

ONE STORY | ONE SAVIOR - UNIT 1 | LESSON 08b

The Pentateuch – The Promise Given Through the Royal Gift Covenant

God is a PROMISE Making God

God 1) **CREATES** a place where 2) He will **MEET** with his People 3) for their **JOY**. 4) His People reject Him. 5) God binds Himself through **PROMISE (i.e. The Royal Gift Covenant)** to 6) **RESCUE** His people from their sin and 7) **RESTORE** them to Himself for their **JOY**.

ILLUSTRATION - The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter: Peter Rabbit’s mother sets clear rules for her children, warning them to stay out of Mr. McGregor’s garden to keep them safe. Although Peter disobeys and faces consequences, the story emphasizes the importance of listening to wise advice and understanding boundaries for one’s safety.




VIDEO - "The Ten Commandments" - Children's Message for January 10, 2021
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXDZXfZpjfg>

“The Law”

The Law Teaches His People About Jesus

Exodus 19:1-6

Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, **if you will indeed obey** my voice and keep my covenant, **you shall be** my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 6 and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

	<p>THE HEAD - To Know how the Law points to Jesus. Q – When we think of the Law, what are our first thoughts?</p>
	<p>THE HEART - To Choose the LAW as we obey Jesus. Q – What is to be our focus when we think of the LAW?</p>
	<p>THE HAND - To Pray we will obey all that God has said. Q – What does LAW obedience look like in the Christian life?</p>

EMPHASIS

All of the Old Testament in prophecy, promise, and pattern is fulfilled in Jesus. The wilderness wandering of Israel says, “We Can’t, But God Can, and Jesus Did.” At Mt. Sinai, God gives Israel the Law. The Law is a VASSAL TREATY. The Vassal Treaty is conditional and is Israel-centric. It is not for the New Testament Church.

- The **LAW** teaches His People they can't but God can and Jesus [will] did.

God instructs His People to remember the *Story* by giving them four resources.

- First, the Law (Exod. 19-24),
- Secondly, the Tabernacle (Exod. 25-30),
- Thirdly, the Sacrificial System (Lev. 1-7), and
- Finally, the Feast Days (Lev. 23).

[The Big Idea behind this section {Israel at Mt. Sinai} is what follows.] Each one of these resources remind His people of the greater *Story* in which they exist. Each resource is to be used to point people to Jesus. They are not ends in themselves. They are only means. They are shadows. Shadows cannot provide they can only point.

This lesson will focus on THE LAW.

The structure of the narrative points to the failure and insufficiency of Israel as a nation. God enters into a covenant with Israel and tells them the terms of that covenant. While Moses is away, being told how to construct the tabernacle, Israel disobeys the covenant set up by God and worships how they see fit. The same problem that was present in the garden has once more reared its ugly head.

LITERARY CONTEXT

In this study of ONE STORY, God's people arrive at Mt. Sinai where Moses will receive Israel's Law. This Law is a VASSAL TREATY. We will explore the nature of this Law in the following Lesson.

1. God **Remembers** His People in Egypt (1:1-2:25)

Let us begin by remembering the *Story* as to why God created us in the first place. God created us so that we would know and experience the joy He has within Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and this joy is only known and experienced in His presence.

The Covenant God gave to Adam and Eve is a ROYAL GIFT COVENANT. God is gifting them with a mediator, a redeemer. This mediator will come from the WOMAN'S SEED (Gen. 3:15) and provide a substitutionary, voluntary blood sacrifice (Gen. 3:21) that will efficaciously restore them into His presence for their joy.

The presence of God equals blessing and joy. The absence of God equals cursing and despair.

2. God **Redeems** His People from Egypt (4:18-15:21)

Their "redemption" from Egypt is part of the ROYAL GIFT COVENANT and not part of a VASSAL TREATY.

