

Naked Bible Podcast Transcript

Episode 288

Exodus 20, Part 2

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Episode Summary

In the previous episode of the podcast we looked at the issues raised by close examination of the placement and nature of the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments. In this episode of the podcast, we take a look at the first four commands: having no gods before Yahweh, not making idols, not making the name of God inconsequential (“bearing the name in vain”), and remembering the Sabbath.

Transcript

TS: Welcome to the Naked Bible Podcast, Episode 288: Exodus 20, Part 2. I’m the layman, Trey Stricklin, and he’s the scholar, Dr. Michael Heiser. Hey, Mike. How are you?

MH: Pretty good. We are into the Fantasy Football season now.

TS: It’s my favorite time of the year.

MH: Yeah. I’ve been told by Mori that if I don’t make the playoffs this year, my job could be in jeopardy.

TS: Uh oh.

MH: [laughs] He’s laying down the law.

TS: Who would he replace you with? I’m just curious.

MH: Probably my daughter. [laughs] She plays.

TS: I’m sure you’ve had some other drafts. Has there been a pick that has surprised you that Mori has suggested? Anybody that...

MH: Mori is a huge risk-taker.

TS: Is he? Is he a Packers fan?

MH: [laughs] Of course. That just goes with being the intelligent creature that he is.

TS: Ah, I see.

MH: But Pollard from Dallas. That was a late pick-up.

TS: Oh, really?

MH: We counted on Zeke not showing up. Just taking a risk there.

TS: I see. So basically, you're just picking my Cowboys. [MH laughs] That's America's team.

MH: Yeah, we're taking advantage of the fact that your best guy doesn't want to show up. So sure.

TS: That's okay. Hopefully you didn't take Pollard high in the draft.

MH: No, no. It was a reasonable risk.

TS: Alright, we shall see. Good luck to you this season. We don't meet until week 8, I believe, so the people have a lovely two months-plus of Fantasy Football talk. So congratulations, guys, we made it another season! Good luck to you.

MH: It is the best time of year. Baseball's going on (had to get into the playoffs) and football is starting.

TS: Yeah. And then basketball is not too far off.

MH: I know you don't like baseball, but for me this is the best time of the year.

TS: I actually do watch the World Series. Not every...

MH: You just like the tension.

TS: 532 games before it. Oh my gosh. Took forever to get there. [MH laughs] I know they'll never do this, but they need to lop off a solid 50-60 games. It would be amazing if the World Series... Because there are so many games. That's why football is so good, because every game means something. There are only 16 games. When you have 180-something games...

MH: 162, not counting the playoffs.

TS: 100,000 games. 1,200,037 games.

MH: It doesn't faze me. If it were me, I'd say they should play year-round.

TS: I hear you. We'll spare our listeners more sports talk and get ready for Part 2. Have you decided how many parts we're going to have on Exodus 20 yet?

MH: Yeah, we'll have a third part.

TS: Well, good. This is Part 2. So I'm ready if you are.

MH: Yep. So if you didn't listen to the previous episode, it's not required for this one, but this is Part 2, and we're just starting the commandments.

So Part 1 was covering a bunch of issues that arise from the text, where the Decalogue (the Ten Commandments) are placed, what kind of commands they are, what's actually the number, so on and so forth. So there were five or six different things that we talked about in the first episode that lead up to actually jumping in. We're at the jumping-in point now. In this part, we're going to hit the first four commands, so I think the rest of them are manageable in a Part 3. So that looks like how we're going to do it.

So in the last episode, I read something from Sarna's Exodus commentary in regard to the number of the commands. So I'm going to read this part again just to refresh people that there was actually an issue with the numbering. But we're going to go with the traditional ten, just so we don't create confusion. But just so that you know why this is an issue, Sarna writes this:

Interestingly, the Jewish tradition treats the statement in Exod 20:2...

Let me read it:

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

Sarna:

5:00

Interestingly, the Jewish tradition treats the statement in Exod 20:2 as a command when the wording has no imperative force to it at all. This latitude arises from the fact that the Hebrew text of the Old Testament exclusively uses *‘aseret ha-devarim* ("ten words") instead of *‘asereth hamitsvot* ("ten commandments")

So the Hebrew Bible actually refers to the Decalogue as the Ten Words, not Ten Commands. So that's why they can treat verse 2 as one of these "Words," even though it's not a command. So Sarna keeps going. He says:

After regarding Exod 20:2 as the first “word” of the ten, verses 3-6 are then thematically understood as speaking to a single prohibition: making idols for worship.

There are actually three imperative statements in this group of verses (“You shall have no other gods before me”; “You shall not make for yourself a carved image”; “You shall not bow down to them or serve them”), but to consider them as separate commands would move the total beyond ten.

If you take all the imperatives as three separate commands, then you’re way over ten. You’re actually at 13. And Sarna goes on to point out that that’s actually part of Jewish tradition as well. If you asked a rabbi... A certain period... The rabbinic period is basically medieval. “Hey, how many commands are there in Exodus 20?” When he heard the word “commands,” he would think of the imperatives and say, “There are 13.” But since they look at it as Ten Words, they can lump some of those together and have one Word beginning in verse 2 and then we go on from there. So there’s actually an issue here. We talked about that last time.

We (for our purposes) are just going to go with “Ten Commandments.” I know that’s not technically precise. We’re not counting imperatives here. This isn’t a Hebrew exegesis class. So just so the listeners out there who would like this to be a Hebrew exegesis class and balk at Ten Commandments... I get it. I know. I understand. We’re just going to go with the traditional numbering here to avoid confusion.

Now as we jump into the very first series here, I want you to be thinking about the patriarchal faith here (what preceded Moses) and that which marks the basis by which after the Tower of Babel episode, God moves to restore to himself a human family and therefore the Edenic dream or goal. Now a lot of people mistakenly assume the Abrahamic covenant to be unconditional. And that is simply not true. I want you to be thinking about the basis of the relationship between God and Abraham (and Isaac and Jacob, all the way up to the time of Moses). Because when we get to Sinai, we’re going to have this covenant, and the law is going to be part of this covenant. The Ten Commandments are going to be part of this covenant.

