***Lights in the World - PH41-02  
  
Advanced Bible Doctrine - Philippians 2:14-15***

Please open your Bibles to Exodus 20 as we continue our study of the subject of Christians being lights in the world. It may have become evident to you by this time that our study of the Book of Philippians is taking a very definite particular kind of direction. What we are engaged in, actually, is an advanced Bible doctrine study. We are not simply studying the Book of Philippians. If we were just studying the book of Philippians, we could move along at a considerably faster pace. But Philippians is a book that touches upon many major facets of divine viewpoint. As we come to those facets, we are stopping to examine them in depth. The result is an advanced Bible doctrine study.

If you have not gone through our basic Bible Doctrine course, we would recommend to you that you start on that study. Without it, you will be somewhat lost in some directions here; in some of the terminology that we use; and, in some of the concepts that we refer to without explaining because we anticipate that you have some background. So this is an advanced course. But I think if you listen carefully, most of this also is pretty well self-explanatory as we go along.

We have seen that, after 400 years as slaves in Egypt, the Jews crossed the Red Sea, and miracles of miracles, they were free. There were no more slave masters telling them what to do; there were no more feelings of the task master's whip on their shoulders; and, they were no longer having the fruits of their labor taken away from them to be enjoyed by others. They had crossed the Red Sea by an act of divine miracle and wonder of wonders. They were free. They were finally free to exercise their own volition to decide for themselves the details of their lives. They were free to choose.

**Freedom**

Many of us do not fully appreciate in this country what it meant for them to cross the Red Sea and to find that they were free after centuries of slavery. We have never known anything else except the freedom to choose for ourselves. We have never known anything else except the right to exercise our volition. As a matter of fact, we have known it to such a degree that many of us become arrogant and contemptuous in the exercise of that freedom. We distort that freedom into a sense of rights so that we begin demanding certain rights that we do not have a claim to. We do this under the guise of freedom. We are distorting freedom.

Not to have freedom is something that few of us really understand. We have to try to project ourselves into the position of people who have not had freedom. We try to put ourselves in the place of people who once knew freedom, as millions of human beings on the face of the earth at this moment once knew freedom, and now they know the abject slavery under collectivist systems of government.

But the Jews knew what it was to be slaves. They did not fully know what it was to be free men and women. And they didn't know a thing about preserving this marvelous thing that they had now come into. It was a whole new way of life, and they didn't know how to handle it. Furthermore, they didn't understand one of the key features of freedom, and that is responsibility to preserve it. Freedom means responsibility.

So immediately, God, knowing this about them, immediately gave the Israelites the means for preserving their freedom. National and personal freedom depends upon conformity to the character of God in your thinking and in your actions. Freedom always depends upon conformity to the character of God in what you think and in what you do. If you are not compatible in your thinking and in your actions to the character of God, your freedom will gradually be eroded and will be lost.

Conduct compatible with the character of God was therefore revealed to the Jews in a code of absolute morality known as the Ten Commandments. In this declaration, in this presentation, God forcefully declared these moral absolutes in an orderly fashion to Moses on Mount Sinai. So we stress again to you that when we speak about the absolute morality of the Scriptures, we are not speaking to you about something that a great leader like Moses sat down and, as a legislator, decided that the people needed. This was something that he simply transmitted from God. Therefore, these rules are not subject to human revision. These rules were not given because they fit the people at that particular time and place. This is not a situation related to a point in time. These are eternally true because they reflect the character and the essence of God.

So God, very forcefully, in an orderly fashion, laid out ten basic principles which form a protective umbrella for human and national freedom. These absolutes, therefore, are still applicable to humanity today. They are the ground for the survival of any nation. They are the ground for the preservation of our personal freedom of choice. They are the only way that humanity can be preserved during the era of the angelic conflict. That's what we live in right now--the era when Satan is free to be the God of this world, where his demon hosts are free to impose their will upon human beings, to entice human beings into their plans and into their cause. This is the era when the demonic angels under Satan's leadership are in warfare with the living God. You as believers are the target of that combat. So the only way we can survive during this era of the angelic conflict is by obedience to these absolute moral stipulations.

