

MOSES AND THE COMMANDS OF GOD: The Role of Obedience to God's Commandments and Their Implications for the God's People

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Abstract

God's commands are very beneficial for all mankind who believe in Him. However, in reality, more people refused and did not carry out the order. In the Bible, Moses is one of the recipients of God's commandment that at the beginning of his call he rejected the order. But finally, he accepted and carried out God's command. Even though in the middle of the journey, Moses often complained and tried to refuse the order in leading the Israelites out of the land of Egypt due to the stubbornness of the people, sometimes Moses was affected by the situation so he violated His commands. The purpose of this article is to describe the journey of Moses receiving God's commands, since God revealed Himself to him and his ability to bring the Israelites out of Egypt to enter the land of Canaan by obedience to God's Commands. The method used in this article is to use a qualitative study research method with literature studies in the field of biblical theology. The discussion is focused on God's command to Moses in several important chronologies and how Moses' attitude towards God's command for the Israelites and how the attitude displayed by the Israelites responded to God's command.

Keywords: *God's Commandments, Law, Moses, Obedience, Word.*



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INTRODUCTION

In the Bible, the story of Moses is well known and is often alluded to in sermons and examples of teaching in the church today. This is because of the many great experiences and passions surrounding

Moses' life. There were many miracles throughout his life, from his birth to leading the Israelites out of Egypt to the promised land. All of this is inseparable from God's great plan to appoint Moses as a prophet to His people. Deuteronomy 34:10 confirms

thus that “Since then, no prophet has risen in Israel like Moses, whom the LORD knew face to face (NIV).” The event of Moses being chosen by God to lead the Israelites out of Egypt began with God's self-revelation to him.¹ But the basis for the election of Moses was inseparable from God's covenant with Abraham and the ancestors of Israel. There is a continuing common thread of history in the sense that God did not spontaneously choose Moses to be His servant. Moses' calling was preceded by the oppression of the Israelites in Egypt after Pharaoh, who did not know Joseph, came to power. To hinder the development of the population of the Israelites, they were enslaved by forced labor because they did not show their loyalty to God and did not accustom themselves to obeying God's commands. Even the life of the nation was farther and farther away from God because it was influenced by the worship of the Egyptians. It is following the Canonization of the text and the Bible: a discussion of the confession of the Biblical Canon and its implications for the church.²

After Moses grew up in Egypt under the auspices of Pharaoh's court. He learned

a lot about Egyptian knowledge, traditions, and culture. Even Moses was given military training to become the next generation of Pharaoh so many people regarded him as a prominent leader.³ This is justified in Acts 7:22 says, “Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action..” W.H. Grispen also argued that Moses received the best education in Egypt in the various sciences to which he was entitled as the daughter of Pharaoh.⁴ Here it is seen that Moses was prepared by the court to be a great leader in the future to lead in Egypt.

But an unexpected event occurred, namely an Egyptian beating the Hebrews witnessed by Moses (Ex. 2:12). Without thinking Moses killed the Egyptian and then fled to Midian after the news was heard by Pharaoh. Since Moses lived in Midian and had a family there was a turning point in his life, which was when God introduced himself to him and sent him to take the people out of Egypt because of their great oppression of them. Moses' encounter with God changed the course of his life from a life of pleasure to a great responsibility to free his people from Egyptian slavery.⁵

¹ Longman III, Tremper. *How To Read Exodus*, (Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2011): 111.

² Damanik, Dapot, and Lasmaria Nami Simanungkalit. “TEXT AND BIBLE CANONIZATION: Discussion of the Confession of the Bible Canon and Its Implications for the Church”. *Didache: Jurnal Teologi dan Pendidikan Kristen* 3, no. 2

³ White, Ellen G. *Sejarah Para Nabi*, (Bandung: Indonesia Publishing House, 2011): 287.

⁴ Grispen, W.H. *Exodus*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982): 41.

⁵ Von Rad, Gerhard. *Musa*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1973): 12-26.

