

LIVING IN THE WORD

WITH DR. GARY YATES

PART 8 | THE MOSAIC COVENANT I

Many Christians find reading the Torah and Mosaic Law to be difficult or question its need or practical relevance for our daily lives. We must begin by understanding the role, purpose, and function of the Mosaic Covenant and the Mosaic Law within the grand narrative of salvation history. With the Mosaic covenant, salvation history is moving forward. The Abrahamic Covenant has established Israel as God's chosen people, but the book of Exodus shows the three specific ways that God begins to form Israel into a nation. He redeems his people from slavery in Egypt, he gives them his commandments to live by, and he provides for the Tabernacle as the sanctuary in which he will dwell among his people. The Mosaic Covenant formalizes Israel's role as chosen people, holy nation, and kingdom of priests. Israel will be blessed if they obey God's commands but cursed if they disobey. The purpose of the Mosaic Law was not to create a performance-based way of salvation. Salvation throughout the Bible is by God's grace through faith, and people were not saved under the old covenant by keeping the law. Instead, the first key purpose of the Mosaic Law was to provide the details for how Israel was to live as God's chosen people. Within the covenant, Israel would never have to question what God expected or demanded from them. The second purpose of the Mosaic Law was to provide a way for Israel to have a missionary presence among the nations. Israel was to mediate God's presence and blessing to the nations, and the nations would be drawn to the Lord when they saw the goodness of the Lord reflected in his commandments and when they saw the blessings that God lavished upon his people as they obeyed him. The problem was

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that Israel was often more drawn to worshipping the gods of the nations rather than leading the nations to know and worship the Lord.

Read the following passages:

Exodus 19-24

Leviticus 26

Deuteronomy 6

Deuteronomy 28

Isaiah 42:18-22

1 Peter 2:9-12

Questions for Discussion:

1. What questions and issues come up for you in your reading of the law sections of the Torah? Are there specific parts of the law that you find troubling or difficult to understand? What practical relevance do you think this part of Scripture has for us as believers today?
2. How does the way God reveals himself to Israel at Mount Sinai reflect the importance and seriousness of the laws and commands he is about to give them? What did the people need to know about God as they began this covenantal journey with him?
3. What do the details in Exodus 19:5 about Israel as God's "treasured possession," "holy nation," and "kingdom of priests" help us to understand about their position and role as the Lord's chosen people? What significance and importance should we attach to the fact that these same terms describe the church in 1 Peter 2?

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4. How would you respond to this statement: “People were saved by works and keeping the law in the old covenant. People are saved by faith in Christ in the new covenant”? What details from this study inform your answer to that question?
5. How specifically did Israel have an evangelistic presence among the nations under the Mosaic Covenant? How would they have a witness to the nations? How is their evangelistic role similar to the church today and what are the differences as well?
6. What are some of the specific covenant blessings and curses that we see in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28? How did these blessings and curses function within the covenant between God and Israel? What was the most extreme covenant curse that Israel would have to face if they did not keep the commandments? Do these curses and blessings apply to the church today? To the United States and other countries today? Why or why not?
7. What is something that you have learned about God in this study that you can share with someone else to be an encouragement to them or to initiate a Gospel conversation with someone who does not know Christ?