

HISTORY OF REDEMPTION

BY

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**Lesson 11
God Speaks**

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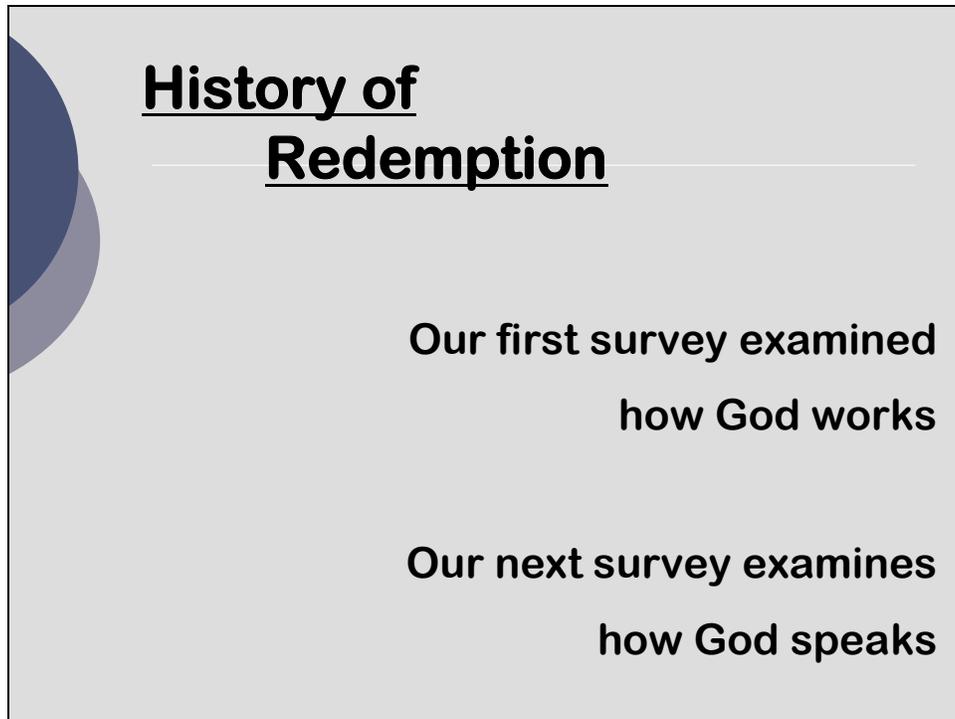
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Let's pray.

Lord, we do want to pause and say thank You today for the opportunity to live, to breathe, to just have our being in You, Lord. And so we worship You, first of all, as Creator. Lord, just to be alive, to have consciousness and awareness. And being created in Your image, what a tremendous thing, Lord. But it is our prayer that Your kingdom would come and that Your will would be done on earth like it is in heaven. We believe that it is, Lord, going to come. And we have seen it throughout history. So Lord, we know our future is wonderful and beyond imagination. And that is such a great comfort to us, as we live here on earth where things are not so wonderful at times. But Lord, it is our prayer, again: Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth like it is in heaven. Increase our faith and our trust today in You, through Your Word and for Your glory, in Jesus' name, amen.



God is speaking. And so we are going to run through this because I want to spend some time on the Abrahamic covenant today. So we are going to run through this first section and take a break. Then we are going to come back and spend a little more time talking about Abraham.

We have seen God set the stage in Genesis 1–11. We saw God build a nation. It took Him time, but He built a great nation. We saw that nation divide. We saw that nation decline, deteriorate, and then it was deported into Babylon. But then we saw God restore that nation, bring them out of Babylon, bring them back to the land and bring His Son, the promised Messiah.

And then His Son introduces the church. And in the book of Acts and in the history that is there, we see the beginning of the church age. We know that the Lord will return and set up His kingdom on earth and that Satan will be bound for a thousand years and He will rule. God will reign. After Satan is loosed, at the end of the thousand years, there will be that final judgment upon Satan and all who would follow him. And then there will

be a new heaven and a new earth wherein dwells righteousness, the one that Peter was looking for, and the one that we are looking for.

And so, we have just seen God work through history. But now on top of that history, we want to see what God says. So, the Creator has spoken to mankind. In Psalm 50:1 it says that He has spoken through Israel in times past or Jesus Christ more recently.

And we can see that in Romans 9 Paul says,

For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises, of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. (Romans 9:3-5)

And in Hebrews 1, we know that “God, in various times and in various ways in the past spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, but has in these last days has spoken to us by His Son” (cf. Hebrews 1:1-2). In the Greek it is literally “in Son” that the realm in which God speaks finally is in Sonship, the incarnation of His own Son. That is the last way God has spoken to us.