Moses' experience in Egypt was a process of maturation in preparation for him to accept the new task of God's Command.⁶

Moses first accepted God's commands as the basis and guide of all his actions. So in the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, the dialogue between God and Moses was instrumental. In the dialogue, God is the giver of the commandments and Moses is the recipient of the commandments. This was Moses' great responsibility, which was to carry out God's command from the time he was sent to deliver the Israelites from Egypt until he died. Therefore, Moses' work as a prophet and leader should not be taken for granted. Moses' obedience and faithfulness to carrying out God's commands are exemplary. Moses was the leader who managed to get his people out of Egyptian slavery and had even given up his whole life to lead the Israelites from Egypt to arrive in the land of Canaan.

During his time at the helm of the Israelites, there were many challenges faced by Moses, but he did not give up. God's commandments and promises are a guarantee for him to keep going. It is precisely obedience to God's

commandments that bring life and salvation. Through God's command, Moses and the Israelites came to know the true God and had the foundation to love God and his neighbor. God's command renewed and purified the faith of the Israelites which was contaminated by the tradition of worship of gods in Egypt for hundreds of years. To that end, the commandments of God delivered to Moses are important to re-elaborate to draw *meaning and implications for the church* today. For there is still a presumption that God's commandment, called the Torah of God, is irrelevant today.⁷ Lessing also argues that there is a very deep gulf between the Old Testament world and the reality of the current context that is impossible to bridge.⁸ For this reason, this discussion reiterates that God's Word and commandments are alive and valid at any time as perfect laws and must be obeyed by all the churches today in which believers today.

This article uses qualitative study research methods with literature studies in the field of biblical theology. This study plays an important role because it is fixed, first and foremost which is a cumulative effort. As in any academic discipline, a

⁶ Simanjuntak, IF & Sianipar, R. *Kajian Teologis Kepemimpinan Musa, Real Didache*, Volume 3 Nomor 2 (September 2018), 9 – 17.

⁷ Budijanto, Bambang. *Torah Dalam Hidup Bangsa Israel*, (Yogyakarta: Yayasan Andi, 2008):1.

⁸ Pratt, Richard L. *Ia Berikan Kita Kisah-Nya*, (Surabaya: Momentum, 2005): 259.

rigorous synthesis of knowledge becomes indispensable in following an exponentially growing theological literature.⁹ In the context of biblical-theological studies what is done is to build what is the theological message of the author of the text, which is different from the study of exegesis. The aforementioned method is an approach that supports the topic of discussion and does not contradict the main source, namely the book of Exodus and Numbers.

DISCUSSION

The Bible is the Word of God without error or what is called "inerrancy." The Word of God written in the Bible is the Word of becoming flesh. And the Word is God Himself (John 1:1). As for God's command to Moses, which is recorded starting from the book of Exodus in the Old Testament, it is God's Command to all his creatures universally. But most people today do not heed the biblical commandments in keeping it in obedience.¹⁰

⁹ Zachary Munn et al., "Systematic Review or Scoping Review? Guidance for Authors When Choosing between a Systematic or Scoping Review Approach," *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 18, no. 1 (December 19, 2018): 143, <https://bmcmedresmethodol.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12874-018-0611-x>; Guy Paré and Spyros Kitsiou, "Methods for Literature Reviews," in *Handbook of EHealth Evaluation: An Evidence-Based Approach*, ed. Francis Lau and Craig Kuziemy, 1st ed. (Victoria, BC: University of Victoria, 2017), 157–180, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK481583/>;

Moses and the Commandments of God

Moses was a Hebrew born during the Israelites' slavery situation in Egypt, the son of Amran and Jochebed, a tribe of Levi. By the time Pharaoh told his soldiers to kill every Israeli baby boy who was two years old and under. Because of God's protection, Moses escaped the murder planned by Pharaoh, even being lifted and saved by Pharaoh's daughter who took him from the water. So Moses' childhood until he grew up until he was 40 years old took place in Egypt.¹¹

But when one day Moses witnessed an Egyptian act of violence against one of his brothers in Israel, he defended his people by killing soldiers who tortured a tribe which resulted in him having to flee to the land of Midian. It was precisely behind this event that Moses met with the God of Midian, the God of his ancestors and his father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Exodus 3:6). God revealed himself

Louis Hébert, *Introduction to Literary Analysis: A Complete Methodology* (Abingdon, Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2022); Daniel Lucas Lukito, *Pengantar Teologia Kristen 1* (Bandung: Yayasan Kalam Hidup, 2002).

