

Small Group Discussion Guide

EXODUS 20:1-3

“Gospel Grammar”

Based on Sunday's
Sermon 10/26/25

Background

Exodus chapter 20 is known as the first location of the Ten Commandments as the beginning of the giving of the Mosaic Law. What is less known is the preamble to the Big Ten found in verses 1-2. Easily overlooked, when combined with verse 3, a pattern emerges in which the fact of God's redemption is placed prior to the call to obedience. Usually, a king in ancient days would expect obedience before he would provide provision or protection for the people. “The law, in other words, is connected to grace. It is based on God's gracious act of saving his people; it is not a condition of becoming God's people, for that has already happened in the Exodus.”¹

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

1. What's something you do *because* you love someone – not because they told you to?

Observation

2. Read Exodus 20:1-2. Are these verses a statement or a command? Explain your reasoning.
3. What is included in the preamble of the Ten Commandments? List everything you can discover from verse 1 and 2.
4. Read Exodus 20:3. Is this verse a statement or a command? Explain.

¹ Tom Constable, *Tom Constable's Expository Notes on the Bible* (Galaxie Software, 2003), Ex 20:1.

Interpretation

5. What does Exodus 20:2 teach us about God's redemption?
6. Read 1 John 4:19. How does the preamble prior to the commandments of the law in Exodus 20 fit the teaching of this verse?
7. Read Colossians 3:1-4. Find the statement (called an indicative) and find the command (called an imperative). What comes first? (Hint: the word "for" in verse 3 helps determine this)
8. We don't have the word "grace" in Exodus 20:1-3, yet God's grace is evident. How so? Find the Gospel in Exodus 20:1-2.

Application

9. God starts with relationship, not rules. His rescue comes before His commands. How does that change your motivation for obeying and serving God?
10. Read Ephesians 1:7-10. How is this redemption we have in Christ pictured in Exodus 20:1-2? The redeemed life of a true believer is described later in Ephesians 5:1-2, "*Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.*" How can we practically be imitators of God? Would someone describe you as walking in love, or would your life bring a different description to mind? What are the commands of this verse, and what are the statements?