And so God declares that He has not done this in a corner. He has not done this in secret, but He has spoken so that everybody could know Him.

Isaiah 45 says,

I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth. I did not say to the seed of Jacob, “Seek Me in vain.” [But

what He said was] “Look to Me and be saved all you ends of the earth.” (cf. Isaiah 45:19, 22)

So God has spoken clearly about how to be saved and what His plan is. “And this is eternal life, that we may know Him, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent” (John 17:3). God has declared His plan and He has spoken openly. It has not been silently. And His ultimate and final communication to the human race is through Jesus Christ His Son.

And it is fascinating when you consider the concept of *the Word* or *logos*, which was a first century philosophical concept. But now has been raised up to the position of deity in the flesh. That is, the incarnation of God the Son becoming flesh. So that is the *logos*. The Word has become flesh. And as John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Verse 14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt [or tabernacled] among us.”

That is God, you know, bringing His last message to mankind. He is bringing it in the flesh, His Son incarnate. And now His Son, living in us, continues that message as we are living epistles. And so—

We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth...No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (cf. John 1:14, 18)

In other words, He has fully exegeted Him, He has fully told out the story of God by becoming a man. So all we need to know about God, we can find in the person and the work of Jesus Christ.

God Communicates to Us

- 1: Through the heavens
Through design in the universe**
- 2: Through the written words of God
recorded and preserved in the Bible**

Passages explaining these truths:

**Psalm 19 and 119; 2 Timothy 3:16-17
2 Peter 1:16-21; Romans 10:17**

There are two other ways that God has communicated to us in the past. First, through the heavens—the testimony of design in the universe, God created, His power and His glory, His Godhead is seen in that.

Secondly, there is the written Word of God, the Bible that has been preserved for us. Both of these are explained in one Psalm. We cannot look at all the Scripture references here. But in Psalm 19 we read this, the first and the second way God communicated to us.

The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech; and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun, which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end

of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat. (Psalm 19:1-6)

So just the fact that the sun alone exists, God says, and you cannot run away from its heat. It is going to catch you every day. And you are going to know that there is a God just because of His design, because of creation.

But secondly, the Psalm goes on and says about the Word of God:

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover, by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping of them there is great reward. (Psalm 19:7-11)

And so you see, just in that Psalm, both the creative power of God and the Word of God. And that is the way God spoke in times past. But the ultimate way He is speaking is now in His Son, through the Sonship of Jesus Christ. And now we have that same Abba Father.

God Speaks Seven Major Times

Genesis 12-22; **Abrahamic Covenant of promise**

Exodus 19-40; Leviticus; Deuteronomy;
Mosaic Covenant of promise

Job; Psalms; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; Song of Solomon;
Davidic Covenant of promise

Isaiah – Malachi; **The Prophets announce New Covenant**

Matthew – John; **God speaks in His Son**
New Covenant is secured

Romans – Jude; **Epistles & appropriation of New Covenant**

Revelation of Jesus Christ; **Final word consummates**
the New Covenant

Now as we go through this again, what we are going to see the second time we go through, when God speaks, there are four things that you are going to need to look for. Under each of the sections that God speaks—and God speaks seven times—under each of those seven times when God speaks, He addresses four issues. And that is what we are going to be learning, primarily, as we go through the seven major times that God speaks are these four issues.

What God Has Said

**The importance of God's *words*
cannot be overemphasized.**

**The eternal destiny of every human being
depends on their response to His *words*.**

And you cannot overemphasize the words of God. The eternal destiny of every human soul, every human being, depends on their response to the Word of God. Because we are saved by the incorruptible seed of the Word of God that is living and abiding forever. And our response to His Word determines our eternal destiny. So what we are going to see is how God is actually communicating with His people. And God speaks when there is a need. He speaks in different times, in different ways, like the book of Hebrews says, but He speaks when there is a need.

Four Aspects of God's Communication

- 1. The *Need* (occasion)
Why is God speaking now?**
- 2. The *Content*
What does He say?**
- 3. The *Method* of Revelation
How does He speak?**
- 4. The *Response Required*
What does He expect?**

So the first thing we are going to look for when God speaks is: Why is God speaking? What is the need? What is the occasion? Why is God speaking now? I mean, why didn't He speak yesterday about it? Or why doesn't He wait till tomorrow to speak about it? Why does God speak at that time? What was the need? What was the occasion? Why is God speaking? That is the first thing you are going to look for in each of the seven sections. Because God always addresses need.

Secondly is the content. What does He say? Simply, in the first section, to Abraham, why is He speaking to Abraham? Why at that time? Then secondly, what is the content that He gives to Abraham?

