

Message Two

**The Law—the Engagement Covenant  
between God and His People**

Scripture Reading: Exo. 20:1-12; 34:27-29;  
Isa. 54:5; Jer. 2:2; 31:3, 32; Ezek. 16:8; Hosea 2:19-20

**I. The subject of the entire Bible, the content of God’s economy, and the secret of the entire universe are the divine romance between God and His chosen and redeemed people:**

- A. The entire Bible is a divine romance, a record of how God courts His chosen people and eventually marries them—Gen. 2:21-24; S. S. 1:2-4; Isa. 54:5; 62:5-7; Jer. 2:2; 3:1, 14; 31:3, 32; Ezek. 16:8; 23:5; Hosea 2:7, 19-20; Matt. 9:15; John 3:29; 2 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 5:25-32; Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2, 9-10; 22:17.
- B. God is a courting God, and the entire Bible is God’s courting word; because He has courted us, we are in the church life today; if we would keep God’s courting word, we need a responsive, affectionate love for Him—John 21:15-17; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; John 14:21, 23; S. S. 1:1-4; 6:13; 2 Cor. 11:2.
- C. When we as God’s people enter into a love relationship with God, we receive His life, just as Eve received the life of Adam; it is this life that enables us to become one with God and makes Him one with us—Gen. 2:21-22.
- D. We keep the law not by exercising our mind and will (cf. Rom. 7:18-25) but by loving the Lord as our Husband and thereby partaking of His life and nature to become one with Him as His enlargement and expression.

**II. God’s intention in giving His law to His chosen people was that they become His lovers—Exo. 20:6; Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:35-38; Mark 12:28-30:**

- A. In bringing His people out of Egypt and giving His law to them, God was courting them, wooing them, and seeking to win their affection.
- B. Jeremiah 2:2; 31:32; and Ezekiel 16:8 indicate that the covenant enacted at the mountain of God through the giving of the law (Exo. 24:7-8; 34:27-28) was an engagement covenant, in which God betrothed the children of Israel to Himself (cf. 2 Cor. 11:2):
  1. “Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saying, Thus says

Jehovah: / I remember concerning you the kindness of your youth, / The love of your bridal days, / When you followed after Me in the wilderness, / In a land that was not sown”—Jer. 2:2.

2. “The covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by their hand to bring them out from the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was their Husband, declares Jehovah”—31:32.
  3. “Then I passed by you and saw you; and then was your time a time of love. And I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness; indeed I swore unto you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord Jehovah, and you became Mine”—Ezek. 16:8.
- C. Both Ezekiel 16:8 and Jeremiah 31:32 use the word *covenant*, a word that refers to the law given in Exodus 20; when God gave the law, He betrothed Israel unto Himself, and Israel became engaged to Him; this is what Jeremiah 2:2 refers to in saying, “The love of your bridal days.”
- D. God’s goal in giving the law was to make His chosen people one with Him as a wife is one with her husband; the law would then impart God’s substance into them, usher them into God, and unite them with God in life and nature.

**III. In giving His law to His people, God was seeking lovers, and the giving of the law was a transaction in which God’s people became engaged to Him:**

- A. The law was an engagement covenant between God and His people:
1. God loves His people with an eternal love—31:3; Gal. 6:16; 1 Thes. 1:4; Eph. 1:4.
  2. In the first nineteen chapters of Exodus, God was courting, even “dating,” His people, as indicated by Jeremiah 2:2.
  3. By means of the law as an engagement paper, God officially betrothed the children of Israel to Himself in Exodus 20 at the mountain of God—Ezek. 16:8; Jer. 31:32.
- B. The betrothal of Israel took place at the mountain of God in Exodus 20, and the law was the official paper stating the conditions for this engagement; the Ten Commandments, especially

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the first five, gave the terms of the engagement between God and His people.

