***Lights in the World - PH41-01

Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 2:14-15***

We are studying the role of the believer as a light in the world, and thus far we have been examining the subject of the basis of ethics in America today. We have been doing this on the basis of Philippians 2:14-16 where Paul calls upon us to be lights in this unenlightened age.

**Morality**

The biblical position of absolute morality we see widely rejected, and as a matter of fact, increasingly unknown by American youth today. The new basis for morality or ethics is one's personal opinion as to what is the ethical thing to do as per a particular situation. Thus, there are no absolutes for what is right, and for what is wrong. The new morality says that the guide to our conduct should be love, and to do that means to act with good intentions, and to do that which produces good for most people.

However, the Bible tells us that acting in love is obeying the absolute statements of right and wrong of the Word of God. You cannot act in love unless you obey the moral absolutes of the Word of God. For this reason, Satan constantly seeks to belittle the Word of God and Bible doctrine in order to enslave people with his human viewpoint principles. But God's divine viewpoint declares that the Word of God lives and abides it forever. Nothing the Bible says, therefore, can ever be set aside or abrogated. The Bible has a life which is always relevant, and it is necessary in a changing world.

The moral code of the Bible is the same thing that you get when you buy a new car. It's the manual by which God tells us how we function; how we will work properly; and, how our lives will not work properly. It's the important manual. Without it, society disintegrates.

Biblical morality is the thing that keeps Satan from realizing his goal. His goal is always a totalitarian one-world government. Socialism and communism were born in the mind of Satan because they are his instruments to achieving his goal of one-world control. It is biblical morality that frustrates his realizing this goal. Once the church is removed from the earthly scene through the rapture, biblical morality will be a thing of the past. Then situation ethics (the so-called new morality) will take the front row in human conduct, and there will be absolute, totalitarian, complete domination of every human being. Freedom will be gone.

Well, the moral disorientation of our own country is even more evident on the international scene when we support such organizations as the United Nations, which is not above welcoming a terrorist organization like the Palestine Liberation Organization into its midst, and to give it a royal welcome.

**American Society**

So as we look upon American society today, what do we see? Well, we see that events in a society are not a series of isolated and detached links. One link leads to the next. So history is a connected chain. The older generation has produced the current younger American generation with its emphasis on freedom from morals, permissiveness, and relativism. This is finding expression in drugs; bombings of university and government buildings; and, public demonstrations of nudity.

There was a time in American society when Bible doctrine and its moral standard were widely regarded as the authority in all these matters of faith and practice. Most Americans once thought in terms of absolutes of morality. This moral standard was rigidly enforced in all the institutions of our society. There were violations, but they were always secret violations. Publicly, the absolute standards of Scripture were maintained.

However, religious liberalism first attacked the authority of the Bible; then it attacked the existence of a personal God; and, then it viewed man as an independent machine who is reacting to drives that he cannot be held responsible for. So the result was the concept of existentialism which says, "Live for the moment. Exist for this moment alone because life has no purpose; it has no meaning; the past has no effect on the future; there is no truth; and, there are no absolutes." All of this was a series of steps that began eating away at American society because of new concepts which were now being tolerated.

Public communication media, glorified liberal theology, and middle class Americans swallowed Satan's bait. Along came Fletcher's new morality, and it was the easiest thing in the world for people to accept. American parents have a memory of biblical moral values, but they no longer have a basis for them. This is because parents themselves have rejected the Bible, and they question the existence of a personal God. So when they tell their children, "I want you to be good," the kid looks at his parents puzzled, "What's good?" Well, the parent says, "This and this and this." He names a few of the commandments. The kid says, "Why?" The parent says, "Well, because, you know. Just because." There was a time they could say, "Because the Bible says so. Because God says not to do this." Then you could say to a kid, "Be a good girl," and she understood what you meant. No more. The older a youngster is, the less he understands a remark like, "Be a good man," or "be a good woman." That no longer has content once the Word of God was rejected and the existence of a personal God was denied.

