



PARASHAT YITRO

פרשת יתרו

Exodus 18:1-20:6

by
Ya'acov Natan Lawrence
& his kids

Note to the adult teacher: It will be necessary for you to give the scriptural context and background for each of the points listed below.

Great Discoveries In This Week's Parashah (Torah Portion)

- 18:1 Jethro (Yitro), Moses' Father-in-Law, Arrives
- 18:13 Jethro Advises Moses on Establishing Leaders/Judges Among the Israelites
- 18:21 Requirements for Righteous Leadership
- 19:1 The Israelites Arrive at Mount Sinai Prior to Shavuot/Pentecost
- 19:3 YHVH's Loving (Marriage) Proposal to Israel; Israel Accepts the Proposal
- 19:10 Israel Prepares to Receive the Torah/Enter into Covenantal Agreement With YHVH
- 19:16 YHVH's (the Bridegroom's) Arrival: A Day of Thunder, Lightening, Clouds, Smoke, Shofar Blasts
- 20:1 The Giving of the Cornerstone of the Torah: The Ten Words (Devarim)/Commandments

Exploring This Week's Parashah:

1 An Introduction to the Ten Commandments or Ten Words

- ▲ (a) What are the Ten Commandments (literally the Ten Words)? (Read Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:1-21.)
- ▲ (b) Were these Moses' laws that he came up with? Who spoke these words and where did they come from? (Look at Exodus 19:16-20; 20:1 and Deuteronomy 5:2-5, 22.)
- ▲ (c) When YHVH speaks, do you think men should listen? Does YHVH speak truth or lies? When he speaks truth, does he change the truth later so that it is no longer truth? (See Numbers 23:19; Malachi 3:6.)
- ▲ (d) YHVH first thundered the Ten Commandments out by voice, then later he wrote them down. (Read about this in Exodus 31:18; 32:15-16; Deuteronomy 9:10.)
- ▲ (e) What did he write them on? (Look at Exodus 31:18.)

According to Jewish tradition, the Ten Commandments are divided into two sections. The first five commandments were written on one stone tablet, while commandments six through ten were written on the other stone tablet.

- ▲ (f) What are the first five commandments or words of YHVH Elohim? You may not be aware of this, but the first commandment/word is actually found in Exodus 20:2. The second word is found in verses three through six. Read these verses and briefly summarize the first and second commandments or words. What are the third through fifth commandments or words?

The first five commandments teach us how to have a good relationship with YHVH Elohim, while the last set of five shows us how to have a good relationship with our fellow man.

- ▲ (g) How does keeping the Sabbath, for example, help us to have a right relationship with YHVH?
- ▲ (h) Why do you suppose the fifth commandment about honoring our parents is grouped with those commands that show us how to have a right relationship with our Father in heaven? What does honoring our parents have to do with loving YHVH?

The Jews teach that each commandment on the one set of tablets correspond with the one directly across from it on the other side. For example, the first word "I am YHVH your Elohim" is directly across from and corresponds to the sixth word forbidding murder.

- ▲ (i) How does the sixth word or commandment relate to the first one? (For a hint, read Genesis 1:27.)
- ▲ (j) How is the second command against worshipping false gods like the command against committing adultery?

These are hard questions and you'll need to think a little to figure out how one commandment relates to the other. You may need your parents to help you with this a little. Here is a clue to the answers. The words on the first stone relate to our relationship with YHVH, and the word on the second one relates to our relationship with our fellow man. The first five words or commands tell us how to love YHVH, while the last five show us how to love our neighbor. Loving our neighbor is similar to loving YHVH. John the apostle asks, how can we love Elohim who we have not seen if we can't love our brother whom we have seen? (1 John 4:20).

- ▲ (k) How does not taking YHVH's name in vain relate to not stealing? Go down the rest of the list and see if you can figure out how each of the first five commands relates to the last five. When you understand this, it will give you a much deeper understanding of the Ten Commandments.