Then thirdly, what is the method by which God speaks? How does He speak to him? Because the method changes. Every time God speaks He uses a different method. He changes methods seven times. He does not speak the same way every time. And so you have to notice the method by which God is speaking because that has something to do with the content of what He is expecting.

Then fourthly, what is the response required by God? What does He expect? Because when God speaks, He is not speaking into thin air for no reason. He does not speak in vain. He expects a certain response from you and me every time He speaks.

And so we are going to look for the need, the content, the method and the response. Look at those four things every time God speaks.

Now the Abrahamic covenant is the covenant of promise in Genesis 12–22. This is the first time God speaks—apart from our introduction—this is the first word that is given regarding God’s program of redemption for the human race. You could call it a charter, like the Magna Carta or the charter of our Declaration of Independence. But it is a charter. God is speaking. And the first word that God speaks to Abraham is actually in terms of an unconditional covenant. And the only condition that is attached to it is that Abraham has to leave his land and follow God’s leading.

Now, right off the bat, can you have an unconditional covenant that has certain conditions within it? Sure you can. The unconditional part just means that God is going to take it upon His sovereign Self to fulfill it in His good time. But enjoying the blessing of that covenant might have some conditions. And we will see that as we go through.

So, what is the need? Why is God speaking to Abraham at this time in Genesis 12? Now, you saw in Genesis 1–11, God set the stage, right? All of those things we wanted to know about in Genesis 1–11 but were not really told much about them. We were just told God created the earth, God made man and woman, and brought the woman to him and everything was supposed to be hunky-dory. I guess it was for a while. Then man fell into sin and things just went south, or they went bad. Then the whole Tower of Babel thing, God is scattering men across the earth because they are not really following Him. They do not want to worship Him. They want to go their own way. They do not want to rule for God. And that is the stage that is set.

And then God comes to one man, Abraham. And so, what is the need? The need is critical. Abraham must know God's plan to give him a basis for a faith relationship. And you would not want to miss this because that is also your relationship to God. The way God wants to relate to you is the same way God wanted to relate to Abraham. It is a faith relationship.

Now, we tend to think, "Well, I am not so sure I want a faith relationship. Can't we work out another deal?" And the Lord says, "Nope. What I want with you is a faith relationship." And I have found throughout my life I struggle with that. It is like, "God, I don't really want the faith relationship thing. Could You just like give me a contract. Or could You just like tell me everything. Tell me what it is going to be tomorrow. Just tell me how things are going to be. And I will do my part and You can do Your part." But it is like God says, "That is not the way I want it to work. I want to have a faith relationship with you."

And that is why many people do not have any relationship with God. It is because you cannot just decide to relate to God the way you want to. You have to relate to God the way He wants you to relate to Him. And you can be sitting in Bible College and thinking, "Well, I do not know about this faith relationship stuff. I would rather have it this way." And God is saying, "No, I would rather have it this way. And if you want to have a relationship with Me you are going to have to have it the way I want a relationship. And I want a faith relationship."

And so it is huge. The need—and why is it so huge? Because the backdrop is what?—man has just turned away from God. He does not want to rule for God. He does not want to obey God. And now man is in sin; he does not even have the ability to obey God. So God says, "Yeah, but there is a way it could happen still." How could it happen? It could only happen on a faith relationship basis. That is how we can have it. And so His plan is going to be to send His Son and we put our faith in His Son.

The Need

**God spoke to Abraham at the start of
His great history of redemption.**

**Abraham needed to know
what God planned to give him,
as a basis for a faith-relationship.**

***“Surely the Lord God does nothing
without revealing His decree to his servants
the prophets.” (Amos 3:7)***

But even Abraham, we know, began to see that. And as it said in Amos 3:7, “Surely the Lord does not do anything unless He reveals it to His servants, the prophets.” And faith comes from hearing the word of God.

So as God speaks, we listen to God and we respond in a faith relationship. And that is the need. The need is for man to have a relationship with God because we have lost it. But the way that relationship is going to be developed is the way God wants it to develop and that is a faith relationship. But my need and everybody else’s need is to have a relationship with God. That is my greatest need, is to sit at His feet, to walk with Him, to have His life, to enjoy Him. But I can only do it in a faith relationship.

It is huge. I mean, aren’t even human relationships built that way? A husband and wife need trust. How can two human beings, a male and a female, have any kind of relationship without trust? If there is no trust, there is no relationship because that is a faith relationship.