So why not do all the previously forbidden immoralities? Parents and teachers can only give trivial reasons for not cheating in school: "You'll fail. What will our friends say when they find out. You need to learn this." So the kid says, "Who cares?" What American parents are seeing in their children is the consequences of the horrendous moral misconceptions which they themselves gave to their children. So if we in this country do not turn 180 degrees back to the legitimacy of biblical morality, we too will follow the pattern of ancient nations like Rome, and what almost became the case of modern nations like Chile, where leaders, while elected legitimately, lack biblical morality to make their authority legitimate. The next generation of Americans won't even have the memory that their parents do of what is right and wrong. All that they will have is what currently everyone agrees is acceptable.

So I say, "Back to God; back to sin; back to judgment; back to salvation; and, back to doctrine." Christianity is true even if nobody ever believes it or lives it. It's an absolute. Christians are to be lights of this world in this generation of moral corruption. This generation has been turned aside from biblical absolute morality to relative morality of the current situation. I say, "Back to the Daniels; back to the Josephs; and, back to the Shadrachs, Meshachs, and Abednegos." If we do not go back to them, then there is only one direction for us. That's more lying; more rioting; more stealing; more murder; more sexual perversion; more pursuit of equality; more loss of freedom; communism; and, despair.

When someone like the terrorist of the PLO can be given the royal welcome that he was given in the United Nations, to which our country is so closely joined, we have the most pathetic classic example of how far we have fallen. Remember that it was the PLO which in 1972 killed the athletes at the Munich Olympics. That was the PLO that did that. It was the PLO who sat around the table with their planning crew and said, "Here's the school of Ma'alot. A group of Jewish children will be visiting it. Storm in on them and slaughter them." They did. It was the PLO who said, "We're going to get the United States ambassador at Khartoum." In 1973, they killed our ambassador. It was the PLO terrorists who have repeatedly murdered Israeli mothers and children caught at home without their fathers around, and have murdered them.

It was a happy note to realize that many American publishers recognized the hypocrisy of the moral standards of the United Nations, and spoke out with severity in spite of the United Nations' supposed dedication to peace. The Richmond Times Dispatch editor said, "The U.N. General Assembly exhibited once again its moral degeneration by according Arafat a warm welcome including a standing ovation, and all the protocol normally reserved for heads of state. Arafat's message was clearly uncompromisingly revanchist. He would restore the Palestine that existed before 1948, and destroy the existing Jewish state. Yet it was the United Nations that decided in the aftermath of World War II and the Nazi Holocaust that the historic Jewish aspiration for statehood ought to be honored.

"All signs are that a U.N., now controlled by an Afro-Asian communist coalition, whose ranks have been swollen by admission of many so-called emerging nations, many of them dictatorships, would side with Arafat in the desire that the U.N.-aided creation of Israel be repealed. This aim very likely could not be realized by actions short of a second holocaust for the Jewish people. It must be an especially bitter pill for a people that look to the United Nations for moral leadership after Adolf Hitler to realize that the enemy has now become the United Nations."

These men have expressed that which many have discerned concerning the world organization--that it is not based upon biblical morality, but it is based upon situational morality. But indeed, since this organization is destined to be Satan's world control organization, in all likelihood, then it must indeed be functioning on his principles of morality rather than that of the Word of God.

**Our Christian Heritage**

Well, what's the way back? That's what concerns us today. We've come a long way from that which constitutes our Christian heritage in this nation.

1. The way back requires, first of all, that the Bible must now be proclaimed as the revelation from God with final authority in matters of morality. Again, we have to begin sounding forth to the American public the fact that the Bible *is* the Word of God--not that it *contains* the Word of God, but that it *is* the Word of God. It is not that sometimes it strikes you as the Word of God, but that *it is the very, very words of God*. Therefore, when it speaks, you cannot dismiss it.