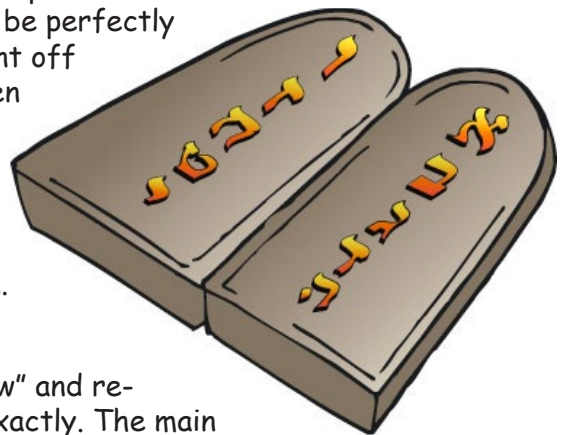
2 The Ten Commandments: Cornerstone of the Torah

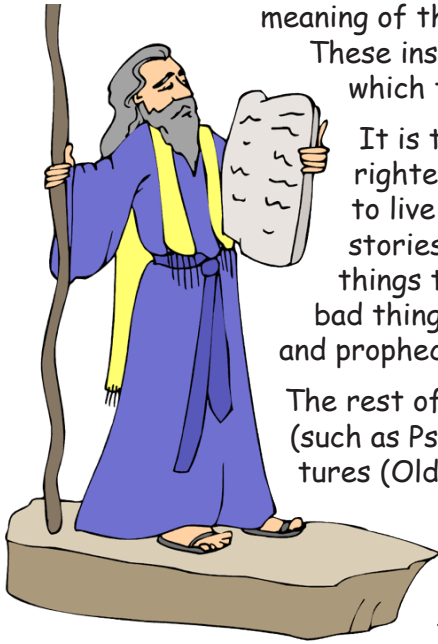
What is a cornerstone? Large buildings used to be made of blocks of stone that were carefully fit together. Like bricks, the stones were laid out side-by-side and then in layers (one on top the other) to form a wall. Another wall was added until you had the four walls of a building. The cornerstone was the first stone that was placed on the ground at the corner of two walls. That stone had to be perfectly square and level so that all the other stones that went off of it would also be perfectly square and level. The Ten Commandments are the cornerstone of the entire Torah of YHVH. Everything else is built out from them.

All total, there are 613 commandments in the Torah that teach us HOW to love YHVH and our fellow man.

What is the Torah?

Many believe that the word "Torah" simply means "law" and refers to all the laws of Moses. Is this correct? Not exactly. The main





meaning of the Hebrew word "Torah" is "instructions, teachings or precepts."

These instructions from YHVH are found in the first five books of the Bible, which the Jews call the Torah, or the Books of the Law.

It is true that the first five books do contain YHVH's instructions in righteousness that he gave to man including the 613 laws that tell us how to live (what to do and what not to do), but the Torah also contains the stories of people's lives and much history. The Torah shows us the good things that happen when we obey YHVH's righteous instructions, and the bad things that happen to us when we don't. The Torah also contains poetry and prophecy.

The rest of the Bible is built upon the foundation of the Torah. The Writings (such as Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ruth, Kings, etc.) part of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) teach us about the advantages of following the Torah and the disadvantages of not following it.

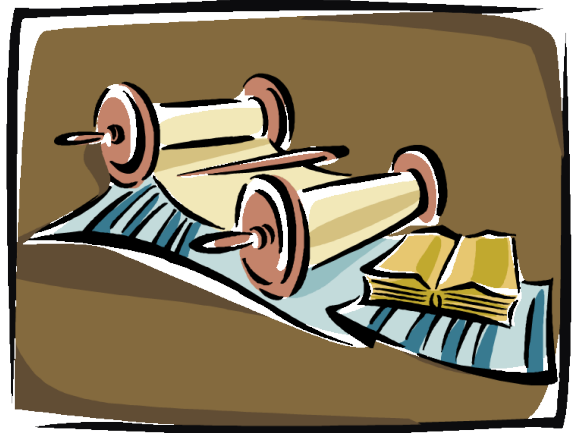
In the books of the Prophets (such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Joel, Malachi, etc.), part of the Hebrew Scriptures, the prophets are telling YHVH's people to get back to obeying the Torah, and they warn of the bad things that will happen to the people if they do

not follow the Torah. They also prophesy about the coming Jewish Messiah who we know was Yeshua, the Living Torah, or Word of Elohim made flesh.