Such moral absolutes, however, are vehemently opposed and vehemently rejected by collectivist mentalities today, such as we find in socialism and communism. Countries which are under these ideologies reject the absolute morality of Scripture. The world today, as a matter of fact, is very rapidly moving toward the destruction of the divine institution of volition. The United Nations is today a collectivist organization. It represents the mentality of humanity as a whole, and the mentality represented in the United Nations is very clearly now that of denying increasingly personal freedom of choice to individuals under the guise of making things better for everybody and for more people. But it does not, in fact, work that way. Collectivists recognize that the Ten Commandments are a threat to their desire to impose their restrictions and their will upon the individual freedom of choice.

So let's look at freedom and its relationship to the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments, as the basis of freedom, is evident by the fact that it was given at the point in time when the Jews had just become free, and they had entered a whole new way of life that they needed to have some guidance to protect. They were not given the Ten Commandments while they were slaves in Egypt. For four centuries, they were slaves, and the Ten Commandments were not given to them. But the moment they crossed the Red Sea into freedom, immediately, they received these guidelines simply because freedom was now a reality with them. Freedom needs always to be preserved.

Satan, of course, immediately began working on the Jews to rob them of their newfound freedom, just as he did with Adam, and just as he still is doing today. The occasion of the giving of the Decalogue then, was to preserve the freedom recently and newly achieved by the Jews from Egypt. Freedom during the angelic conflict always rests on these specific basic moral absolutes. We have them listed for us in Exodus 20.

The use of every "thou shalt not" in this list of absolutes indicates the principle of appeal to individual decision. When God says, "Thou shalt not," it indicates that you can do it if you choose to do it. It is addressed to a people who are free to decide. These absolutes, of course, also include not only what you do outwardly, but what you think. That's where it all begins after all. So the Bible tells us that murder is not only an outward action, but it is also a mental attitude of hatred. Matthew 5:21-22 explain that. Also, the Bible tells us that adultery is not only an external act, but it is a mental attitude of lust. Matthew 5:27-28 explain that to us.

So the moral absolutes include, first of all, the mental attitude. That's where morality begins. People who are negative are negative because they are so in their thinking. It is your mind that makes you negative to a preacher who is explaining the Word of God. It is your mind that makes you negative to a principle that you have heard expounded. It is your mind that makes you negative to warnings; to cautions; to appeals; and, to whatever God may direct toward you. So it begins with the mind, and we must not think of these moral absolutes as simply something external, and that's all that God expects. What God is calling upon us to do is to have a right mental attitude. That's what is necessary to preserve freedom.

So the Decalogue, as the Ten Commandments are called, is a way of evaluating where any nation stands at any point in time in respect to individual freedom. The general acceptance of moral violations by a society means that that nation is on its way out relative to its freedom. The divine institutions are given to us to protect humanity, freedom, and volition. It is the goal of the angelic conflict to destroy this. A free people can resist Satan's plan. Therefore, Satan wants to remove freedom so that he can control people. He can only control people through other people. Therefore, Satan imposes authorities over people who remove their freedom, their ability to choose. Violations of biblical moral standards in time will destroy the divine institutions, and with them, the nation.

**Exodus 20**

In Exodus 20, therefore, we have already looked at Exodus 20:1 where we read, "And God spoke all these words saying." We pointed out that the Hebrew there is telling us that God, in an orderly fashion, forcefully declared these things that follow. These are the words of God and not the words of men.

Now look at Exodus 20:2, which says, "I am the Lord your God who have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." "I am the Lord your God." The word "LORD" you will notice in your English text is all capital letters. This is a way of indicating a specific Hebrew word ("YHWH"). "Jehovah" is the way this Hebrew word is pronounced. We refer to it as the Tetragrammaton which means "the four-letter word." The Tetragrammaton is the most sacred name for God that there is. It means "the self-existent eternal one."

