

## The Cycle of Redemption

Throughout salvation history, the Judeo-Christian people have been caught in the cycle of redemption, a theme that runs throughout the Old Testament.

As the priests and scribes wrote, they saw a pattern that described their history. . . .

This pattern occurs [as follows:]

- God creates or enters into a covenant, and it is good.
- Humanity falls into idolatry, resulting in disease, war, and grief.
- God sends teachers, kings, prophets, and others who lead the people to repentance.
- The people return to following the covenant.
- Peace and God's healing return to the people.

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In agreeing to follow the Ten Commandments and accept God's love and protection, the Israelites chose to enter into a covenant with God.

Because of the Ten Commandments, the Israelites are responsible for maintaining the following:

- **Obedience.** In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for *obedience* meant primarily "listening" or "hearing." An obedient person heard God's Word and followed it (see Exodus 15:26). To be obedient was simply to align oneself with God's will.
- **Respect for divine justice.** The Hebrew and Greek words translated as "justice" are also translated as "righteousness" and "judgment." Divine justice calls for the fair and equitable distribution of life's necessities. The scriptural idea of justice is based on the truth that all humans have dignity and worth and are children of God. God's love for all creation is shown in his emphasis on justice, which is love in action.
- **Openness to Divine Revelation.** Revelation is the act or process by which God reveals himself and the divine plan to humanity. It is a gift, a mystery of the Divine Presence breaking into human history.
- **Commitment to ethical responsibility.** The commandments of God are the fundamental rules of conduct for the Chosen People. The Ten Commandments are about the love of God and love of neighbor.
- **Commitment to the Covenant / Commandments.** The covenants between God and Israel are central to the Old Testament, where God promised to be faithful to the Chosen People, who in turn were expected to observe God's commandments.