¹⁰ Douglas Stuart & Gordon D. Fee, *Hermeneutics – Interpreting God's Word Correctly*, (Unfortunate: Mas Wheat, 2017), 25

¹¹ David Lambert, "How the 'Torah of Moses' Became Revelation," *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Period* 47, no. 1 (2016): 22–54, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26551161>.

to Moses to command him to take the Israelites out of Egypt (Ex. 3:10-11).¹²

The word command in Hebrew is מצוה (*mitsvah*), meaning the laws and commandments of God or the commandments of God.¹³ God's commandments are also often referred to as the "Torah", i.e. teaching, law, upbringing, and instruction to obey.¹⁴ In the Bible, kata Torah is used to refer to the laws (Exodus 20), addressed to the entire will of God and the five books of Moses, and is also interpreted as the Word of God (Psalm 1).¹⁵ From some of these understandings, God's command is all the Words spoken by God be fully carried out by man faithfully as a means of fulfilling God's will. God's commandments are the basis of all laws, regulations, and statutes contained in Scripture. This means that God's commands are higher than the laws or norms of life made by man. The violation of God's commandments has serious consequences in the form of retaliatory punishments instead of bringing God's lovingkindness to those who hold fast to His commandments (Ex. 20:5-6).

Therefore, God's command to Moses means that all the words or utterances of

God that were spoken to Moses be fully implemented, from his sending the Israelites out of Egypt to leading them into the land of Canaan. God's commandments in the important chronology of Moses' journey leading the Israelites out of Egypt to the land of Canaan are described as follows.

When God revealed Himself to Moses

The Bible explains in Exodus 3:10 God said to Moses "So now, go, I sent you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." After Moses fled Egypt and settled in Midian, God revealed himself to him in the flames coming out of the thorn bush. In his encounter with God several instructions he received, including: "Do not come near", "take off your shoes", "go", and "as you say". Since God revealed himself to Moses there were many commandments that he had to do even though it was surrounded by doubts and considerations because it was beyond his expectations. God revealed himself to Moses to transfer his original conviction from the Egyptian upbringing to the God of his fathers, namely the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For, while in the care of Pharaoh's daughter,

¹² Siakok Sin, Musa Dan Kepemimpinannya Dalam Kitab Keluaran - SOLA GRATIA: Jurnal Teologi Biblika dan Praktika, 2013 -sttaaletheia.ac.id

¹³ Reinhard Achenbach, Kamus Ibrani – Indonesia Perjanjian Lama, (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih, 2012), 193

¹⁴ Dachi, Rahmat Alyakin. *Hukum Taurat Dalam Perspektif Iman Kristen*, (Tangerang: Pascal Books, 2021): 9-10.

¹⁵ Browning, W.R.F. *Kamus Alkitab*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2009).

it was most likely that Moses did not know the true God. Through this revelation, God wanted to tell Moses that He was the God who had accompanied his ancestors and promised them. "Allah of your fathers" (*Elohe abtikem*) revealed to Moses means God your fathers, because the word (*abtikem*) comes from the word *ba* which has the meaning of father in the plural with the addition of suffix as the word point "*mu*."¹⁶ Similarly NIV and KJV translate with the word *God Your Father*.

To strengthen Moses' conviction in his commission of sending, he questioned the name of God who revealed himself to him. Then God says "I am I" (*ehyeh aser ehyeh*). By some scholars "I am I" is defined as "there", in contemporary and in the present, always present and acting, because it is written in an active form.¹⁷ Thus, this name expresses the totality of Jehovah denoting His power, power, and existence that will never change forever. Through this answer, God wanted to declare to Moses that indeed I am the One who exists and will be dynamically present

with you in the mission of deliverance of My people Israel in Egypt.