What’s the basis of the relationship with God prior to that? And I’m going to argue that it’s the same even after. But since you get a whole list of commands from Sinai onward, that’s not about meriting your salvation. We’ll talk a little bit about this in the episodes that follow. But the Sinai covenant defined one’s relationship with Yahweh. You were in covenant with Yahweh. And there were expectations to be in the covenant. That doesn’t preclude or exclude the necessity of belief (what we would call faith). It’s not that, “Oh, now, after Sinai just blind obedience in every jot and tittle, that merits your salvation now.” No, God is never in your debt. The issue with the law (Sinai) is that this defines your relationship with

10:00

Yahweh in the sense that this is how you are supposed to live and believe for a couple of reasons. I should say, this is how you're supposed to live and *behave*, for a couple of reasons. One is, if you do this (if you live this way), it shows that you believe that Yahweh (this deity) is the one who took you out of Egypt and is the true God—is the God of gods, is superior to all other gods. So you believe that, and so you want to be in this relationship with him because to be outside of it, that would be bad. What assurance do you have of resurrection, of hope in the afterlife? What assurance do you have at all, if you're not in relationship to the God who's really the God of gods? So you do these things, not to put that God in your debt (like he owes you something now because you've earned a place at the table). You do it because you believe who he is and that you're going to trust him with your everlasting destiny (whatever that might be). This is just the way to look at Sinai.

This takes us into the whole “works of the law” controversy with Paul. And I would suggest to you that no Pharisee who understood the law is going to think that they're putting God in their debt by obeying the law. They're paranoid about following the law because of the exile. They don't ever want to see that circumstance happen again. They know what resulted from disloyalty to their covenant relationship. They were expelled from the land. And in Jesus' day, they're back in the land. They at least are occupying it, even though all 12 tribes are not restored. So in that sense, the excluded tribes... There's still a sense of exile. Not with the two that come back from Babylon, because that was only a 70-year captivity. But with the others, there's still this sense of exile. There's still this sense of being in this situation. So this is a real consciousness. “We want to follow the law so that this doesn't happen to us again. It's not that we think that God owes us something now. We're always at the mercy of God.”

What Paul is really talking about with the works of the law is that you should no longer define your identity (your relationship with God) by virtue of the Sinai covenant. Instead, you should define your relationship with God by virtue of Jesus the messiah—identifying him as the messiah and the initiator of the new covenant that was promised in the Old Testament and believing that this messiah (Jesus) was God in the flesh (God come as a man) to fulfill the rest of the covenants, usher in the new covenant, and now our faith is in him. We recognize him as the incarnate God of Israel who sacrificed himself for our behalf. And we live the way we do now both to attract people (just like it should have been in the Old Testament) to the faith, but also to show the world where our loyalty is. Our loyalty is to this one now: Jesus of Nazareth, Jesus the messiah.

So that's what Paul is after. Change your identification. Change the way you're thinking about how you show your loyalty and your belief—how you illustrate and demonstrate your belief to the true God. It's no longer by the law of Sinai. Now it's by faith in Christ. That's really what he's after. He's not attacking a merit-based way of thinking. Now I'm sure there were Jews out there somewhere that got it wrong and thought that God was put in their debt by virtue of them obeying

the law (and Paul was one of these). But any self-respecting Jew or Israelite who understands the necessity of belief, that what God is after is the heart, not just performance... Anybody who understood that from the Old Testament is going to know that it's never about putting God in your debt.

So we need to think about that in relationship to where we are here, because I'm going to suggest (I suggested this many times... of course, in *The Unseen Realm* I do this) that that's the way it was with the patriarchs. At all times—patriarchs before Moses, Sinai, the time of Moses and, of course, the theocratic state of Israel (the monarchy, biblical Israel), and then afterward, after the exile, with Jesus, up until right now—it's always been the same: believing loyalty. That is salvation. Belief and then you illustrate that belief. You confirm it in terms of how people... People are wondering, "Where's your faith at? What God do you serve?" You reinforce that, you illustrate it, you demonstrate it through the way you live. And it's no different before Sinai and after Sinai. (We're talking about Christians now in the New Covenant.) I would suggest it really wasn't any different in biblical Israel. You believe that Yahweh is the God of gods, that he has entered into a covenant relationship with you. And you demonstrate that belief by worshiping no other. And you *want* to be loyal to him out of gratitude. You're thankful to him. And so you want to do the law, for the right reasons, not to put God in your debt.

15:00

So let's just be thinking about that, because when it comes to the Abrahamic covenant, I'm going to show you that this is consistent. There are a lot of (especially) Christians, because of their eschatological situation or their position or what they've been taught, that insist the Abrahamic covenant was unconditional. If that's true, then salvation is different before the time of Moses and it's really actually different in the sense of the New Covenant as well. It's not different. The Abrahamic covenant *does* have conditions. Abraham had to believe and be loyal to Yahweh. Loyalty was the means by which belief was shown. Abraham couldn't just decide to reject the sign of circumcision. So here we have Genesis 15:6:

Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.

Paul quotes this verse in Romans 4. Well Abraham couldn't believe and have God count it to him for righteousness and then two chapters later when God says, "Okay here's the sign of the covenant: circumcision," Abraham's like, "Forget that. I'm not doing that. That's going to hurt. I don't get it. I don't see any reason for it. I already believe so why am I going to do that?" He can't just reject the demonstration of his loyalty. Because if he did, that would show that he is *disloyal*. It would show that he *doesn't* believe that Yahweh is who he is. He doesn't believe that. If he did believe it, he would obey. Abraham does obey because he *does* believe that. In fact, when you get to Genesis 22 (the offering of Isaac), Abraham couldn't just say, "Ah, I'm not going to do that. Not going to go

through with that. I heard you, Lord, loud and clear, but I'm just not going to do that." Right? Abraham believes and that's why he takes Isaac up and is about to go through with offering him. And we actually get a hint of this in Genesis 22:5 where if we read the verse... And the book of Hebrews picks up on this.

Abraham said to his young men" [as he's about to take Isaac up on the mountain], "Stay here with the donkey. I and the boy will go over there and worship and we will come again to you.'

The verb there is plural. You could say, "Abraham's bluffing. He's just lying to these guys." No. The book of Hebrews actually alludes to this verse and says that Abraham believed that God was able to raise up his son again. He was serious. He believed that somehow God would give him his son back. So what he does is a demonstration of faith. It's belief. And it's right there in the grammar in this case: "We will come again to you." He's being absolutely sincere.

So there are conditions here. If Abraham doesn't do this, it shows he doesn't believe. If he obeys, it's not that, "Okay God, you have to pony up now. I performed well." That is not the issue, and it's not the issue with Sinai, either. The point about bringing all this up with Abraham and the Abrahamic covenant and its conditions is just to summarize, "You have to believe. Before the law (the period of the law) and, of course, the New Testament period, you have to believe. And if you do believe, you will live a certain way." None of these instances—Abraham, Moses, anybody righteous in the Old Testament period, Paul when you get to the work of Christ... Nobody is thinking that we should do works to put God in our debt. Nobody is thinking that, if they're thinking correctly. It's consistent across the testaments. You must believe. And if you do, you will live a certain way. And we already know from Exodus, when we hit Exodus 19, that part of the logic of living a certain way was to attract the nations back and be the kingdom of priests and a holy nation and all that stuff. I get that. And that's fine because it's biblical theology. But notice that if that's the motivation, if that's the rationale for it, it's still not putting God in your debt. That is not what's going on here.

