

Introduction: I have learned something new this year from my evangelical Catholic brothers and sisters on the EWTN television network. The early Church fathers, including Augustine, described The Three-in-One God as Good, Beautiful and True. Therefore, all He created has goodness, beauty and truth in it. I learned this through two brothers who are folk-bluegrass songwriter singer-musicians. *** Their mother was a concert pianist in New York City. The family moved to Virginia soon after the second boy was born. While growing up the boys learned the folk music of the Shenandoah Mountain region. They play guitar, mandolin, banjo and fiddle. They are now writing songs in a band with two friends who are the rhythm section. Even though they are evangelical Catholics, they write songs about living in America today. They want to help people thrive in a country where there are great divisions over basic morality issues. They try to put something of the Good, Beautiful and True into every song they write. Fathers have come up to the brothers after a concert to thank them for their songs that reinforce the Biblical morality they are teaching their children. Because young people love their music, they are exposed to the Goodness, Beauty and Truth God has built into the world. Parents can teach their children about God and His ways through the gift of the well crafted song lyrics. *** Our passages this morning bring out these great realities about God and His Creation. In His goodness He saved Israel. The language used to describe this salvation is poetic metaphor. And the 'Ten Words' Yahweh God gave His people to live by are true, as all God's words are true. But people can only receive salvation to live by His ways in and through God's Son. Unless THE Life-giving Savior is going through us, affecting all we are and all we do, we are nothing – spiritually dead.

God saves those living in faithful obedience through His Son

With this introduction, let's discover the goodness, beauty and truth in today's passages.

I. Yahweh saved Israel on eagle's wings to be a holy nation to Him, then He gave them ten strong words to obey to fulfill His will. (Exodus 19:3-7; 20:1-17)

- A. Yahweh saved Israel by lifting them on eagle's wings from slavery in Egypt to bring them to Himself to be a holy nation of priests to Him. (Exodus 19:3-7)
1. Moses went up to God, and Yahweh called him, thus shall you speak to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: you saw what I did to the Egyptians, and I lifted you on the wings of eagles, and I brought you to Myself. (Verses 3-4)
God: God is used of the all-powerful Creator, and Yahweh is the Covenant Name for God.
People: Isaac and Rebekah named their second-born son Jacob, 'supplanter'. After he wrestled a man who may have been pre-Bethlehem Jesus, the man changed his name to Israel, 'he will be God's prince'.
See: They were all eyewitnesses to the miraculous works God did in Egypt to set His people free.
Salvation: Salvation is the good God lifting His people out of slavery and bringing them to Himself.
Poetry: Notice God rescued them on eagle's wings – a beautiful poetic metaphor.
 2. Now, if you will indeed hear My voice and keep My Covenant you are My valued treasure among all the people, for all the earth is Mine. (Verse 5)
Hear: This is careful hearing in order to obey, literally, 'to hear, you will hear'.
Keep: They are to guard the provisions of Yahweh's Covenant. Both the hearing and keeping are conditional, that is only those who do both are God's valued treasure.
Treasure: Again, God uses poetic language to describe the value of people faithfully obedient to Him.
 3. You will be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, you will speak these words to the sons of Israel; then Moses called the elders and put before them all the words Yahweh commanded him. (Verses 6-7)
Holy priests: Every person obedient to God by faith in God is a holy priest to Him.
Impossible: However, the historical record in the Bible, both before and after Moses, shows such faithful obedience is impossible for people in their own strength. Only after God sent His Son Jesus is such obedience of faith now possible. (Galatians 2:17-21; 3:6-14)

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These words: At this point, these are the Torah. They are summarized by the 'Ten Words' of truth in the next chapter. So, in this short passage we see how the Good, Beautiful and True God communicated to His people so they might reflect these qualities in their lives in this world.