In his human limitations, Moses was still in doubt and wanted stronger evidence to confirm his going to Egypt. He understood that the Egyptians were very cruel to the Israelites and it was not so easy for Pharaoh to free them. To answer Moses' doubts, God did not let go of his hands by demonstrating something miraculous before Moses, namely that the staff became a serpent and again became a staff and Moses' leprosy-filled hands became restored to their original state (Ex. 4:1-7). This is all inseparable from Moses' obedience to follow God's commands. After a long dialogue between God and Moses was over, Moses became ready and set out for Egypt to carry out all of God's commands. What Moses did was proof of him as a Leader prepared by God to lead the Israelites who would listen and obey the Command-giver.¹⁸

When 10 Plagues Were Inflicted on Egypt

¹⁶ TOW Project, "Moses' Final Appeal for Obedience to God (Deuteronomy 29:1-30:20). Bible Commentary," *Theology of Work*, last modified 2020, <https://www.theologyofwork.org/old-testament/deuteronomy-and-work#moses-final-appeal-for-obedience-to-god-deuteronomy-2913020>; Bina Nir, "The Genealogy of Obedience in the Biblical Sources of Jewish Culture," *Genealogy* 6, no. 4 (October 10, 2022): 84, <https://www.mdpi.com/2313-5778/6/4/84>.

¹⁷ Wahyuni, Sri. *Pengenalan Akan Nama Allah Sebagai Peneguhan Iman Dalam Masa Kesusakan*, Jurnal Scripta Teologi dan Pelayanan Kontekstual, Volume 3 Nomor 2 (November 2018), 184-204.

¹⁸ John C. Maxwell, *God for Gold – Inspirasi untuk Meningkatkan Pengaruh Kepemimpinan Anda*, (Jakarta: Immanuel, 2010), 32

In Exodus 7:7-9 it is written that even though Moses was eighty years old and Aaron was eighty-three years old when they spoke to Pharaoh. In Exodus 7:14,17 the LORD said to Moses: "Pharaoh was adamant in his heart that he refused to let the people go. Therefore thus saith the LORD: From the following, you shall know, that I am the LORD. Behold, with this rod in my hand shall I shall be struck the water which is in the Nile and the water shall turn into blood.¹⁹

Moses faced a formidable challenge, namely resistance from the Pharaoh and the rulers of Egypt. Pharaoh wanted to see or prove the omnipotence of God who sent Moses to him. Therefore, proving the power of God through Moses entering the stage of the stick turning into a serpent, and returning to a stick. Even though the Egyptians were able to perform the same attractions, their sticks were swallowed by the staff of Moses. The book of Exodus records that 10 plagues befell the Egyptians. Each plague is preceded by the Lord's command to Moses and Aaron. This means that every action of Moses and Aaron still follows God's commands

without adding or subtracting. The plague that God gave over Egypt, namely:

1. Water becomes blood (Ex. 7:19-21),
2. The Frog (Ex. 8:5-15),
3. Mosquitoes (Ex. 8:16-19),
4. Allure Flies (Ex. 8:20-24),
5. Pestilence in cattle (Ex. 9:1-7),
6. Barah (Ex. 9:8-12),
7. Hail (Ex. 9:13-35),
8. grasshopper (Ex. 10:1-20),
9. pitch black (Ex. 10:21-29),
10. Death of the firstborn (Ex. 12).

Indeed, the gift of the plagues that God inflicted upon the Egyptians is evidence of His presence and the revelation of His power.²⁰ Blommendaal says that the giving of these plagues was a major event that occurred in the Old Testament. It has the intention of showing the glory and dominion of God.²¹ Through plague after plague also intended to edify Moses and Aaron so as not to be daunted in the face of the harsh Pharaoh. The plagues are estimated to have occurred for approximately one year.²² This means that the liberation of the Israelites from Egypt took quite a long time. Here it is also seen that God's promise of inclusion of Moses

¹⁹ Thomas Whitelaw, *Genesis-Exodus Dalam The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 1*, ed. H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985).

²⁰ Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa. *Talk Thru The Bible: Mengenal Alkitab Secara Lengkap*

Dalam Waktu Singkat, (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2017): 42.

²¹ Blommendaal, J. *Pengantar Kepada Perjanjian Lama*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 2016): 43.

