

Exodus

Covenant at Sinai

Lesson #8 for August 23, 2025

Scriptures: Exodus 19:1-20:17; Revelation 21:3; Deuteronomy 5:6-21; James 1:23-25; Romans 3:20-24; 10:4.

The Israelites at Sinai

1. What is a *covenant*? What was the covenant at Sinai?

[From the *Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=T-BSG:] At Sinai, God establishes a covenant with His people. He is the Initiator of the contract. As the Initiator, God gives grace to His people and enters a relationship with them. God wants Israel to be His special people, His treasured possession, a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. Israel's success will rest on their positive response to God's loving guidance and to the mighty acts He performed on their behalf in Egypt and on the way to Sinai. God has already invited them to follow Him and proved that He plans to give them a bright future. If they only will keep His teachings and **seek to cultivate a genuine relationship with Him**, then God will be able to lead them in an unprecedented way to the Promised Land. **They need to learn who He is and what He does for them in order to admire, love, obey, and worship Him.** The **gift of the Decalogue** revealed the principles for a happy, balanced, and prosperous life.—*T-BSG** 106.^{†‡}

[From the *Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*=BSG:] After two months of traveling, the Israelites arrived at Sinai (*Exod. 19:1*), where they would remain for about one year (*compare Exod. 19:1 with Num. 10:11, 12*). [They could have been in Palestine in less than one month!] **During this year, many laws were issued, as described in Exodus 19–40, Leviticus 1–27, and Numbers 1:1–10:10.** Israel's stay at Mount Sinai is the central piece of the narrative found in the first five books of Moses. **Here is the foundation of their becoming God's chosen people, the only nation not steeped in paganism and idolatry.**—*BSG** for Sunday, August 17.^{†‡§} [Was Satan happy?][‡]

[T-BSG:] By leading Israel out of Egypt and guiding them through the Red Sea and the wilderness to Mount Sinai, God desired to **bring them to Himself** (*Exod. 19:4*). **For about a year, He taught them through this process.** God was like a loving parent to His people, instructing them in what was best for their prosperity. **The people saw how God defeated the Egyptian deities and cared for them through the plagues and their escape from Egypt. Then God gave them the most precious gift: the Decalogue, to teach them how to fear** [reverence] **Him** (*Exod. 20:20*). **We reflect in this lesson on the different functions of God's law.**—*T-BSG** 106.^{†‡§} [In the limited Hebrew vocabulary, the word for *fear* ranged from *respect* to *terror*.][‡]

2. How do you think Moses felt as he remembered that this was the spot where he had seen the burning bush and the site to which God had promised to bring him back with the children of Israel? (Exodus 3:1; Exodus 19:1-2)
3. God cares about every one of His children. If we wander away from Him, He pursues us and brings us back. Imagine how God felt when Eve and then Adam ate that forbidden fruit! But,

He did not give up on them; He went looking for them! (Genesis 3:9)

Preparations at Sinai

4. What did God do to help the children of Israel prepare for His appearance on the mountain?

Exodus 19:1-8: ¹⁻² The people of Israel left Rephidim, and on the first day of the third month after they had left Egypt they came to the desert of Sinai. There they set up camp at the foot of Mount Sinai, ³and **Moses went up the mountain to meet with God.**

The LORD called to him from the mountain and told him to say to the Israelites, Jacob's descendants: ⁴ "You saw what I, the LORD, did to the Egyptians and how I carried you as an eagle carries her young on her wings, and brought you here to me. ⁵Now, **if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own people.** The whole earth is mine, but **you will be my chosen people,** ⁶a people dedicated to me alone, and **you will serve me as priests.**" ⁷So Moses went down and called the leaders of the people together and told them everything that the LORD had commanded him. ⁸Then all the people answered together, **"We will do everything that the LORD has said,"** and Moses reported this to the LORD.—American Bible Society. (©1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation*[®]* [GNT] (*Today's English Version*) [TEV], Second Edition, Exodus 19:1-8). Philadelphia: American Bible Society [abbreviated as *Good News Bible-TEV** or *GNB-TEV**].^{††} [Imagine God, responding to a human being: Moses!][‡]

5. Notice that **the people promised** to "do everything the **LORD has said**" (Exodus 19:8, *GNB-TEV**) **before they even heard what God thundered from the mountain.**

[BSG:] God takes the initiative and establishes the covenant between Himself and Israel. On the condition of the people's obedience and their maintaining a relationship with Him, God promises to make them a special treasure, a kingdom of priests, a holy people.