3. God **Sustains** His People in the Wilderness (15-18)

4. God **Instructs** His People at Mt. Sinai (19:1-40:38)

This covenant between God and the Nation of Israel is a VASSAL TREATY. There are stipulations for the benefit or cursing of either compliance or non-compliance. It is a cause and effect TREATY.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Yahweh has brought His people out of slavery, rescued them from the armies of Egypt, and provided for them in the wilderness. Three months after leaving Egypt, Moses brings Israel to Mount Sinai where he encountered Yahweh for the first time through a burning bush. When Israel arrives at the mountain, Yahweh descends in cloud and fire (19:18) to speak with His nation. Yahweh gives Israel Ten Commandments (20:1-17) to follow that are good and just in fostering a community of honor and trust. After these commandments are given, the people respond in fear and beg for Yahweh not to directly speak to them (20:18-19), so Moses ascends the mountain. While in the cloud and fire, Moses listens to Yahweh who gives him laws and commandments for Israel to follow (20:22-24:2). These commandments reflect the heart and character of Yahweh which He wants His people to reflect and represent to the other nations. After delivering these commands to the nation, Moses goes up again to receive more instruction (24:12-31:18) related to the tabernacle and priests. While Moses is up on the mountain, the Israelites begin to think he is dead, so they construct a calf made of gold to worship (32:2-4). This is idolatry. In doing this, Israel breaks the very first commandment Yahweh gave them and many others. In the midst of Yahweh's wrath, Moses contends for Israel and begs for mercy (32:11-13). Inexplicably, Yahweh relents and turns his wrath away from rebellious Israel by not destroying the nation (32:14).

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

At Mt. Sinai, God expands on the SEED PROMISE and BLOOD PICTURE in giving what we call THE LAW. The design of this Covenant is to guide the nation in expressing their love for God and for one another. God sets up a covenant with the nation He brought out of bondage and they quickly break this covenant. This points to the insufficiency of humanity to match the character and heart of God, and the need for someone better to fulfill humanity's end of the covenant.

STRUCTURE

This chapter introduces the giving of the law upon Mount Sinai, which was one of the most sensible appearances of the divine glory that ever was in this lower world.

I. The Historical Context (vv. 1, 2)

- Exodus 19:1, 2

¹On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ²They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain,

If we step back and look at the bigger picture of the LAW, we can see why God gave the LAW. The LAW given on Mt. Sinai and then repeated in Deuteronomy is slightly different. Why? Because of occasion. In the Ancient Near East, the LAW was not something that was to be followed to the LETTER, but applied through WISDOM in life's circumstances.

The LAW as we know it is far more expansive than we initially think. The LAW was given on Mt. Sinai beginning in Exodus 19 and running all the way through Numbers 10. God gave to Moses a significant amount of information. There are categories of this instruction. All of this instruction was a picture of something bigger than itself. The LAW or shadow always pointed, it never provided. The LAW was never an end. It was and is only a means to an end. The end of the LAW is JESUS. The LAW never found fulfillment in Israel or the NATIONS.

Often when speaking of the LAW, we speak of LAW as the antithesis of GRACE. But that is a misunderstanding of the LAW'S INTENT or ROLE.

- **Like all SHADOW, the LAW could only POINT, it could not PROVIDE. The LAW said, "I CAN'T, BUT GOD CAN, AND JESUS [WILL] DID."**

II. **The Conditions of the Treaty (vv. 3-6)**

- ³ while Moses went up to God. The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: ⁴ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel."
- A. "Verses 4-6 are the heart of the section, and some would go so far as to say they are the heart of the Old Testament revelation of God pertaining to His covenant with Israel."¹
- B. Israel never kept the "if" [protosis], thus God did not have to keep the "then" [apodosis].
- C. God references the EXODUS (VV. 3, 4)
 - a. The EXODUS is a consequence of the ROYAL GIFT COVENANT of Genesis 3:15 and 12:1-5.
- D. The covenant that God speaks of in verse 5 is still future (vv. 5-9)
 - a. This covenant is a VASSAL TREATY with stipulations and conditions
 - i. It is conditional (vv. 5a, 7-9).
 - ii. It is consequential (vv. 5b-6)

The nation is already "saved." The law does not happen until *after* the nation leaves Egypt.