²² Lane West, Sandy. *Handbook To The Bible*, (Bandung: Kalam Hidup, 2016): 176.

and Aaron was evident in the time they obeyed and faithfully carried out every commandment that *Allah* said so that Moses and Aaron were protected from all threats because God sent them in His mighty power. And every word Moses uttered was powerful because it was based on God's command. Of all the plagues that befell the Egyptians, the 10th plague was the very painful h, namely the death of the firstborn of the Egyptians and the great event that became the door to the deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

When Easter, The Death of the Firstborn, and Deliverance

Before the 10th plague was inflicted by God upon Egypt, God made a distinction between the Israelites and the Egyptians so that the plague would not hit the firstborn of Israel. So God commanded the Israelites to celebrate the Passover. Easter comes from the Hebrew verb: *Pesakh* which means "to miss" with the meaning of "to save."²³ The Passover is a feast day for God for generations as a warning of great salvation and deliverance (Ex. 12:14). All the Israelites had to do in the Passover was to

sanctify themselves, eat unleavened bread along with bitter vegetables and slaughter a ram lamb whose blood was smeared on both the doorposts of the house of Israel and its upper threshold. Every family that obeys God's commands will be saved, but those who transgress will die (Ex. 12:15). William Dyrness explained that the celebration was like a family service conducted as a memorial service, and every time the Israelites celebrated Paskah they would continue to remember how God delivered them from Egyptian oppression²⁴

After the time that God had ordained Moses, the terrible 10th plague occurred. As a result of this plague, there is nothing left, from the firstborn of the people in Egypt, to even the firstborns. (Ex. 12:29) On the contrary the Israelite whose door had been smeared with the blood of a ram, survived the death according to the Lord's command.²⁵

When crossing the Red Sea to pass through the wilderness

Di this place the road was closed while from behind the Egyptian army again pursued them in horse-drawn carriages on

²³ Douglas, J.D. *Ensiklopedia Alkitab Masa Kini Jilid I: A-L*, (Jakarta: Yayasan Komunikasi Bina Kasih, 2008): 1664.

²⁴ Dyrness, William. *Tema-tema dalam Teologi Perjanjian Lama*, (Malang: Gandum Mas, 2004): 128.

²⁵ James Montgomery Boice, *Dasar-Dasar Iman Kristen – Sebuah Teologi yang Komprehensif dan Mudah Dibaca*, (Surabaya: Penerbit Momentum, 2011), 249

the orders of the hard-hearted Pharaoh. Humanly the Israelites were so terrified that they even questioned Moses "What did you do to us by bringing us out of Egypt?" (Ex. 14:11). The Israelites regretted that they were led by Moses out of Egypt because they thought it would be impossible to escape the crunch and would be destroyed by Pharaoh's army. But God did not let Moses face the problem himself. God again gave the command to lift his staff and extend his hand over the sea, so that a miracle occurred that the sea of Teberau was split and the dry road in the middle was passed by the Israelites to the other side until salvation. Meanwhile, the entire army of Pharaohs who pursued the Israelites drowned in the middle of the ocean, after which the sea was reunited.²⁶

Moses led the people out of Egypt, so Moses was always blamed in a hushed manner. Although the Israelites had just witnessed the miracle of God's inclusion, so quickly they were desperate. A difficult situation that occurs while in the wilderness, for example, is the absence of water in the wilderness of Shur (Ex. 15:22), the water that was very bitter in Mara but was changed by God to be sweet (Ex. 15:25).

Amid the challenges and difficulties facing the Israelites in the wilderness aimed to mature and test their obedience to God. So when God paved the way for every problem, Moses made the people aware of the importance of obedience to God as mentioned in Exodus 15:26.²⁷

When Receiving the Ten Commandments (Dekalog) on Mount Sinai

The ten commandments of God are also known as *dasa titah* or *decaeon* (Greek "*deka logoi*") and Hebrew "*aseret hadevarim*", which is the law of God given to Moses on Mount Sinai for the Israelites written by the hand of God himself (Deut. 4:13). The ten commandments that Moses received are written in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. This *Decalog* commanded the Israelites to worship God only, stay away from idolatry, keep God's name and the sabbath day holy, honor parents, and prohibitions against murder, adultery, theft, lies, and all desires contrary to God's will.²⁸ These ten laws are divided into two large parts according to two tablets, namely: Laws 1-4 serve to regulate man's relationship with God (vertical), and

