

Peace be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In our last two lessons we saw how God descended on Mount Sinai in fire, thunder and lightning to deliver His ten holy commandments to the tribes of Israel. In the first commandment God said to them: **You shall have no other gods before me.** In the second: **You shall not make for yourself an idol.** Third: **You shall not use the name of the Lord your God in vain.** Fourth: **Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.** Fifth: **Honor your father and your mother.** Sixth: **You shall not murder.** Seventh: **You shall not commit adultery.** Eighth: **You shall not steal.** Ninth: **You shall not lie.** Tenth: **You shall not covet the things of your neighbor.**

These are the Ten Commandments which God sent down to Moses and to the Israelites. God laid on them a heavy burden, saying to them: Whoever can **perfectly** keep **everything** that the Ten Commandments demand, is worthy to live with Me forever. However, whoever keeps the whole law but fails in just **one point** is guilty of breaking **all of it**, and will be separated from Me **forever!**

That was the way of holiness God delivered to the tribes of Israel on Mount Sinai. God commanded that they obey Him in everything! Yes, **everything!** Are sinners able to keep **all** of God's commandments? No, they are not! Nevertheless, that is exactly what God, the Holy One, requires! Therefore, **the big question** before us today is this: **Why did God give His Ten Commandments to the children of Israel, when He knew that no one could keep them perfectly?** Why did God place such a heavy burden on Adam's descendants?

We have already seen how the children of Israel said, *"We will do everything the Lord has said!"* However, God knew that they could not do all that He required. The Israelites did not realize that they lacked the strength to fulfill the will of God perfectly. They did not recognize just how far they were from God and His great glory. That is precisely why God gave the Israelites ten perfect commandments, saying to them: **Keep them all, if you can! But whoever fails in even one point will be separated from Me forever!**

God intended, through those burdensome commandments, **to reveal to the tribes of Israel their lack of ability to please Him.** God knew that the children of Israel could not follow all His commandments, but they themselves had not yet discerned this. The Israelites were like religious people of our day, who wrongly think that God simply wants us to try to do good and on Judgment Day, if our so-called "good works" outweigh our "bad works," then God will say to us, "Come, and dwell in My presence forever!" However, those who think this are mistaken and do not know the Scriptures or the holiness of God. God is perfect, and cannot overlook even one sin!

By way of illustration, how many sins did our ancestor Adam have to commit before God expelled him from the Garden of Paradise? Ten sins? Or one hundred? Perhaps a thousand? No! Just **one sin** and Adam had to get out!

One sin and Adam was no longer perfect before God!

One sin and he could no longer approach God!

One sin and he had to die!

One sin and he earned for himself a place in the eternal fire!

Yes, God is holy and does not take sin lightly! That is why He told the children of Israel: *"Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just **one point** is guilty of breaking **all of it.**"*

Therefore, if this is what the holiness of God is like, what we want to know is: **Why did God give the Ten Commandments to the Israelites when He knew that no one could keep them perfectly?** Listen to God's answer: *"No one will be declared righteous in [God's] sight by observing the law; rather, [the purpose of the commandments is to reveal sin!]"* So what is the purpose of the Ten Commandments? To remove sin? "No," God says, "the purpose of the commandments is to **reveal** sin.

Did you get that? Why did God give His ten holy commandments to Moses and the children of Israel? Did He give them those commands so that by keeping them they could earn the right to enter Paradise? No! That cannot be because God says, "If you fail to keep **all**, you are condemned!" Can the children of Adam perfectly obey God in **all** that He has commanded? Can one draw pure, clean water from a dirty, polluted water pot? Impossible!

What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments? The Scripture says: "The purpose of the commandments is **to reveal sin!**" God did not give the commandments to save us from His judgment. God gave them to show us that **we are condemned sinners** and that **we need a Savior!** Is this clear in your mind?

The Ten Commandments are somewhat like an **X-ray** machine at the hospital. If I am sick and I do not know what is wrong with me, perhaps the doctor will examine me by taking some X-rays. What is the purpose of an X-ray photo? It has just one purpose: **to reveal what is wrong inside my body.** In a similar way, the holy commandments which God entrusted to Moses are like the hospital's X-ray machine. Their purpose is **to**

reveal what is wrong--the sin that is in my heart and soul. How can the Ten Commandments reveal the sin that is in me? They reveal my sin in this way: If I compare my conduct with God's holy law, I will see how far I am from God--in my thoughts, my words and my deeds. When **I look at God's law** and then **I look at myself**, I know that I have sinned against God and sinned against man and that I **cannot be admitted into the pure and uncontaminated presence of a holy God!**

Just as the hospital X-ray machine is useful for **showing** what is not right in a person's body, so the Ten Commandments are useful for **showing** what is not right in a person's heart. And just as the X-ray **cannot cure** the one who is sick, likewise the Ten Commandments **cannot cure** my heart which is full of sin. In order for that to happen, I must go back to the Great Physician, that is, to God. Only God has a plan to save me from the death and condemnation that await me due to the sin that is inside me.