This word was so sacred to the Jewish people that any time that they read it in the Hebrew Bible, they would not even pronounce it. They considered it unbecoming of them as sinners to even let this name pass their lips. So they would substitute another word. Whenever they came to it, they would use another name for God, "Adonai", which is Lord. Actually there is some question whether we even know how this word was originally pronounced because it was never pronounced over the centuries, so its pronunciation was lost. But it is referred to among the Jews as the Tetragrammaton, the four Hebrew letters "YHWH" which together give the most sacred name of God: the name Jehovah. This is the term which is applied to God the Father individually, or to God the Son individually, or to God the Holy Spirit individually. It stresses the fact that God is the absolute One. It is the supreme name of God.

Then it says, "I am the Lord, thy God." The word "God" is the Hebrew word "elohim." "Elohim" is a word that stresses the essence of deity. That is, that He is the Supreme One--that He is the Godhead. It is used of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as a unit, as the Godhead of the Trinity. He is specifically God because He is the one who chose Israel as His special people. Israel was a nation under God.

It is this God, it says, who "brought thee." "I am Jehovah, thy Elohim, who have brought thee." "Brought thee" is a Hebrew word meaning "to lead out." They were led out by Jehovah Elohim. However, in the Hebrew, we have a little more information because it is given to us in the grammatical form which is called the "hiphil" stem, and the "hiphil" stem will indicate a cause. It indicates that God caused them to be led out. This was not a credit to them that they left Egypt. As you know, even after they got out of Egypt, they kept bemoaning the fact that Moses had led them out into this wilderness, out away from all the security that they knew even as slaves, and how they longed for the leeks and the garlic and all the things they used to have back in Egypt. They preferred that to the hazards of freedom, so to speak. It was God who caused them to be led out of that slavery.

It is active voice. The "hiphil" indicates an active voice. That is, that God Himself did it. It is what in the Hebrew is called the perfect tense, which means it's a completed fact. They were free. He says, "I am Jehovah Elohim, thy God, who has caused you to be led out of Egypt, and you are free." Now. Completed. Free from what? They were free from the land of Egypt, the place of their bondage. They were free from the house of bondage. Bondage was their way of life without freedom. They never knew a day when they did not wake up to bondage.

**The Source of Freedom**

Now, this raises a very interesting question to us that we must settle. Many Americans are confused about this. This incident in the Word of God will clarify the origin of freedom. Where does freedom come from? Freedom is the thing that has elevated the United States above every nation of the world. It has literally made it the light and the hope of the world. Freedom is simply the power to act for one's self. It is the ability to choose. It is being able to do what you may elect to do.

I want to read you a story. This is a story about a king who had two sons. He had an older son and a younger son. The time came when the king realized he was going to die, and it was up to him to decide who would be his successor. Therefore, he decided to call his two sons in and ask them two questions. See how you would answer these questions. How you would answer these questions will indicate to yourself what you understand about freedom--if you really know what freedom is; how freedom is secured; and, how freedom is preserved.

The story goes: "One day the great king called his two sons to him and said, 'All my days I have ruled my kingdom with justice. Now it is time for me to retire. I must decide which of you is qualified to inherit the kingdom and rule in my place. Therefore, I wish to ask each of you two questions so that I may decide which of you to choose. Question number one: what do you wish to accomplish as ruler of this kingdom? Question number two: how do you plan to accomplish your desires?'"

Both of these questions are very pertinent to any elected official in any phase of the government of the United States of America today.

"Here is what the elder son said: 'Father, I would like my land to be known as the kingdom of truth, where each man is free to find his own happiness. Therefore, to accomplish this, I will teach my people the laws of truth in all things, and will make them free men and women who are responsible for their own actions and their own welfare.'