And we have never had any reason to doubt or to mistrust God. He has always been faithful. He has always done everything He promised to do. Well, He is still fulfilling some things that He promised to do, but we trust Him that He will do it. And our relationship is a faith/trust relationship, just like it is on a human level. You cannot have a relationship with somebody you do not trust. Well, you can have a relationship but it is only going to go what?—just so high. It won't go up to where it needs to go because there will be mistrust. And that is why it is such a huge thing when it comes to relationships.

The Content

Through Abraham's seed, the Messiah will build a great nation that blesses all the families of the earth.

(Genesis 12:1-3)

God will provide through Abraham's seed (Christ) salvation for all who repent and believe.

(Galatians 3:16)

Over thirty times God says He will provide!

Genesis 12:1-3,7; 13:14-18; 15:1-21;

17:1-21; 18:1-15; 22:11-18

Now, what is the content? What does He speak to Abraham in terms of content? What does God say? Well He says, "Through Abraham's seed, the Messiah is going to build a great nation that blesses all the families of the earth." And God will, through Abraham's seed, which seed is Christ. Galatians 3:16 makes it clear that it is not unto seeds (plural) but unto seed (singular) that the promise looked forward to one person that would come from Abraham and that was Christ. And He would provide, through Christ, salvation for all who would repent and believe. Over thirty times God says that He will do it. He will

provide. And what do we say? When God says He will do it, we call that grace. Grace is God doing it. So God says, “I will do it.”

And from Genesis 12–22, in these references, you can see the promise to Abraham begin to develop. The Lord will provide. In the mount of the Lord it will be provided, or it will be seen. He will provide Himself to fulfill it. So, God’s promise is that He Himself will make this happen. He will actually provide Himself as the sacrifice. So in terms of that covenant, that is pretty unconditional. God will do it.

The Method of Revelation

“...and the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness; and he was called the friend of God.’”
(James 2:23)

**This method is appropriate to
God sharing His plans with Abraham.**

Jesus said to his disciples, “*I call you friends.*”
(John 15:15)

Now, what is the method of revelation that God chooses? And I think this is interesting because James 2:23 says that “Abraham believed God.” Why?—because he was called the friend of God. God spoke to Abraham as a friend. And that is so wonderful. The Scripture was fulfilled which said, “Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness and he was called the friend of God” (James 2:23). Now, that was appropriate to sharing His plans. This is the way we speak with friends, isn’t it?

Jesus said to His disciples one day, “I call you friends” (cf. John 15:15). Now, when did He say that? When He started explaining His plan to them and He said, “Look guys, here is the deal. I came down here and I know you are thinking all this stuff about the kingdom and wondering when I am going to restore the kingdom and all. But the reality is this, I am going to Jerusalem and I am going to be dying. I mean, they are going to take Me and they—I am going to be turned over to them and they are going to kill Me. And I am going to die. But I am going to rise again in three days. Three days later I will come back.” And He started explaining the plan to them and He was calling them friends that day.

Because what do you do? Who do you tell what is going to happen next semester? You tell your friends, don't you? You just tell the people who are really close to you your plans. As a matter of fact, what happens when you don't tell them and they find out later, or they find out through somebody else? You didn't tell me! And they start pouting, “You didn't tell me you were going to the mall on Friday. You didn't tell me you were going Friday night to whatever.” And your friends get their feelings hurt, don't they. Because they expect you to tell them what you are doing because you have a relationship with them and you are friends.

But this is the way we relate to friends, we tell them our plans. Isn't it neat that God comes to Abraham and says, “Here's My plan for the world.” He chooses this guy. He comes to his tent there in Mamre, He sits down and says: “Here is My plan for the world.” And He tells Abraham. And He talks to him like a friend. And James says, “Abraham is called the “Friend of God” (James 4:4). I think that's great.

And Jesus got to that point with His disciples. He says, “Now I can call you friends.” And I think we are in that same boat too. The Lord has revealed to us by the Spirit, and we pray for revelation that we might know and discern the will of God, even now for the world. What should you be doing? How should you fit into the kingdom of God now? And God reveals it to His prophets. He doesn't do anything except He reveals it through His Word or to His prophets. He reveals it by His Spirit in your human spirit and through

your mind and the Word of God, so you can know what God's plan is. He is your friend and He tells you His plans for your life.

Jeremiah says, "The plans I have for you are great; I have awesome plans for you" (cf. Jeremiah 29:11). And God will show you those plans.

And as you walk with Him in a faith-trusting relationship, you are His friend. But you cannot do that and walk with the world at the same time because "friendship with the world is real enmity with God" (cf. James 4:4). And God says, "Well, if you want to, okay, that is fine. But that is not the faith-trusting way. That is the world's way." The world wants it this way and this is the kind of relationships the world wants over here. But God says over here, "I want it this way. And you are going to have to walk with Me and trust Me like Abraham did."

