law exists then no sin has been committed. Why was it wrong for Cain to kill Abel. It was only wrong because there is a commandment that say it. Romans 4:15 'where there is no law, there is no transgression'

Someone cannot be guilty of a sin unless the law is already there (or known.) I John 3:8 '...for the devil sinneth from the beginning' Lucifer was in heaven when he sinned, before the world was created, - no law, no sin - if you commit sin - there is a law that was broken. Plain and simple. II Timothy

## **The Ten Commandments Before Sinai?**

"On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were 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. And [Mount Sinai](#) was wrapped in smoke, because The Lord [see [Rock Of Ages](#)] descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. And The Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and The Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up." (Exodus 19:16-20 RSV)

The formal receiving of [The Ten Commandments](#) is one of the most well-known events of [Bible History](#). But did The Ten Commandments *originate* at Mount Sinai? No, they did not. All were recognized long before.

### **The First Commandment**

"I am The Lord your God, Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me." (Exodus 20:2-3 RSV)

- [Adam And Eve](#) were commanded by God to obey Him. He made plain to them right in the Garden of Eden that He was their God, their Creator. But they

chose to believe and obey Satan. And Satan is yet "the god of this world" (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). For their violation of The First Commandment, among other things, they were cast out.

- Long before Sinai, violating the First Commandment was sin:  
"Your fathers lived of old beyond the Euphrates, [Terah](#), the father of Abraham and of Nahor; and they served other gods." (Joshua 24:2 RSV)

## **The Second Commandment**

"You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down 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 the fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love Me and keep My commandments." (Exodus 20:4-6 RSV)

- Long before Sinai, God told Jacob to get rid of the idols (see [Images and Idols](#)), so Jacob collected them and buried them under a tree:  
"God said to [Jacob](#), "Arise, go up to [Bethel](#), and dwell there; and make there an altar to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother [Esau](#)." So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments; then let us arise and go up to Bethel, that I may make there an altar to the God who answered me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone." So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears; and Jacob hid them under the oak which was near Shechem." (Genesis 35:2-4 RSV)

## The Third Commandment

"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 vain." (Exodus 20:7 RSV)

- Long before Sinai, profaning The Name of God was sin:  
"and so profane the name of your God ... for all of these abominations the men of the land did, who were before you, so that the land became defiled."  
(Leviticus 18:21,27 RSV)

## The Fourth Commandment

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, and do all your work; 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, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days The Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore The Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it." (Exodus 20:8-11 RSV) (see [Remember The Sabbath Day](#) and [Sun Worship](#))

- The Sabbath originated at [The Seven Days Of Creation](#), long before Sinai:  
"And on the seventh day God finished his work which he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all his work which he had done in creation."  
(Genesis 2:2-3 RSV)
- Before the formal giving of The Ten Commandments, the people were commanded to observe the Sabbath by not gathering [Manna](#):  
"Six days you shall gather it; but on the seventh day,

which is a Sabbath, there will be none." (Exodus 16:26 RSV)

## **The Fifth Commandment**

"Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which The Lord your God gives you." (Exodus 20:12 RSV)

- Long before Sinai, Noah's son sinned by dishonouring his parent:  
"When Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his youngest son had done to him, he said, "Cursed be Canaan." (Genesis 9:24-25 RSV)

## **The Sixth Commandment**

"You shall not kill." (Exodus 20:13 RSV)

- The first murder of course occurred all the way back in the Garden of Eden:  
"And The Lord said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood is crying to Me from the ground. And now you are cursed from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand." (Genesis 4:10-11 RSV) (see [Cain and Abel](#))

## **The Seventh Commandment**

"You shall not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14 RSV)

- Long before Sinai, Joseph (see [Coat Of Many Colours](#)) refused to sin by committing adultery with Potiphar's wife:  
"But he refused and said to his master's wife, "Lo, having me my master has no concern about anything in the house, and he has put everything that he has in

my hand; he is not greater in this house than I am; nor has he kept back anything from me except yourself, because you are his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:8-9 RSV)

## **The Eighth Commandment**

"You shall not steal." (Exodus 20:15 RSV)

- The first recorded theft, and the penalty for that sin, occurred right in the Garden of Eden:  
"Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (Genesis 3:11 RSV)

## **The Ninth Commandment**

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour." (Exodus 20:16 RSV)

- The ultimate liar, Satan, was also right in the Garden of Eden:  
"And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.'" But the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die." (Genesis 3:2-4 RSV)
- "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks according to his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44 RSV) (see [That Old Serpent](#) and [Did God Create The Devil?](#) and [Sweet Nuthins'](#))

## **The Tenth Commandment**

"You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbour's." (Exodus 20:17 RSV)

- Coveting was a sin that began very early, right in the Garden of Eden:  
"So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit." (Genesis 3:6 RSV)

**Fact Finder:** Did God's Ten Commandments ever stop being in force?  
See [The Ten Commandments Now?](#)

by [Wayne Blank](#)

Christians can only be saved by the grace of God, through the blood sacrifice of [Jesus Christ](#). There is *nothing* that we can ever possibly do to save ourselves. We don't have the power to do it, and no amount of "law keeping," or "righteous acts," or "Levitical rituals," or "works" can possibly make God owe it to us. We can't earn salvation.