To be a holy people means to be dedicated to God and to reveal His character to others, especially to the nations around them. [He placed them at the world's crossroads.] They were also **called to function as a kingdom of priests who would connect other people with God,** leading them to Him and teaching them His ways and His laws. They were to be God's special treasure because He wanted Israel as His channel to illuminate the world with knowledge of Him and His character.—BSG* for Sunday, August 17.^{††}

6. ***Is God reaching out to us in the same way? In 1888, God tried to start a revival and reformation that would take us into the kingdom of God. What happened?***

[From the writings of Ellen G. White=EGW:] An unwillingness to yield up preconceived opinions, and to accept this truth, lay at the foundation of a large share of the opposition manifested at Minneapolis against the Lord's message through Brethren [E.J.] Waggoner and [A.T.] Jones. **By exciting that opposition Satan succeeded in shutting away from our people, in a great measure, the special power of the Holy Spirit that God longed to impart to them.** The enemy prevented them from obtaining that efficiency which might have been theirs in carrying the truth to the world, as the apostles proclaimed it after the day of Pentecost. The light that is to lighten the whole earth with its

glory was resisted, and by the action of our own brethren has been in a great degree kept away from the world.—Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*,* Book 1, 234.6-235.0.^{†‡} [\[https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p98.1417&index=0\]](https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p98.1417&index=0)[†]

7. ***Can you imagine what it would be like to be called God's special people? Or, His special treasure? Would that involve special privileges? Or, special responsibilities? What responsibilities would that include? Are we called to be God's special people?***

Exodus 19:9-25: ⁹ The LORD said to Moses, “I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will believe you from now on.”

Moses told the LORD what the people had answered, ¹⁰and the LORD said to him, “**Go to the people and tell them to spend today and tomorrow purifying themselves for worship.** They must wash their clothes ¹¹and be ready the day after tomorrow. On that day I will come down on Mount Sinai, where all the people can see me. ¹²Mark a boundary around the mountain that the people must not cross, and tell them not to go up the mountain or even get near it. If any of you set foot on it, you are to be put to death; ¹³you must either be stoned or shot with arrows, without anyone touching you. This applies to both people and animals; they must be put to death. [Why did God say this?] But when the trumpet is blown, then the people are to go up to the mountain.”

¹⁴ Then Moses came down the mountain and told the people to get ready for worship. So they washed their clothes, ¹⁵and Moses told them, “Be ready by the day after tomorrow and don’t have sexual intercourse in the meantime.”

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, a thick cloud appeared on the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast was heard. All the people in the camp trembled with fear. ¹⁷Moses led them out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸All of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD had come down on it in fire. The smoke went up like the smoke of a furnace, and all the people trembled violently. ¹⁹The sound of the trumpet became louder and louder. **Moses spoke, and God answered him with thunder.** ²⁰The LORD came down on the top of Mount Sinai and **called Moses to the top of the mountain.** Moses went up ²¹and the LORD said to him, “Go down and warn the people not to cross the boundary to come and look at me; if they do, many of them will die. [Think of the children!] ²²Even the priests who come near me must purify themselves, or I will punish them.”

²³ Moses said to the LORD, “The people cannot come up, because you commanded us to consider the mountain sacred and to mark a boundary around it.”

²⁴ The LORD replied, “**Go down and bring Aaron back with you.** But the priests and the people must not cross the boundary to come up to me, or **I will punish them.**” ²⁵Moses then went down to the people and told them what the LORD had said.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†‡}

8. God gave strict and specific orders how the people were to prepare to meet Him!

[BSG:] God gave specific instructions for what the Israelites were to do in preparation for the giving of the law at Sinai. **Their external purity was to reflect their total dedication to God.** They needed to be ready for the splendid

manifestation of the Lord's glory that was about to come. And when it did, it was accompanied by "thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled" (*Exod. 19:16, NKJV*).—BSG* for Monday, August 18.^{†§} [Did the children panic?][‡]