"The second son said, 'I would like to be known as the greatest ruler in history who eliminated all the evils of society, such as poverty, famine, crime, and disease. To do this, I will first select the smartest and best-educated people in the land to study the evils in our society, and will make them responsible for finding the cause for them. Next, I shall organize a planning committee from these experts, and authorize them to prepare a scientific system of government that will solve these problems. We will have equal wealth, equal work, and equal rewards. When no one is in need, everyone will enjoy life and the masses will honor my name.'

"After listening to both answers, the old king said, "I will choose my elder son to rule in my place. He will make the wisest ruler.'"

Why? Because the answers of these two sons indicated that one understood that the most important thing in life is freedom. The other son, the younger son, indicated that he had a very defective line of thinking. He thought that the most important thing in life was equality. Therefore, he was going to form a government with experts to create programs which would provide equality. Please remember that *equality under freedom means equal opportunity to demonstrate unequal abilities*. That's freedom, and that's the only equality that is possible in human society. The old king knew that freedom was the critical thing. The younger son showed that he did not esteem freedom, and therefore, the king selected son number one.

However, it may make you a little uncomfortable as you listen to this story, because you may have discovered that the younger son struck a very responsive note in some of your own thinking, which shows how brainwashed and defective has been the influence upon the American mind that our children are reared without understanding what freedom is all about; where it comes from; how it is secured; how it is maintained; and, the implications of it.

So what do we do? We elect presidents who are in the pattern of the younger son. We elect congressmen; we elect senators; and, we elect officials in all areas of our government who are the living image of the younger son, who are going to get the smart, brainy experts together in order to solve our problems for us by imposing restrictions upon our freedom.

You're going to hear a message from the president of the United States very shortly. I can almost guarantee to you that when you get through listening to that message, oriented to the Word of God and to an understanding of freedom as you are, that when you get through listening to it, your heart is going to be saddened. For you will have listened to the funeral oration of a little more American freedom which is being put to death by experts who are solving our problems for us. So many young politicians come along with the idea, "We've got money; we've got brains; we've got talent; we've got know-how; and, Americans can solve these problems." But you cannot solve these problems because there is the old sin nature and there is Satan in the woodpile messing up every good human intention to solve problems. All you can do is control them, and wait and pray for the King, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of Lords, the King of Kings, to get back here and set up the millennium so that we can solve human problems.

No, the world's going to get worse. We elect the younger sons, and we do not realize what it is that we are doing. Had this king appointed his younger son, freedom would have quickly eluded the people. It would have been gone. Now do you see? That is what government tries to do for us--to make life so beautiful for us that we lose our personal integrity. We lose our individualism. Never forget that today around the world, the dirtiest word that you can apply to a human being is that he is an individualist. In American society, this used to be the most esteemed word, but now people only apologetically speak about individualism. This is because the rising acceptable concept is collectivism, and collectivism and individualism cannot go together.

**The Constitution of the United States**

So where do we get freedom? Where has freedom come to us from? Some people say that freedom came to the American public because of our Constitution. But the Constitution is not the source of freedom. We cross that one out. The constitution simply defines freedom as our possession, and it establishes a system of government which is supposed to protect our freedom. Those who wrote the Constitution came to it with this attitude: that the worst thing in the world is government. Therefore, they wrote the American Constitution with this attitude of mind. This has been completely rejected practically in our day, but nevertheless, it is an historical fact. They came to it with this attitude of mind.

They said, "We are going to tell the federal government that it cannot do anything." Now, that's the summary of the Constitution. If you were to say, "Summarize the Constitution of the United States for me," you could summarize it in one sentence by saying, "The Constitution says that the government can't do anything." "Except," you have to add an "except." "The Constitution says that the government cannot do anything except one, two, three, etc." Then it lists several things that the government may do. That is all. Everybody knows that's true. The way the constitution is being undermined, and freedom is being gradually eroded, is because certain of these statements where the founding fathers tried to limit in a very definite statement what the government can do, have been expanded and made elastic, and stuff has been squeezed in that was never in the minds of the founding fathers. They'd be horrified to see that these things are interpreted in this way.