- C. The first five commandments were given in an atmosphere of intimacy, with the expression *Jehovah your God* uttered intimately again and again as God lovingly courted His people:
1. In the first commandment the Lord told His people that they should not have any other beloved in addition to Him; He must be their unique Beloved—vv. 1-3.
  2. In the second commandment the Lord did not want His people to make for themselves an image, an idol, of anything, and as a jealous Husband, He wanted His people to serve Him and Him alone, telling them that if they would love Him, He would show lovingkindness to their descendants for thousands of generations, a time span that will lead into eternity—vv. 4-6.
  3. In the third commandment the Lord, as their Beloved, did not want His people to use His name in an improper way, but He wanted them to honor His name and use it lovingly—v. 7.
  4. In the fourth commandment the Lord required His people to keep the Sabbath as a sign that they belonged to Him alone and that they were absolutely for Him—vv. 8-11:
    - a. Just as a woman wears a ring as a sign of her engagement, the keeping of the Sabbath day was to be a sign that God's people were engaged to Him.
    - b. The Sabbath is mentioned in relation to the work of building God's dwelling place, signifying that as God's people work with Him and for Him, they must learn to rest with Him by enjoying Him and being filled with Him—31:12-17:
      - 1) Keeping the Sabbath is a sign (v. 17) that God's people work for God not by their own strength but by enjoying Him and being one with Him.
      - 2) It is also an eternal covenant (v. 16) assuring God that we will be one with Him by first enjoying Him and then working with Him, for Him, and in oneness with Him.
      - 3) God first worked and then rested; man first rests and then works—Gen. 2:2.

- 4) The mentioning of the Sabbath in Exodus 31 indicates also that everything related to the tabernacle and its furniture leads us to God's Sabbath, with its rest and refreshment in the enjoyment of what God has purposed and done.
  5. In the fifth commandment the Lord wanted His people to remember Him as their source—20:12.
- D. The highest function of the law as an engagement paper, an engagement covenant, is to bring God's chosen people into oneness with Him, as a wife is brought into oneness with her husband (cf. Gen. 2:24; Rev. 22:17), making them His enlarged and expanded expression, His testimony (Exo. 25:21-22; 38:21).
- E. In order for God and His people to be one, there must be a mutual love between them—John 14:21, 23:
1. The love between God and His people that is unfolded in the Bible is primarily like the affectionate love between a man and a woman—Jer. 2:2; 31:3.
  2. As God's people love God and spend time to fellowship with Him in His word, God infuses them with His divine element, making them one with Him as His spouse, the same as He is in life, nature, and expression.

**IV. Since the law was given as an engagement contract and the entire Bible is God's courting word, we should not try to keep the law apart from loving the Lord and His word and becoming one with Him—John 21:15-17; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; John 14:21, 23:**

- A. The truth of God coming into us to do everything for us and in us is the central concept in the Bible concerning the giving of the commandments—Rom. 3:19-20; Gal. 3:23-24; Exo. 19:4, 6; Isa. 40:31; Matt. 5:48; Phil. 2:12-13; Rom. 8:4.
- B. As long as we love the Lord and His word and as long as we stay with Him to be infused with Him, He will do in us what we cannot do ourselves:
1. In order to practice the vision of the eternal economy of God, the highest peak of the divine revelation, we need to spend time to be infused with the Lord as our Husband, becoming more and more like Him to be His expression—S. S. 1:1-4.

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2. Our love for the Lord should be that which is expressed in Song of Songs, where we have a beautiful and touching description of the deep, tender, and affectionate love between the beloved (the Lord) and the one he loves (His loving seeker)—1:1 and footnote 1; 3:11 and footnotes 1 through 3; 6:13 and footnote 1.
3. We keep the law of God by loving Him as our Husband—Matt. 22:37-40; 1 Cor. 2:9; 16:22; cf. Deut. 11:29; 27:12-13:
  - a. Part of the secret of living Christ is telling the Lord again and again that we love Him; whenever we tell the Lord that we love Him, He supplies us with His life, and this life enables us to become one with God and makes Him one with us.
  - b. Then what we live out will be according to the law as His description, definition, and expression.
4. Because we love God, we also love His living word, which infuses His substance into us to cause us to glow with Him—Jer. 15:16:
  - a. When Moses was on the top of Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai), he was not striving or working to fulfill the requirements of the law; rather, he was being infused with God by God's speaking with him, and his glowing face was simply a reflection of what God is—Exo. 34:28-29; cf. 2 Cor. 3:18—4:6.
  - b. God does not want a people who strive to keep the law; He wants a glowing people to express Him for His glory—Judg. 5:31; Matt. 13:43.
  - c. As we are infused with the Lord, we will shine spontaneously to become His living portrait, His testimony; we will not work or strive but simply glow.
  - d. Whenever we contact the Lord in a direct, intimate way, becoming one with Him, His word supplies us with life to cause us to grow, become His expression, and spontaneously live in a way that corresponds to what He is—John 5:39-40; 6:57.
- C. Those who keep the law by loving God and His word to become one with Him have the living of a God-man to bear the image of God, being a portrait of God and a duplication of God.