But, does that mean that  
God's Commandments  
were "nailed to the  
cross," and that we are  
somehow *lawless*? Are  
free to worship false  
gods, or bow down to  
idols, or blaspheme  
now  
we

God's name, or ignore His Sabbath Day, or abuse our parents, or commit murder, or run wild in adultery, stealing, lies and coveting? Of course not.

Our salvation is *made possible* by grace, but *whether or not* we will be saved depends upon our repentance and obedience to God. God isn't going to grant His gift of eternal life to those who do not obey Him. The unrepentant *lawless* are going to find themselves in the lake of fire with the wicked and *lawless* Satan.

Are God's Ten Commandments now abolished? What does the *New Testament* have to say about it? What does *The Savior Himself* have to say about it?

### **In The Savior's Own Words**

"Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, *Till heaven and earth pass* [Note: heaven and earth are still here], one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least Commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 5:17-19 KJV)

"And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments. He saith unto Him, Which? [Note: Jesus then went on to clearly identify that by "Commandments," He meant the Ten Commandments] Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matthew 19:16-19 KJV)

"If ye love Me, keep My Commandments. And I will pray The Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; Even The Spirit of Truth;"  
(John 14:15-17 KJV)

### **Plain Language From Your Holy Bible**

"My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with The Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know Him, *if we keep His Commandments*. He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His Commandments, is a liar, and the Truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." (1 John 2:1-6 KJV)

"Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and every one that loveth Him that begat loveth Him also that is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep His Commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments: and His Commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is Truth." (1 John 5:1-6 KJV)

### **Satan Does Not Want You To Obey God**

"And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the

Commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." (Revelation 12:17 KJV)

"If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." (Revelation 14:9-13 KJV)

### **The Reward Of The Obedient**

"And, behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. Blessed are they that do His Commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie." (Revelation 22:12-15)

**Fact Finder:** Did James say that "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also"?  
James 2:26

### **Sin Defined**

Before proving that the Ten Commandments have existed since the creation of man, we need to understand the Bible definition of sin: "Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" ([I John 3:4](#)).

[Romans 6:23](#) defines the penalty—the end result—of sin: "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Notice: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, *for that all have sinned*: (For until the law sin was in the world: but *sin is not imputed when there is no law*. Nevertheless *death reigned from Adam to Moses*, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come)" ([Rom. 5:12-14](#)).

In other words, Adam sinned. Sin is not imputed—does not apply—where there is no *law* ([Rom. 4:15](#)). Death reigned from Adam to Moses. (Remember, death is the penalty for sin, which is defined as the transgression of the law.) The only way Adam and his descendants could sin—break God's spiritual law—is if God's law *already* existed!

Instead of rejecting sin, false religionists reject the law. They view the law as a burden—they want to be free from keeping it. But notice the key lessons found in [Romans 7:7](#): "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. No, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, You shall not covet." It is not the law that is at fault, but

sin. God reveals to us what sin is. He does this by His perfect law. On his own, man cannot discover God's perfect law. God has to reveal and teach it to us.

## **Man's First Sin**

In the Garden of Eden, God talked to Adam and gave him clear, understandable instructions. Adam needed this. He was an adult with an adult mind, but God had to reveal to him the spiritual boundaries that Adam could not discover on his own, without breaking God's laws. [Genesis 2:15](#) states, "And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, you shall not eat of it: for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." And [Romans 6:23](#) states "the wages of sin is *death*."

Adam was given instructions on how to maintain the garden. He was also commanded not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (not to decide for himself what is right or wrong), and was told what the penalty would be for disobeying this command.

God revealed to Adam, and to his wife, Eve, right knowledge about how to live. But He gave them the freedom to decide whether or not they would follow His way. This was free moral agency, which God has given to all mankind.

Satan, in the form of a serpent, told Eve that if she took the fruit of the forbidden tree, “You shall not surely die: For God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil” ([Gen. 3:4-5](#)). Being gullible in the face of Satan’s shrewd tactics, Eve fell for his deception and ate from the tree, as did Adam.

Adam sinned by acting against God’s command. He broke God’s law. In doing so, he became the servant of the one whom he obeyed—Satan. This principle is explained in [Romans 6:16](#): “Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?”

Whoever or whatever someone obeys and serves is his god. In this case, Adam and Eve broke the First Commandment by *putting another god before the Creator God*. In doing so, they also broke the Fifth Commandment, by *dishonoring their Parent*, in the sense that Adam was a created *son* of God ([Luke 3:38](#)). Their sin also involved *stealing* (the Eighth Commandment), in that they took something that was not theirs. Besides this, Eve *lusted* for the forbidden fruit. Lusting is coveting, which breaks the Tenth Commandment.