Well, that's the first thing we have to do on the road back. That is to get back to the authority of the Bible. You say, "Well, that's good. That's what churches are doing." No, they're not. The very thing the churches are doing is degrading the Word of God; is dismissing it; and, is making it an immaterial thing in the lives of people. Do you know how they're doing it? It's like one of my sons recently said. He had attended a church service in a very large church in the Dallas area, and he said he simply could not believe it. Here was this man whom every one of you would immediately know because he is so well-known. All of his sermon, before this group of thousands of people, was a series of 5 illustrations all hooked together. The congregation laughed; and the congregation was sad; and the congregation punched one another; and, they all went out feeling happy. And the one thing they did not have was God's thinking dignified.

So it is the preachers who are mostly at fault for dismissing the Word of God as being crucial, and the critical factor in a person's thinking. That's the first step back: to start putting the Word of God where it belongs. That means getting yourselves with preachers who are expository explainers of the Word of God, and that's all they understand themselves to be. If you want somebody to hold your hand; and to tickle your fancy; to make you laugh; and, to make you cry, then watch your television screen.

1. Another step we need to take is that we as believers must exemplify the morality in our own lives (Matthew 5:16). We have to become, as Paul calls upon us in Philippians to become, lights in the world. We have to act upon these principles ourselves.
2. Thirdly, we must recognize the human viewpoint origin of the world's ethical values. What the world believes to be right and to be wrong comes from human viewpoint opinions. Therefore, we must understand that these are not acceptable. Just because most people agree that something is all right to do does not make it right.
3. Fourth, we must seek out the divine viewpoint value system of Bible doctrine. We have to get into a church that has a functioning pastor-teacher, and stay out of churches that have a pastor who is under the domination of a board of elders or whatever else they may call them. Get into a church that will recognize the fact that some people are going to heaven and some people are going to hell, and will also tell people that. Some believers are earning rewards and some believers are wasting their lives with human good production, and they'll tell them that too.

It is time that you went to a church where the preacher is going to point out to you, for example, that the Jewish people are not just fine folks who are serving God in their own way, and somehow they're going to make it through to God. Just stop and think that the Jews, those poor pathetic people over the centuries, have been the brunt of oppression and persecution as they continue to be in parts of the world today. But has it ever occurred to you that the full impact of the Jews screaming at Pilate when he said, "I'm innocent of the blood of this just Man," and they screamed back, "His blood be upon us and our children," and God in heaven looked down and said, "So be it?" And upon the Jew, there descended a darkness relative to the person of Christ, so that the Bible tells us there is a blindness upon the Jew such that he cannot recognize that Jesus is the Messiah that he was looking for. Has it ever occurred to you that the Jew who has suffered so much on this earth, when he dies, he goes straight into hell, and experiences the worst suffering that he has ever suffered?

You're not going to hear famous evangelists get up on public television and say that to the Jews. Nor are you going to hear famous religious leaders stand up and say, "Jack Benny has died. Jack Benny had 80 years. Jack Benny was a practicing Jew. Jack Benny was a man who had gained the world: fame; honor; a man of great talents and great capabilities; and, a likable human being. But in all likelihood, He did not know Christ as His Savior. Thus, here's a man that all the world will honor now as he is laid to rest in some cemetery. Before us comes the scriptural question: 'What will it profit a man if he has gained the whole world and lost his own soul?' The saddest part about the death of Jack Benny is that he has gained the world, and lost his soul." Do you think some evangelist, some leader of prophetic knowledge, is going to get up publicly and tell people that about Jack Benny, in order that all the rest of the people who have gained the world may stop and pause and think for just a moment as to where they are heading?

This is what was meant the other day when we had our demonstration on the evangelism issue and the using of the chart of the ages for explaining where history is moving. It is quite a shock to point out to a person, "I believe that Jesus Christ has come to provide me with eternal life. I believe what the Bible says, and I've accepted it. I'm going to die on that basis. Now, if I die and discover that none of this was true, I haven't lost anything. But if you who reject this; who reject this Savior; and, who reject the authority of the Bible, if you die in that condition and you discover this is true, you've lost everything. Are you ready to take a gamble like that?"