The Response Required

The Wrong Response:

**Abraham bears Ishmael through Hagar;
Sarah is despised. (Genesis 16:1-4)**

The Right Response:

**Abraham bears Isaac through Sarah; all nations
shall be blessed because he obeyed God.
(Genesis 22:1-22)**

Well, what was the response that God required from this? The wrong response we see in Genesis 16, which we know Abraham did. He tried to do what God said He would do. And he created an Ishmael. Now in the New Testament we would call this salvation by

works, which is not the way to relate to God. But there are many religions, many false cults, many people today wanting to relate to God by creating Ishmaels. They want to help God do it. And that is salvation by works. But when God says He is going to do something and He does it, we call this grace. And we should simply respond and receive it by faith.

Ephesians 2:8 says,

For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works lest anyone should boast about it.

And we do. But the right response is in Genesis 22. You are supposed to wait and expect God to do it. And the New Testament abstract on faith is obviously Romans 4, where it records God speaking to Abraham and to Sarah. And it says that Abraham looked at his body, looked at Sarah's body and said, "Okay, this is the deal. I do not deny it. We are old. It is not going to happen unless God makes it happen. What can we do about it anyway?" So they waited and expected God to do it.

And you see the same thing in Hebrews 10:25 through 12:2. This is that great hall of faith and all these people, at sometime looking forward to the promise of God. They never received it, but they died in faith. They just kept looking and saying, "God, I expect You will do it. It may not happen in my lifetime, but it is going to happen." And they continued to trust God and believe in a faith relationship, a trusting friendship with God and that God will accomplish it in His time.

So, when God tells you to do something and you don't do it though, we call that sin. But when God says He will do it, then we are to wait and expect that God will do it in His time. And that is a big part of the unconditional covenant relationship, it is the time factor. Because we tend to say, "Well, it has not happened yet." But it will happen in God's time. There will come a day when those conditions are met and we will see it.

The right response then—

Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but he was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and fully convinced that what He had promised, He also was able to perform. (cf. Romans 4:3, 20-21)

Therefore it was accounted to him for righteousness through the righteousness of faith. That is the right response.

And the same thing in Hebrews 10 it says,

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. Do not cast away your confidence which has great reward. For you have need of endurance so that after you have done the will of God you may receive the promise. For yet a little while and He who is coming will come and not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith. But if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not those who draw back to perdition. We are of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (cf. Hebrews 10:23, 35-39)

We are among the group which is called “friends of God.” He has told us His plans. We have heard Him speak His plans to us and like Abraham we have said, “Amen.” God said it. That settles it. Lord, help me to believe it. Help me to wait for it. Help me to expect it. Help me to endure and persevere and not ever draw back from it. And as we believe God that way, it brings pleasure to Him because we have proved that we are really His friends.

And you see it even on the human level sometimes, don't you? Have you ever set a date with someone and said, "I will meet you at such and such a place at such and such a time." And then have you ever done that and gotten there and they were not there? And you are kind of going, "Well, I wonder where they are. They said they would meet me here." And then what if they never show up—you know. Sometimes they would show up late and then they have an explanation for why they were late. You may not like it, but you begin to just expect and wait. But a lot of that has to do with what?—your relationship in terms of your friendship with them.

There are some people you know who have never not shown up. They have always shown up. And they tell you to meet them out at such and such a place at such and such a time, and you are there and it is ten minutes later. You are thinking, man, something must have happened. Or, something is going on, because you know that person. And you know that person would not promise to do that and not be there.

But then there are other people you might know and when it is ten minutes late, you are thinking, "Well, I just better go on and do something then because they have done this to me before. They have done it several times." And you know that you cannot depend on them. They are not going to be here. And you don't know if they are ever going to show up. So you decide to go after a few minutes and do what you are going to do anyway.

And we understand that even on a human level but when we are responding to God, we have no reason not to wait and wait and wait and wait. He will show up. We should confidently expect Him to do exactly what He says He will do. And He does it in His time. "Lord, please show me every day, as You're teaching me Your way, that You do just what You say in Your time," as the song says. And so it will happen.

The Mosaic Covenant

The Law: Exodus 19-40; Leviticus; Deuteronomy

*The second major time God speaks
is 430 years after He gave
the Abrahamic Covenant.*

Secondly is the Mosaic covenant, the law. This is the second time God speaks. Now when God gives the Mosaic covenant, the law in Exodus 19–40, in Leviticus, and again in Deuteronomy, it is the second major time God speaks. 430 years after the promise, God speaks again after the Abrahamic covenant. He speaks to Moses.