²⁶ de Matthew Henry, Tafsiran Matthew Henry – Kitab Keluaran, Imamat, (Surabaya: Penerbit Momentum, 2019), 214

²⁷ Whitelaw, *Genesis-Exodus Dalam The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 1.*

²⁸ A.A. Sitompul & Ulrich Beyer, Bible Interpretation Methods, (Jakarta: BPK. Mount Mulia, 2015), 142

the 5th-10th law to regulate man's relationship with a man (horizontal).²⁹

Meanwhile, for Jews, the ten commandments of God are broken down into 613 rules called mitzvot, namely 365 negative commands (*mitzvot aseh*) and 248 positive commands (*mitzvot lo taaseh*).³⁰ Despite the many laws and regulations in the book of Moses or the book of the Torah, Jesus only divided into two major parts: Loving the Lord God and loving others (Matthew 22:37-40).

In its development, various views emerged regarding the ten commandments of God or the so-called law. According to Martin Luther, the law has dual functions, that is, political or civil functions and theological or spiritual functions. Politically the law serves to prevent the spread of sin due to Satan's influence in society and spiritually serves to maintain the purity of heart, holiness, perfect obedience, fear, respect, and love for God.³¹ Meanwhile, according to John Calvin, the function of the law is divided into 3, namely:³²

1. It serves *as a mirror where* humans can see the stains and all the evil they have done.
2. Serves *as a curb* to prevent criminal behavior.
3. Serves *as a rule of life*

According to Verkuyl, the use of the law in the view of reformers Martin Luther and John Calvin is almost the same in principle, namely the *paedagogical intestine* (converting errors), the *normative intestine* (the norm for new life), and the *civilized intestine* (to reflect God's justice in society and the state).³³ Therefore, in essence, the ten laws of Taurat are the universal benchmark of human behavior and piety, especially for the people of God both Israel and the church.

In the context of the life of the Israelites, the Dasa Titah was designed by God as a way to reimagine the social life, moral values, and foundations of faith that God wanted. So that relationships with others become peaceful, harmonious, and loving and intimate relationships with God continue to run in holiness.³⁴ This cannot be separated from the background of the Israelites during their time under Egyptian

²⁹ Gulo, C. P. (2021). Understanding the meaning of the law as a good moral formation for believers. *Excelsis Deo: A Journal of Theology, Missionology, And Education*, 5(2), 127-138.

³⁰ Dachi, Rahmat Alyakin. *Hukum Taurat Dalam Perspektif Iman Kristen*, (Tangerang: Pascal Books, 2021): 9-12.

³¹ Lowijaya, J. *Hukum Taurat Dan Injil Menurut Martin Luther*, Jurnal Amanat Agung, Volume 2 Nomor 1 (April 2006), 83-100.

³² <https://Presbyformed.com>. Two or Three Uses ? – The Law In Luther & Calvin

³³ Verkuyl, J. *Etika Kristen Bagian Umu*, (Jakarta: BPK Gunung Mulia, 1993): 93-94.

³⁴ James Montgomery Boice,.... 264

rule which was contaminated with the local culture, especially the ritual worship of gods or other gods. It is certain that around 430 years in Egypt, the Israelites did not know the true God, who had revealed himself to their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

The memory of the Israelites is still strong in the tradition of idolatry. The old custom of the Israelites can be attested to when Moses was told by God to go up to Mount Sinai to receive the ten Words but he was a little bit down for a long time, they were impatient and in a huff led to the idolatry of the golden calf (Ex. 32:4). This behavior of disobedience also invited the wrath of God who had saved them, even though He was sorry for that (Ex. 3:14).³⁵ This is inseparable from Moses' role as a mediator who had carried out God's command to receive the ten Words and defend his people from God's punishment. It goes back again that obedience to God's commandments brings blessings, but transgression will bring punishment.