When you tell a person, an unbeliever, something like that, it brings him up short. He has to stop and think, "Am I really to take a gamble like that with my time? If the Bible is right, then I'm going to spend eternity in the torments of hell--never to be released from it. I've got an awful lot to lose if I'm wrong and the Bible is right." My advice to people in that condition is: just don't die. I'm telling you, friend, you are going to lose if you do.

That's the kind of talk that brings people up short to the realization of what they're facing. But instead, we love to get the high and mighty entertaining us in our evangelistic campaigns, but we do not point out where the high and the mighty are going; who have gone; and, who have rejected Christ. When Jack Benny dies, everybody's attention is focused on a man who has gained the world. That's the time to point out the contrast of what in all likelihood, he probably lost.

1. The point for this return has to be with our children. This is the fifth thing we must do on the way to return. We must begin to teach our children Bible doctrine within the family. It is natural for a child to learn things from his parents, and he does--good or bad. And it only takes one generation of children, well-trained in doctrine, to reverse a national trend such as we are in now. Freedom is absolutely necessary to enable us to teach doctrine. This is why Satan is forever trying to destroy freedom. Freedom is dependent upon biblical morality. That's why Satan is trying to undermine biblical morality. If he can destroy biblical morality as the practice of a society, he will destroy the freedom of that society, and will then remove the opportunity of parents to teach their children doctrine. And when parents cannot teach their children, or do not elect to teach their children, the nation will disintegrate, and we'll go out of existence.

It has happened again and again and again. Freedom is not self-perpetuating. Each generation of children has to be prepared to preserve freedom through military means if necessary. The United States today is at the lowest ebb of its history in the knowledge of Bible doctrine. This is reflected very clearly and increasingly in our weakening of our standard of living; our diminishing of our world influence; our dwindling economic power; and, our increasingly diminishing military might.

But there is no such thing as a moral vacuum. We have rejected the morality of the Word of God in our social institutions. But by the same token, we have opened the door to immorality. There is no such thing as a moral vacuum. If you do not stand with the morality of Scripture, you will stand with the immorality of Satan.

A grace oriented Christianity is the hope of our nation, but it is very rare. What we need so desperately in this country is an evangelist who has national stature; who is grace oriented; who is, on the one hand, not legalistic, as so many old-time fundamentalists were; and who, on the other hand, is not engaged in accommodations to the liberal churches and to the liberal mentality--the liberal theologians. We need that man who is a grace oriented evangelist; who knows his business; who knows the doctrine of salvation; who is able to, with the power of God, capture the hearing of the general public; and, then to differentiate what happens when a Jack Benny has gained the world and when he has lost his own soul. We need that man who will stand publicly and make that kind of declaration. We desperately need an evangelist in this nation of national stature who is oriented to the Word of God and who is not compromising. We do not have one.

We need an evangelist who at the same time will dignify the pastor-teacher concept in the local church ministry, and who will promote the fact that God's people can only survive in any situation, including an apostate nation, as they are taught the doctrines of the Word of God. That man will dignify that kind of teaching. We desperately need people to become aware of the difference between the nice Bible church where everybody is sweet, and everybody calls you up so they can pray with your problems for you (which is alright, if the Lord leads you to do that, and you want to ask somebody to do that). But that is not the thing that causes you to make it in your spiritual life. You should ask people to pray for you. It is not bad for you to come by and say, "I'd like you to pray with me, and come and see me." And people do that, and I appreciate their doing it. But I also know that after I've gotten through praying with them, the thing that's going to carry this man or woman through is the doctrinal understanding they have. And if I haven't taught him, this person is not going to make it in their problem. That's the point.

We need to get back to trying to dignify, in the minds of the general public, that there are churches, and then there are churches. Spiritual revival always comes from the teaching of the Word of God to people. Jonah saved the Assyrian empire when he bestirred revival in Ninevah in 756 B.C., and the Assyrian empire, which was on the brink of going out of existence, and then it rose to a magnificent power for another 100 years. Why? Because the people in that generation turned back to doctrine.

The Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar were a bunch of splintered little tribes. Nebuchadnezzar brought them together, and he put a man named Daniel, who was oriented to doctrine, in the position of authority over the nation. Daniel began setting national policies that were based upon divine viewpoint. The Chaldean Empire rose to dominate the world.

Later, under Belteshazzar, the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar was a clunker from the word "go," and he turned to human viewpoint policies. The nation deteriorated, and finally was conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire.

Great Britain is a prime modern example of how a nation can rise and decline as per its devotion to Biblical principles. In the time of the Puritan era, it was not uncommon, it was said, to be able to walk by a house and to hear a father reading the Bible and explaining doctrine to his children. What was the result? The result was there were group of Englishmen who arose in the Puritan era who were able to colonize three continents, and men and women who brought the gospel to millions in Africa and in China and in India. And whenever England strayed from the Word of God, she began to decline. God, in His mercy, enabled the nation to survive by bringing a Presbyterian revival; a Quaker revival; and, the Methodist revivals. All of them brought England back from the brink of national disaster.

But in the 19th century, England embraced two very defective satanic notions. One was evolution, and the other was the concept of Fabian Socialism. Fabian Socialism is a creeping socialism. It is one that is brought about gradually so that people are not aware. Fabian Socialism is illustrated by the frog that you put in a pot of cold water, and you put him on the stove. Because the frog is cold-blooded, he just adjusts to the temperature around him. So you put him in a pot of cold water. It's cold. Gradually, you heat the water, and he adjusts to it as you go along. He doesn't have a stable temperature. Gradually the water gets up to the boiling point, and the water's bubbling, and he's looking around and saying, "Boy, it sure is getting steamy in here." Then he wakes up dead because he is boiled alive. That's Fabian socialism. England accepted that. Gradually, through very legitimate means, socialism was introduced into the English form of life.

Where is she today? She's a fourth rate power that hangs onto existence because of us. She can no longer stand up and sing, "There will always be an England, and England shall be free." Now she has to say, "There will always be an England, as long as there's a USA." Once she could stand and say, "The sun never sets on the British Empire." That was her doctrinal heritage. When she turned against doctrine, she became a fourth rate nobody.

**The Ten Commandments**

So we're going to begin to look today at the Ten Commandments, the epitome of the moral code. Please turn to Exodus 20. The Ten Commandments are something that most everybody knows. Every unbeliever is acquainted with the idea of the Ten Commandments. This is not anything unusual. This is one of the passages that's well-known to believers and unbelievers, and politicians love it. They just get sweaty under their armpits over the Ten Commandments. They just love it. This is one of the things they can really take a stand on very forcefully, and there is one thing they know--that nobody will criticize them over taking a stand for the Ten Commandments.

People generally view the Ten Commandments in the wrong way. For example, they view it as a means of gaining salvation. It is not. Some of them, Christians, for example, view it as a means for gaining spirituality. It is not. The Ten Commandments is a unit. It is part of the Law system. It was given specifically to the Jewish nation as their way of life. The Ten Commandments never applied as a code to the gentiles, and it never applied as a code to Christians. It always apply to believers under the Old Testament Mosaic order; that is, to the Jewish nation and to the Jewish people. It was enforced during the dispensation of the Law. It is part of three sections. The Mosaic Law was made up of, first, the commandments that we refer to here as the Ten Commandments. That was the moral part of the law; the ordinances had to do with the religious regulations of the law; and, the judgments which had to do with their social regulations. This is one absolute unit. You cannot break up the Mosaic Law. It's either all enforced or none of it is enforced.

We have this notion being suggested that, "Well, we don't bring the sacrifices anymore, and we don't have to circumcise boys anymore. But the Ten Commandments: that does apply to us--that still is in force." The Ten Commandments are actually ten general principles which later are amplified with specific cases that come under these basic principles. These are specific moral absolutes, and only they are named, not because these only are sins, but because these ten are the epitome of the moral basis for the preservation of human freedom. I stress that again to you: the purpose of the moral code is to preserve freedom.