- B. Then He gave them ten strong words to obey so they would fulfill His purpose for them. (Exodus 20:1-17)
1. And God spoke all these words: I am Yahweh your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. (Verses 1-2)
Prelude: In the middle of the second millennium before Jesus came to earth all conditional king-serf agreements began with a declaration of the gracious provision the sovereign king made for his serfs. Yahweh tells the sons of Israel that He brought them out of the bondage of slavery in Egypt. This should be incentive enough for Israel to want to live by the 'Ten Words' that follow.
 2. Yahweh then gives ten strong words calling for obedience of His people so He may bless them. (Verses 3-17)
Format: Eight words are an emphatic 'you will not ever' do this in the future. The fourth word is the expected result of the three words that precede it; and, the fifth word is the only true command.
 - i. There will be no other 'gods' to you above Me. (Verse 3)

- ii. You will not make to yourself an idol, and any likeness that is in heaven above and in earth beneath and in the water under the earth; and you will not bow down to them, and you will not let yourselves serve them; because, I am a jealous God, counting the iniquity of the father upon four generations of those hating Me; and, showing strong LOVE to thousands loving Me and keeping My commandments. (*Verses 4-6*)
Warning: There is a strong warning against putting anything we make above The Creator God; however, all who live a lifestyle of love and obedience to God, experience His strong LOVE.
- iii. You will not take The Name of Yahweh your God in vain, for Yahweh will not acquit the one who will lift up His Name in vain. (*Verse 7*)
Words and deeds: ‘Vain’ also means in emptiness or falsehood. ‘Acquit’ also means unpunished. In other words, any words or deeds done by a person that are empty (meaningless) in God’s eyes or are false to God’s character of truth will be punished.
- iv. To remember the Sabbath (seventh) day to keep it holy; do all your work six days, the seventh is a Sabbath to Yahweh your God, no one will do any work; for, in six days Yahweh made everything, then He rested on the seventh day; so, He blessed and made it holy. (*Verses 8-11*)
Result of above: Those putting nothing above the good and beautiful God, Yahweh, who say and do everything according to His truth, will remember to rest and be blessed in Him on the Sabbath.
Will not work: They (including children, servants, animals and sojourners) will do NO work.
Blessing: The result will be the blessing of sharing in God’s holiness by devoting one day in seven totally to Him.
- v. You must honor your father and mother in order that your days may be long in the land Yahweh your God is giving you. (*Verse 12*)
Parents: This is a transition word of command. The first four are about how people relate to Father God. Fathers and mothers are our parents on earth. We honor them by esteeming them and giving full weight to all their instruction about God (*Deuteronomy 6:4-9*).
Promise: The promise has two dimensions. The sons of Israel as a people will stay in the land a long time, and individuals may have their days of life in the land extended.
- vi. You will not kill. (*Verse 13*)
- vii. You will not commit adultery. (*Verse 14*)
- viii. You will not steal. (*Verse 15*)
- ix. You will not speak against your neighbor a witness that is a lie. (*Verse 16*)
Jesus: Jesus took these four words to a higher level in the Sermon on the Mount. Can we say we have never been so angry with someone so we hated him, even for a moment? What man can say he has never lusted a woman? (*Matthew 6:21-30*) When my boss asked if I had passed along his request on a task that was not done, I knew he meant had I asked every day for a week. I had only asked twice, but I said two or three times. The only way we can obey God’s commands and be saved to do His will is IF we are IN Jesus by faith.

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- x. You will not covet anything belonging to your neighbor. (*Verse 17*)
Paul: Paul said the law (Torah) taught him what it meant to covet (*Romans 7:7*). God gave houses, wives, employees animals (possessions) as examples.

II. Jesus corrected His followers by saying He came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. (*Matthew 5:17*)

- A. He said they should not think He had come to destroy the Law and the Prophets. (*Verse 17a*)
Context: Jesus just commanded all His disciples at the foot of the mountain to be salt and light in all they do (holy priests, as Yahweh told all his people at Mt. Sinai) to glorify Father God (*Matthew 5:13-16*). He is about to destroy their false teaching of Scripture, but He tells them He is not destroying Scripture. As we saw earlier, he is giving fuller meaning to the ‘Ten Words’.
- B. ‘I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill (them)’. (*Verse 17b*)
Fulfill: His teaching about the true meaning of God’s good Word is a prelude to the perfect life of faithful obedience He will live before them in order to become the perfect sacrifice to save people from sin.
The Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit God’s Son sent enables and empowers all receiving Him to live in faithful obedience. We need the Three-IN-One God with us and IN us.

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Only in Jesus: All living in the faith of Jesus live good, beautiful and true lives because of Jesus.

Jesus came to fulfill the Law and the Prophets. (#1)

Conclusion: The God of Israel, Yahweh, saved His people by lifting them from slavery in Egypt on eagle’s wings to bring them to Himself to be a holy nation. He then gave them ten strong words to obey so they would fulfill His purpose for them as His treasured covenant people. This relationship was not fulfilled until Jesus came to fulfill all God’s Word.

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