

**[Wednesday, December 21, 2016] Exodus Series, Exodus chapter 20,
Introductory Remarks – Craig Thurman**

Before we come into the details of the giving of the Law of Moses, which contains the Ten Commandments, it might be helpful to consider what has been operating in the hearts of every man for the past two and a half millennia. The conscience of man has been affected by what is called the light of nature, law of nature, or the *work of the law* that is written in their hearts. (Jn.1.9; Ro.2.15) There is a distinction that needs to be made between the *work of the law* and the Law of Moses.

First, What Is This Working of the Law?

From Adam and forward every man has in their hearts a working principle from God which affects their conscience. All men have it, though the effect of it varies according to how the conscience is nurtured.

Jn.8.9, convicted by their own conscience; Acts 24.16, to have always a conscience void of offense; Ro.2.15, their conscience bearing them witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another; 1Co.8.7-12, their conscience being weak is defiled; 1Ti.1.5, Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience; 4.2, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Tit.1.15, but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.

In Romans chapter two we find this principle that works in them described. This is something quite different from the outward giving of the Law which Israel received. That becomes clear as we read this text of Scripture.

*Ro 2:12 For as many as have sinned **without** law ἀνόμως shall also perish **without** ἀνόμως law: and as many as have sinned **in** ἐν the law shall be judged **by** διὰ the law;*

13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

μηὲν νόμον ἔχοντα

*14 For when the Gentiles, which have **not the law**, (notice that)*

*do by nature the things contained in the law, these, **having not the law**, are a law unto themselves:*

by nature, φύσει, dat. sing. of φύσις; the dative is translated by nature 4 times, and once mankind. This appears to be the equivalent of the adverb naturally.

These Gentiles are their own law by which they shall be judged.

*15 Which shew the **work** ἔργον of the law written in ἐν their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another;)*

16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.

T. P. Simmons, *A Systematic Study of Bible Doctrine*, p.178, “As many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law,” i.e., those to whom the written law of God has not been made known shall perish, but they shall not perish through the condemnation of the written law. How then will they be judged? The verses which follow the above quotation show that they will be judged by their own standard of righteousness; they will be charged with no transgressions except those against their own conscience.’

So, it is a principal which works apart from the Law within the hearts of men which has some semblance to The Law of Moses. By observing the general revelation of God in the natural, created order of things, they have a sense of what God is like and what His Law is. Couple this with the few judgments revealed in mankind’s history their conscience will affect them for or against sin. The judgments of Adam and Eve, Cain, the flood, Babel, and Sodom and Gomorrah impressed upon the hearts of man that there was a law to which they were answerable. It is not required that men have knowledge of the Ten Commandments in order to be condemned a sinner before God and receive a just sentence of everlasting punishment from the LORD. And this working principal is still valid to this day among the nations. God has revealed Himself enough through His works to convince every man that there is right and there is wrong.

Ro.1.18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

is revealed, ἀποκαλύπτεται, 3ps. pres. ind. pass. of ἀποκαλύπτω, ἀπό forth, since, from, of, off + καλύπτω, to cover, hide; the wrath of God is uncovered ... from heaven; so it is disclosed, revealed; the noun, , is translated to lighten, revelation, manifestation, coming, revealed [a noun translated as a verb, ἐν perhaps affecting the clause so that it has the sense of when.]

19 ¶ Because that which may be known of God is manifest

φανερών, acc. sing., revealed, apparent

ἐν

in them; for God hath shewed it unto them

by revealed

ἐφάνερωσε, 3ps. aor. ind. act; manifest, revealed

Mankind alters his behavior in light of His revelation and wrath of God. He has set up laws, and insists on order in society. He applies a subjective sense of moral judgment? This is derived from the invisible things of God working in the hearts of men so that it affects what they do. Whether they will admit it or not this is the truth.

20 For the invisible

ἀόρατα, ἄ + ὄράω, the unseen;

That which cannot be seen of God through the faculty of the eye, the *natural mind* of man, because God made a general revelation of Himself through the things that are seen, is comprehended. And so, unregenerate man has a naturally derived knowledge of God. This knowledge is not spiritual. It is a natural knowledge and man is

affected naturally by it. This has nothing to do with the revelation of God through Christ which is spiritual, and requires a regeneration of life, the new birth, in those who would possess it.

things of him
[of God]

The nature, the attributes, perfections or properties of God.

from [ἀπὸ, since] the creation of the world are clearly seen,

καθορᾶται, 3ps. pres. pass. of καθοράω, κατά *down, as,*
according + ὁράω, to see ...