This is not a royal gift covenant. This is a vassal treaty.

Types of Covenants

1. Covenant among equals – marriage
2. Royal gift covenant
3. Vassal treaty

The **Garden of Eden is a Vassal Treaty**. Adam and Eve failed to obey. As a consequence, they die in their relationship with God. God, however, condescends and gives them the **Royal Gift**. He will provide an offspring from the woman who will destroy their enemy. And He provides a blood sacrifice that atones for their sins.

The **Mosaic Covenant is a Vassal Treaty** with Laws and Stipulations, Blessing and Cursing.
God's Redemptive Purpose is a Royal Gift.

Why is this important? First, God's redemptive purpose is a gift. Second, God's governance of the Nation of Israel is a Vassal Treaty. The two are not the same. God is not saving Israel in the Mosaic Code or the Law. God is governing Israel in the Mosaic Code. God saves Israel as a Royal Gift. Thus, to impose redemptive purposes onto the vassal treaty leads to heresy. Is there continuity between the two? Yes.

Look at Galatians 3:16-29 and notice with me the relationship between the ROYAL GIFT and the VASSAL TREATY.

- Gal. 3:17-19
¹⁷ What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise. ¹⁹ Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.

Now let us go back to the conditions of the Mosaic Covenant.

⁵ Now therefore,
if you will indeed **obey** my voice and **keep** my covenant,
[then] . . .

[1] you shall be my **treasured possession** among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and

[2] you shall be to me **a kingdom of priests** and

[3] **a holy nation.**'

Conditional sentences generally have two parts: the 'if' clause [called the **protasis**] and the main or 'then' clause [called the **apodosis**].

"Israel NEVER met the conditions laid out in this VASSAL TREATY. Thus, the nation of Israel was NEVER God's treasured possession among all peoples,"⁶ and they were NEVER a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. The prophet Malachi identifies the believing remnant as those who would become this, but the nation collectively never became this.

What Israel failed to do, Jesus did. Jesus as the new Israel keeps the Law perfectly and "becomes" this to the Father and for the Nations.

JESUS IN THE TEXT

The Mosaic Covenant was conditional and Israel was not able to keep the Law. They were always in violation of it. They were transgressors. Although Israel would prove unfaithful in their obedience, God would prove faithful and keep His “end of the bargain.” Those who confess Jesus are His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation not because of who they are, but because of who He is.

- Romans 8:3, 4

³ For God has done what the law, **weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh,** ⁴ in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

Through the Law, God is showing that He desires His people to reflect His character to the nations, but humanity is incapable of this. As a result, **this narrative establishes a need for a better Israel and a better human to fulfill the covenant.**

For a nation of unholy failures, the Law is a gracious expression of a gracious God who seeks to empower and enable them in their pursuit of Him. The Law provides “rules and regulations” that show the Nation what loving God and loving one another looks like. Their inability is met by blood through the sacrificial system, for without the shedding of blood there can be no remission of sin (Lev. 17:11). This system is a daily activity at the Tabernacle to remind them of God’s desire to restore them to His joy.

APPLICATION

- God is **merciful**.
- God is standing by his people and bearing with their shortcomings and rebellion. God’s capacity for mercy in the midst of rebellion is nothing short of amazing.

Due to the finished work of Christ, we can rest in the fulfillment of the Law. Through the work of Christ, the Law is now written on the hearts of believers through the Spirit, and the Spirit is working in and through the Church. Where Israel failed to reflect the character and love of God through the Law, the Church is able to reflect the character and love of God through the Spirit.

VISUALS

MEMORY VERSE

Exodus 19:5-6 (ESV)

⁵ Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; ⁶ and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.”

RESOURCES

ENDNOTES

¹ <https://bible.org/seriespage/12-preamble-israel-s-constitution-exodus-19>