So just to apply this to us... We did enough of this in the book of Hebrews. I'm not going to rehearse all this territory. But Christians, you need to stop thinking about your works being the necessary element to your salvation. Faith is the necessary element to your salvation. Works are for lots of reasons. Earning salvation is not one of them. And this is going to be consistent across the board. So when we jump into the commands, it's not about earning a position. It's about defining a relationship that you have with God because you believe who he is. You are going to enter into the covenant. The Israelites are going to approve the covenant with God because they believe that, "Good grief, this is the God who defeated the gods of Egypt and took us out of Egypt. And look at the Red Sea and the manna and all this stuff." They believed this. They're going to make a statement of faith. And then they're going to enter into this covenant relationship

20:00

and agree to live a certain way to honor that God, to honor his sacred space, to honor his presence, to honor each other as members of the same family, to attract the nations. These are all reasons why believing Israelites are supposed to live the way they're supposed to live. You have to be really wrong-headed to think that, "Okay, I did this. Now God owes me something." That's just not in the picture. It's not the point. So listen to how the Decalogue begins in light of all of that. This is Exodus 20:2-6.

And God spoke all these words, saying,

So they're at this mountain scene and God just starts speaking.

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

The point is Pharaoh (if remember the exodus story) had mockingly asked, "Who is Yahweh?" Well, he got his answer. The whole point of delivering Israel and the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is to answer that question, not only for Pharaoh, but also for Yahweh's own people. They had to believe Yahweh was the God of all gods. When God says, "I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of slavery," they're like, "Yep, you sure did. And we know what that means. It means you are the God of all gods." All of this was to bring them to faith. So they had to believe that Yahweh was the God of all gods, the God of their fathers, the God who had supernaturally created them by virtue of Abraham and Sarah. "This is the God of our fathers." They have to believe all this stuff. They have to believe that he is who he says he is. If you go back in Exodus, this is clear in hindsight. All this disaster... The plagues that come on the gods of Egypt have a purpose. Exodus 6:7:

I will take you to be my people and I will be your God. And you shall know that I am the Lord your God who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Exodus 7:5:

The Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt to bring out the people of Israel from among them.

So the Egyptians are going to learn the lesson that their gods are lesser and Israel is going to learn the lesson and they're going to believe that their God (this God) is the God of all gods. Exodus 8:10:

Moses said to Pharaoh, ‘Be pleased to command me when I am to plead for you and your servants for the people that the frogs be cut off from you and your houses and be left only in the Nile.’

And he (Pharaoh) said, ‘Tomorrow.’

And Moses said, ‘Be it as you say, so that you may know that there is no one like the LORD our God.’”

This is just the whole point. Exodus 14, the Red Sea crossing:

I will harden Pharaoh’s heart and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.

Now verse 18:

And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD.

This is why these things happen—for the Egyptians. And if the Egyptians convert (they turn into believers) they go along... We know the exodus story says that a number of the people of Egypt (Israel’s neighbors) went with them. They were convinced. That does happen. The judgment part of it happens too—that Pharaoh lets the people go but he’s not becoming a Yahweh follower. Some of the Egyptians did. Some of them did. A mixed multitude went out of Egypt and followed Moses and the rest of the Israelites into the desert.

So this is how the Decalogue begins. “Do you know this now? I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. Now because of that, because you know that and you believe it, (verse 3) you shall have no other gods before me.” Okay? It’s not like you could sit there and be an Israelite and believe in no deity but just never go through life and make an idol. “I’m good now. I never made an idol. Lord, you said I wasn’t supposed to make an idol, so here we are at the pearly gates and you have to let me in here because I never made an idol.” No, that isn’t the point. The performance is not the point. The performance demonstrates something that is believed. We just have to get this straight in our heads. So this is the loyalty element: Don’t have other gods before me. Believe that Yahweh is your God and reserve all of your loyalty for him. This is believing loyalty all over again.

25:00

Now as a sidebar, notice that the command doesn’t deny the existence of other *elohim*. I’m not going to go off into *Unseen Realm* territory here. We’re all well familiar with that. If you’re new to the podcast and you’ve never read my book *Unseen Realm* or the lighter version (*Supernatural*), you need to read one or both of those to go off into the nature of *elohim* in the Hebrew Bible, and that the

gods were real but Yahweh is species-unique. Yahweh is an *elohim*. No other *elohim* are Yahweh, ontologically by definition. This is the theology, even, of the Decalogue. “You shall have no other gods before me.” In other words, you’re not being loyal to anybody else but me. “I am the LORD your God.” “The LORD *our* God is one.” Right here in the Decalogue, we get this flavor for it. And the best place to read it is Deuteronomy, because Deuteronomy affirms this if you understand Deuteronomy 4 against the backdrop of Deuteronomy 17 (the first few verses), and Deuteronomy 29, right around verses 23-26, Deuteronomy 32:8-9 (reading verse 8 with the Dead Sea Scrolls), and Deuteronomy 32:17. The gods are real in the biblical writers’ minds. They are spirit beings. That’s all they are. They are lesser. They are contingent. God created them. The God of the Bible created them, all things in heaven and earth, visible and invisible. All of that. There are lots of *elohim*. All the term means is spirit beings. It has nothing to do with a unique set of attributes. But Yahweh among them is ontologically unique. Only he is sovereign, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, all this stuff. He’s the only one that those things are said about. He is unique. So there’s one of him. Let’s go back to Exodus 20. So we have “I am the LORD your God. You shall have no other gods before me.” Verse 4:

⁴“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not bow down to them or serve them...

It’s pretty clear. The plagues should have taught Israel that Yahweh was above all creation, not part of it. So by definition, no, don’t make an image of anything (any likeness) that’s in heaven above or earth beneath, or the water under the earth. Notice the three-tiered cosmology there—the ancient Near Eastern cosmology. There it is, in the Decalogue. You’re not going to make an image of any of those things, in any of those spheres of your worldview of Israelite cosmology here. Don’t do that, because the Lord your God is not part of creation. He’s the one who is separate from and responsible for creation. He’s the one who created. He’s the Creator, not a created thing. He is completely *other*. Nothing in creation is like him or his equal. He is unrepresentable by anything in creation.