Now, what is the need? The people need to be told what God expects of them, what He wants them to know, what He expects them to do. God made man with very few instincts. Not like the animals. We do not have those built-in behavior patterns like animals. But we are learners. God wants a relationship with us where we learn and we grow. We can see that in the book of Matthew and in the book of Ephesians.

But the need is critical. There is this multitude of God's people on their way to the land because God has taken them there. And what they need is direction. They need to know what God wants them to do and how He wants them to do it.

So, you know, people today, even Christians, tend to have a bad taste for the law. But that is probably because we do not understand the purpose for which God gave it. By the law God is saying, "This is what I would like you to be."

And so He brings the people out and gives them the Law. And He spoke on Mount Sinai and said, "This is what I want you to be, folks. This is it. You want to know what I want you to be?" He said, "Here it is." And a lot of Christians say we are not under the law. We are not under the Old Testament law given to Israel, but 1 Corinthians 9:21 says that we are under the law to Christ. We actually have a harder, higher law than they had. The law that we are under is much more difficult than the law that they were under.

Jesus even said in His Beatitudes in Matthew 5:20 that our righteousness really has to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and the Pharisees. And it does exceed it because Christ exceeded it. But now Christ lives in us and the law is fulfilled in us because Christ is in us. And if it is not being fulfilled in you, then Christ is not in you. You can say all you want and you can talk all you want. You can go to church all you want. You can claim all you want, but if it is not being fulfilled in you, you are not of Christ and you do not have Christ in you. You have to be born again and receive Jesus Christ to live in you in order for that law to be fulfilled in you. And you do it in a way that exceeds the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees. So that is a great need. We need to know, at that time when He is speaking to Moses, the direction that He wants them to take.

The Content

**Two great areas of truth
that God wants them to learn:**

**Moral Law - Exodus 20:1
Ceremonial Law - Deuteronomy 4:7-8**

So what is the content? There are two great areas of truth about the law that God wants them to learn. Because there is a moral law and there is a ceremonial law. The moral law is found in Exodus 20 and the ceremonial law is found in Deuteronomy 4. So we will look at both aspects of this law.

The moral law is how they are to live, to act, to respond. And that covers every aspect of life. And man needs to learn to act like God. This is the ideal for man's moral character. He said in Leviticus 19:2,

Say to all this congregation of the people of Israel: "You shall be holy [Why?] for I, the Lord your God am holy."

The other laws are an expansion of the moral law. And we know what makes an issue moral. How do you know something is a moral issue? It is really simple, isn't it? What makes something a moral issue?—whether God has said anything about it or not. If God has spoken about an issue, it immediately is a moral issue.

The only things that are not moral issues are things that God has not spoken about. But if God has spoken about it then it immediately becomes a moral issue. You say, “Is abortion a moral issue?” It depends on whether or not God has spoken about it. Is lying a moral issue? Depends upon whether or not God has spoken about it. Is adultery a moral issue? It depends on whether or not God has spoken about it. If God has spoken about it, it is a moral issue.

And He says, the moral law is about you living, really His life and being like Him. Now, an issue is moral because God has spoken about it. If man does not recognize the God of the Bible then he has no real moral restraints. If you don’t believe He has spoken, and He has spoken through the Bible, you don’t really have the moral restraints that are needed to be in a relationship with God and to fulfill humanity the way God intended it to be fulfilled.

That is why it is so important staying in the Word because if you read through the Bible you get what God has to say about things. And you just have more information from God about what is moral and the way He wants us to live.

Now, what about the ceremonial law? The moral law, we go, oh, that is cool. But then He gave this weird ceremonial law. And Exodus 25 says that this aspect of the law is provided for the heart to respond in worship. God provided a place and a ritual to respond to Him. He gave priests in chapter 28. He gave continual worship before Him in chapter 29. And then in Exodus 29:42 God is speaking and meeting and dwelling that they may know that He is God.

And so He gives them this ceremonial law so that they can relate to Him in worship and respond to Him. But it is a heart response though it is done through a ceremony. And that is something we have to keep in mind because there are certain people, in particular, who need a little more ceremony than others. And it does not necessarily mean that the ceremony is wrong in and of itself because God instituted ceremony. Don’t forget. It was not Moses and the guys sitting around going, “You know what? We really need a

ceremony to relate to God with. What do you guys think?” It did not happen like that. God came down and God said, “Let Me give you a ceremony and I want you to relate to Me through this ceremony.”

