

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"THE LAW OF LIBERTY"

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: January 8, 2023

SPEAKER: Chad/Wil

SERIES: Deuteronomy

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 5:1-6

Family Dinner Table

Of the Law of God

Westminster Confession of Faith, Section 19

The law of God has been characterized as the "schoolmaster that drives us to Christ" (See Galatians 3:24, KJV). What exactly does that mean? The Holy Spirit uses the law of God to convict us of sin, and so to look to Christ by faith for salvation from sin. Or another way to describe it: the law is like a mirror, it reflects our sinfulness, while at the same time revealing to us the holiness of God (Romans 3:20).

Are the Ten Commandments applicable to all people? If so, how is God's law relevant to unbelievers? According to the Westminster Confession of Faith, the moral law, as an act of common grace, has a restraining influence of common grace "to awaken their consciences to flee from the wrath to come, and to drive them to Christ; or upon their continuance in the estate and way of sin, to leave them inexcusable."⁴

Using the Westminster Confession of Faith as a guide, as a family read through Section 19 and discuss the following questions: (If you don't have a copy of the WCF, you can find one online at [wts.edu](https://www.wts.edu).)

- How binding is the moral law? (19.5)
- In what way is the law of great use to believers? (19.6)
- How is the law related to grace? (19.7)

PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Church of the Firstborn,
strategic partner ministry

PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Friends of the Good Samaritans,
world missions partner

If you recall from our previous studies, the book of Deuteronomy is a generational guidebook for covenant renewal. Renewal involves remembering God's redemptive story. And in a series of three sermons, Moses reminds the second generation of wilderness wanderers of the covenant God made with their fathers. In chapter 5, we encounter a reiteration of the Ten Commandments first delivered on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20). For the next few months, our studies will focus on the Decalogue (translated, "ten words"). Today we begin with what is known as the preamble or prologue, as summarized in verse 6, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." *As God's covenant people enter the promised land, they are reminded of the continuity of the law (vv. 1-3), the personal nature of the law (vv. 4-5), and the redemptive foundation of the law (v. 6).*

The Continuity of the Law (vv. 1-3)

The Westminster Confession of Faith states that the Law given to the Israelites at Horeb was a continuation of the covenant of works that God made with Adam in the Garden of Eden: "This law, after his [Adam's] fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness; and, as such, was delivered by God upon Mount Sinai, in the ten commandments, and written in two tables. Although true believers be not under the law, as a covenant of works, to be thereby justified, or condemned; yet is it of great use to them, as well as to others; in that, as a rule of life informing them of the will of God, and their duty, it directs and binds them to walk accordingly."¹

- What implications does the continuity of the law have for the church today?
- Read Psalm 78:1-8. According to the psalmist, why is it important for us to keep God's commands and to teach them to our children?

The Personal Nature of the Law (vv. 4-5)

God personally spoke to his people, "face to face...out of the midst of the fire" at Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy 5:4). The emphasis in Exodus 20:1-2, "I am the LORD your God," indicates that his covenantal relationship with the people is personal. According to Dr. Philip Ryken, "God is LORD. Here he uses his special covenant name Yahweh. He is the great I AM, the sovereign and Almighty LORD. He is the supreme, self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable God, who bound himself to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with the unbreakable promise of his covenant. Furthermore, he is our very own God. 'I am the LORD your God,' he says, indicating that he has a personal relationship with each and every one of his people."²

- Read Deuteronomy 4:32-40. What does this passage tell you about the relationship between the Israelites and Yahweh? How did God demonstrate to them the personal nature of his relationship with them through the law (v 40)?

The Redemptive Foundation of the Law (v. 6)

Dutch theologian Herman Bavinck presents the redemptive foundation of the law by tying the Abrahamic covenant in Genesis 12 with the Sinaitic covenant: "The covenant with Israel was essentially no other than that with Abraham. Just as God first freely and graciously gave himself as shield and reward to Abraham, so also it is God who chose the people of Israel, saved it out of Egypt, united himself with that people, and obligated it to be holy and his own people. The covenant on Mt. Sinai is and remains a covenant of grace."³

- How is the covenant of grace key to understanding the purposes of God in redemption? (Galatians 3:15-29)
- How does the law of God reveal humanity's sinfulness and need for a Redeemer? (Romans 5:12-21)

¹ The Westminster Confession of Faith, 3rd Edition. *Of the Law of God*. Committee for Christian Education & Publications. 1990. 61-62.

² Ryken, Philip Graham. *Written in Stone: The Ten Commandments and Today's Moral Crisis*. Philipsburg, NJ. P&R Publishing, 2003. 13.

³ Bavinck, Herman. *Reformed Dogmatics: Sin and Salvation in Christ* (Vol. 3). Grand Rapids, MI. Baker Academic, 2006. 220.