So if you think about this, God would veil himself when present (in clouds or the storm theophany in storm clouds and all that stuff) or he’d remain out of sight. And this scene that we’ve been reading in Exodus 19 with Sinai is kind of like that. You see the storm atmosphere at the top of the mountain and the burning and the fire. But you never see Yahweh himself. Now he does at some points—and he’s going to in Exodus 24—decide to let some of the Israelites see at least part of him. When he does decide to show himself, guess how that happens? He comes as a man. He appears as a man. That’s Exodus 24. We’re going to get there. You probably already know the verses (9-11). They see... Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the 70 elders go up into the mountain and “they saw the God

of Israel.” They see what’s under his feet, so they can see part of his form. It doesn’t say they see his face. But there’s a man there, and they know it. It’s kind of like Ezekiel 1. There’s a seated man on a throne, “the divine man” as scholars like to refer to him. You get these episodes where God does decide to show himself, at least partially. And in some cases, it’s even more dramatic. God does show up as a man. I would say the Angel of the Lord is one of those. And you can read... I have three chapters on this in *Unseen Realm*. I know how to make this case, and the case is a good one, that Yahweh is the Angel of the Lord. You have the two Yahwehs: the invisible, transcendent one and then the visible, human one. They can be in the same scene or different.

30:00

This is a precursor to Judaism’s Two Powers in Heaven. Judaism used to believe in a Godhead until the second century A.D. Timing is not a coincidence there because of the advent of Christianity. This used to be a normal part of Jewish theology, what they called the two Yahwehs—the Two Powers in Heaven—the greater and lesser Yahweh (or the divine name). This was part of Jewish thinking. It comes right out of the Hebrew Bible. So you have instances like Genesis 18 where God comes as a man and has a meal with Abraham with two angels. We find out they’re angels in Genesis 19. God does this. And in some of those instances, you can’t say that the face was covered. They have conversations. We don’t really know that for sure, but there’s no indication in the passage that God is wearing a hood or something. They have a meal. They sit down and have a meal. Abraham speaks to God like he would any other person, interceding for Sodom. This *does* happen, that God veils himself in this form. And it’s a precursor to the later way Christians think and the New Testament writes about Jesus. God is man. Now the incarnation is a bit different. It ups the ante, because God is born of a woman there. But one sets up the other.

So when you go back to the command, how do we reconcile these things?

Don’t make for yourself any carved image or anything that’s in heaven above, or the earth beneath, the water under the earth.

But God will do this. So you would think, “Well, God came as a man. Can’t we make an idol of a man?” No. You’re not supposed to do that. You’re not supposed to do that. You’re not supposed to bow down to *any created thing*—a thing made with your own hands. See the key here is the bowing down. And we know this to be the case because God later in the book of Exodus tells them to make objects of heavenly things (the cherubim). Did God just violate his own command here? No. Because the issue is the worship—the bowing down. So God can come as a man, but don’t you go make an idol of a man (a figure of a man). You can’t justify it by saying, “Well God showed up as a man, so we’re going to make this statue. It’s a man. We’re going to bow down to it. God will know we’re worshipping him.” No. You do not bow down to anything made with human hands. Period. Don’t do it. And even the ark of the covenant, when God

tells them how to do this and how to fashion the cherubim and all that, they're not supposed worship the ark. The ark isn't supposed to become a fetish. We know from Israelite history that sometimes this kind of thing happens, like with the bronze serpent. It became an object of worship later in Israel's history and it had to be destroyed. We know that this sort of transgression did happen. But the issue here with the command is that you bow down to nothing made with human hands, because it's a theological statement that our God is not made. Our God is, by definition, uncreated. He is not part of creation. He is not made. So this is a theological statement, and it's a really important one. And observing it is part of believing loyalty.

Just to use my earlier illustration, you can't just sit there. You get to the pearly gates as it were and, "I'm here. I was a faithful Israelite. I never made an idol. You have to let me in." No, that's not the point. The point is not the performance. The performance demonstrates belief.

So we're back at the same point again. I would say this applies to our pictures of Jesus today. If you have a picture of Jesus on your wall, should you take it down and destroy it? No. If you're bowing down to it, yeah, you need to get rid of it. You need to stop doing that. It's a theological statement that I will bow down to nothing that is made. I will only bow down to the uncreated God—to the uncreated Creator. That's it. That's the line in the sand. So these are theological statements in some pretty important ways. And verse 5 elaborates on this. Let me go back to Exodus 20 here.

⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God [MH: so we have some added emphasis here], visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

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So "jealous God." Sarna has a really nice summary here. I'm going to read it. I think this is pretty well said. He writes:

The Hebrew stem [MH: for the word jealous] *k-n-* ' , in its primitive meaning, seems to have denoted "to become intensely red." Because extreme and intense emotions affect facial coloration, the term came, by extension, to express ardor, zeal,¹⁷ rage, and jealousy.¹⁹ It is used in a variety of contexts, even with God as the referent. The limitations of language necessitate the application to God of phraseology that typically belongs in the human sphere.

(What are we going to do? We're humans. We have to use human phrases.)

The present epithet *'el kanna'* [MH: a jealous God] is most frequently translated “a jealous God,” a rendering that understands the marriage bond to be the implied metaphor for the covenant between God and His people.

There's no evidence in Exodus 20 that this is how marriages were conducted. In other words, the Israelite marriage ceremonies don't mimic what happens at Mount Sinai. There's no animal killed and blood sprinkled on everybody. So that's not what Sarna is talking about. There's no evidence for that. Rather he's saying that jealousy—the jealousy that would occur within a marriage if there's a violation—becomes the point of the metaphor for what is trying to be conveyed here, God's attitude. It's really an attitude that is well understood within a marriage context because of the intimacy of the relationship and the potential violation.

God demands exclusive loyalty from Israel, and, according to this interpretation, His reaction to their infidelity is expressed in terms of human jealousy. It should be noted, however, that the form *kanna'* is used in the Bible solely of God, never of a human being, a distinction that testifies to a consciousness that the emotion referred to differs qualitatively from the human variety. Whether one renders *kanna'* as “jealous” or “impassioned,” the term emphasizes that God cannot be indifferent to His creatures and that He is deeply involved in human affairs. It underscores the vigorous, intensive, and punitive nature of the divine response to apostasy and to modes of worship unacceptable to Himself.

