

## Exodus 20: The Rules

A popular question these days is: Who has the right to tell us what or what not to do?

The answer found in Biblical passages like this is: The One Who has made us and rescued us.

The famous 10 Commandments weren't formulated by a government or committee. Nor were they the theoretical musings of a human dictator.

*God* gave these rules originally to the ancient people of Israel, descendants of Abraham, people He had just saved from slavery in Egypt. Keeping His promise to their ancestor, their Creator and Saviour wanted to protect and bless them further, providing them with promising territory in the land of Canaan.

This was the Lord formalising a 'covenant' relationship, teaching them trust and *obedience* as the means to experiencing His continued favour. We are beginning to learn that God is faithful in love but also awesome in holiness.

The first four Commandments demand appropriate reverence for the Lord, the only One Who is all-powerful and all-knowing. Human beings should have the utmost respect for His person, His name and the patterns he has ordained since creation. The other six Commandments concern how we treat one another, beginning at home.

These are ten strong, positive foundation pillars for an individual's or indeed a community's or country's life.

In His Sermon on the Mount in Matthew chs 5-7, Jesus didn't change or lessen these Commandments. If anything He added depth to them, saying what we think in our hearts is just as important in God's eyes as what we actually do. Actions spring from good or bad motives nurtured inside.

This means we have a problem for in practice none of us can perfectly keep these standards. They actually illustrate quite painfully the New Testament assertion that 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Romans 3v23)

We need help, forgiveness and more.

We need a Saviour!

