



# Law

Exodus 19–40 · Leviticus · Numbers · Deuteronomy

After their rescue, God gives his people the law. The people realise they are sinful and can't be close to a holy God. They need a representative and must approach God in his way. God provides the Tabernacle, priests and sacrifices and moves into it so he can be connected and close to them.

## Video Summary

God appears on Mount Sinai in fire, smoke and lightning. He gives the Israelites the law — the key responsibilities for them to fulfil as they live with him as their king, under his rule, in his kingdom. It includes the Ten Commandments and detailed national laws covering everything from property rights, to contracts, to criminal justice, to health and safety.

The law is given after their rescue. It is how to live because they have been saved, not how to live in order to be saved. This is the same for Christians — we are not saved by obedience but we are saved for obedience. The New Testament word for this is 'grace'.

The people recognise that they are incompatible with being close to God. Just like light overwhelms darkness, when a holy God full of beauty, life and light meets sinful people full of chaos, death and darkness, we're overwhelmed and our existence is threatened.

God allows Moses to act as a mediator between God and the people. He goes close for them. He represents the people to God and represents God to the people.

The people attempt to make their own way to get close to God by building a golden cow. It doesn't make them closer to him — it actually distances them further. God gives the people designs for a large tent called the Tabernacle. They accept God's way to get close to him and carefully follow his designs. God moves into the tent.

Laws and rituals related to the Tabernacle show how people can be connected and close to God again. Priests show that we need a mediator between us and God. Sacrifices show that we need our sin to be covered, our chaos, death and darkness to be removed, and something or someone to be overwhelmed instead of us.

The Israelites wander around the desert for 40 years. Moses gives a series of farewell speeches, reminding the new generation of God's promises and describing the benefits they can enjoy and the responsibilities they must fulfil as they live in God's place.

## Discussion Questions

- 1** We are not saved by obedience but we are saved for obedience. How does this understanding of grace and law shape your approach to living the Christian life? What happens when we forget that we are not saved by obedience? What happens when we forget that we are saved for obedience?
- 2** The people realised their sinfulness made them incompatible with a holy God. Why are the two incompatible — why can God just ignore sin? How does an understanding of God's holiness impact your own self-awareness and your approach to God?
- 3** Why do you think the people built a golden cow to get close to God, even after all they'd seen God do? What are some ways people today might try to approach or define God on their own terms rather than God's?
- 4** The Tabernacle, priests, and sacrifices pointed to the need for a mediator and for sin to be covered. How do these symbolic rituals help you appreciate what Jesus later accomplished?

## Bible Passages for Further Study

**Exodus 19–20:21** — God appears dramatically on Mount Sinai, Moses acts as representative and God gives the Ten Commandments ★

**Exodus 40** — The building of the Tabernacle is completed

**Deuteronomy 34** — Moses sees the promised land but dies before entering; leadership passes to Joshua