In the context of the Christian life, the law is not a way of salvation, but a guide

for man to Christ. Galatians 3:24 makes it clear that the law is the guide for us until Christ comes, so that we may be justified by faith. This means that man is not saved by the law but by faith in Christ. However, this does not mean that the law is abolished - Matthew 5:17.³⁶

Israel's Attitude Towards God's Commandments

In doing God's commandments, the Israelites were inconsistent. They obeyed otherwise and rebelled, but they were more often disobedient to God's commands. The obedience of the Israelites during the leadership of Moses was always influenced by their interests or needs as if they were merely taking advantage of God's goodness without knowing to thank Him.³⁷ He quickly turned away from God who had just shown great things before their eyes. The miracle of God delivering the people of Israel should strengthen their faith in Him. Indeed, the source of the problem was the Israelites' disobedience and unfaithfulness to God.³⁸

³⁵ Whitelaw, *Genesis-Exodus Dalam The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 1.*

³⁶ Douglas Moo, "Should Christians Obey the Old Testament? The Law of Moses and The Law of Christ," *DesiringGod*, last modified 2020, accessed March 13, 2022, <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/should-christians-obey-the-old-testament>; Nir, "The Genealogy of Obedience in the Biblical Sources of Jewish Culture."

³⁷ de Matthew Henry, Tafsiran Matthew Henry – Kitab Keluaran, Imamat,....236

³⁸ Thomas Römer, "Moses Outside the Torah and the Construction of a Diaspora Identity," *The Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 8 (December 31, 2008), <https://jhsonline.org/index.php/jhs/article/view/6213>; Whitelaw, *Genesis-Exodus Dalam The Pulpit Commentary, Vol. 1.*

Israel also opposed the leadership of Moses and Aaron, so they were swallowed up by God's judgment (Num. 16:30). Furthermore, a disquiet attitude towards Moses and Aaron, made many of them die in venomous snakes, so that Moses had to make a copper serpent at the command of the Lord and who saw the copper stake alive (Num. 21). But the great effect of the Israelites' disobedience occurred at a time when they were nearly entering the land of Canaan. Their scouts were twelve, ten of whom were frightened and disobedient to God's commands.³⁹

As a result, they perished by the wrath of God including those who had previously rebelled and murmured so that those who managed to enter the land of Canaan were 2 scouts; Joshua and Caleb, children and women aged 20 and under (Numbers 14:29-30).

The punishment that befell the Israelites was not based on God's hatred but neither should His justice and holiness be played out. God loves and loves His people very much, but God's promises and blessings are reserved only for those who

respond in faithfulness.⁴⁰ Regarding the so-called obedient and faithful, W. Pink argues that "one who obeys the will of God will acknowledge His absolute decision and right to do unto us all that He considers good."⁴¹

Moses' Attitude Towards God's Commands

From the whole journey of Moses receiving God's command for the Israelites from the time he was sent to expel the Israelites from Egypt until he entered the land of Canaan, there can be found the exemplary value and attitude in Moses that he showed before his people, especially before God, namely:⁴²

1. Obeying, meaning Moses obeyed, respected, and cherished every command of the Lord to be carried out without rebuttal or delay and did not change every intention of God's commandment.
2. Brave, meaning that Moses did not hesitate or be ashamed to deliver God's commands directly, honestly, and

³⁹ Mark Greenspan, "To Whom Must We Answer? Civil Disobedience and Jewish Law Para Shat Sh'm Ot, Exodus 1:15-20," *The Rabbinical Assembly*, last modified 2019, accessed March 15, 2022, <https://www.rabbinicalassembly.org/sites/default/files/public/resources-ideas/source-sheets/tol-parashot/sh-mot.pdf>.

⁴⁰ Van Gemeren, Willem A. *Penginterpretasian Kitab Para Nabi*, (Surabaya: Momentum, 2005): 117.

⁴¹ Pink, Arthur W. *The Sovereignty of God*, (Surabaya: Momentum, 2005): 168.

⁴² Sinaga, Janes, et al. "Karakter Kepemimpinan Musa Inspirasi Setiap Pemimpin." *SCRIPTA: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pelayanan Kontekstual* 12.2 (2021): 123-141.

openly both before the Israelites and before Pharaoh.

