

- Q43. What is the preface to the Ten Commandments?
A43. **The preface to the Ten Commandments is in these words, *I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.***

Exodus 20:2; Deuteronomy 5:6

- DQ1: Who is the one that gave the Ten Commandments?
- DQ2: What is the relationship between the giver of the Ten Commandments and those who were slaves in Egypt?
- DQ3: What is the significance of the phrase “I am the Lord your God”?
- DQ4: Why did God record such an introduction to the Ten Commandments?

Notes:

The introduction to the Ten Commandments includes some very significant information. First, it says the giver of the Ten Commandments is “the Lord your God.” Second, it says God is the one “who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” The introduction provides significant information regarding **who God is** and **His relationship with God’s people**, i.e., the Redeemer.

God appeared to Israel as the Redeemer. The events described in Exodus are not a fairytale but very significant historical and Biblical events. It was most important to God that the Israel of God, the church, remember these events. God wanted to make certain that the Israel of God never forget that it is Jehovah God who was in charge of the Exodus events.

The use of the expression, “the Lord (or Jehovah) your God”, is significant in the following ways:

First, God’s focus is on relationship. A very relationship indeed! The relationship between Himself and His people! The use of the word, “your” is an indicative of such a relationship. What kind of a relationship? It is a kind of relationship that matters. God demonstrated that He is a Person who is able to hear the groans and moans of the suffering people in bondage. So, God wanted to make sure that Israel was reminded again and again that it is He who brought them out of the bondage. It is this God who is giving the commandments.

A true relationship is only possible between two persons or personal beings. In redeeming His people and giving His commands, God has elevated His people as those who truly bear the image and likeness of God. “Your God” is a loving expression of God. God desires to be our God. That is a true elevation of the status for a people who were slaves in bondage in Egypt. While Jehovah is God and thus He is vertically above us, He has lifted us up to His level as those He has counted worthy to contend with. So, right off the bat, God desires to instruct His people that He is most interested in the relationship.

Second, the Ten Commandments represent and embody the coming and the presence of the Lord in a concrete way. (Exodus 20:20) God’s people were desperate for the coming of the Lord. They had waited for a savior for a long time. The 400 years of slavery in Egypt produce in the hearts of the Israelites a deep yearning for redemption. To them, the Ten Commandments

express the coming and the presence of the Lord because they evidence God's Kingdom and His rule. The people of God finally felt vindicated that they can now live under the rule of God, rather than the rules of the slavery. It is through the Word that the people were able to experience God. In the New Testament, the coming of the Lord is referred to as "Emmanuel," meaning "God with us." (Matthew 1:23)

The Ten Commandments are not merely a set of rules to live by. They are a concrete demonstration of the coming and presence of the Lord. They were given because there is a living God who cares and loves His people enough to dwell in and among us. Therefore, we must do more than committing the Ten Commandments to memory. We must live as a people who have experienced God's presence in us. Yet, we also know that we will not be able fully and perfectly satisfy the requirements of God's command. We are not discouraged or disheartened because we do know of the One who is more than able to satisfy the requirements thereof for us, even Jesus Christ. (John 19:30)

Third, God reminds us again that He is "Jehovah" or "Yahweh," meaning "I am that I am" or God who is wholly self-existing, self-directing, and self-sufficient. There cannot be any other god like Yahweh. Indeed, there is no other God. We must remember that the give of the Ten Commandments is this God.

There are also following reasons for the introduction:

First, the preface establishes the authority of the God's command. All commands must be back by appropriate authority. Here, God is the unquestionable authority behind His command.

Second, the preface establishes that the source of the Ten Commandments is God.

Third, the preface establishes that there are certain duties of man which are owed to God and his neighbors.

Are you mindful of these duties to your God and your neighbor?