

speaking and God answering him with thunder.

<sup>20</sup>When the LORD came down to the top of Mount Sinai, he summoned Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up to him. <sup>21</sup>Then the LORD told Moses, "Go down and warn the people not to break through toward the LORD in order to see him; otherwise many of them will be struck down." <sup>22</sup>The priests, too, who approach the LORD must sanctify themselves; else he will vent his anger upon them." <sup>23</sup>Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot go up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us to set limits around the mountain to make it sacred." <sup>24</sup>The LORD repeated, "Go down now! Then come up again along with Aaron. But the priests and the people must not break through to come up to the LORD; else he will vent his anger upon them." <sup>25</sup>So Moses went down to the people and told them this.

CHAPTER 20

**The Ten Commandments.** <sup>1</sup>Then God delivered all these commandments:

<sup>2</sup> "I, the LORD, am your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, that place of slavery. <sup>3</sup>You shall not have other gods besides me. <sup>4</sup>You shall not carve idols for yourselves in the shape of anything in the sky above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; <sup>5</sup>you shall not bow down before them or worship them." For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous\* God, inflicting punishment for their fathers' wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation; <sup>6</sup>but bestowing mercy down to the thousandth generation, on the children of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>7</sup>You shall not take the name of the LORD, your God, in vain. For the LORD will not leave unpunished him who takes his name in vain.

<sup>8</sup>Remember to keep holy the sabbath day. Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD, your God. No work may be done then either by you, or your son or daughter, or your male or female slave, or your beast, or by the alien who lives with you. In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh

day he rested. That is why the LORD has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.

<sup>12</sup> "Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land which the LORD, your God, is giving you."

<sup>13</sup> "You shall not kill."  
<sup>14</sup> "You shall not commit adultery."  
<sup>15</sup> "You shall not steal."  
<sup>16</sup> "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

<sup>17</sup> "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male or female slave, nor his ox or ass, nor anything else that belongs to him."

**The Fear of God.** <sup>18</sup>When the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the trumpet blast and the mountain smoking, they all feared and trembled. So they took up a position much farther away and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we shall die." <sup>20</sup>Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid, for God has come to you only to test you and put his fear upon you, lest you should sin." <sup>21</sup>Still the people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the cloud where God was.

<sup>22</sup>The LORD told Moses, "Thus shall you speak to the Israelites: You have seen for yourselves that I have spoken to you from heaven. <sup>23</sup>Do not make anything to rank with me; neither gods of silver nor gods of gold shall you make for yourselves."

<sup>24</sup> "An altar of earth you shall make for me, and upon it you shall sacrifice your holocausts and peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In whatever place I choose for the remembrance of my name\* I

<sup>p</sup> 2:17; Dt 5, 6-21; Lv 26, 13; Ps 83, 10; Hos 13, 4-17; Ex 34, 17; Lv 26, 1; Dt 4, 15-19; 27, 15; Ex 34, 17; Nm 14, 18; Dt 4, 24; 5, 15; Lv 19, 12; 24, 16; 26, 16; Ex 23, 12; 31, 12-16; 34, 21; 35, 2; Lv 23, 3-4; Ex 31, 17; Gn 2, 2f; 12, 16; Mt 19, 18f; Mk 10, 19; Lk 18, 20; Rom 13, 9; Mt 15, 4; Mk 7, 10; Eph 6, 2; Mt 5, 21; Lv 18, 20; 20, 10; Dt 22, 22; 24, 28; Rom 7, 7-4; Ex 23, 1; Dt 19, 16f; Prv 19, 5; Heb 12, 18f; Ex 20, 3f; Dt 12, 5, 11; 14, 23; 16, 6.

<sup>20</sup>, 1-17: The precise division of these precepts into "ten commandments" is somewhat uncertain. Traditionally among Catholics w 1-6 are considered as only one commandment, and v 17 as 20, 5; *Jealous*: demanding exclusive allegiance, such as a wife must have for her husband.  
<sup>20</sup>, 24: I choose for the remembrance of my name: literally, "where I make my name to be remembered": at the sacred site where God wishes to be worshipped and his name revered.

come to you and bless you. <sup>25</sup>If you make an altar of stone for me, do not build it of cut stone, for by putting a tool to it you desecrate it. <sup>26</sup>You shall not go up by steps to my altar, on which you must not be indecently uncovered.

