

April 20–26: Exodus 19–20; 24; 31–34,
“All that the Lord Hath Spoken We Will Do”

Introduction

Recall from last week’s lesson that Moses received the Melchizedek Priesthood from his father-in-law, Jethro. At this time, the Israelites were eligible to receive the fulness of the priesthood and all of God’s blessings available through the Abrahamic covenant. It wasn’t until after they demonstrated their disobedience by creating and worshipping the golden calf that Israel was restricted to the lesser law.

Brigham Young

"[Moses] received the law of carnal commandments for Israel from the mouth of God. I believe with all my heart that if the children had been ready to receive the Gospel in all its fulness, the yoke of carnal commandments would never have been placed upon their necks. Moses was a High Priest after the order of Melchizedek." (JD, 9:308)

J. Reuben Clark, Jr.

"The Lord tried to make a nation of priests out of Israel but Israel would not, and so the Lord had to organize as he did, giving the Priesthood to one tribe, withdrawing the Melchizedek Priesthood from their midst, and setting up the Priesthood of Aaron." (CR, April 1953)

Faith Tested at Mount Sinai

The Lord makes it clear that He desires to give the Israelites the fullness of the gospel.

Exd 19:3-6

3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles’ wings, and brought you unto myself.

5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

What do you think the Lord meant when He said Israel could become His “peculiar treasure” and a “kingdom of priests”?

Lorenzo Snow

"This is what the Lord designed to effect through Israel in bringing them out from Egyptian bondage; He wished to make of them a united people, a peculiar nation, a nation of people whom God could honor and respect in order that the world might believe, and that they might receive the blessings

which He wished to bestow upon them. If Israel had carried out His requirements, the world, no doubt would have been greatly benefited thereby, and the purposes of God more fully effected. The Lord... wished to extend his love and blessings through Israel to the whole human family."
(JD, 23:338)

The people covenanted to obey the Lord, and as a result they were able to witness and experience marvelous things at Mount Sinai.

Exd 19:7-11,16-17

7 ¶ And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

10 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes,

11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

16 ¶ And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled.

17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

What do the people's reactions to the marvelous manifestations they witnessed reveal about the strength of the Israelites' faith?

(all the people that was in the camp trembled)

The Israelites lacked the faith necessary to endure the great things the Lord had prepared for them.

Exd 20:18-21

18 ¶ And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

Why do you think the Israelites wanted Moses to act as their intermediary instead of seeking the Lord themselves?

(let not God speak with us, lest we die)

John Taylor

"The Israelites had the Gospel preached to them in the wilderness; but... when they heard the thunders and saw the lightning and heard the voice of God, they said unto Moses, 'Speak thou unto us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die;' we are not prepared for this glory, for this kind of manifestation which has been given unto us.

"Well, they were foolish; they departed from correct principles, they violated the laws of God and therefore incurred his displeasure, and his Spirit was withdrawn from them, and the Gospel was taken from them and they were left under a law of carnal commandments, and the law was given them as a schoolmaster, we are told, until Christ came." (JD, 20:219)

The Ten Commandments

After speaking with God on Mount Sinai, Moses descended the mountain and delivered the Ten Commandments to the Israelites.

Exd 20:1-17

1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 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;

6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7 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.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10 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:

11 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.

12 ¶ Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land

which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

17 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.

We have discussed several examples that reveal the Israelites' lack of faith. The Ten Commandments appear to have been given to provide foundational principles to guide their lives, strengthen their faith, and prepare them for the higher law.

Mark E. Petersen

“By his own finger the Lord wrote the Ten Commandments on tablets of stone. They represent the basic law of the Almighty and have formed the underlying elements of civil and religious law ever since.”

“They are fundamental to our relationships with God. They are an integral part of the restored gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and are essential to our becoming perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect.” (Moses: Man of Miracles, pg. 110)

What do you think Elder Petersen meant when he said that the Ten Commandments have “formed the underlying elements of civil and religious law”?

Attempt to Establish the Fullness

The Israelites covenant to obey the words of the Lord.

Exd 24:3-4,7-8

3 ¶ And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.

4 And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.

8 And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

What ordinance did Moses perform to symbolize the covenant between the Lord

and the people?

(Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant)

How does this covenant ceremony compare to ordinances we participate in today?

-The sacrament

Richard Lloyd Anderson

"[There are] profound contacts between the divine covenant given at Sinai and the new covenant instituted in the Upper Room.... The first is the powerful repetition of Moses' cry, 'Behold the blood of the covenant.'... [Then] we hear the Savior tersely telling the full meaning of Moses' words as he raised the cup: 'For this is my blood of the new [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matt 26:28)." ("The Restoration of the Sacrament" Ensign, Feb. 1992)

With the people willing to make this covenant, Moses continued to try to bring them the fulness of the gospel. Here, seventy elders saw the face of God.

Exd 24:9-11

9 ¶ Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel:

10 And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

What does the seventy elders' ability to endure the Lord's presence reveal about their faith and obedience?

John Taylor

"The Lord at that time desired to make of Israel a great nation, a kingdom of priests. They had the Gospel preached unto them in the wilderness.... It was the design of the Almighty to lead them into the presence of God, that they might see him as Moses did, and as the seventy Elders of Israel did, that they might converse with him and obtain intelligence from him, and be under his special guidance and direction; but they could not endure the Gospel." (JD, 14:356)

In chapters 25 thru 30 the Lord goes into great detail about building the tabernacle and administering ordinances in it.

Exd 29:43-46

43 And there I will meet with the children of Israel, and the tabernacle shall be

sanctified by my glory.

44 And I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar: I will sanctify also both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the priest's office.

45 ¶ And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God.

46 And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God.

In what ways would the tabernacle help the Israelites draw closer to the Lord and partake of His fullness?