I thought that was a really good summary of how to think about the jealousy element. And the rest of the verse:

...visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Note how these phrases are being contextualized. I think Sarna, again, has a good summary. These are not curses only on individuals and their families. Let me just telegraph where I'm going here. Notice verse 6, that God shows “steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.” Look, if you were an Israelite, and your parents were apostates, but you follow the Lord your God with all your heart... You know what? God's going to love that. He's going to respond positively to that. What I'm picking at here is this generational curse idea. Your relationship to God depends on your believing loyalty to him. It is not going to be impeded or overturned or trashed by some (I almost want to say mythical) generational curse idea—some generational bugaboo curse that someone utters over you or somebody else. That is not more powerful than the gospel. It just isn't. So stop believing lies. I get emails like this. “My brother did this crime” or whatever, or “Some witch

40:00

pronounced a curse over him and his family,” or “I’m the grandson and I’m cursed now.” No you’re not. Stop believing lies. Stop giving power to something that has no power. And you cannot use a verse like this to justify it. Because God will show steadfast love to thousands of those who love him and keep his commandments. Believing loyalty. Where is your believing loyalty? If it’s with him, that’s all you need. Is he the Lord your God who brought you up out of Egypt and out of the house of bondage? Is he the Creator? Is he who he says he is? If you claim to believe that and start living like it, stop believing lies.

Okay, off my hobby horse now. Here’s what Sarna writes on this section:

The Israelite conception of itself as a community bound to God by a covenant has dual implications. Society is collectively responsible for its actions, and the individual too is accountable for behavior that affects the life of the community. There is thus forged a mutuality of responsibility and consequences.

Yeah. If your grandpa committed a crime or something like that, yeah, your family’s reputation is going to suffer. And you can get caught up in that. It has nothing to do with your relationship with God, your eternal destiny. The crime of someone else and the stigma attached to it or the social suffering that you endure for something has nothing to do with your eternal destiny. Zero. There’s a difference between consequence and eternal destiny. I would think that would be clear, but I get these emails that people are so hung up on this generational cursing thing. Is Jesus (who is Yahweh in the flesh, the God who brought Israel out of Egypt) and his work on the cross sufficient or not? That is the fundamental question. You either believe or you don’t. So don’t tell me you believe but now you’re cringing there in the corner that you’re under a curse. Look, you don’t need to pray long prayers of memorization. You don’t need to do the Christian voodoo stuff of deliverance ministry to get rid of the... You know what you need to do? You need to start trusting God. You need to stop believing lies and start believing truth. That’s what you need to do. And then live your life. Be a disciple. Be a partner in the Great Commission and start doing the things you’re supposed to be doing and God will bless you. That’s what you need to do. Back to Sarna:

It is further recognized that contemporary conduct inevitably has an impact upon succeeding generations. [MH: It does. There are effects.] These historical effects are perceived in terms of God “visiting the sins” of one faithless generation upon the next or of His “showing kindness,” that is, rewarding fidelity, far into the future. This understanding of God’s governance of the world recurs many times in the Bible, and it has an educational function. Over time, however, [this led to]... a pervasive feeling of hopelessness and apathy in an era of acute national crisis.

Now what Sarna is referring to (and he quotes Lamentations 5:7 here) is that when Babylon is knocking on the door, we get Lamentations 5:7.

Our fathers have sinned and are no more and we bear their iniquities.

Well, yeah. Because your fathers violated Leviticus 26 and they became idolaters, you're going to be driven from the land. The righteous will suffer along with the wicked. Those who were not guilty of those things are going to suffer the effects. But you know what? God still knows who the righteous are. So you can get driven to Babylon and you can be sitting there by the river Chebar when Ezekiel has his vision and you can believe. You can take hope in Ezekiel's message because he's sent to give the exiles hope. You can still believe and be in right relationship with God and trust him with your eternal destiny. This has no effect—this has no impact—on your eternal destiny. It may have an impact on how society looks at you, but spiritually speaking, this has zero power over your eternal destiny. Zero. Goose egg.

The point of what Sarna is saying and peripherally what I'm getting at here is, if you look back at the exile, it's illustrative of community suffering. The righteous do suffer with the unrighteous. Sin does have consequences. Scripture elsewhere juxtaposes this idea with individual guilt as well. Jeremiah 31:29-30. I'll just read that.

²⁹ **In those days they shall no longer say:**

“‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes,

and the children's teeth are set on edge.’ [MH: The children are suffering for what the fathers did.]

³⁰ **But everyone shall die for his own iniquity. Each man who eats sour grapes, his teeth shall be set on edge.**

Ezekiel 18:1-4:

45:00

The word of the LORD came to me: ²“What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, ‘The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge’?

Ezekiel attacks this notion about, “Because of what our fathers did, now our fate is sealed,” etc.

³ **As I live, declares the Lord God, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. ⁴ Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.**

The believing loyalty. The heart that is aligned toward Yahweh will live. That's the whole point. I would also say before we leave this, one additional observation. The phrases "who reject me" and of course "who are blessed" can modify grammatically either the fathers or the children or both together. Now the fact that "those who reject me" can modify either means the statement should not automatically be read as some generational curse that will make the godly suffer. Yes, sin has consequences, but this is... Consequences for what other people do (your suffering) has nothing to do with your own individual eternal destiny and the way the Lord looks at you and your heart. These are two distinct things. Stop conflating them and stop believing lies and start believing what's true. Believing loyalty, we're back to square one again. Now Sarna adds this:

It is important to note that the statement in the Decalogue concerning the generational extension of punishment has nothing whatsoever to do with the administration of justice in Israel's legal system. There, vicarious punishment is never mandated; indeed, it is explicitly outlawed in Deuteronomy 24:16.

¹⁶ "Fathers shall not be put to death because of their children, nor shall children be put to death because of their fathers. Each one shall be put to death for his own sin."

Now here's the question. Here's why I bring it up. If God's not even thinking that way (like "Your fate is sealed now. Because of what someone else did, this is your lot.") even in his own legal system that he gives Israel, why do you suppose he would think about that in terms of your spiritual everlasting destiny? It just makes no sense. So stop believing lies. This is theocratic covenantal language in context. It has nothing to do with our eternal destiny. So on to Exodus 20:7, the next command:

⁷ "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain."