Now what is neat, in the New Testament, is that He has kind of boiled it down to just two basic things. Baptism is a ceremony by which we relate to God. And Communion is a ceremony by which we relate to God. So we do not have a lot of ceremony in the New Testament. Not as much as they did in the Old Testament. But we still do have ceremony. And it was not our idea. Again, God came down and said in the New Testament, “Here are two ceremonies. I want you to use them to relate to Me.”

And so they are big things. They are not little. And the reason they are not little is because God gave them. It was not a bunch of church leaders that sat around and said, “Well, let’s just do baptism and communion.” That is not how it happened. It was just like in the Old Testament. God said, “This is the way you can relate to Me. There is the moral law and there is the ceremonial law.” And we are even involved in that today.

So the law is progressively given. From Genesis 17 God said, “Walk before Me.” This is the seed of the ceremonial law. “And be perfect.” This is the seed of the moral law. Walk is a ceremony, you might say. That is the external, outward thing we see. But “Be perfect” is inwardly in your heart. That is what God sees. So you have both the ceremonial law. Walk before Me, externally. And you have the moral law, be perfect inwardly. You see that in Deuteronomy 4:7–8. You can see a summary of that. Verse 7 says—Here is the ceremonial law.

For what great nation is there that has a God so near to it,
so close to it as the Lord your God.

Our God is close to us, whenever we call upon Him. He is so close walking with us, among us.

And what great nation is there that His statutes and ordinance is so righteous as this law which I set before you this day?

That's the moral law. He says, "Here is how you are to be. And I give you these statutes to show you how you are to be."

Now what is the method? We have seen the need. We see the content. What is the method by which God speaks? Does He change His method? Does He talk to them as a friend? No! He does speak to them as friend. God shows up. God speaks. And how does He speak? Like thunder! He speaks like lightning. There are clouds. There are trumpet blasts. There is smoke. There is fire. And the whole earth, the mountain is just quaking like an earthquake.

Now what do those things speak to us about? I think they are establishing one issue. And that is, God is in charge. God is the authority. He spoke very authoritatively—He did not come and talk like—He did not sit down in a tent and have tea with Abraham this time. He said, "Moses, I am going to talk to you." Matter of fact, God's talking was so memorable and unique that the people said, "Moses, do you think like in the future God could just speak to you? We don't want Him talking to us. Because we were down there at the bottom of the mountain and we were scared." And it was like all they were hearing was the echo. It was like, "You talk to Him. You tell us what He said. We don't want to talk to Him. We don't want Him to talk to us because God scares us to death when He talks."

So it was not the same way as when He went in the tent with Abraham. You see, the method has changed. God is not talking the same way. This is just like you change your method. Sometimes you talk to people like you are their friend. Other times, when they don't show up on time maybe, when they promised, they may get there and you talk to them differently. You know? Have you ever screamed or yelled at a friend? Not you guys! I mean, yeah, we talk differently to communicate different things.

Well, God is speaking. What is He doing? He is laying down the law. He is establishing His right to direct them, establishing His authority over them. And where there is no authority behind the law, it becomes meaningless. And that is part of the problem we have today in the world. There are all kinds of laws, but they do not mean anything because they are not enforced. But God enforces them immediately. They see it and they say, “Whoa. You don’t want to mess with Him.” A cow touches the mountain and falls over dead, stupid cow! What are you going over there for? It does not matter. The cow was ignorant but the cow still fell over dead. What does that tell you? You don’t mess with God! I don’t care if it is through ignorance. You still die if you touch the mountain. That is authority.

He speaks in a way to cause the people to respect or to fear Him as God. And we have lost a lot of that. It used to be, you know, when our nation was first started, there was a whole lot more fear of God and respect that way. But like it says, when a judgment or a penalty is brought forth and you do not execute it speedily, then the heart of man is set to do evil. And that is the way it is today. You can go do evil and you never know; you might not even get prosecuted for a while. Who knows what will happen?

Well, what is the response He expects from us? The correct response is to obey. It is commitment. You have got to submit and dedicate by free choice to what God speaks. It is a personal commitment to God and what He says. All He wanted was obedience. He said, “Here is the law. You have got to do it.”

Now of course the problem is, we know later, that they cannot obey it. But it does not change the fact that is it a good law. Is there anything wrong with the law? No. It is a holy law. It is a moral law. It has its ceremony. God gave it. There is nothing wrong with it. The problem was never with the law—it still isn’t. It is a great law. The problem is the people were not able to do it.

So when you study law and grace, you see law came after the promise, that is. And it does not change the promise. Galatians 3:17 makes it clear that the promise has not changed because the law was added.

