

What is the Gospel? – The Gospel in Exodus (20:1 – 21)

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

These inspirational words have often been repeated and misquoted. Their origins can be traced back 2000 years ago to Jesus who told a group of his fair-weather-followers, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” But far from being inspired, when this group of Jews heard Jesus say this they retorted, “We are Abraham’s descendants and have never been slaves of anyone. How can you say that we shall be set free?” Blinded by their ethnic pride, these men seem to have forgotten about the centuries in which the Hebrew people had been subjected to slavery in Egypt (not to mention Israel’s years of exile in Babylon and their occupation by the Roman Empire at that time). But Jesus didn’t want to debate Jewish history. Instead he persisted with the deeper undercurrent of his teaching, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.” (John 8:31 – 36) The aim of this Bible study is to explore the relationship between the historical event of the Exodus, when God set Israel free from Egyptian slavery, and Christ’s teaching that he is the only one who can set us free from sin so that we can live holy lives before our holy God.

1. Read Exodus 20:1 – 2. Why are God’s Ten Commandments directly preceded by his reminder to Israel that he is the one who rescued them from Egypt?
2. Read Exodus 20:3 – 11. What do these first 4 commands have in common? Continue reading Exodus 20:12 – 17. What do these last 6 commands have in common? (Hint: See Matthew 22:34 – 40)
3. Why do you think God gave these 10 laws to Israel after they had left Egypt but before they entered the Promised Land? (See Leviticus 18:26 – 30).
4. Read about the things that happened directly after God gave these laws to Israel (Exodus 20:18 – 21). Now read Leviticus 19:1 – 2. How do these verses take us even deeper into the purpose of God’s Law?
5. Read Jesus’ words in Matthew 5:17 – 20 and 5:43 – 48. How has Christ alone perfectly demonstrated and fulfilled the heart and soul of God’s Law.
6. Reflect once again on Jesus’ famous quote, “*Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*” Now read Romans 6:15 – 23. Since Jesus has set us free from our slavery to sin, how does he expect us to live now? What does it mean to live a holy life before God?