Perhaps someone says, "Wait a minute, my friend! I'm a good person! I am not like others who steal, cheat, and commit adultery!" If that is your attitude, clearly you have not yet fathomed God's holiness! What you need to know is that, on the Day of Judgment, **God will not compare you with your sinful neighbor. He will compare you with His holy and perfect law**, which states: *"Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it!"* The God who says: "You shall not commit adultery" also says, "You shall not lie!" Thus, if you have not committed adultery, but have told just one lie, then you have transgressed the whole law (see James 2:11) and cannot enter the presence of God in Paradise, because the Scripture says: *"Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful."* What is certain is that we can never please God through our own efforts! That is what the Word of God declares when it says:

*"All of us have become like one who is **unclean**, and all our righteous acts are like **filthy rags**." "God condemns all as sinners. There is no one righteous, not even one. All have turned away. There is no one who does good, not even one. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God!"*

Now then, if that is what we are like before the One who must judge us, how can we escape His punishment? What must we do to be saved? Are we without hope? Based on **our own efforts** we have no hope. But thanks be to God, He has designed a **plan to rescue** the children of Adam from the punishment of sin!

Let us now continue in the Torah, in the book of Exodus, chapter twenty, and see the way God provided for the children of Israel to deliver them from the curse which His holy law brought upon them. After God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites, the Scripture says:

*When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance... while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was. Then the Lord said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites this: 'You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven... [Therefore,] make **an altar** of earth for me and **sacrifice** on it your burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, your sheep and goats and your cattle. **Wherever I cause my name to be honored, I will come to you and bless you.**"*

Thus, Moses wrote in a book everything that God instructed him. Then early in the morning Moses arose, and made an altar at the base of Mount Sinai as God had commanded. When Moses finished making it, he ordered some young men to sacrifice some bulls, collect the blood in bowls, and burn the flesh on the altar. Then Moses took the blood of the bulls and sprinkled it on the altar, on the book in which he had written the Ten Commandments, and on all the crowd, and said, "***This is the blood of the***

covenant that the Lord has made with you." Thus we see Moses, at the commandment of God, making an altar, sacrificing some animals, and sprinkling the blood upon the whole multitude of Israel. What was the reason for all of this? God wanted to remind the Israelites of what He had taught their ancestors Adam, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that **"without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin."**

Everyone who wished to approach God had to approach Him in the perfection of a spotless sacrifice.

Why did God command those animal sacrifices? God commanded them because He is righteous, and His holy law states that **the penalty** of even the "smallest" of sins is death and eternal condemnation, far from God and His great glory. And since the children of Israel could not keep all His holy commandments, they had to bring to God a sacrifice without blemish, so that the **innocent** victim could replace the one who was **guilty**. However, as we have already learned, animal sacrifices could not **remove** sin, they could only **cover** man's sin, until God sent **the holy Redeemer** into the world. The Redeemer would willingly offer Himself as the final Sacrifice for sin.

How glad we are today to know that this Savior has come and has paid for our sins once for all. Do you know His name? Yes, it **Jesus**. The name *Jesus* means *the Lord saves*. Jesus had no earthly father. He came from heaven. He did not inherit the sin nature found in all of Adam's descendants. Jesus perfectly obeyed the Ten Commandments and fulfilled all of God's righteous requirements. Because He was without sin, He was qualified to give His life as a sacrifice which takes away the sin of all who believe in Him. Based on the Redeemer's perfect sacrifice, God can declare you and I as righteous, because the One who had no sin, suffered the penalty for your sin and mine.

Dear friends, based on what we have studied today, let us remember two very important thoughts.

1.) First, know for sure that **no one can save themselves by keeping the Ten Commandments!** Listen again to what the Scripture says about this: *"All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law!'" "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."* No one will be saved by trying to keep the Ten Commandments! The purpose of the commandments is to reveal sin.

2.) The second thought that we must keep in our minds is that **God alone has a plan to save sinners!** Listen to what the Scripture says: *"There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all!"* Truly, only God has a plan to save sinners.

And so, listening friends, we leave you with these two thoughts: **No one** will be saved by trying to keep the Ten Commandments! And: **God alone** has a plan to save sinners!

Thank you for listening....

May God bless you and give you insight into what we have studied today, for His Word says:

"No one will be declared righteous in [God's] sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin!"