The Apostolic Scriptures (or New Testament) further explains the Torah—how to keep it at its highest level of love and faith with the help of Yeshua the Messiah living inside of us spiritually in our hearts and minds through the power of his Set-Apart Spirit.

But the Ten Commandments are the very cornerstone of this spiritual building called the Torah, which is the foundation for the rest of the Scriptures (the Bible). The Jewish rabbis teach that all 613 Torah laws come out of the Ten Commandments, and that the Ten Commandments can be expanded into the 613 laws. Here are some examples of what we mean:

- The third commandment says not to take YHVH's name in vain. We are also not to speak the name of pagan gods.
- The fourth commandment says to honor the Sabbath day. Related commandments include that we are to work the other six days, and that we are to keep YHVH's seven yearly appointed times that are also Sabbaths.
- The sixth commandment forbids us from murdering. We are also not to "kill" people with unkind words or gossip or slander (speaking evil about someone).
- The seventh commandment tells us not to commit adultery. This also means that we should not turn away from YHVH and turn to witchcraft or sorcery. This is a form of spiritual adultery—not remaining faithful to YHVH.
- The eighth commandment says not to steal. Kidnapping is stealing someone. Speaking evil about someone is stealing their good name and reputation. If we fail to return something we borrowed from someone, this is stealing. On our job, if we take time away from our work to make a phone call or to do something that is not work related, but we charge our company for our time, this is stealing from our employer.



- The ninth commandment tells us not to say something untrue about someone else or to lie. This could include any area where we fail to keep our word or promise to someone, or when we repeat something that is not true about someone.
- The last commandment prohibits us from coveting—or greatly wanting something that belongs to someone else. This could also include greed, which is an intense selfish desire for something such as money, possessions or power. This command teaches us that we should be content and thankful for what we have, instead of always wanting more.

3 The Deeper Meaning

The Hebrew Scriptures contain a number of phrases that express the deepest or true meaning of the Torah.

- ▲ (l) Psalm 15 teaches us who shall live in YHVH's Tabernacle—or who will live with YHVH forever. How are the Ten Commandments summarized here? (Read Psalm 15.)
- ▲ (m) Isaiah reduces all of YHVH's commandments into six commands. What are they? (Look at Isaiah 33:15.)
- ▲ (n) Micah reduces the commandments into three. What are they? (See Micah 6:8.)
- ▲ (o) Isaiah further reduces them into two. What are they? (Read Isaiah 56:1.)
- ▲ (p) Yeshua also reduces them to three. What are they? (Read Mark 12:29-31. See also Matthew 7:12.)
- ▲ (q) Amos shortens them into one commandment (Amos 5:4) as does Habukkuk (Habukkuk 2:4). What are they?
- ▲ (r) We see other summations of the Torah in the Apostolic Scriptures as well. What are they? (See Romans 1:17; 13:8; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38.)
- ▲ (s) What is the most important reason why we should follow YHVH's commandments? (Read John 14:15.)

If we're not keeping or obeying YHVH's instructions, commands or laws out of love, then our keeping them doesn't count for anything!

- ▲ (t) Read 1Corinthians 13:1-13. What is the most important thing it says that we are to do?

John, in his epistle, discusses this idea at length in 1John 2:7-11; 3:11-24; 4:7-21 where he states that "Elohim is love" (4:8,16) and that one's love of Elohim and man is linked to obedience to the Torah commandments (2:3-11; 3:11-18). As YHVH first loved us, we should love our fellow man (4:7-11), in word, deed and in (Torah) truth (3:18).