CHAPTER 21

**Laws Regarding Slaves.** <sup>1</sup>These are the rules\* you shall lay before them. <sup>2</sup> When you purchase a Hebrew slave, he is to serve you for six years, but in the seventh year he shall be given his freedom without cost. <sup>3</sup>If he comes into service alone, he shall leave alone; if he comes with a wife, his wife shall leave with him. <sup>4</sup>But if his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the woman and her children shall remain the master's property and the man shall leave alone. <sup>5</sup>If, however, the slave declares, "I am devoted to my master and my wife and children; I will not go free," <sup>6</sup>his master shall bring him to God\* and there, at the door or doorstep, he shall pierce his ear with an awl, thus keeping him as his slave forever.

<sup>7</sup>When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go free as male slaves do. <sup>8</sup>But if her master, who had destined her\* for himself, dislikes her, he shall let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to a foreigner, since he has broken faith with her. <sup>9</sup>If he destines her for his son, he shall treat her like a daughter. <sup>10</sup>If he takes another wife, he shall not withhold her food, her clothing, or her conjugal rights. <sup>11</sup>If he does not grant her these three things, she shall be given her freedom absolutely, without cost to her.

<sup>8</sup> Dt 27, 5; Jos 8, 31; 1-2-6; Lv 25, 39f; Dt 15, 12-18; Jer 34, 14; 1-12f; Lv 24, 17; Nm 35, 15-29; Dt 4, 41f; 19, 2-5; 30, 24, 7; Prv 20, 9; Mt 15, 4; Mk 7, 10; 12, 25-31; Lv 24, 18-21; Dt 19, 21; Mt 5, 38.

<sup>21</sup>, 1: *Rules*: judicial precedents to be used in settling questions of law and custom. This introductory phrase serves as the title of the following collection of civil and religious laws (chapters 21-23) which is called in Ex 24, 7, *the book of the covenant*.

<sup>21</sup>, 6: *To God*: to the sanctuary; or perhaps the phrase is to be rendered, "to the gods," in the sense of "to the judges." Cf Ps 82, 1. Since the expression "to have an open ear" meant "to obey," a pierced earlobe was an ancient symbol of obedience. Cf Ps 40, 7.

<sup>21</sup>, 8: *Destined her*: intended her as a wife of second rank. <sup>21</sup>, 23f: This section is known as the *lex talionis*, the law of tit for tat. The purpose of this law was not merely the enforcement of rigorous justice, but also the prevention of greater penalties than would be just. Christ refers to this passage when he exhorts Christians to cede their lawful rights for the sake of charity. Cf Mt 5, 38ff.

**Personal Injury.** <sup>12</sup> "Whoever strikes a mortal blow must be put to death. <sup>13</sup> He, however, who did not hunt down, but caused his death by an accident, may flee to a place which I have appointed for this purpose. <sup>14</sup> But when he kills another after maliciously scheming to do so, you must take him even from his altar and put him to death. <sup>15</sup> Whoever strikes his father or mother shall be put to death.

<sup>16</sup> "A kidnaper, whether he sells him or still has him when caught, shall be put to death. <sup>17</sup> Whoever curses his father or his mother shall be put to death."

<sup>18</sup> "When men quarrel and one strikes the other with a stone or with his fist mortally, but enough to put him in jeopardy, the one who struck the blow shall be acquitted, provided the other can get up and walk around with the help of his staff. <sup>19</sup> If he must compensate him for his forced idleness and provide for his complete cure.

<sup>20</sup> "When a man strikes his male slave with a rod so hard that the slave dies under his hand, he shall be punished. <sup>21</sup> If, however, the slave survives for a day or two, he is not to be punished since the slave is his own property.

<sup>22</sup> "When men have a fight and a pregnant woman, so that she suffers carriage, but no further injury, the one shall be fined as much as the woman demands of him, and he shall be in the presence of the judges. <sup>23</sup> \* If injury ensues, you shall give life for an eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, <sup>25</sup> burn for wound for wound, stripe for stripe.

<sup>26</sup> "When a man strikes his male slave in the eye and destroys it, or the eye of the eye, he shall let the slave go in compensation for the eye. <sup>27</sup> If he lacks a tooth of his male or female slave, shall let the slave go free in compensation for the tooth.

<sup>28</sup> "When an ox gores a man or a woman to death, the ox must be stoned; its owner may not be eaten. The owner of the ox, however, shall go unpunished. <sup>29</sup> But if the ox was previously in the habit of goring people and its owner, though warned, would not keep it in; should it then gore a woman, not only must the woman be stoned, but its owner also must be