Now as I've noted a number of times, just recently in some of the talks that I've done that are YouTube, the word "take" here is Hebrew *nasa'*. It means to bear (like in lifting up), to carry. The idea of bearing the name (taking the name, carrying the name) is representational. Yes, that's going to encompass speech that is disrespectful or makes God or his name of no consequence or the object of contempt. That's part of bearing the name. But bearing the name is much bigger. It's also about imaging. Fundamentally, it's about imaging. To bear the name, to carry the name, is about representing God. It's about imaging God. The name (this is *Unseen Realm* territory again, doing biblical theology in that book) refers to the person. *Ha shem* (the name) is another way of referring to God himself. It's not just, "Hey, don't say the four consonants in a frivolous manner." Okay, that's part of it, if you're treating the name frivolously, that means you're

treating God frivolously. But it's bigger than that. Bearing the name in a frivolous way, bearing the name... Let's talk about "in vain." In vain can mean falsely (like a false profession, false representation). Leviticus 19:12:

¹²You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.

So it can be like lying—a false representation. "In vain" can also mean "worthless"—bearing the name worthlessly or uselessly. Behaving in such a way that you equate the name (God himself) with nothing, with something of no consequence. You equate God with an insubstantial thing, making him of no consequence. That's much wider than just what comes out of your mouth. But the "in vain" idea (the Hebrew wording here) can mean just making something insubstantial or inconsequential. 1 Samuel 25:21:

²¹Now David had said, "Surely in vain have I guarded all that this fellow has in the wilderness, so that nothing was missed of all that belonged to him, and he has returned me evil for good.

Like, "Well this was a useless exercise." So in vain in there refers to something that is useless, having no consequence. (It's *lashav* in Hebrew.) Jeremiah 2:30:

**³⁰In vain have I struck your children;
they took no correction;
your own sword devoured your prophets
like a ravaging lion.**

That's on the impending invasion of Nebuchadnezzar. So this was useless—a useless activity. You get the idea. We actually have easy ways to illustrate this, how bearing the name really is representational. It's another way of talking about imaging God, being God's proxy. And for an Israelite, they're supposed to be the kingdom of priests, right? They're supposed to be a holy people. They're supposed to represent their God well. We have this idea today. We talk about bearing the family name or bearing the company name. Like when I worked with Logos, we would go to different events and wear the shirt with the logo. So you go out and you are a representative of the company. If you're a jerk, that means that people are going to perceive the company in a negative way. Anyone who has a job or considers the reputation of their family important is going to get this idea immediately. You don't do certain things, because that brings shame or it puts the thing you represent (family, company, whatever—in this case, your God)... It gives it ill repute. It lowers opinion. It makes inconsequential something that should be of great consequence.

Now I like Wenham says here. He writes:

This commandment is couched in language deliberately chosen to permit a wide range of application, covering every dimension of the misuse of Yahweh's name. [MH: So he says, "It's really broad."] Yahweh had not withheld his name but had freely given it to Moses and so to Israel as both a summary and an extension of the revelation of his Presence. His sovereignty is such that he was not subject to the manipulation of his worshipers, and thus he opened himself to his people with as much fullness as they could stand. Not surprisingly, there are no incantation texts in the OT. Yahweh could not be controlled, or even altered in his set purpose, by men.

The third commandment is directed not toward Yahweh's protection, but toward Israel's. Yahweh's name, specifically the tetragrammaton but in principle *all* Yahweh's names and titles, must be honored, blessed, praised, celebrated, invoked, pronounced, and so shared [MH: and I would add, "believed in"]. To treat Yahweh's name with disrespect is to treat his gift lightly [MH: his gift is himself], to underestimate his power, to scorn his Presence, and to misrepresent to the family of humankind his very nature as "The One Who Always Is."

To bear the name, and bear the name uselessly (bear the name in vain, bear the name poorly)... It's about imaging God. It's about representation. And it's really important. It ties back in to Genesis. Now for those of you coming to the Naked Bible Conference, you're going to hear a little bit more about this, because this is going to be related to the topic that Carmen Imes is going to be talking about, because she did her dissertation on this. So this is something that is a really significant part of biblical theology. So if you're at the conference, you're going to get a good dose of it from Carmen. The next command, Exodus 20:8-11. Let's read that:

⁸ "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Now back to Wenham. I'm going to read something from Wenham's commentary and then Carpenter's. Wenham says:

55:00

The fourth commandment is the longest in the Decalogue, because it is the most expanded of all the commandments. No other commandment has received as much reapplication and as many defining and justifying clauses as this one. The probable reason for its expansion is the difficulty the people of Israel had keeping it, a difficulty attested by the attack of Amos (8:4–8) on the greedy merchants fidgeting for the sabbath to pass.

If you're one of these merchants, "I can't wait for the Sabbath to pass so that I can make money," you've just really missed the point. You've really missed the point of what it means. Now Carpenter writes this:

The Sabbath, or seventh day, as a day of rest and a test for Israel's commitment to keep the way of Yahweh, had already been described in Exod 16:5, 21–30. [MH: That was the manna incident.] Now it is placed under the broader canopy of the covenant and within the context of the Ten Words at Sinai. It has no parallel in the ancient Near East, as Hallo has shown definitively.

I've put the study he's referencing in the protected folder so if you're a Miqlat newsletter subscriber you can get access to these articles. It's William W. Hallo and the title of the article is "New Moons and Sabbaths: A Case-study in the Contrastive Approach." That's from *Hebrew Union College Annual* 48 (1977) and it's an 18-page article. Now Hallo for many years was a professor of Akkadian and Sumerian at Yale. In his day, Hallo was one of *the* voices (*the* top dogs) in cuneiform studies. He was also a champion of the comparative approach—the legitimacy of how cuneiform material (Akkadian, Babylonian, Sumerian, all that stuff) could enlighten our reading of the Hebrew Bible, and even a little bit vice versa. So he was big on the comparative method. He was a champion of it, and he had critics, obviously, who didn't like the fact that any other literature out there might [laughs] endorse what's in the Bible—might actually show that, "Yeah, the biblical writer knew what he was talking about here." So Hallo had critics in his day, in the '60s, '70s and '80s. That was his period, when people were especially attacking biblical archeology (an attack that is still ongoing).

But in this article... Notice the subtitle, "A Case-study in the Contrastive Approach." Not comparative, but *contrastive*. In his article, he talks about the importance of the comparative method. But he says, "Today, we're going to look at something that's actually contrastive." And it's an important study because he goes through Akkadian and Babylonian material about seven-day festivals and even the terminology and says, "Look, none of this aligns well or really even coherently with the Sabbath. The Sabbath is unique." I think it's an important article because out there in wacky internet-land (Middle Earth) this is going to be one of those things where, "Even the Sabbath... The Jews stole that from the Babylonians." No, no, no. It just doesn't work.

