



Verses 44-49 of the previous chapter really belong to this section, as they show a new subject, relating to the giving of the law, and describe the location of this the confirmation of

the Covenant which was cut in Horeb - a mountain down south in Sinai. As a nation they were all gathered East of *Jordan, in the valley over against Bethpeor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites.*

Moses is not speaking to all the people who had assembled around the foot of Mount Horeb when the Covenant was made. The adults there had all died. Now the children who were there present had all grown up – and now 38 years later, they were all adults with families. They would have remembered the moment, even though they would not have understood it fully. Now was the time for this covenant to be presented again, to ensure their full understanding of it. The reason is explained immediately – verse 1: *that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.* This reminds us of the last book of the Bible – The Revelation, and the reason that book was given as well – 1:3: *Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein –*

- Learn Keep Do
- Read Hear Keep

Note the close similarity and process. The all important word *keep*.

In Hebrew keep -*shamar*- to hedge about or guard – the words would be most precious, and the ‘keeping’ is the attitude of mind, the ability to control even every thought, and from there actions follow.

Moses commences with reminding them that although it was their parents who were recipients of the covenant, and responsible for it, the covenant wasn’t just made with them. It was made with all of them as a nation, with all generations following, so they were equally culpable. Also Moses speaks about this covenant being *made*... The word in Hebrew is *karath* and means to cut. This reminds us, - as it would them of what a covenant means. That breaking of the covenant involves a forfeit – the shedding of blood. As to prove that either side would be faithful to the promise, a sacrifice was made, and blood shed, to signify that if either side broke, it, then they would be personally responsible, and their blood would be shed in return. In the event, Israel broke the covenant, and they paid the price. But in



redeeming them from the curse of the law, God gave of His own blood – through His Son. The example of the cutting of the covenant is seen in Genesis 15:8-18.

Verse 4 reminds also of the Bible teaching about angels. *The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire.* In the same Mount Horeb, God told Moses Exodus 33:20: *And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.* It was not then Yahweh that the nation looked upon, but it was the Divine Presence – in either the form of the Angel, or the terrible glory that made the mountain shake and tremble and burn like fire.

This event is taken up by the Apostle in Hebrews 12, and it is worth referring to, to appreciate the way Moses stood in, as a representative of the Lord Jesus Christ, who would act as the Mediator between God and man – see verses 18-29.

And so also this the Covenant with the Nation, the giving of the law, was also designed to bring the nation to the Messiah, to the will, work and purpose of God, who through Christ would reconcile the world unto Himself -2 Corinthians 5:19. So in every aspect, the Law was designed to act as a pointer, and channel to bring each citizen of the nation to an understanding of Jesus Christ. This is explained in Galatians 3:23,24. *But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

6 I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

It is interesting that this statement precedes the commandments which immediately follow. It shows the operation of the Covenant.

God brought Israel out of Egypt – out of slavery. As a nation they were purchased by the blood of the firstborn. They were now belonging to God. Under His protection, they were obliged to fulfill His requirements which were encapsulated and summed up in the following commandments.

All of these - bar one – are endorsed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me. One would assume that Israel would appreciate this, as Pharaoh, the one who enslaved them also would have no other god before him either. But it seems those memories faded fast. The next verses 8 to verse 10, which describe the second commandment were covered in depth recently in a Bible Study which took place on January 3rd. Please click on this link to see both written studies of this two-part in-depth look at the character of God:

11 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.

This command being confirmed to the nation – it had already been broken by the members of the priesthood – in the episode of Korah, Dathan and Abiram – see particularly Number 16:9 the work of God hence His Name made a small thing – taking His Name in vain – but also could be broken when under stress – Proverbs 30: 9 *Lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.* Jesus taught to control the tongue in every instance: Matthew 5:33,34: *Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne:*

12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.

This the fourth commandment is the only commandment NOT endorsed by Jesus Christ, as he is Lord of the Sabbath, and the sabbath was made for man, and not the other way around, therefore, every day is to be a Sabbath to the believer – to rest from the works of the flesh which is sin. The Christian is to live every single day, as if he is a citizen of the Sabbath of Rest, which is the Kingdom of God. Therefore to keep Saturdays as Holy, is an injustice to God, as the whole life of a disciple, a true Israelite indeed, is to be holy to God.

16 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

This is the commandment which the Apostle highlights as being the Commandment with Promise - Ephesians 6:2: *Honour thy father and*

mother; which is the first commandment with promise; and the Apostle paraphrases the commandment, under Divine inspiration: 3:That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

The words *with promise* clearly infer that obedience to this command, would give the disciple an inheritance in the Kingdom of God. Leviticus 19:32: *Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head...* spells it out to those not quite grasping the structure imposed by the Almighty – the building block of society. If honour is not given to those who can be seen, then how is it possible to give honour to the one we cannot see? 1 John 4:20

17 *Thou shalt not kill.* See Matthew 19:18-19 where Jesus endorses these commands. But Jesus takes these commands and builds upon them... *But I say unto you – whoso hateth his brother without a cause...* Revealing of course that such development of the temptation to break these commands means a journey has already been made in the mind.. Bring the thought in captivity first, and then the danger of breaking the commands will not occur...

18 *Neither shalt thou commit adultery.* Such behaviour again strikes at the very foundation, the purpose of God. Faithlessness, vow breaking, betrayal, greed, lust of eyes and flesh, - as King David admitted – *Against thee, and thee only have I sinned.* Adultery is sin against God, and the Body is a temple, for the Spirit of God to reside in through the life of Christ. Sadly Israel fell away in this respect so quickly as taught by Balaam, and immediately in a spiritual sense with the incident of the golden calf. Jesus of course, showed that adultery can take place in the mind – see Matthew 5:28

19 -21 *Neither shalt thou steal. Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour. Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's.*

Jesus said Matthew 5: 17 -19 *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, 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.*

This simple transaction was well understood by the nation, and they agreed to keep all of the words written upon the two tables of stone – see verse 22 -27, and asked Moses to mediate for them, promising to keep all that the Lord hath said – we will do! Reminding of course of the words of the Apostle: 1 Timothy 2:5,6: *5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*

The Lord – Yahweh, the God of Israel responded to Moses petition, and commended the nation for responding so positively to the commandments, yet – and yet, they were just words -

29 *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!* God, who knows the weakness of all flesh knew that within hours and days of the giving of the commands, the nation would forget, fail, and fall away.

Jeremiah 10:23: *O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps.*

It was understandable then for the next words of God – to dismiss the nation: 30 *Go say to them, Get you into your tents again.*

Romans 11:15: *For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?*

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