There's one supreme body in the United States today, and that's the Supreme Court. It is accountable to nobody. Once you're on the Supreme Court, you're there for life. It is the one body that doesn't have to face election. It does not have to account to the people. It can do anything it wants. It is without restriction. It is very difficult to change the Constitution to restrain the Supreme Court. It is that court which gradually, depending on who's on it, has undermined the fact that the Constitution says that government can't do anything.

Furthermore, the Constitution says that all rights belong to the states, and to the people of those states. Therefore, in order to make it clear, the founding fathers said, "Now, just because we say that you may do this and this and this, does not mean that, because we did not mention certain other things, that these are not the right of the states. Everything is the right of the states. You can only do these things, and you cannot deny the states any rights. You have no control over the states except in this, this, and this. You can make money; you can raise armies; and, you can deal in foreign matters. That's all. But other than that, you cannot tell a state, "You must bus your children to school." That's what the Constitution says. The Constitution was not designed to deny us freedom. It was not designed to give us freedom. It was just designed to protect freedom. The founding fathers knew that protection of freedom meant restricting government.

**Governments**

Some people say, "Well, freedom comes from governments." Wrong. Governments do not give us freedom. Governments are only designed to protect freedom again. What the government gives, the government can take back. Governments are called upon to protect life, liberty, and our personal happiness. The Magna Carta, which was signed by King John in 1215, granted the nobles certain freedoms. While those freedoms became the foundation of English and even American freedom, the very fact that they had to go to a king showed how disoriented the minds of people had become. They thought that a king had the right to give people freedom, not realizing that people already had freedom from some other source. It was not up to a king or a government to give it.

**Our Founding Fathers**

Some people say, "Well, freedom came from our splendid American founding fathers." Wrong. Those were brilliant men. They invented a fantastic nation, and a fantastic form of government. It is absolutely astounding, as you analyze what those men did, to realize that never in the history of the world before or since has such a brilliant assemblage of men come together that came out with such a fantastic form of necessary government with restrictions that has brought maximum blessing to a maximum number of people, and maximum prosperity. But they did not give us freedom. They understood themselves the source of freedom, as you well know.

**God the Creator**

It was these men who very carefully declared in the Declaration of Independence that freedom comes from the Creator. For when they wrote the Declaration of Independence, you will remember that they said, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed."

You will notice that they recognize in the Declaration of Independence that we are endowed with liberty by our Creator. We are not endowed with liberty by governments; by our Constitution; by the founding fathers; or, by rulers of any kind. It is not the province of governments to give people freedom, and thus it is not the privilege or the place of government ever to remove freedom from people.

Freedom comes from God. They knew it. It was very clear to them that freedom was an inalienable rights that came from God. Consequently, they recognized that no government has the right to take away freedom. Of course, this is confirmed by the Word of God, as you know. In Genesis 1:26-28, we see that freedom was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were told that they could do anything they wanted to do. They were given freedom. They were told they could not do one thing that had to do with a certain tree. They were told that they could enjoy everything that was given by God to them in that garden (Genesis 2:15-19). But Satan led Adam and Eve to violate God's moral restriction upon them. They became slaves of sin and of Satan. They lost their freedom.

Our right of freedom is the design of the Creator, but it is constantly under the threat of the old sin nature. Adam was responsible for the choices he made with his freedom, and the consequences which followed, and so are we. Tyrants throughout history have been trying to substitute for this freedom in one way or another that has come from God, and that has been preserved by the moral absolutes of the Ten Commandments. The greatest tyrant, of course, is the state itself. The state constantly has risen up, trying to claim that it has the right over the lives of people and over freedom for them.

When a people reject the moral grounds of the Ten Commandments, then tyrants of any kind can rise up. The countries that boast that they give people the greatest amount of blessings and benefits are the countries, you will discover, that give people the least amount of freedom. While Russia may boast, "We have no unemployment in our country, and nobody goes without enough food," everybody goes without freedom.

