

How Do You Learn What Is Right?

The *International Sunday School Lesson* for Sunday, September 26, 2010
Exodus 34:1-10

“Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth’” (Exodus 34:6—NASB-U).

“The LORD passed before Moses, and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness’” (Exodus 34:6—NRSV).

“And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, ‘The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth’” (Exodus 32:4—KJV).

At God’s command, Moses climbed Mount Sinai again, carrying two stone tablets so God could write again the Ten Commandments for His people. Once again, God identified himself by name, “LORD” [YHWH], which can be translated “I Am” or “I Exist” (unlike the gods of human imagination). Moses was to listen to and obey only “The One Who Exists,” the Creator of all creation. The LORD alone completely understands and maintains all the physical and moral laws that people must learn in order to live blessed and happy lives.

Just as people cannot break God’s physical laws without consequences, neither can they break God’s moral laws without consequences (although the ultimate consequences of breaking either type may not happen immediately). Rather than abandon people to discover the moral laws by trial and error, God revealed the Ten Commandments so people could know what moral laws they should obey and not break for everyone’s own good. God is merciful and gracious; therefore, He revealed His moral laws to Moses for all people everywhere. Because God is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, preferring that we return to Him in repentance and faith whenever we break a moral law, God created a sacrificial system. The sacrificial system God revealed to Moses was a means for granting those who came to Him and fulfilled the conditions He established the assurance of forgiveness. The elaborate sacrificial system in the Bible helps us understand the meaning of the Son of God coming into our world as a sacrificial Lamb, shedding His blood, and dying for our sins. — Copyright 2010 L.G. Parkhurst, Jr.

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Questions for Further Thought

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1. Why do you think God prefers to work through and speak to people through godly men and women; such as Moses, rather than appear and speak directly to groups of people? In what ways would you describe Moses as a godly person? How was God speaking to people through Moses different from God speaking to people through Jesus Christ?
2. Why does God want people to obey him exactly? What would happen if surgeons did not operate on people with exactness? What would happen if builders did not build large buildings, bridges, or airplanes with exactness? What are some consequences when commands or designs are not followed exactly?
3. How does God describe his moral character (see verses 6 and 7 especially)? Does this description encourage or discourage you? Give reasons for your answer.
4. How does the Bible and subsequent history show that our human choices can have a dramatic effect of the generations that follow us? How does that make you feel? What does that knowledge make you want to do?
5. When you evaluate the way Moses prayed, how would you describe true intercessory prayer today? Why is intercessory prayer so important for believers to practice?