

Words from the Fire: Word 1

6/20/2021

Message 18 Exodus Series

Message 1 Words from the Fire

Exodus 20:1–3 (CSB)

20 Then God spoke all these words: ²I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. ³Do not have other gods besides me.

Introduction: When God speaks, take notice.

A. All of Exodus has led us to this point.

1. The most important event in Israel's history is not the crossing of the Red Sea.
2. It is the receiving of the Law.
 - a. The feast of Passover celebrates the sparing of Israel from the destroying angel and marks the beginning of deliverance.
 - b. The feast of Pentecost celebrates the giving of the Law, 50 days later.¹

B. God opens this revelation by reminding his people where they have come from.

1. They had been slaves.
2. They had been a nation of slaves, now they were to be a nation of Priests.

¹ https://lifeinmessiah.org/feasts-shavuot?gclid=CjwKCAjw_JuGBhBkEiwA1xmbRYA1CL5s6_pyg3nkM56b1enniq_bqFeeWFISqeVd0S-u5HBjfRSADBoC730QAvD_BwE

a. When all you know is slavery, living in freedom is not easy.

1. Some of us have lived in sin for so long, we do not know how-to live-in freedom.

2. Some of us have served the devil for so long that we struggle serving Jesus.

b. These 10 Commandments, 10 Words, would teach Israel how-to live-in Freedom.

1. The boundaries and guardrails of the Law were not given to prevent Israel from having fun.

2. The boundaries of the Law taught Israel how-to live-in relationship with God.

3. All of us have lived in slavery to sin.

4. Now that Jesus has saved us, we have to learn what it means to live in freedom!!!!!!

a. True freedom cannot be experienced outside of God's boundaries.

b. God begins their transformation by outlining 10 areas for His people to walk in.

1. Then God spoke these words...

A. We call these the Ten Commandments.

1. In other parts of Scripture, they are referenced as commands.

2. But the word "commandment" is surprisingly missing here.

3. What it does say is: Then God spoke these "words".

a. 10 words. 10 Laws. 10 Revelations of God's holy expectations.

b. If you read a scholarly book or commentary, you will see the name "Decalogue".

c. Deca=10, Logo=word.

B. "By calling them the Ten Words the writer employs a powerful expression that conveys that Yahweh's will is being revealed—by his very words."²

1. God could have revealed Himself in an infinite number of ways to Israel.
2. But God chose to reveal Himself through these words.
3. **To know God's Word is to know God.**
 - a. We cannot seek a revelation of God apart from God's Word.
 - b. As Pentecostals, we do believe that we can encounter God through experiences, miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Spirit.
 - c. The primary revelation of God is always His Word.
 - d. John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word..."

C. Before God gives these words, commands, He establishes the basis of relationship.

1. "I Am the Lord your God."
 - a. Not the God of your forefathers.
 - b. Your God.
2. This takes the form of a Covenant between a greater party and a lesser.
 - a. Throughout the ancient times, the sovereign would make an agreement or covenant and that agreement would be founded upon his position and authority.

² Eugene Carpenter, *Exodus*, ed. H. Wayne House and William D. Barrick, vol. 2, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012), 35.

1. In other words:
2. Because he was the king, the king could establish whatever covenant he needed.
- b. God declares in Exodus 20: I am your God, and here are my expectations from you.
 1. These were not moral suggestions.
 2. These 10 words did not originate from a committee or philosophical discussion.
 3. These were the words of God and His conditions to govern His relationship with His people.
3. Have you ever wondered why God put these words on 2 tablets of stone?
 - a. Ancient kings would write up agreements and covenants and often would do so on stone.
 - b. One copy would be for the people, so they might take ownership in the covenant.
 - c. The other copy was for the king, to remind him of his covenant and responsibility.
 - d. This is what God is doing with Israel.
4. But what God is doing is unlike a human king.
 - a. Earthly kings conquer their people; God delivered His.
 - b. God bound himself to these people.
 - c. From this relationship, Israel (the lesser party) would be blessed by the greater.
5. We must not relegate the 10 Commandments to a list of moral or ethical suggestions.
6. They are revealing Words of the all-powerful God to His people.

Therefore, we should not be surprised that the First Word is a Word of exclusivity.

2. The first word is a word of exclusivity.

A. You shall have no other Gods before me.

1. The Hebrew for “no other” is the word “strange”.
2. You shall have no “foreign” or “strange” god is what God demands.
3. “The only God fit for a relationship with beings made in God’s image is the God whose being they resemble and whose likeness they embody.” (Kass)³
4. God created us in His image, therefore He is the only God we are to serve.

