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Every book in the Bible has two significant characteristics, both equally important: one, each book is about the story of God rescuing His special creation to His Eternal Kingdom, through the person of His Son, Jesus the Christ. This story line that runs through every book in the Bible.

The other characteristic of the Bible is, each of the 66 book speaks to the brokenness of humanity and God's love which repairs and restores our humanity.

For example, the central theme of the Book of Genesis is sibling rivalry, the result of our broken relationship with God: Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Rachel and Leah, and finally, Joseph and his brothers. Sibling rivalry continues to play a central role in human conflict, through tribal warfare and national wars, social discord and familial disharmony. But because of God's grace, many amazing, unreported things have taken place and continue to do so, and the story line of God's salvation through Christ, continues.

The central theme of the books of Judges, 1&2 Samuel, 1&2 Kings and 1&2 Chronicles is about the fallenness of rulers and those in positions of authority; those who break fellowship with God make a mess of their kingdom, often letting their nation to be conquered by neighbouring countries; but those who make a conscious, public confession of their relationship with God, find their kingdom restored and prospering.

Many think the book of Exodus is a travelogue, because we wrongly start by comparing it with our own experience of travelling as parents with children, and the problems of hunger every 15 miles (*I'm hungry!*), toilet stops every 10 miles, change of seating arrangements every 5 miles, not forgetting the repeating refrain, *Are we there yet?*, the same complaints the Hebrew people made as they started their 40-year journey through the desert to the land to which God was leading them.

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In reality, this book is about God offering a people He has chosen, to model the excellence of Kingdom-Life for the whole world to see.

Every nation needs rules and regulations to define the character of how it is governed and its Constitution defines this character.

A Constitution has three sections. **First** it establishes the relationship of the Ruler with the legislative, executive and judicial branches of Government. **Second**, it defines how people relate to authority, and **third**, it sets out a framework of rules which govern society, in order that **ALL** citizens of the kingdom enjoy genuine equal privileges.

Every Constitution also has an ongoing process of **Amendments**, which explains the Law and how it is applied. In the Bible, the books of Deuteronomy and Leviticus clarify the law.

God's 10 Instructions is the Constitution for the new nation God is building.

The first section, the longest of three, relates to the character of the leader: God Himself.

God introduced Himself to Moses as **I AM;**¹ now He introduces Himself to the Hebrew people, **I AM the Lord your God!** That's who He is, always in the *present continuous*, **I AM**. On any day and at any time, God introduces Himself to anyone looking for Him as, **I AM!**

Three months on from their run for freedom out of Egypt, this group of former slaves seem to have forgotten Who rescued them from slavery! They complained about lack of water, insufficient supplies of bread and meat, all of which was miraculously provided to them. God has to remind them, **I AM the LORD your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery!**

¹ Exodus 3

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Had they really forgotten the severity of the 10 plagues, the first nine of which were intended for their enemies? Had they forgotten the 10th plague, from which they were saved by applying the lamb's blood on their doorpost?

The Constitution of God's Kingdom reminds us, the Angel of Death has no power over those lives marked with the blood of the Lamb who was slain at Calvary, ***I AM the Lord your God, who has rescued you from eternal death through the death of My Son on the cross at Calvary, and His resurrection from the sealed tomb! He has carried you to the other side, safe from slavery to the sin of the world. The journey to My eternal Kingdom lies ahead. I AM the Lord your God and I have put your past behind you. Now, let's journey forward together.***

These 3-5 million people didn't know the God of Moses. They knew the Pharaoh's power, they acknowledged the power of the river Nile to keep them comfortable and prosperous as the bread basket of the Middle East, but who is this God Moses speaks to, and talks about?

I AM the only God; there is none beside me, no one like me. You cannot fashion me in the form of anything I have created, and worship it as if it were me. Moses' God is very different. He is the Creator of life, not to be confused with what He has created.

Moses' God is not a lifeless idol; He is eternally alive, speaks His mind and has emotions! When our emotions are diverted to objects that do not represent Him, He is jealous. Imagine yourself for a moment, working at the Aston Martin factory up the road. You have worked on a special model to gift someone special in your life, a spouse, a child, or a friend. Having gifted the special car to that special person, the person ignores you and allows everyone to believe, they earned the car for themselves. You would be right in feeling jealous, that the emotions of gratitude and

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pleasure that should be rightly directed to you, are being lavished on something you gave them!

This is the jealousy God feels. To those who acknowledge Him as the Creator and Giver of Life, He is *unswervingly loyal to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments²*, but those who turn their backs on Him, will feel His punishment, down four generations, because lifestyle, attitudes and habits are easily passed down the line!

One of the hallmarks of pagan worship is to call on the name of the idol-god, swearing on it and swearing by it, using its name to make promises it cannot keep, and using it to give collateral which it cannot honour. Moses' God cautions against doing this: *don't use my Name in vain; don't make Me promise to do things for your personal gain or benefit. The gods made of stone and wood and clay cannot respond to you, but I can and you will invite punishment if you do take my Name in vain.*

In growing our relationship with God, He says: *Do as I do - The Seventh day is Holy because on that day, I rested from work, so must you.*

I often wondered why God says this to us, until I realised, the seventh day of rest is eternal rest - After 6 day of creative activity, giving life to a host of things to make it a purpose built Creation for us, God does no work after that. There is no Monday morning, there no *the morning after the day before*. **GOD RESTED**, a picture of Heaven where we shall enjoy eternal rest, having laboured hard for three-score and ten years!

Rest on the seventh day, because I made it Holy, and teach everyone within you span of influence, to refrain from work and honour Me for who I am, and what I have done for you.

² Exodus 20:6

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Let's jump to the third section of a Constitution, before we conclude with the second section. The third section of this Constitution, is the framework of rules which govern society. It is very straight forward - you cannot take someone's life, literally, emotionally or spiritually, because it is not yours to take! You cannot take what belongs to others because God blessed them with it, and it is not God's blessing for you, and so on.

Now the second part, verse 12. This verse is a transition between the first and the third: **Honour your father and mother.** It is extremely rich in meaning and carries a unique sentence construction. I want to briefly point out three aspects of this instruction before we close our worship this morning.

1. This instruction spans time and generations. I honour my father and mother, my children reading it honour their father and mother and so on. Honouring parents is a degree of affectionate respect owing to parents, which no other person can properly claim. Our parents were not perfect, and neither are we. Our parents did what they they could afford, so did we. Our parents did what they thought was right, so did we. Not everyone can say *...so did we...*, but that is beside the point. The instruction to us is to *honour your parents* and so we must, without condition.
2. This 5th instruction is the only one with a condition attached to it: **... that all may go well for you in the land in which I the Lord am going to settle you.** The condition is so straight forward, it cannot be interpreted, but it does raises a question, *"Does the blessing refer to an individual, or a nation?"* The answer is **Both**, starting with the obedience of individuals, multiplied by the nation who practice honouring both parents, the blessing of peaceful living in a land of plenty, is realised.

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3. Positioned between the character of God and the character of society, honouring one's father and mother, is to **practice on earth, what we will be doing in eternity** - honouring our Father God for who He is and what He has done for us.

The Constitution given to the Hebrew people is valid for us today, because it defines our relationship with God, with our family and our relationship with our neighbours, the society in which we live.

Will you make this your framework for life?

AMEN.