So the Jews here, leaving Egypt, crossing the Red Sea, out of slavery, into freedom, are immediately given the necessary rules for preserving that freedom. We are free today because of the grace of God. We will remain free as the values and standards that Bible doctrine gives us become part of our thinking. The purpose of the Ten Commandments is to restrict sin, not to restrict your freedom. It is to restrict that which destroys freedom, and thus to protect it for your maximum blessing.

**The First Commandment**

So we come to Exodus 20:3, and we have the very first moral absolute for the preservation of freedom which has come to us from God, which is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." The principle here is "no other gods." In the Word of God, there are many subsidiary examples and declarations of this fact of no other gods. "Thou shalt have no other gods." It literally says, "Let there not be to thee." The word "let there be" is the word "haya" which is simply the Hebrew word "to be." It is in what is called the "Qal" stem in Hebrew. It's a statement. It is active voice. It is the believer's responsibility.

However, it is in the imperfect tense, which means it's a future continuing prohibition. "Let there be something continuing in the future." The word "no" is the Hebrew "lo," and "thou" is singular: "to thee." It's the Hebrew word "leka." Because it is singular, it indicates to us that it is directed to individuals. This moral directive of no other gods is not simply to a nation as such, or to a society as such, but to the individuals within that group. "Other gods" is the same word again "elohim." This word "elohim" can be used of the true God, or it can be used of the false gods. It is simply an indication of deity. When it says "other gods," it that means other than "Jehovah Elohim." These are false gods other than the true God.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Here's a critical word. In the Hebrew, it is "alpana." Literally, and more exactly what it says is, "There shall not be to thee another God *beyond* Me." It is not "before Me," but it is "beyond Me." Before Me" is rather misleading as a translation, because it may suggest to our thinking that it is all right to have other gods as long as you don't put them ahead of Jehovah Elohim. That's not what it's saying. It is not alright to have any other god at all. What it is saying is that beyond Jehovah Elohim, the only true God, there is nothing. Polytheism and worship of false gods is a delusion, because beyond Jehovah Elohim there is nothing. Satan has filled the world with false gods--gods with demon powers. But there is only one living true God, and that's Jehovah Elohim.

So the Bible is in effect forbidding an attachment of your soul to another deity. A mental frame of reference will determine your loyalty to God. The Jews from Egypt were still slaves in their souls, and so they were enslaved to many false concepts concerning deities. They were enslaved to the false gods of Egypt, and thus it was no problem for them, when they thought Moses had finally died and left them, for them to invent the golden calf. They knew this in Egypt. What their souls were attached to, they eventually expressed outwardly. But once you go beyond God in your soul, there is nothing but enslavement to a lie. The golden calf was a lie. You give your love then to a false object.

If God is not sovereign and absolute and the only God, and if there are other gods too, then He cannot be sovereign absolute God. If there is more than one God, then no one is supreme. So it's important to know that there is one true God, and to learn His will and His ways. That's the purpose of doctrine. Doctrine remains, though we may reject it. Doctrine frees us from our delusions about God, and our falsehoods.

Here are some implications about the first commandment. The first commandment indicates that God is to be feared because He is the absolute Lord of the universe. If you go beyond Him, there is nothing. We have, in Deuteronomy 6, an expansion in this final farewell address of Moses to the Jewish people before Moses himself dies, and they go into the land. Here in the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses makes a declaration relative to this first commandment of no other gods.

Deuteronomy 6:1-3: "Now these are the commandments, the statutes, and the ordinances which the Lord your God commanded to teach you that you may do them in the land to which you go to possess it. That you might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and all His commandments which I command you--you and your son, and your son's son, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. Hear, therefore, O, Israel, and observe to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may increase mightily as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you in the land that flows with milk and honey."

What Moses has declared here is that respect for God is the essence of sanity; of common sense; and, of contact with reality. All of the blessings will reside upon obedience to the first commandment that they respect; they fear; and they reverence this only God.