[EGW:] God purposed to make the occasion of speaking His law a scene of awful grandeur, in keeping with its exalted character. **The people were to be impressed that everything connected with the service of God must be regarded with the greatest reverence.** The Lord said to Moses, "Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, 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." During these intervening days all were to occupy the time in solemn preparation to appear before God. Their person and their clothing must be freed from impurity. And as Moses should point out their sins, they were to devote themselves to humiliation, fasting, and prayer, that their hearts might be cleansed from iniquity.—Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets** 303.5.^{†‡} [How would you prepare to meet God?][‡]

<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p84.1333&index=0>[‡]

[BSG:] This principle of reverence is valid today. It springs from an understanding of God's greatness, transcendence, and majesty. Seeing God's glory creates gratitude in our hearts and humbles our pride. The closer we see God's holiness, the more imperfections we will discern in our lives, leading us to thirst even more for His transforming Presence and to desire to be more like Him....

At the same time, Jesus made it clear that, if we humbly accept God as our Lord and King, His commands are not difficult to obey (*Matt. 11:28–30*). Christ made it plain that the divine law has permanent validity (*Matt. 5:17–20*). When we keep God's laws out of love and gratitude to Him because of the salvation that He has freely bestowed upon us, we can experience the fullness of a saving relationship with Him. While enjoying the great advantages of keeping the law (after all, look at the pain and hardship that violating it brings), we also can enjoy the assurance of knowing that our salvation is found in Jesus, not in our law-keeping.—BSG* for Friday, August 22.^{‡§}

God Gives the Decalogue from Mount Sinai

[T-BSG:] Even though particular laws of the Decalogue were already known in a nutshell before Sinai, God Himself chose to formally present the Decalogue to His people and to humanity. That's because **these commandments reflect, in a systematic way, who He is, His character, and His values.**—T-BSG* 107.^{†‡}

Exodus 20:1-17: ¹God spoke, and these were his words: ²**"I am the LORD your God who brought you out of Egypt, where you were slaves.**

³ "Worship no god but me.

⁴ "Do not make for yourselves images of anything in heaven or on earth or in the water under the earth. ⁵Do not bow down to any idol or worship it, because I am the LORD your God and **I tolerate no rivals.** I bring punishment on those

who hate me and on their descendants down to the third and fourth generation.

⁶But I show my love to thousands of generations of those who love me and obey my laws.

⁷ “Do not use my name for evil purposes, for I, the LORD your God, will punish anyone who misuses my name.

⁸ “Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. ⁹You have six days in which to do your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a day of rest dedicated to me. On that day no one is to work—neither you, your children, your slaves, your animals, nor the foreigners who live in your country. ¹¹**In six days I, the LORD, made the earth, the sky, the sea, and everything in them, but on the seventh day I rested.** That is why I, the LORD, blessed the Sabbath and made it holy.

¹² “Respect your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you.

¹³ “Do not commit murder.

¹⁴ “Do not commit adultery.

¹⁵ “Do not steal.

¹⁶ “Do not accuse anyone falsely.

¹⁷ “Do not desire another man’s house; do not desire his wife, his slaves, his cattle, his donkeys, or anything else that he owns.”—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

9. ***So, how would you try to explain the meaning of the Ten Commandments to someone who had not heard of them before? Could you summarize in a few words the various functions of the Ten Commandments which are God’s law? Aren’t these good rules even for us today?***

[BSG:] In the first four commandments, the Decalogue interprets what it means to love God; in the following six commandments, the law interprets what it means to love your neighbor. The Decalogue begins with honoring God above all (vertical love) and continues with respecting others (horizontal love):

Honoring and revering God by giving Him the first and the highest place in every situation of our life (the first commandment);

Honoring and preserving God’s unique position and not replacing Him by an idol in any form, either physical, symbolic, or spiritual. Our purest affections belong to the Lord (the second commandment);

Revering God’s name—His reputation and character (the third commandment);

Honoring His day of rest and worship—the Sabbath (the fourth commandment);

Respecting parents (the fifth commandment);

Respecting life (the sixth commandment);

Respecting marriage (the seventh commandment);

Respecting people’s property (the eighth commandment);

Respecting the reputation of others (the ninth commandment); and

Respecting self so that no selfish desires will mar our character (the tenth commandment).—*BSG*^{*} for Tuesday, August 19.[‡]

10. The Ten Commandments provide basic principles for relating to God and to our fellow human

beings. Violating any of the 10 shows that we do not really love God or our fellow humans.

