

# Ten Commandments to Death of Moses

## 34.—The Ten Commandments.

1. Three months after their departure from Egypt the Israelites came to Mount Sinai. God called Moses, and he went up into the mountain. Here the Lord spoke to him, and bade him remind the people of all He had already done for them, and how He would continue to protect them if they would be faithful to Him, and that He would make them a *chosen people*. When Moses descended from the mountain and told the people all the words of the Lord, they cried out, "We will do all the Lord bath spoken."

2. Then God commanded the people to purify themselves to-morrow and the next day, and to be ready for the third. On the morning of the third day it began to thunder and lighten; a thick cloud covered the mountain. The top of Mount Sinai was on fire, and it shook to its base. Then came the sound of a trumpet, that grew louder and louder, until the people trembled with an exceeding great fear.

3. When Moses had led the people to the foot of the mountain, the Lord spoke thus:

1. I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt not have strange gods before Me.
2. Thou shalt not take the, name of the Lord thy God in vain.
3. Remember thou keep holy the Sabbath day.
4. Honor thy father and thy mother.
5. Thou shalt not kill.
6. Thou shalt not commit adultery
7. Thou shalt not steal.
8. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
9. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.
10. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods.

4. When the people, who were camped round about the mountain, beard these things, trembling with fear and full of reverence, they promised to do all the Lord commanded them. Moses built an altar and offered sacrifice to the Lord. He took also of the blood of the victims and sprinkled it upon the people, as a sign of the covenant the Lord had that day made with them.

5. As the covenant of the Old Law was established on Mount Sinai, so was the covenant of the New Law sealed on Calvary. There God showed His power; here, His mercy. Both covenants were sealed with blood: at Sinai with the blood of bullocks; on Calvary with the blood of Jesus Christ.

**Questions to Chapter 34.**—When did the people come to Sinai? Who was called up to the mountain? What did God tell Moses? What did the people say? What were the people commanded to do? What happened on the third day? Repeat the Ten Commandments. What did Moses offer? With what did he sprinkle the people? What comparison between Sinai and Calvary?

## 35.—The Golden Calf.

1. After this, Moses again went up into the mountain, and for forty days and forty nights remained conversing with God. The Lord gave him two tables of stone, on which were written the Ten Commandments. While Moses delayed on the mountain, the people began to murmur, and came to Aaron and demanded that he would make for them gods like to those of the Egyptians. Not thinking they would comply with his command, he said to them, "Bring me the golden earrings of your wives and daughters."

2. Contrary to his expectations, they brought them, and, being a weak man, he had not courage to resist their wicked wish; so he cast them into a furnace and made a golden calf, and built an altar. Then the Israelites gathered together and offered sacrifice, and, eating and drinking, rose up to play, after the manner of the pagans.

3. When Moses came down from the mountain and saw these abominations, he was exceeding angry, and throwing down the tables on which the Ten Commandments were written, broke them. Seizing upon the golden calf, he burned it, and beat it into powder. Then he commanded the sons of Levi to unsheathe their swords, to march through the camp and return, and to put to death all whom they met. There were slain on that day about twenty-three thousand men dared not look upon him; so Moses was forced to put a veil on his face when he spoke to the people.

4. Moses again returned to the Lord on the mountain, and prayed for the pardon of the people. The Lord heard his prayer. Moses hewed two tables of stone like the first, and God again wrote on them the Ten Commandments.

5. When Moses had finished speaking with the Lord, he descended from the mountain carrying with him the two tables of the Law. His face had become horned, and shone like the rays of the sun. When the Israelites saw this, they

and doves; or *unbloody*, in which were offered cakes and unleavened bread and wine.

The bloody sacrifices prefigured the bloody sacrifice of Christ upon the cross; the unbloody were a type of the sacrifice of the Mass.

### 36.—Ordinances for the Worship.

1. Besides the Ten Commandments which God gave Moses, He also gave many other ordinances. These latter related to the public worship, which, with extreme care, Moses established according as God commanded him.

2. *The Tabernacle*.—Moses began by constructing a tent whose supports were made of setim-wood and were so framed that they could easily be taken apart. The length of the tent was thirty cubits, and the height ten, and the breadth ten. The supports were overlaid with gold, and the whole was covered with most precious hangings. Within hung a veil of magnificent tapestry, which divided the Tabernacle into two parts—the smaller called the Holy of Holies; the larger, the Sanctuary.

3. Within the Holy of Holies was placed the Ark of the Covenant, a small box made of the most precious wood, overlaid with gold and surmounted by two cherubim. In the Ark were placed the two tables of the Law.

Within the Sanctuary were kept three objects consecrated to the worship of God: the Table of Showbread, on which were placed twelve loaves of bread, made of the finest flour; the Golden Candlestick, that, with its seven lights, shone during the entire night; and, lastly, the Altar of Perfumes, on which was burned the finest incense.

4. Besides this, Moses constructed around the Tabernacle a grand portico which enclosed two other sacred objects: the Altar of Holocausts, and the Great Brazen Basin in which the priests were commanded to purify themselves before they performed any sacred function.

5. This Ark was a figure of the tabernacle in Catholic churches; the Holy of Holies, of the altar on which is offered the sacrifice of the New Law; the Sanctuary corresponded to the place the priests occupy; and the portico represented the body of the church, where the people now worship.