(I will sanctify the tabernacle of the congregation
I will dwell among the children of Israel
they shall know that I am the LORD their God)

The Lord commands Moses to return to Mount Sinai to receive the fulness of the gospel so he can teach it to the people.

Exd 24:12,15-18

12 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

15 And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount.

16 And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

17 And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

18 And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

What did the Lord promise to give Moses when he returned to Mount Sinai?

(a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them)

The Golden Calf

Note that Moses was gone for forty days. During that time, the people once again showed their lack of faith and their inability to keep their covenants.

Exd 32:1-4

1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

Why do you think the Israelites so quickly returned to iniquity despite all they had experienced and the covenants they had made?

John Taylor

“Moses... would have led all Israel into [God’s] presence, but they would not be led; they turned to idolatry, to evil and corruption, and hence they became disobedient and unmanageable. And when the Lord spake to them they became terrified and said, ‘Let not God speak unto us, lest we die’ (Exd 20:19). God wants to bring us near to him, for this purpose he has introduced the Gospel with all its ordinances.” (JD, 21:53)

Fullness Taken Away

Moses returns from Mount Sinai with the writing of God on tablets.

Exd 32:15-16,19

15 ¶ And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.

16 And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.

19 ¶ And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

Why might Moses have broken the tablets that contained the higher law when he saw the Israelites worshipping the golden calf?

-Israel had broken their covenant and were clearly not ready for the higher law

Exd 32:26

26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD’s side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

What do you think it means today to answer Moses’ call, “Who is on the Lord’s side”?

George Albert Smith

“I have many times repeated what my grandfather said.... In advising his family he said, ‘There is a line of demarcation, well defined. On one side of the line is the Lord's territory. On the other side of the line is the devil's territory.’ And he said, ‘If you will stay on the Lord's side of the line, you are perfectly safe, because the adversary of all righteousness cannot cross that line.’

“What does that mean? It means to me that those who are living righteous lives, keeping all of the commandments of our Heavenly Father are perfectly safe, but not those who trifle with his advice and counsel.” (CR, Oct. 1949)

Because of their wickedness Moses moved the tabernacle away from the camp of the people.

Exd 33:7-11

7 And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.

8 And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle.

9 And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.

10 And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

What does limiting the people's access to the tabernacle teach us about the importance of keeping covenants?

(Moses entered into the tabernacle... and the LORD talked with Moses the LORD spake unto Moses face to face)

L. Tom Perry

"Because of the disobedience of the children of Israel, 'Moses took the tabernacle [out of their midst], and pitched it without the camp.'

"Now their centerpiece, the tabernacle, was away from them. They could no longer be guided and protected by its presence. Now only the faithful were allowed to come to the tabernacle. One thing the Lord would not tolerate was the worship of other gods. Because of their many years of captivity in Egypt, this was challenging to the children of Israel." (CR, Oct. 2003)

The Law of Moses

The Lord commanded Moses to return to Mount Sinai with two tablets on which He would record the lesser law for the Israelites.

The Joseph Smith Translation makes it clear that the Lord had hoped to give the Israelites the fullness of His gospel and priesthood but could not because of their disobedience.

Turn to page 800, or click on 'And' in verse 1 if you are reading on a device.

JST Exd 34:1-2

1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two other tables of stone like unto the first, and I will write upon them also the words of the law, according as they were written at the first on the tables which thou brakest; but it shall not be according to the first, for I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore, my holy order and the ordinances thereof shall not go before them; for my presence shall not go up in their midst, lest I destroy them.

2 But I will give unto them the law as at the first, but it shall be after the law of a carnal commandment; for I have sworn in my wrath that they shall not enter into my presence, into my rest, in the days of their pilgrimage. Therefore do as I have commanded thee; and be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount.

What do you think the Lord meant when He said that His "holy order... shall not go before them"?

(but it shall not be according to the first, for I will take away the priesthood out of their midst)

What did the Israelites lose when they received only the "law of carnal commandments" rather than the higher law?

(my presence shall not go up in their midst
they shall not enter into my presence, into my rest, in the days of their pilgrimage)

-It was the Lord's intention to bring Israel into His presence (His rest), but with only the law of carnal commandments, they would not be able to prepare themselves to do so.

Abinadi helps us better understand the lesser law.

Mosiah 13:29-31

29) And now I say unto you that it was expedient that there should be a law given to the children of Israel, yea, even a very strict law; for they were a stiffnecked people, quick to do iniquity, and slow to remember the Lord

their God;

30) Therefore there was a law given them, yea, a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God and their duty towards him.

31) But behold, I say unto you, that all these things were types of things to come.

Why was it necessary for the Israelites to be given a “very strict” law?

(they were a stiffnecked people
a law of performances and of ordinances
observe strictly from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of
God)

The Lord makes it clear that He is still anxious to extend His mercy to the Israelites and that they will continue to witness His good works.

Exd 34:4-10

4 ¶ And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.

9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

10 ¶ And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

What does the Lord say in this passage that shows His continuing love, mercy, and commitment to Israel?

(Verse 10)

Keith B. McMullin

"The lesser portion of the gospel encompasses vital, saving truths and rests on the cornerstones of obedience and sacrifice. These truths school men and women, boys and girls in the fundamentals of righteousness. They consist of repentance, baptism, and observance of the law of carnal commandments unto the remission of sins.... Principal among these are the Ten Commandments. This lesser portion of the gospel will nourish those who are new in the Church, lead back those who have strayed, help young people recognize and overcome the temptations and deceptions of the world.

Without this preparation, the fulness of gospel blessings cannot be realized or enjoyed.

"The responsibility for administering this preparatory portion of the gospel is entrusted to the Aaronic Priesthood." (CR, Oct. 1997)