11. Near the close of the 40 years in the wilderness as Moses was giving his final instructions to the children of Israel, he gave them an oral version of the Ten Commandments which was slightly different. These two versions of the Decalogue were recited under different circumstances. **Do these circumstances explain the slight differences between the two?**

[T-BSG:] In both Exodus and Deuteronomy, the Decalogue lies at the beginning of the law collections and their interpretation. There are two versions of the Decalogue, with very slight differences; the first one is recorded in Exodus 20:1–17 and the second one in Deuteronomy 5:6–21. The second version presented orally by Moses to Israel occurred almost forty years later, just before they entered the Promised Land (*Deut. 1:3, 4; Deut. 4:44–47*), where now he emphasizes the redemption given them in the Exodus. When Paul summarized the law as being love, he quotes from the Decalogue (*Rom. 13:8–10, Gal. 5:14*). Love is indeed the sum of God’s law because He is the God of love (*1 John 4:16*).—*T-BSG** 107.†§

12. Why doesn’t the Bible study guide come straight out and say that the reason given in the Bible for keeping the Sabbath is different in the version of the Ten Commandments as recorded in Exodus and the version in Deuteronomy? Does that invalidate the Sabbath commandment? Does Deuteronomy give the Sabbath as a reminder of the exodus and the redemption or “re-creation” of humans from slavery? Is that an additional meaning to the Sabbath? Or, does that mean the Sabbath is only for the Jews? Many believe the latter!

[BSG:] The Decalogue (the Ten Commandments) is the heart of God’s revelation and biblical ethics. It forms the substance and foundation of divine standards for all humanity; its principles are eternal and universal.—*BSG** for Monday, August 18.†§

[T-BSG:] The Decalogue forms the heart of God’s revelation and biblical ethics and presupposes salvation. **It is the Magna Carta of biblical teaching**, and its summation, the norm of all norms. It forms the substance and foundation of divine standards for all humanity; its principles are eternal. The Pentateuchal account of the giving of the Decalogue underlines that it was announced by God (*Exod. 19:19; Exod. 20:1; Deut. 5:4, 5, 24*) and also written by Him (*Exod. 24:12, Exod. 31:18, Deut. 5:22*). It was given twice to Moses as a special gift (*Exod. 32:19; Exod. 34:1; Deut. 10:1, 2*). In the book of Exodus, the Decalogue is called “the Testimony” (*Exod. 31:18, NKJV*) and “the words of the covenant” (*Exod. 34:28, NKJV*). **The phrase “the Ten Commandments” is not used in the Hebrew, although they are referred to as being “commandments” in Exodus 20:6. Instead, the Decalogue is three times called “the Ten Words” (Hebrew: ‘aseret haddebarim; see the Hebrew usage in Exodus 34:28, Deut. 4:13, Deut. 10:4).**—*T-BSG** 106-107.†§

[BSG:] **Note that the Decalogue [God’s Ten Words] does not begin with the commands but with God’s gracious action for His people:**

“ ‘I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery’ ” (*Exod. 20:2, NIV*). The Lord first shows His grace by giving freedom and salvation to Israel, and only then does He reveal His will. These commandments were to be observed out of love and gratitude for what God

did for them.

God's key summation word for the Decalogue is "love" (Rom. 13:10). The greatest commandment is the commandment of love, which is expressed in two ways: love to God (*Deut. 6:5*) and love to our neighbor (*Lev. 19:18*).—BSG* for Tuesday, August 19.^{†§}

13. Try to imagine what it would be like to be led by a pastor, a prophet like Moses, who could speak and God would respond, thundering from the mountain! God told Moses that He would give him two stone tablets with His commands. What if God's "cloud" was seen at church today? Would we respond differently?

The New Covenant and the Ten Commandments in the New Testament

14. God's covenant with the children of Israel at Sinai is recognized as God's first great covenant relationship with them. In this case, the children of Israel were the ones who had promised to obey all that God told them. As we know, that did not last long at all. About a thousand years later, God officially recognized that things were not going well; and He said:

Jeremiah 24:7: "I will give them the desire to know that I am the LORD. Then they will be my people, and I will be their God, because they will return to me with all their heart."—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*

Jeremiah 31:33: "The **new covenant** that I will make with the people of Israel will be this: I will put my law within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people."—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