6. The sacrifices of the Old Law were either *bloody*, in which were offered heifers and sheep and goats

7. The Religious Feasts were: 1st. The *Pasch*, on which the Israelites eat the flesh of a lamb, and for seven days unleavened bread, in remembrance of their deliverance out of Egypt. 2nd. The feast of *Pentecost*, celebrated seven weeks after the Pasch, in remembrance of the Law received on Mount Sinai. At this feast were also offered the first-fruits. 3rd. The feast of *Tabernacles*, in memory of their long sojourn in the desert. During this feast the Israelites were required to live in tents made from the branches of trees. 4th. The feast of *Expiation*, on which the priest sacrificed a heifer for his own sins and a goat for the sins of the people. Then he entered into the Holy of Holies, carrying with him the golden censer and the blood of the victim: with the former he incensed the Ark, with the latter he sprinkled the pavement.

8. The Ministers of Divine Worship were: 1st. The *High Priest*. To this office Moses consecrated Aaron, anointing him, and clothing him with the various vestments of his office. 2nd. The *Priests* proper, who were the sons of Aaron, and whose office it was to offer sacrifice. 3rd. The *Levites*, who were of the tribe of Levi, and who were charged with the lower offices within the Tabernacle.

### 37.—Murmurs of the People.

1. The Israelites remained a year at Mount Sinai. When they started on their way, Moses chose twelve men, among whom were Joshua and Caleb, to go into the Land of Promise. After forty days they returned, carrying with them specimens of the fruits of the country. Amongst these was an enormous bunch of grapes borne on the shoulders of two men, besides apples and pomegranates and figs. The land, indeed, said they, overflowed with abundance, but the inhabitants were giants.

2. Then the people wept, and again murmured against Moses and Aaron, wishing they had died in Egypt or in the desert. In vain did Joshua and Caleb speak of the richness of the country and the weakness of the people. The multitude, led on by the others, would not listen, but cried out the more to return to Egypt.

3. When the murmur was at its height, the glory of God was seen over the Ark of the Covenant. Then the Lord said to Moses He would destroy the Israelites, for they were an incredulous people. The Lord even offered to make Moses ruler over a greater nation; but Moses, the meekest of men, only prayed the more that the Lord would pardon them.

4. At his prayer the Lord again pardoned the people; yet, as a punishment for their sin, He declared that not one of them that had attained his twentieth year should enter the Promised Land, Joshua and Caleb excepted. Their children would enter, but for forty years should the people wander in the desert—a year for every day spent in exploring the country.

5. This history of the Jews is similar to what happened in the time of Jesus Christ. The Jews, as a whole, would not understand the spiritual kingdom promised and established by Christ; hence they rejected Him. On the cross He begged His Father to forgive them. That prayer is still being answered in the constant but small stream of conversions to Christ and will be fully answered before the end of the world, according to the prophecy of St. Paul.

### 38.—Core, Dathan, and Abiron.

1. Some time after the events related in the preceding chapter, two hundred and fifty Levites, led on by Core, Dathan, and Abiron, revolted against Moses and Aaron, denying their authority. On the following day the Lord commanded the people to go out from the tents of these wicked men; not to touch anything belonging to them, lest they also would be involved in their sin. While the people were looking on to see what would come to pass, the earth opened under the feet of the three leaders and swallowed them down, with their tents and all their substance. Then a fire came out from the Lord and consumed the two hundred and fifty Levites. Moses and Aaron were that day vindicated.

2. In modern times we often see similar revolts against the priests of God. Ambitious and wicked men wish to rule the Church; but, like Core and his companions, they will ever receive a just punishment for their pride and presumption.

### 39.—The Brazen Serpent.

1. Water again failed, and the people began to murmur. Then the Lord commanded Moses to take his rod and strike the rock. Moses, for a moment, doubted; then struck the rock, when water gushed forth in great abundance. This momentary doubt greatly displeased God, and He declared that Moses, because he had not believed, should not lead the people into the Promised Land.

2. Shortly after, the people rebelled again, and, murmuring, complained they had neither food nor water. When God saw this He sent among them fiery serpents, whose sting burned like fire. Many died amid the most cruel torments. When the people saw this they came to Moses, acknowledging their sin, and begging him to pray to the Lord that He would take the serpents from amongst them.

3. Moses prayed, when the Lord commanded him to make a brazen serpent and to set it up for a sign. He did so, and as many as looked upon it were healed.

4. This serpent prefigured Our Savior nailed to the cross; for as the Israelites were cured by looking upon the serpent, so are all who, with faith, look up to Christ cured of the wounds of sin caused by the bite of the infernal serpent.

### 40.—The Death of Moses

1. When, according to the course of nature, the time came that Moses must die, the Lord commanded him, in the presence of the people, to put his hand upon Joshua, that they might have no cause to disobey him. Then Moses told the people he was about to die; that he would not pass over the Jordan with them, nor enter the Promised Land.

2. He then reminded them of all the Lord had done for them—how He had nourished them in the desert, and how He had watched over them; then he commanded the people to keep the commandments, to love the Lord, and to hearken to His voice. He also foretold them, in a spirit of prophecy, that the Lord would in time raise up a PROPHET like to him, whom they should hear. He spoke of Christ.

3. When Moses had finished speaking, he went up to the top of Mount Nebo, from which the Lord showed him the land of Canaan. When Moses saw it he rejoiced; and, full of gratitude and thanks to God, died at the ripe old age of a hundred and twenty years. The Lord buried him in the valley of Phogor, but the spot no man knows. Israel mourned for him thirty days. There was never after a prophet like Moses.