Now, immediately, somebody is going to say, "Oh, well, you're antinomian. You're a lawless person. You're saying that we can break all these Ten Commandments." No. Dr. Fletcher says that. I didn't say that. The Word of God doesn't say that. Actually, what we're telling you is that God has various ways of expressing His moral essence. In the era of the Jewish people under the Law, He expressed it in the Ten Commandments. In the New Testament, He does it in a different way.

For example, the first commandment is repeated in the teachings of grace. By that I mean that the books of the New Testament were written for the guidance of the new age of grace, the church age.

Under the grace age, for example, we see the first commandment repeated, which is not to have any other gods beside the true living God. We have, for example, Acts 14:15 that repeats the same commandment, and 50 other New Testament passages as well repeat that commandment.

The second commandment you'll find in 1 John 5:21--no worship of images. There are 12 other passages in the New Testament that repeat that one.

The third commandment, about not taking God's name in vain, you'll find in James 5:12, and four other passages in the New Testament.

The fourth commandment about keeping the Sabbath day is never repeated in the New Testament. That is one of the Ten Commandments that is not at all applied to Christians. Christians are no longer required to worship on Saturday. The pattern of the New Testament was to have the new day of worship, which is Sunday, the anniversary of the Lord's resurrection. It is a more fitting day for it.

Fifth: honor your father and mother. We find that in Ephesians 6:1 plus six other passages.

Commandment number six against murder: we find that repeated in 1 John 3:15 and six other passages.

The seventh commandment against adultery: 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, and twelve other passages.

The eighth commandment against stealing is repeated in Ephesians 4:28 and six other passages.

The ninth one is the commandment against bearing false witness, or lying. We find it in Colossians 3:9 and four other passages.

The commandment against coveting what belongs to another we find repeated in Ephesians 5:3 and nine other passages in the New Testament.

The Mosaic Law does not constitute a way of life for the Christian in the age of grace. But the moral code is repeated in the teachings of grace in a way that is applicable to believers who function with an indwelling Holy Spirit, having His power available to them to obey the law which the Jew of the Old Testament did not have.

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, the founder and first president of Dallas Seminary, in his Systematic Theology, volume 4, on page 211, makes this statement: "The teachings of grace are not only gracious in character and of the very nature of heaven itself, but they are extended to cover the entire range of the new issues of the life and service of the Christian. The Ten Commandments require no life of prayer; no Christian service; no evangelism; no missionary effort; no gospel preaching; no life and walk in the Spirit; no fatherhood of God; no union with Christ; no fellowship of saints; no hope of salvation; and, no hope of heaven.

"If it is asserted that we have all these because we have both the law and grace, it is replied that the law adds nothing to grace but confusion and contradiction, and that there is the most faithful wanting in the Scriptures against the admixture. A few times, the teachings of the law are referred to by the writers of the epistles by way of illustration. Having stated the obligation under grace, they cite the fact that this same principle obtained under the law. There is, however, no basis here for a commingling of these two governing systems. The Law of Moses presents a covenant of works to be wrought in the energy of the flesh. The teachings of grace present a covenant of faith to be wrought in the energy of the Spirit."

For this reason, it was necessary for the principles of morality, which reflect the essence of God, which were given to the Jews in the Ten Commandments, to be given in a different context to the believer in the church age in the New Testament Scriptures, and they have been. The Sabbath day was a particular sign of relationship between Israel and God. That's why the Sabbath day was dismissed. It is not fitting that this sign of the Mosaic system should be continued in the grace era.

The Ten Commandments do express the moral principles which are applicable to the human race as a whole. They are applicable for the protection of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The Ten Commandments express the essence of God, and the fact that man is sinful and that he needs a Savior (Galatians 3:19-25). The old sin nature within us constantly seeks to violate the moral standards expressed in the Ten Commandments, and thus to destroy freedom and prosperity during the angelic warfare. That's why morality is important. During this era of the angelic conflict with which we are surrounded, Satan's purpose is to cause us to be immoral so that he can enslave. When a society as a whole violates these ten principles, their nation comes under discipline and even destruction. This happened to the nations of Canaan. So if you see widespread violation of these moral principles in our country, you may anticipate the same kind of national destruction.