Well, why the law? It was added, not to grace but it was put along with grace. People think the law was added to grace. It was not added to grace. It was not added to the promise. It was not about the promise. It was brought in alongside to help fulfill the promise. It was added because of sin. Romans 3:20 makes that clear. Men were so far off in their friendship with God and in their relating to God, that the law was added to help bring them back closer to a relationship with God so they could be friends with God.

And the Law has two basic functions. It reveals sin and my need for grace, or my need for the promise. And secondly, God's holiness is expressed throughout the Old and the New Testament because the law reveals the holy character of God. The law tells you something about God and who He is and we are to be like Him. The problem is that we just cannot seem to do it. But the law revealed it.

Relationship: Law and Grace

Law

- Shows Need
- Enlightens
- Reveals
- "Thou Shalt"
- Obedience Required

Grace

- Meets Need
- Empowers
- Gives Ability
- "I Will"
- Faith Required

So, what is the relationship of law and grace? Well, the law shows the need but grace meets the need. The law enlightens you, puts light on the subject but that is all. Grace empowers you. It enables you to obey God. It gives you ability for the relationship and the obedience. The law reveals, but grace gives ability. The law says, "Thou shalt do this." Grace is when God says, "I will do this in and through you." In the law obedience is required, but under grace, faith is required.

Faith and obedience are very closely related. We can have faith in Christ and Christ will live in and through us. But if we don't have faith in Christ He won't live in and through us. So, there is the relationship of law and grace.

So the Mosaic Law was for children. Galatians 4:1-6 makes that very clear. And God has revealed more and more about that relationship. And in the New Testament we are not children anymore. We are called sons. We are sons of God, sons in Christ. We do not offer blood sacrifices and we don't go to the temple to meet God anymore. David did that. He was a child and dwelling in the house of the Lord was the greatest thing he could think of. But for us, we live in daily fellowship, walking and living with God every day, everywhere we go because we are in "sonship." In the Old Testament it was like they were children. In the New Testament we are sons. We have grown up. We have come of age, in that respect.

So, let's review the first and second time God spoke. First, Abraham. What was the need? It was to know God's plan on the basis of a relationship with God. That was the need. What was the content? It was all about how God would provide it. Three times God said, "I will. I will. I will. I will do this." So the content was about how God would make it happen. That is grace. What was the method? It was friendship. What was the response God expects? Wait and expect Him to do what He says because He is your friend and He has told you His plans. It might take time, but God will do it. You have got to believe Him.

And you can apply that to your life now, can't you? Some of you have been waiting for certain things to happen in your life and they have not happened yet. Believe God! Wait. Expect. Trust Him. He is the one you need to be looking to, not every other way to fulfill it. And you will create an Ishmael and you won't like it when you get it.

But then when He spoke to Moses, the need is direction and to know what God expects of them. They are out in the desert. They don't know where to go. If God doesn't lead by the pillar of fire, you know, at night and the cloud during the day, they are not going to know where to go. God has to lead them and directed them.

The content is about the moral and ceremonial law, the moral character of man in every aspect of life, how to please God. The method is great authority—thunder, lightening, earth quaking. The response God expects is obedience. “So the law says do this and live but neither gives me strength nor hands. A better word the gospel brings. It bids me to fly and it gives me wings.”

And so we see the first two times God speaks: to Abraham, and then secondly, to Moses. But do you see that when He speaks, He speaks to a need? And then we look at the content of what He is saying. We look at the method by which He is speaking and then the response that He expects from us. And we are going to see that. God speaks seven times. We have already just briefly looked at the first two times God spoke, first to Abraham and secondly, to Moses.

Next we will look at David and the Davidic Covenant and after that, to the prophets. So as we go through seven times God speaks and each time we will find that there is a need, a reason, an occasion for why He is speaking. We will find that there is a certain content that He is trying to communicate. And we want to note that content. And we will see that there is a method that He chooses to do it, because the method always fits what He is trying to do. And then He wants a response from us.

The first response we have seen is faith. The second response we have seen is obedience. It is interesting how faith and obedience go so closely together.

Let's close in prayer.

Lord, we just pray that You would continue to just show us more and more of what You are speaking, what You are saying and how that what You said actually fits well with what we have seen in terms of history what You did. You have a single goal and that is our redemption, the redemption that is found in Christ Jesus. And Lord, we are just so grateful that You are excited about saving us. And that You can bring us into a relationship with You. Lord, may You just give us revelation to see the Bible in terms of a big picture. To step back and look at the whole forest and see the large things that hold and keep the Bible together in its parts so that we can interpret it more properly and correctly. And then fit in and obey and do what You say, because You give us revelation and You give us power by Your Spirit. Thank You for it, in Jesus' name.

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