B. It makes sense that God would start here:

1. In Egypt, Israel watched their neighbors worship the Sun, the Nile, and Pharaoh.
2. In fact, we do not see Israel worshipping YHWH God in Egypt at all.
 - a. Israel was prone to idolatry.
 - b. When times became hard, they worshipped other gods as a normal reflex, which explains the golden calf.
3. God begins this revelation by announcing that there is only ONE God, and that is YHWH.

3. Our society struggles with this command.

A. For many years, our culture has embraced the concept of many gods, many paths, to the same destination.

1. All roads lead to the same place, we have said.

³ <https://tikvahfund.org/uncategorized/the-ten-commandments-why-the-decalogue-matters/>. Accessed 6/14/2021

2. I have heard it said that every person is a universalist at a funeral, meaning that no matter who or what, we like to think that everyone enters eternal life and not death.

3. However, Exodus 20 and the teachings of Jesus teach an exclusivity.

B. Jesus said this: John 14:6–7 (CSB)

⁶Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷If you know me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

1. Jesus declared the exclusiveness of God.

2. All are invited, all are welcomed, all have opportunity.

3. But Jesus is the ONLY way to God.

4. All roads don't lead to God.

5. All roads lead to death, except One: Jesus.

C. Our missionaries to the college campus last week made an interesting point:

1. Generation Z is the least religious generation, with 1/3 believing in no god at all.⁴

2. Notice this: When a generation claims that all religions lead to the same place, the next generation will declare that religion leads to nowhere.

3. **If all religions are true, then none are true.**

a. Truth demands exclusivity.

b. All things cannot be true.

⁴ <https://psmag.com/ideas/gen-z-is-the-least-religious-generation-heres-why-that-could-be-a-good-thing>

c. In the face of contradictory claims, only one can be right.

D. God made this claim as the basis for His relationship with Israel:

1. He did not provide validity for the religions and gods of Egypt.
2. He did not teach them how to be accepting of the gods of Canaan.
3. Instead, God boldly declared: You shall have no other God's except me.

4. God created us to be worshippers.

A. Albert Mohler has observed:

1. "Human beings are worshipers. We will worship either the one true and living God, or we will worship an idol of our own devising or our own adoption."
2. We can't help but worship.
 - a. We may not worship household idols like other parts of the world.
 - b. But we all worship something.

B. For us, everything can be the object of worship.

1. For decades, science has been the replacement for God.
2. For some, careers and jobs are our objects of worship: or dare I say, it is the safety, security, and stuff that our jobs bring that become our worship.
3. For others, your kids can be your objects of worship.

C. We are all created to be worshippers.

1. It is only a matter of who or what we will worship.
2. How can we ensure we are worshipping God.

5. How to check my Worship:

#1. Whatever consumes most of my thoughts, time, and attention points to what I worship.

#2. My anxiety points to gaps in my trust, without trust there is no worship.

a. What am I most anxious about right now?

b. If I am experiencing unexpected anxiety over a situation, it could be a sign that I'm out of balance in my worship.

#3. What I'm not willing to give up or giveaway may demonstrate what has become a god to me.

Ask yourself: What would I hate to give up if Jesus asked me to?

a. The Rich Young ruler was not willing to give up his wealth.

b. If the thought of tithing makes you cringe, maybe money is more of an idol than you realize.

c. If you aren't willing to move away from family in order to be obedient to God's call, your family is an idol and a false-god.

d. **Anything that tempts me to tell God "no" is a false-god.**

Close: The 1st Word is still valid for our lives.

A. There is an intense fight for our attention and our worship.

1. **What has our attention has our worship.**

2. And everything is vying for our attention.

B. Maybe you would admit that Jesus doesn't have enough of your attention.

1. When you reflect upon your week, how much time, attention, and devotion does God receive from you?

2. If most of us were honest, we would all have to admit that God doesn't have our full attention.

C. **What has our attention becomes our god.**

1. The question for us is why would we want any other god?
2. What other God can deliver us from slavery to sin?
 - a. Tell me of another God who provides forgiveness and salvation?
 - b. Tell me of another God that promises to be our healer, our Savior, and our friend.
 - c. Tell me of another God who promises to be the Prince of Peace and the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords.
 - d. Tell me of another God who is willing to come down to earth so that he may participate in the redemption of his people?
 - e. Tell me another god that was Willing to die upon a cross from your sins?
3. So why would we pursue lesser gods when we have the opportunity to serve a great God?
 - a. Why would we choose to create God in our own fallen image when we have been offered the opportunity to worship the one true God.
 - b. Today, I ask for all of us to stand and worship the One True God for a few minutes.
 - c. And if you realize that you have brought other gods to the relationship, would you specifically repent of that God.