3. Steadfast, meaning that Moses was not discouraged, neither giving up nor despairing despite the few obstacles he faced.
4. Meek, meaning that behind the firmness and even anger of Moses, in his soul there was tenderness. This was seen when he defended his people before God so as not to be punished by intercessory prayers and asking for God's forgiveness.
5. Relying on God means that Moses did not act alone in leading and guiding the Israelites, especially in difficult times, but he always asked and communicated with God.
6. Faithful, meaning Moses did not abandon his duty of leading the Israelites out of Egypt to the land of Canaan. Moses' faithfulness to leading God's people is demonstrated by obedience to God's Commandments until the end of his life.

The Fulfillment of God's Commandments in the New Testament

Moses had shown his obedience to God's commands all his life, but as a man, there were still weaknesses and limitations.

Behind Moses' gentleness, he was also an irritable or emotional person. Especially in leading the Israelites who had committed so many transgressions that it angered God and punished them. But amid the great responsibility that Moses carried, all the words of the Lord reaffirmed him to be faithful to his stake. Moses can be said to have been obedient and faithful to God even under limitations.

In all of God's commandments in the book of Moses, whose culmination is the ten Words, no man can do so perfectly. Therefore, in faith the Promise of God is only Jesus Christ who has obeyed, faithfully, and perfectly fulfilled the commandments of God and all the laws (Matthew 5:17). In Jesus Christ, the entire law, the prophets, and the Old Testament have been fulfilled (Luke 24:25-27). Indeed, the new basis of Christian obedience to God is faith in Jesus Christ which brings blessings, eternal life, and salvation. His absolute decision and right to do unto us all that He considers good".⁴³

Implications of Obedience to God's People Today

The purpose of obedience to God's commands is always for God. The people sent must live permanently in dependence

⁴³Pink, Arthur W. *The Sovereignty of God*, (Surabaya: Momentum, 2005): 168.

on their God who sent them. God's people never renounce the *environment* of their obedience to God, nor does he obey the man who acts as the mediator of His will.⁴⁴

Next, he needs to turn his proper obedience to his superiors into a climate of permanent and habitual service to Jesus Christ. Peter asked Christians to "submit, for the Lord's sake, to all human institutions, both to kings, and to the guardians sent" (1Pet. 2:13-14 cf 1Pet. 2:16). And he concluded with this explanation: "Respect everyone. Love your brethren. Fear God. Honor the king" (1Pet. 2:17). The driving force of every moment that is behind the supposed obedience is love. Only love makes obedience perfect and accountable. Love must give impulses and change our obedience for the better. Our relationship must be led by love.

CONCLUSION

All of God's commandments in the Bible, especially the Law called Dekalog, are intended to be for a man to love God and love his neighbor. Likewise, the commandment of God given to Moses and the people of Israel was intended that he and his people love the Lord God and his neighbor. God's command should be seen as God's gift to the church and His people.

These commandments and laws of God become the new guide of life, guiding the hearts, minds, and actions of the people to His will as a way to enjoy happiness. In this law, the church in this case is a people who believe in God directed to maintain a close relationship with God, always dwelling before Him and enjoying His presence. God's laws also invite us to do all our work earnestly, making good use of our time in life for useful things and glorifying God. Thus, every day is worship for God.

Therefore, the attitude that should be shown in responding to God's commands is obedience and faithfulness as shown by Moses in this discussion. Moses had tried to follow all of God's commandments so that he succeeded in bringing the Israelites out of Egypt to the promised land. Likewise, we as believers in the Lord God in Jesus Christ should be willing and ready to obey the Lord's commands. Obedience and rebellion against the commandments of the Lord God both have consequences. Obedience brings life, salvation, and happiness whereas disobedience comes with God's punishment as experienced by the Israelites. Ultimately all of God's commandments are teachings (*Torahs*) for believers today and are still relevant to be applied in daily life as

⁴⁴ Jose Cristo Rey Gracia Paredes, *Ketaatan Demi Kerajaan Allah: Teologi Kehidupan Religius*, ed. Philip Ola Daen, 1st ed.

(Mauwere: Ledalero, 2016), <http://repository.stfkledalero.ac.id/557/1/Ketaatan.pdf>.

worship and a manifestation of our believers' obedience to God.

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