So I want to give you a good resource to refute nonsense. This is what we like to do here. Let me read you a little bit of a selection from the *New International Dictionary of the Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*. That's a premier word study resource. It's the entry on Shabbat. (And *shabbaton* is the noun; *shabbat* is the verb.) The entry says this, in part:

Although a cognate exists in Aram., Syr. *šabb^etā* ', it is unlikely that the Heb. nom. שַׁבָּת (middle consonant doubled) [MH: if you have Hebrew, it's the dagesh dot, so in English it would be S-H-A-B-B-A-T] can be derived from the Akk. term *šab / pattu* for "15th day/full moon day," because of the doubled last consonant of the latter [MH: of the Akkadian term].

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If you haven't had Hebrew or Semitic languages or something of comparative morphology, you're not going to get that. But basically, I'll try to decipher this. In Hebrew, the third consonant is doubled: *shabbat*. In the Akkadian, it's the last consonant that's doubled. There is no way linguistically etymologically to account for the difference. So Hallo would agree with this. The NIDOTTE entry is going to be dipping into Akkadian stuff. The one term does not mean the other. The one term does not derive from the other. Linguistically, etymologically, you can't make the case. That's what the entry is drawing on here.

There is also uncertainty about the possible connection between שַׁבָּת and the Akk. seventh, *šibbitîm* (both fem. forms). The Heb. for seven is שֶׁבַע, and there has been no convincing explanation as to why the final consonants changed.

So the Akkadian word for seven or seventh is S-H-B-B-T. The Hebrew for seven is S-H-B, then *ayin*. It's not a T. And there is no linguistic interchange between *ayin* (that last consonant, which looks like a backwards Y) and T. So even this... I'm pointing this out because this is what you're going to hear on the internet. This is what you're going to read on the internet. "Well, the Akkadian word for seven is spelled like Hebrew *shabbat*." Yeah it is, but you're overlooking the fact that Hebrew seven isn't the same word. And when you get the thing that's actually calendrical... The Akkadian term that refers to the calendar pattern (*Shab pattu*), that doesn't align with *shabbat* because of the doubling of different consonants. Linguistics matter. Comparative linguistics matter. Comparative philology and etymology matter. I realize in internet-land, it doesn't matter. And you're going to be deceived by what looks like a visual similarity that actually if you knew how to work with the languages you would see that these aren't the same. But in internet-land, they're close enough. People are duped into thinking that one thing derived from the other when it actually didn't. So I'm trying to give you resources here and alert you to the fact that when you see this kind of stuff online, don't buy into it. Don't buy into it. The people who actually work with the languages know that it's nonsense. I sure wish more of them would comment on the nonsense. But hey. There we are. Now back to the entry and we'll wrap it up here.

Despite inconclusive ANE comparative evidence and fruitless etymological speculation, sevenfold chronological divisions can be found in Ugaritic texts: seven years (*Dnl* cycle); seven days (*Krt* legend). This does not presuppose any universal sevenfold chronology in the ANE [MH: there just isn't any except for the Sabbath], but it does indicate a certain tendency to use a sevenfold division for whatever reason (Kapelrud, 494–99).

And Hallo would say there was just a fondness for the number seven, but there's no system in the ancient Near East of having a seven unit of time that is more than just a singular event. There's no annual seven cycles. There's no annual jubilee pattern cycles anywhere else except in Israel. This is just the fact. But out there in the internet, you'll read and hear other things to the contrary and they are misinformed.

So for our purposes, I'm not going to fill the episode with more speculations. This is where we're going to drop it. I try to get you the resources and alert you to the fact that Assyriologists (people who are serious), Babylonian, Akkadian, Sumerian experts like Hallo who taught at Yale for many years, are not persuaded *at all* that the Israelite sabbath derives from anything else in the ancient Near East. Now recall since we brought up Exodus 16... Exodus 16 (the manna incident) was the first time in the Torah that the noun "sabbath" (*shabbat*) occurred. It occurs four times there. So if you concorded it, you're not going to see "sabbath" (the noun) back in Genesis. The first time you ever see it is Exodus 16. The verb "rest" (*shabbat*—the verb), of course, does occur in Genesis. It does occur in the creation account. And Hallo, who is cited in Carpenter (so this is quoting Carpenter, but he's citing Hallo), argues as follows:

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... the sabbatical idea of Israel permeated the legislation of Israel, and the building of the sacred tabernacle was not to impinge on this holy day. As one of two positive commands, it promises great benefit to those who honor the Sabbath with awareness that Yahweh is Lord over this holy time in a special way. The recognition of the day is not, in this motive clause, tied to nature or to human culture, but is linked to creation and the Creator... At creation Yahweh first hallowed this Sabbath because on it he ceased from his labor. The Sabbath, for Israel and in the scheme of creation itself, was a part of the texture of God's created order, an essential part of the matrix of reality.

Now Deuteronomy 5:15, of course, links the Sabbath to the deliverance from Egypt. So there are other contexts and motivations for Sabbath. But it's kind of interesting that on one hand, the Sabbath is linked to the resting of God in creation (it's part of the fabric, the matrix, of reality, as Carpenter says) and then on the other hand it's linked to taking Israel out of bondage. Carpenter writes this:

Yahweh had redeemed them from their slavery in Egypt. This is a new act of creation, for the people of God were created anew at the exodus event. All social classes and even animals were to be allowed to observe it—it was a gracious gift. The Israelites affirmed Yahweh as God, their redeemer and Creator, on a weekly basis by keeping this day.

So there's actually a connection. Why is it that the Sabbath is linked not only back to creation in Exodus, but in Deuteronomy is also linked back to the removal of Israel from Egypt? Because it's a supernatural act of creation. It's creating a people. It's a re-creation of God's family on earth. And it is miraculous because, why? Because look how it was accomplished: the plagues, control of the Creator over creation, defeat of the gods of Egypt. And out of all of that comes this people. So it is perceived by the Israelites—by the biblical writers—as being connected. The creative idea and the new national status idea are ideas that are connected.

Now I would suggest to you that this is in part why Jesus could refer to himself as the Lord of the Sabbath. Why? What's the logic? He was the Passover Lamb and the new redeemer of God's people. And I would even add, if the destroying angel at the last plague is, in fact, the Angel of Yahweh (the Son, as it were, in visible human form), then he was also Egypt's judge as well. You could have Jesus performing, even foreshadowing, his role as judge of evil. And isn't it interesting that we get the Egyptian plagues in the book of Revelation? I'll just stop there because I'm not into eschatology. But there we go. Literarily speaking, theologically speaking, there might be a connection there. And I would suggest there is. Connecting all these things to Jesus. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath because he is the new redeemer out of bondage. He is the agent of creation in New Testament theology. He's linked back to the God of Sabbath by these things. So he can rightly say, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath." Carpenter adds another thought:

God did not circumscribe his sacred day of rest; his people were then, and now at Sinai, invited to enter into that holy time and space and to share it with their Redeemer-Creator God.