15. **In this new covenant, God is the one who promises to do the action!**

16. How do you feel about Paul's summary in Romans of the Ten Commandments?

Romans 13:8-10: ⁸ Be under obligation to no one—the only obligation you have is to love one another. Whoever does this has obeyed the Law. ⁹The commandments, "Do not commit adultery; do not commit murder; do not steal; do not desire what belongs to someone else"—all these, and any others besides, are summed up in the one command, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself." ¹⁰If you love others, you will never do them wrong; **to love, then, is to obey the whole Law.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†} [See Hebrews 8:13.][‡]

17. As you read the Ten Commandments, do you see God's love expressed?

18. If we truly love God and truly love our fellow human beings, we will not disobey any of the Ten Commandments. That is, we will be "doing right because it is right." **A legalistic observance of the Ten Commandments does not mean loving either God or our fellow human beings. The Pharisees demonstrated that!**

[BSG:] In the Bible, the law of God is seen in a very positive light (*Matt. 5:17, 18; John 14:15; 1 Cor. 7:19*). One may create poems on the law (*see Psalm 119*), sing about the law (*Psalm 19*), and meditate on it day and night (*Ps. 1:2, Josh. 1:8*). The law helps keep one from evil and gives wisdom, understanding, health, prosperity, and peace (*Deut. 4:1–6; Proverbs 2; 3*).—BSG* for Wednesday, August 20.^{‡§}

Functions of God's Law

19. While it is impossible for us to read the minds and characters of other human beings, and thus, we cannot really know if someone is loving or not, the Ten Commandments give us

simple, observable rules that give us some idea of what is motivating that person's life. How would you describe how God's law protects and helps us?

[T-BSG:] **The function of the law is not to teach us to gain salvation through its observance. That is, we should keep the law of God not in order to be saved but because we are saved. The law is not a source of life but instead is the means by which we manifest and express the life we have.—T-BSG* 107.^{†§}**

[T-BSG:] The Decalogue has several crucial functions:

1. *God's law is a warrant of freedom (Gen. 2:16, 17; James 2:12).* It is like a fence that creates a large free space for life and warns that beyond a specific point lies danger, problems, complications, and death. There is no future for those who step outside the circle of freedom.
 2. *The law is a mirror (James 1:23–25).* In it, we can see how dirty we are and how much we need to be cleansed. The Decalogue reveals our sinfulness; however, it cannot purify us from sin or guilt (*Rom. 3:20*).
 3. *God's law is a signpost.* As such, it leads us as a *paidagogos*, or schoolmaster, to Christ (*Gal. 3:24*). It points to Jesus, who cleanses, forgives our sins, and changes our lives (*2 Cor. 5:17, 1 John 1:7–9*).
 4. *The Decalogue is God's promise to us.* By proclaiming these laws, God promises that these standards will be part of our lives if we maintain a close relationship with Him. He is the Guarantor who will enable these standards to become our permanent lifestyle. We will be so intimate with Him that we will not desire what is prohibited. We shall happily stay in fellowship with Him, asking Him to perform this obedience in us by the power of His grace, Word, and the Holy Spirit.—T-BSG* 107-108.^{‡§}
20. The New Testament says many different things about the law and how we should relate to it.
- Galatians 3:23:** But before the time for faith came, the Law kept us all locked up as prisoners until this coming faith should be revealed.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.*
21. What is suggested by the idea that “the law kept us all locked up as prisoners”? Is that what God told the Israelites when He presented the law to them?
22. In James 1:23-25, James described God's law as the perfect law of liberty, or the law that sets people free. How does that work? How does that relate to being “locked up”?
23. **The Pharisees proved very conclusively that just the strict observance of the Ten Commandments does not make one a saint.** (Luke 18:18-21)

The Decalogue As God's Promise for Us

24. What did Paul say about the keeping of God's law and how it should affect us?

Romans 3:20-26: ²⁰For no one is put right in God's sight by doing what the Law requires; **what the Law does is to make us know that we have sinned.**

[How We Are Put Right with God]

²¹ But now God's way of putting people right with himself has been revealed. It has nothing to do with law, even though the Law of Moses and the prophets gave their witness to it. ²²God puts people right through their faith in Jesus Christ. God does this to all who believe in Christ, because there is no difference at all: ²³everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. ²⁴But

by the free gift of God's grace all are put right with him through Christ Jesus, who sets them free. ²⁵⁻²⁶God offered him, so that by his blood he should become the means by which people's sins are forgiven through their faith in him. **God did this in order to demonstrate that he is righteous.** In the past he was patient and overlooked people's sins; but in the present time he deals with their sins, in order **to demonstrate his righteousness.** In this way God shows that **he himself is righteous** and that **he puts right everyone who believes in Jesus.**—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†‡}

