

Sunday 4 May 2008

“Ten” - “One”

10

1 And God spoke all these words:

2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3 "You shall have no other gods before me.

Exodus 20.1-3 NIV

God and His people

As we consider the 10 commandments, it is easy to think of them as just that; yet these are commandments that God gives to **His** people.

- **God chooses**

The Israelites are the descendants of Abraham, God had chosen him and promised that he would be the father of a great nation Genesis 12.2. So these people are God's people.

(6) I am the God who was worshiped by your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moses was afraid to look at God, and so he hid his face. (7) The LORD said: I have seen how my people are suffering as slaves in Egypt, and I have heard them beg for my help because of the way they are being mistreated. I feel sorry for them, (8) and I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians. I will bring my people out of Egypt into a country where there is good land, rich with milk and honey. I will give them the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live.

- **God keeps his promise**

God had also told Abraham that his people would be taken into slavery but would later return to the land that God had promised. Notice the nations were to be driven out because of the evil they had committed.

Genesis 15:12-16 When the sun was going down, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and fear and terror came over him. (13) The LORD said to him, "Your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land; they will be slaves there and will be treated cruelly for four hundred years. (14) But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and when they leave that foreign land, they will take great wealth with them. (15) You yourself will live to a ripe old age, die in peace, and be buried. (16) It will be four generations before your descendants come back here, because I will not drive out the Amorites until they become so wicked that they must be punished."

- **The Israelites are set free by God**

Egypt was the superpower of the nations, God was the absolute superpower and he was the one who enabled Israel to be freed and brought out of the land of slavery

1 And God spoke all these words: 2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. Ex 20.1-2

God wants an exclusive relationship

It is the light of this , God choosing Abraham and his son Isaac and his family that the Israelites are called into a special relationship with god. God has chosen them and had set them free from the Egyptians.

Yet God had chosen them to be his people and because they were his people then he gave them laws which were distinctive and wholesome.

The first and most important is :

God having called Abraham, and having chosen Isaac's family through him established the nation of Israel.

"You shall have no other gods before me" Exodus 20.3 NIV

God is wanting exclusively to be their God. They are not to have others gods that they worship, whether these gods would be considered alongside Him or in their minds more important. (NIV "gods before", NLT "but me". The Egyptians had many gods and the Promised Land also had peoples who worshipped a variety of gods. God is looking for their exclusive worship. All the other commands flow out of establishing a relationship with Him.

Our Call!

- **Where are we with God?**

For many people today knowledge of God and his commandments would be limited. Whilst there is a sizeable percentage of people in the UK who do believe or who maybe open to explore their relationship with God, the God that they believe in maybe rather vague in character.

Many people are on a spiritual journey including ourselves as Christians. The first commandment which is the most important only makes sense and becomes relevant when we too have discovered who God is and why he is looking to be our God.

Jesus tells us that this spiritual search and making God a priority in our lives is most important.

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Mat 6.33 NIV

- **Making our response to God and this command?**

So where does God figure in our thinking and priorities. Do we exclusively worship him? What implications does this have for us within our pluralistic society and how do we promote values that we believe lead to the wellbeing of society. Through this command there is the challenge of helping people outside of the Church to make connections with Him.

For Small Groups – Exodus 3.1-9, 6.1-8, 20 .1-23

1. Why did God give his people the 10 commandments?
2. Are the commandments relevant to 21C society?
3. What are we going to do with this command?

Ex 20.3 "You shall have no other gods before me.