

Church of God Sunday School

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Exodus 18:1 — 24:18

The children of Israel were traveling through the wilderness to the land that God had promised. God was leading them (the pillar of cloud), providing them with water and food (manna and quail), and had given them victory when they were attacked by the Amalekites (*uh-MAL-uh-kites*).

Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, "heard of all that God had done for Moses, and for Israel his people." Moses' wife and his two sons had been staying with Jethro. He brought them to where Moses had camped. Jethro rejoiced to hear of the Lord's goodness to the people of Israel.

In the morning, Jethro gave Moses some good advice about hearing and judging the problems of the people. Moses listened to his father-in-law and "did all that he had said." After that, Jethro returned to his own land.

The Israelites had camped beside Mount Sinai. Moses went up into the mountain to talk to God. The Lord told Moses to tell the children of Israel: "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people . . . And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation."

Moses gathered the elders of Israel and told them all the words of the Lord. The people answered as one, "All that the LORD hath spoken we will do." When Moses gave the Lord the people's answer, God said He would come "in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever."

God told Moses to sanctify the people in preparation. They had to wash their clothes for the occasion and be ready on the third day, for God was going to "come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai."

Moses had to set boundary lines at the foot of the mountain to keep the people and the animals away. The mountain was a holy place. It was not to be polluted by anything sinful. The people were sinful. If any man would even touch the mountain with his hand, he would surely be killed. When the people heard the trumpet sound long, then they could come near to hear God speak.

On the third day, in the morning, it began to thunder and lightning. The mountain was covered with a thick cloud. The whole mountain shook and smoked as a furnace. God came down upon the mountain in fire. The people could not see God, but they could hear the "voice of the trumpet." It was very loud. All the people trembled, but Moses brought them out to meet with God.

When the "voice of the trumpet" sounded for a long time, louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him from the mountaintop. God called Moses up to the top of the mountain. There God told him to go back down and warn the people, again, that they should not break through the boundary lines; for if they did, they would perish! Also, Moses had to make sure the priests had done

as they were told. So, Moses went back down to warn the people.

God Himself spoke the Ten Commandments for the people to live by. But when the people heard the thunder and the "voice of the trumpet" and when they saw the lightning and the mountain smoking, they were afraid. They moved away from the mountain and said to Moses, "Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

Moses told the people to not be afraid. God wanted to teach them that He was the only God and that they should fear and respect Him. The people were still afraid. So Moses drew near to God to hear what He had to say. God gave him some laws for the people to



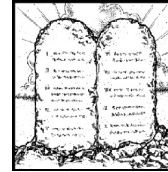
live by. Moses told them to the people. They agreed to be obedient to all that God had said. Moses wrote down all God's words in the Book of the Covenant.

Then the Lord told Moses to "Come up to me into the mount." Moses took Joshua with him, and they went "into the mount of God." God came down in a

cloud on the mountain, and Moses went into the cloud to talk with God. At that time, God gave Moses two tables, or tablets, of stone. Those stone tablets had God's laws and commandments on them. They were "written with the finger of God" (Exodus 31:18).

Here are the Ten Commandments. These commandments of God are the ones we are most familiar with. They teach us how to honor and serve God and how to treat others.

1. *Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*
2. *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.*
3. *Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain.*
4. *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*
5. *Honour thy father and thy mother.*
6. *Thou shalt not kill.*
7. *Thou shalt not commit adultery.*
8. *Thou shalt not steal.*
9. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*
10. *Thou shalt not covet . . . any thing that is thy neighbour's.*



MEMORY VERSE:

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

—Exodus 20:3