That is, these *are brought into focus.*

being understood

νοούμενα, nom. pl. neut. part. pres. pass. of νοέω, KJV, *to understand, perceive, consider;* noun root, νοῦς, *mind*

They are brought to the mind.

by the things that are made,
by the *workmanship* ... as they behold the works of God in creation.

the phrase, τοῖς ποιήμασι, meaning, by the *workmanship,*
Eph.2.1

even his *eternal* *power* δύναμις *and Godhead;*
or, *inexhaustible*

eternal, αἰδιος, Jude 6, everlasting; LXX, Wis.7.26, everlasting
with reference to the *light* [of wisdom].

Perhaps because αἰδιος it modifies *power* it means *the inexhaustible*
power. As the Light of wisdom will never extinguish, the power of

God shall never diminish. God by His workmanship uses His creation as a vessel to manifest Himself to the creature.

Θειότης, only once here; LXX, only in Wisdom 18.9, translated holy law; Moulton's *Greek Lexicon*, deity.

Θεῖος, adj. is translated *Godhead* (1, marg. *Divine*) and *divine* (2, with reference to nature and power; 2Pe.1.3, 4), and in the LXX, Ex.31.3; Job 33.4, *divine*; Pv.2.17, *God*;

God has made it so that all of the creation exclaims that He is. (Ps.19.1-3; 33.5; 104.24) The minds of unregenerate men cannot prevent this working of the power of God in them. The very working of the law of nature in every man will bring them to know *some* of the invisible, general attributes of God.

*Joh 1:9 That was the true Light, which lighteth **every man** that cometh into the world.*

Look at the plant life, the flowers. View the heavens. The birds in flight; the planets in their unchangeable positions. Look into the faces of mankind, and the great diversity of animal kind. Consider the rivers, lakes, and oceans and the life in them. All of it cries out that God is! Man is left with a sense of awe. God communicates through these His holiness. There is none like Him. (Deu.3.24) He is righteous and good. The cycles of the seasons of growth and rest, sun, rain, cold and heat, sowing and harvest. The bounds given to the seas. The effect of the moon, the tides ever coming in and going out like clock-work, all contribute by covenant of God to show us the goodness and wisdom of God. Only the fool would deny that behind all of this is the One, Absolute, Perfect Being called God. He must everlasting. He must have no beginning or ending. He must be all-knowing, all-present, and infinite in understanding.

so that they are without excuse:

And this even *when* they are without the Law.

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations

became vain, ἐματαιώθησαν, 3ppl. aor. ind. pass. of ματαιώω or ματαιόομαι; the noun, μάταιος, is always translated with the English vain, vanities.

Man did not begin like this, but became increasingly so as a result of rejecting the natural revelation of God. And as they reject God, He begins bringing judgment. This judgment is summed up with four words, 'God gave them up.' As men reject His natural revelation their conscience becomes increasingly diminished in its discernment to naturally right, sensible, reasonable issues of life.

imaginations, διαλογισμοῖς, dat. pl. of διαλογισμός; διά by, through + λογισμός, KJV, thoughts, imaginations; KJV, noun, thoughts, imaginations, reasoning; the verb, διαλογίζομαι, would be act of reasoning, thinking, musing, casting about in the mind.

In the twenty-second chapter of Job Eliphaz makes an observation which reveals the attitude of those who lived before the flood in the days of Noah.

Job22.15 ¶ Hast thou marked the old way which wicked men have trodden? (Eliaphaz says, 'Job, there is a biblical record of God's dealings with the wicked.')

16 Which were cut down out of time, whose foundation was overflowed with a flood:

17 Which said unto God, Depart from us: and what can the Almighty do for them? (Such goodness of God should have worked in them repentance, yet they have gone in the way of Cain ... [Jude 11])

18 Yet he filled their houses with good things ...

The rejection of the general revelation of God is man deifying His own imaginations above the truth of God.

and their foolish heart was darkened.

ἐσκοτίσθη, 3ps. aor. ind. pass. of σκοτίζω; the noun, σκοτία, skotia, is *dark, darkened*;

For dishonoring God and for their ingratitude He works to *darken* their hearts *even* more in the natural sphere of their understanding. John Gill speaks of a *natural hardness* and an *acquired hardness*.