Now what he's getting at here is, if you think back to Genesis, the seventh day God rests. And this is like, God is now in the state of resting. He's done with creation. He's now in the state of resting. So in theory, the seventh day, the time of rest, extends indefinitely, which is part of the logic as to why it was a thing to be remembered and it was cyclical throughout all time, not just some isolated individual feast or festival. He doesn't limit it.

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God did not circumscribe his sacred day of rest; his people were then, and now at Sinai, invited to enter into that holy time and space and to share it with their Redeemer-Creator God. G. von Rad and recently [Walt] Kaiser have emphasized

this much-neglected theme in OT and NT theology. The ultimate rest for God's people is realized when his presence dwells among them.

See that's really... When you rest on the Sabbath, you're supposed to be picturing yourself at home with the Lord, because the earth is God's temple (back in Genesis in creation). God has made himself a place to live. He's made earth, which is fit for human habitation. But he's also made Eden, the divine abode. So heaven has come to earth and he's going to rest there. He's going to have family time now. He's going to enjoy this. And so you're supposed to be thinking in that mode. You're invited to think in that mode and to join God in his rest when you do this.

The ultimate rest for God's people is realized when his presence dwells among them. He will dwell among them in the wilderness in the tabernacle in a more permanent way than in the pillars of fire and cloud; and more so when he plants them in his prepared location [MH: the land, the place where God will chose to set his name] (15:15; 25:8–9; 29:42–46; 40:34–38). Exodus advances this theme significantly and maintains the promises to the fathers and looks to the future (3:15–17; 13:3–5; 32:13–14; 33:14). Israel's rest of *שָׁלוֹם* (*shalom*) had historical goals, but these goals expanded to include eschatological parameters and are ultimately realized in the NT and even later in the new heavens and the new earth through Christ [MH: The book of Hebrews dealt with this a lot, "entering into God's rest" and "our rest is Jesus." Go back to the series in Hebrews.] (Heb 3:1–4; Rev 21:1–4)... Yahweh's new people are commanded again to enter into a closer relationship with him by observing his Sabbath. His call is a call to begin to restore the image of God in persons by imaging his [MH: own] behavior. But to redeem fallen humanity he had to interrupt and work on his seventh day [MH: to deliver his people]. To save life on the Sabbath was good. The observance of the Sabbath by Israel was a clear mark that they were the newly created people of Yahweh, on whom he was once again conferring his guidance in the way of holiness, righteousness, love, and wisdom.

Now God had to... His rest was interrupted. He had to go back to action in Egypt and rescue his people. Now that they're out, now we have rest again. That's the whole point. I would suggest, as well, that this provides some context for Jesus' statement that the Sabbath was created for man and not man for the Sabbath. The Sabbath was created for man. The rest is what it is so that God's family can be with him at rest in his house (in his world). Man wasn't created for that; that was created for man. Pete Enns (we're going to end with this) has a nice summary section here. He writes this:

This is a reconnection with the Garden of Eden as Israel sits poised to enter the land of Canaan, the new garden. As God ordered the universe in Genesis 1, he is now giving Israel order in its existence amid the chaos of the world around them.

By resting on the seventh day, Israel is not just following God's command, but actually following God's lead [MH: his example]. They are doing what he himself did first. This pattern, therefore, is not a burden but a delight and high honor. By ceasing his own work on the seventh day, God declared it to be different, separate—or, as the commandment puts it, "holy." The Israelites, too, are to "keep it holy" (v. 8) by remembering it.

The first four commandments concern our conduct toward God; the remaining six concern our conduct toward others. But we should not force too sharp a distinction between these two foci, as if the first four are "religious" and the last six "social" or "ethical." The laws concerning conduct toward others are still commands from God. They are still his laws, so that breaking any commandment, even one against a fellow Israelite, is an offense toward God. That is, there is no sphere in ancient Israelite life that is "secular."

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Or without God. I think that's really a nice summary and creates a segue to Part 3 when we get into those last six commands. But I really liked the notion of looking at the Sabbath, and really all these laws... Because bearing the name is about... Just think of it:

I am the Lord your God who brought you up out of Egypt. Don't make graven images.

God cannot be represented adequately by anything in creation. He is other than creation. He is uncreated. Consequently, you must not bow down to anything made with human hands. You only bow down to the uncreated Creator who is your God, entering into covenant with you, Yahweh of Israel. Look at that. That has to do with images—imaging. It's the wrong use of imaging. And then it transitions to bearing the name. That's imaging. It's representation. And now we have Sabbath. We imitate God. We image God. The imaging and the law... These things are really tied together. And you get the last six, how you treat other people. Who are other people? Imagers! It's how you treat other imagers.

So this is a really big deal, and I think it's worth pointing out because we typically look at the law as something either to earn brownie points with God, to put God in our debt, or some kind of ridiculous burden. Or "Thank God I don't live under the law." A godly Israelite wouldn't look at it that way. "This is our chance to imitate God, to image him, to represent him, to be his proxy to people who don't know him, and to treat each other well." That was the law. It doesn't sound too bad when you actually look at it the way it should be looked at. Not as a system of bondage where... Look, we're humans. We want autonomy. We don't like anyone telling us what to do. It's part of the flesh. But if you actually look at what the law was supposed to mean, it's not a system where you earn God's love. God already loves you. You're in his family. You're supposed to believe and be

loyal—show that you believe that God loves you, show that you believe that God is who he is by the way you live. Treat him well. Treat everybody else well. The law... Like Jesus said, you can reduce it all to two things: love God and love your fellow man. It's not burdensome when it's perceived and enacted in the right way. But that isn't what people do. It's not what humans do. We tend to basically ruin everything we touch. [laughs] And here we go again. This is why Paul could say the law was holy and just and good, but it makes us aware of our need to be saved by an external savior (God—Christ). So it serves that purpose as well, ultimately because we're fallen. But in and of itself, in principle, I think we need to try not to lose sight of what it really meant. And I think tying it to imaging will help us do that.

TS: Alright, Mike. What can we expect for Part 3 next week?

MH: In Part 3 we'll get through the rest of the commands. I think that's certainly manageable. We'll get through the Decalogue in Part 3.

TS: Sounds good. We'll get people out with that. And with that, Mike, I just want to thank everybody for listening to the Naked Bible Podcast! God Bless.