"In Deuteronomy 6:4-5 then, Moses gives a statement which is very, very important to the Jews to this day. "Hear, O, Israel. The Lord our God is one God, and you shall love the Lord God with all your heart; with all your soul; and, with all your might." This is a comment on the part of Moses on the first commandment. That's what this is all about here. He is reviewing how they are now going to continue in freedom without him, and he stresses the fact that it's all bound up in this number one thing: no other gods. We're going to look, before we are through, at some other gods. You may say, "Oh, I have no shrines at my house. There are no gods that I worship." Before we are through, you may realize how subtly we ourselves violate this moral absolute.

But Moses here is making this statement, and what he is saying in verse 4 is that the eternally existing One is our God, and He is the unique and only eternally existing One. There you have it right there. The eternally existing One is our God, and He is the only eternally existing One. This is called by the Jews, the "Shema Israel." It is named after the first word in the Hebrew text of Deuteronomy 6:4, "shama." It means "hear." So this is a summary declaration of faith. It's sort of a Jewish declaration of creed. It stresses the fact that Israel's God alone rightfully has the name Jehovah. He is the absolute uncaused One, the eternal One.

The Orthodox Jews, on the basis of Deuteronomy 6:7, recite this twice a day. They say it when they rise up in the morning. A Jew gets up in the morning. The first thing he says, usually in Hebrew, is, "Hear, O, Israel, the Lord our God is one God. Thou shalt love thy Lord with all thy heart; with all thy soul; and, with all thy might." Just before he goes to bed at night, he lies down on his bed, before he closes his eyes, and this is the last thing he says. They do this because Moses referred to association with the Word of God in verse 7, "When you lie down, and when you rise up," that the Word of God is to be upon their mind.

Verse 5 says that since Jehovah is the unique and only Lord God, then He alone is the One who deserves to be loved and to be obeyed supremely. Love for Jehovah Elohim is required because He's the only true object of love. Love for anything else is a false love. Love for Jehovah Elohim should be with our whole heart; that is, a mental attitude of love. It is to be with our whole soul; that is, with all the capacities of the soul, including the emotions. It is to be with all of our strength; that is, with all the capacities of body and soul. Love for anything else is a violation of the first commandment. That's what it amounts to.

That's what Moses was trying to get across to them. Moses was saying, "Folks, what you love is what you will esteem. Where your heart is and where your love is, that's where your treasure is. And your treasure must be only upon the eternally existent One. You must fear this God. Be obedient to His divine viewpoint ways. Love Him for maximum service to Him." All of this is tied to knowing the Word of God. We have this indicated in Deuteronomy 10:12-13.

So the moral codes of the religions of the world are not equal to the rules that you have here in the Book of Exodus. Some people are constantly trying to tell us that the religions of the world have good things to teach us. That is wrong. There is nothing beyond God: "If you go beyond Me," He says, "there shall not be to thee any other god beyond Me. Beyond Me there is nothing." Anything that comes out of nothing is nothing. It is a deception of Satan. God is immutable. He does not change. So we cannot abandon His biblical morality. The Lord Jesus Christ called Deuteronomy 6:5 the first and the greatest commandment in Matthew 22:37-38. What He meant was that this is the basic principle of the moral code. The reason that it is basic is the fact that in Deuteronomy 6:4, we have declared to us that beyond Jehovah Elohim, there is nothing. Therefore, what this God says is all that there is to guide us. Going after other gods is going to bring severe discipline (Deuteronomy 6:10-15).

This brings us, of course, to that, which is a very great concern to ourselves. How do I violate this first commandment? There are many subtle ways in which we do this. There are ways that sometimes never come to our thinking. There are ways that, you will discover, you are constantly doing in your everyday life, and you will be brought up with somewhat of a shock when you start thinking about this, to realize that you are violating a moral absolute of the Word of God without ever realizing it. This is the moral absolute of having another God that you love, and of having another devotion beyond Jehovah Elohim. Beyond Him, is nothing. Next time, we'll begin with those violations.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1973

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