‘There is a natural "hardness" of the heart in every son and daughter of Adam; and there is an acquired habitual hardness, which is increased by sinning; and a judicial one, which God, for sin, sometimes gives persons up unto. An "impenitent heart" is not only an heart which does not repent, but such an one as cannot repent, being harder than the nether millstone.’
John Gill, *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments*, vol. 8, p.424, Ro.2.5

We have seen this in our study through the book of Exodus with Pharaoh, king of Egypt. It is true that the LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh, and it is also true that Pharaoh hardened his heart against the LORD. Men in their natural darkness acquire even more darkness as they strive against the *work of the law of nature* in their hearts. Yes, the Lord hardens the hearts of men by bringing things, whether good or evil, into their lives. This only serves to prove the wickedness that is already resident in them. And against His goodness men harden themselves so that they become more and more aggravated to the depravity of their hearts. They proceed into more sin; that is they add *iniquity unto iniquity*. (Ro.6.19) It is like pouring gasoline is to a burning fire, or booze is to the drunkard, or drugs are to the addict. He becomes enflamed in his sin. It is like opening the flood gates to a dam which lets the waters flow more freely, so diminish the work of the light of nature upon the heart and the conscience will allow more sin with less obstruction.

Ec 8:11 Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.

This course of the unregenerate man is marked with intermediate judgments along the way to interrupt their constant spiral down into depravity. But there is a final judgment which concludes the matter.

22 Professing

φάσκοντες, nom. pl. masc. part. pres. of φάσκω; KJV, Acts 24.9 saying; Acts 25.19, affirmed; Ro.1.22, professing; Re.2.2, which say; equivalent to φημί, to say, affirm, state.

themselves to be wise, they became fools,

ἔμωράνθησαν, 3ppl. aor. ind. pass. of μωραίνω; Mt.5.13; Lk.14.34, of salt *having lost his savour*; Ro.1.22, *became fools*; 1Co.1.20, *made foolish*; as a noun or adjective μωρός is translated *fool, foolishness, and foolish.*

What they had received naturally of the knowledge of God and the indicators of that final judgment cast off of them.

ἐν

23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.

...

32 Who	ἐπιγνόντες knowing comprehending	τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ θεοῦ the judgment of God, righteousness (Ro.8.4), 'the righteous standard' justification (Ro.5.16), 'the only rule by which God alone may clear the
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innocent.'

who knowing, ἐπιγνόντες, nom. pl. masc. part. aor. act. of ἐπιγινώσκω, ἐπί upon, this preposition give the idea of full or extensive ... + γινώσκω, to know;

These having sufficient knowledge of God's righteous standard ... which is revealed from heaven. (Who doesn't know Adam and Eve, Cain, Babel, the flood, and Sodom and Gomorrah? These very events are brought up by the scoffers. [cf.2Pe.3.5, *For this they (v.3, scoffers) willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water ...*]):

All secular history has some account of these things.

ὅτι	πράσσοντες
that	they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only
because	practice
	n.s.m.pt.pres.act.

ποιοῦσιν	ἀλλὰ καί	πράσσουσι
do	the same, but	have pleasure in them that do them.
perform	[also]	practice
		dat.pl.m.pt.pres.act.

*have pleasure, συνευδοκοῦσι, 3ppl. pres. ind. of συνευδοκέω, σύν with, together + εὖ well + δοκέω, to think, suppose [εἰδοκέω, to be well pleased, to take pleasure]; **have pleasure together** (but redundant given the pronoun them).*

So, by this principal God shows His character and mind toward ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, warns of impending judgment, and brings His ultimate judgment against them. That is what we witness in the antediluvian world, of the judgment at Babel, and of Sodom and Gomorrah. The LORD did this without the Law of Moses.

T. P. Simmons, *A Systematic Study of Bible Doctrine*, p. 177, '[M]an can be responsible for what he is unable to do only on the supposition that he is to blame for his inability. And it is a fact that man is to blame for his spiritual inability.'

If the Lord will, perhaps we can consider what the Law of Moses does peculiarly for Israel. It does for them what it cannot do for the nations. This law only applies to them, though many have tried to compel the nations to various selective forms of it. But we cannot keep the Sabbath. We cannot adopt their special priesthood or perform those sacrificial rites. We cannot apply the law of property to our society. None of these things belong to the Gentiles. But if the Gentiles would apply what is known from the general revelation of God in creation, and heed the past judgments of God against sin our society would naturally thrive. But that is limited to the natural realm.

All sinners shall be judge and removed from the earth. Only those who are righteous as He is righteous shall inherit everlasting life.

1Co 1:30 But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption ..

Ro.4.6 Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7 Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8 Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Does Jesus Christ stand for you? When He came to die for sin did He come to save you from your sins? When He raised from the dead, were you raised with Him to walk in newness of life? When He comes again to rule over the earth for a thousand years will you be caught up to greet Him in the air! It is by Christ alone that we come to God.