[BSG:] The Hebrew meaning of the term *dabarim*, used in the writing of Moses to describe the Ten Commandments (*Exod. 34:28, Deut. 4:13, Deut. 10:4*), does not literally mean "commandments," but "words." This "word," *dabar* (singular), can have the meaning of a "promise." That is why, in numerous places (*1 Kings 8:56; 2 Chron. 1:9; Neh. 5:12, 13; Deut. 1:11; Deut. 6:3; Deut. 9:28; Josh. 9:21; Josh. 22:4; Josh. 23:5*), *dabar* is translated either in a noun or verb form **expressing the idea of promise.**—BSG^{*} for Thursday, August 21.^{†§}

25. Notice these words from Ellen White:

[EGW:] **The ten commandments, Thou shalt, and Thou shalt not, are ten promises, assured to us if we render obedience to the law governing the universe.** "If ye love me, keep my commandments." Here is the sum and substance of the law of God. The terms of salvation for every son and daughter of Adam are here outlined (Manuscript 41, 1897).—[Ellen G. White,] *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*,^{*} vol. 1, 1105.1.^{†‡}

<https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p90.302&index=0>[†]

26. **Do the Ten Commandments help you to guide your life? How does that work?**

27. **God does not desire the type of obedience that springs from fear or obligation.**

[EGW:] **The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey.** When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. **The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God.**—Ellen G. White, *Christ's Object Lessons*^{*} 97.3-98.0 [1900].^{†‡} <https://egwwritings.org/read?panels=p15.369&index=0>[†]

[EGW:] **A sullen submission to the will of the Father will develop the character of a rebel.** By such a one service is looked upon as drudgery. It is not rendered cheerfully, and in the love of God. It is a mere mechanical performance. **[**] If he dared, such a one would disobey. His rebellion is smothered, ready to break out at any time in bitter murmurings and complaints. [**]** Such service brings no peace or quietude to the soul.—Ellen G. White, *The Signs of the Times*,^{*} July 22, 1897, par. 11; *Manuscript 20*, 1897,^{*€} par. 15 (*MR* # 970); *12MR*^{*€} 236.1.^{†‡} [Section between the double asterisks (**)] is omitted in *That I May Know Him*^{*} 120.4.][†]

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28. Is our obedience to the Ten Commandments obligatory? Or, even sullen?

29. How do you explain Romans 10:4?

Romans 10:4: For Christ has brought the Law to an end [as a way of being saved], so that everyone who believes is put right with God.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

Romans 10:4: The earlier revelation was intended simply to get us ready for the Messiah, who then puts everything right for those who trust him to do it.—*The Message*.^{*}

[BSG:] **Paul states that Jesus Christ is the *telos* of the law, but not in the sense that Christ abrogates the law or does away with it. Instead, this means that Christ is the goal and intent of the law; it does not mean that His atoning sacrifice terminates the validity and perpetuity of it.**

On the contrary, Paul speaks about the importance of the law, about its legitimacy, and about its enduring authority (*Rom. 3:31, 1 Cor. 7:19, Gal. 5:6*). The meaning of the word *telos* is primarily purposeful and goal-oriented, not time related. Christ is the key to unlock the true meaning and purpose of God's law. Thus, it would be incorrect to state that Christ invalidated, superseded, or abrogated the law. Christ is the goal of the law, the One to whom it points.—BSG^{*} for Thursday, August 21.^{†§}

30. Didn't God command the children of Israel to circumcise all the males? (Genesis 17:11-12) How does that fit with what Paul said in 1 Corinthians 7:19?

1 Corinthians 7:19: For whether or not a man is circumcised means nothing; **what matters is to obey God's commandments**.—*Good News Bible-TEV*.^{*†}

31. God spoke to the children of Israel again and again, essentially saying: "I want to be your God, and I want you to be my people." Does that also apply to us today?

32. Why do so many people today want to get rid of the Ten Commandments? Is it that they just do not want to observe the seventh-day Sabbath? Is there any other of the Ten Commandments they want to ignore?

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