Every "thou shalt not" of the Decalogue is a call for the preservation of freedom and happiness. The widespread violation of these moral absolutes by the Jews themselves took them back into the slavery that they escaped when they came out of Egypt. In 586 B.C., they went back into slavery in Babylon because they ignored the warnings of Jeremiah, who was calling out to them that what they were doing was bringing them back to the point of slavery.

**The Introduction to the Ten Commandments**

In Exodus 20, we have the presentation (the introduction) to the Ten Commandments in the first two verses. Exodus 20:1 says, "And God spoke all these words saying." "God spoke." The Hebrew word for God is "elohim." "Elohim" is the name for God in reference to His relationship to the world in general as Creator. This is the word that stresses His role as the ruler of men and of nature. This is the word that indicates the Godhead as a whole. It refers to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as the Godhead: "elohim." It is actually a word of plurality, which is one of the indications that in the Old Testament also there was indication of the doctrine of the Trinity, though not as spelled out as in the New Testament.

These principles of morality came from God Himself. That's the first point I want you to notice here in verse 1. "And God spoke." These are not the rules for conduct that Moses invented, which therefore may be adapted in later ages to later situations. When these ten are rejected, it is the height of human arrogance, and it is the depth of human depravity. For to reject the Ten Commandments is to reject God himself. They originated with Him. It is what God thinks, and what God has declared to be right.

The word "spoke" is the Hebrew word "dabar." The word "dabar" here actually means to lay something out in an orderly fashion. So it indicates that He is going to set in a row some basic concepts. What is it? What is he going to do? He's going to set out certain basic principles of morality. "Dabar" is in what grammatically in Hebrew grammar is called a "piel" stem. The "piel" stem means that it is intensive. That is, throughout human history, God has strongly been declaring these essential forms of conduct for human freedom; for evangelism; for opportunity to teach doctrine; and, for personal happiness. God has stressed and stressed and stressed. Here when He first introduced these concepts, the writer uses this intensive word that God is speaking something to us that is very, very important.

It is in the imperfect (what we would call) tense in the Hebrew which means that God continues to declare these moral principles as always being in effect. These moral principles are unchanging, no matter how Fletcher and Robinson may want to deny that. He is speaking to individual members of society. "God spoke, saying all these words." "All these words" are the ten moral principles which follow in verses 1-17.

The word "saying" is the Hebrew word "amar." The word "amar" means to bring to light, and thus to declare. What God says here is bringing out an orderly expression of moral enlightenment, which is of monumental importance to man. So He uses the word "amar," indicating "enlightenment." This is something that man would not know any other way, and yet, which man must know if he is to survive in this world during the angelic conflict. What God says, He brings with an orderly enlightenment.

"Amar" ("saying") also indicates "the very words of God". These are the very words that God is using. The word "dabar" simply gives us a statement, in general, that God is making a statement, but "amar" indicates enlightenment in very specific words--the very words that God has spoken. It is an infinitive in form which indicates that this is a purpose that God has for the human race, to have this enlightenment.

Now, the first people that need this information are, of course, our own children. I want you to notice the occasion upon which these words were given. "God spoke all these words saying, I am the Lord your God who has brought you out of the land of Egypt and out of the house of bondage." God did not give them the Ten Commandments when they were slaves in Egypt. But the moment they entered freedom, the very first thing that God says is, "I have a declaration to make to you in an orderly fashion of great enlightenment, which is of monumental importance to you to preserve what I have now given you--your freedom." Then He proceeds to give them ten principles that summarize the essence of deity in its expression and conduct. Without these, God says, "Your freedom will again be lost to you." Jewish history has amply proved that when they got away from the moral code, they also got away from the freedom that was so magnificently given them on the shores of the Red Sea. We're going to look at this in greater detail next time.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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