Breaking one commandment leads to breaking all of them. This is precisely what the Apostle James expressed in [James 2:10](#): “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in *one* point, he is guilty of *all*.” God’s laws are interrelated and intricately woven together—if you break one, you eventually break them all.

In [Genesis 4](#), Adam's first son, Cain, became angry against his brother Abel, because God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but not Cain's. Notice how God admonished Cain in [verses 6-7](#): "And the Lord said unto Cain, Why are you wroth [angry]? and why is your countenance fallen? If you do well, shall you not be accepted? and if you do not well, *sin* lies at the door. And unto you shall be his desire, and you shall rule over him." Cain murdered and broke the Sixth Commandment.

When someone is in the wrong frame of mind, sin does lie at the door, waiting to happen, because sinful thoughts lead to sinful actions. God commands us to rule over sin—to control those pulls and impulses to commit sin. Cain murdered Abel and lied to God about it. This is a direct violation of the Ninth Commandment, which forbids "bearing false witness against your neighbor." Cain had sinned and he knew it. This happened a few decades after Adam had first sinned. Adam and Eve's expanding family knew that sin was the breaking of God's law, else God would not have held them accountable.

## **Other Commandments in Force Before Sinai**

The Bible gives examples of each of the Ten Commandments being kept before Moses' time. When God called Jacob to return to Bethel, where God had appeared to him approximately 21 years before, Jacob warned his people, "*Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments: And let us arise, and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God, who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went*" ([Gen. 35:2-](#)

3). Jacob knew that God forbade idolatry—breaking the Second Commandment. By telling his household to put away their idols, this fulfilled the principle in [Proverbs 16:6](#), “By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.”

When Abram told King Abimelech that Sarah, his half sister and wife, was merely his sister, he lied—another breaking of the Ninth Commandment. Believing this, Abimelech sent for Sarah. Now notice [Genesis 20:3-4, 6](#): “But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, you are but a dead man, for the woman which you have taken; for she is a man’s wife. But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, will you slay also a righteous nation?...And God said unto him in a dream, Yes, I know that you did this in the integrity of your heart; for I also withheld you *from sinning against Me*: therefore suffered I you not to touch her.” In this situation, Abimelech would have committed adultery, which is a sin. He would have broken the Seventh Commandment.

When Joseph was tempted by the advances of Potiphar’s wife, he “...refused, and said unto his master’s wife, Behold, my master knows not what is with me in the house, and he has committed all that he has to my hand; There is none greater in this house than I; neither has he kept back any thing from me but you, because you are his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and *sin against God?*” ([Gen. 39:8-9](#)). Joseph was well aware that adultery was sin. This occurred about 250 years before the law was officially presented to Israel at Mount Sinai!

During their march to the Promised Land, God told the Israelites to gather their daily amount of manna each morning. On the morning before the weekly Sabbath there would be enough for both days. This was because no manna would appear on the Sabbath, God's day of rest. God intended that they rest on the Sabbath, rather than spend time gathering manna. This account is given in [Exodus 16](#). In [verse 28](#), after some of the people deliberately broke the Sabbath by attempting to gather manna, God told Moses, "How long refuse you [Israel] to keep *My commandments and My laws?*"

Now notice [verses 29-30](#): "See, for that the Lord has given you the Sabbath, therefore He gives you on the sixth day the bread of two days; abide you every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day. So the people rested on the seventh day." So, the Fourth Commandment was in effect *before* the law was given at Mount Sinai.

By the time Israel entered the land of Canaan, the nations there had "run the full course"—they had surpassed the threshold of moral collapse, much like nations have done today. God knew that this would happen and had told Abram about it, over 400 years earlier: "And you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in a good old age. But in the fourth generation they [Abram's seed—the nation Israel] shall come here again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" ([Gen. 15:15-16](#)).

Here, the word "iniquity" comes from the Hebrew word *avon*, which means "perversity, mischief or sin." If there had been no law in force, there would not have been any iniquity or sin for

the Amorites, or any other nation, to commit. Refer to [Leviticus 18:3, 19-30](#) for more description of the iniquity and abominations committed by the Canaanites. They included sacrificing—murdering—their children in the fire of Molech, every form of adultery and sexual perversity, and profaning the name of God.

Take a look at the pre-Flood world: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” ([Gen. 6:1-3, 5-6](#)). The word “wickedness” used here comes from the Hebrew word *rah*, which means “exceedingly evil.” So wicked was mankind that [verse 6](#) tells us, “And it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.” This wickedness brought every conceivable type of sin and blatant disregard for the sanctity of life.

These sins were imputed—pointed out—by the laws of God—the Ten Commandments, which existed from the creation of mankind.

These examples show that *all* the Ten Commandments preceded Moses. From Adam to Moses, all men had sinned—had broken God’s laws, the Ten Commandments. That is why God commended Abraham, saying, “Abraham *obeyed My voice, and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes and My laws*” ([Gen. 26:5](#)).