

Exodus 19

(Exodus 19:1) In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on the same day, they came *to* the Wilderness of Sinai. (2) For they had departed from Rephidim, had come *to* the Wilderness of Sinai, and camped in the wilderness. So Israel camped there before the mountain.

After the defeat of the Amaleks by God through the intercession of Moses and the sword of Joshua and his men, the children drank from the Rock that Moses struck. Now they were camping there in front of the Mountain.

(Exodus 19:3) And Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: (4) 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. (5) Now therefore, **IF** you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, **THEN** you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth *is* Mine. (6) And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These *are* the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel." (7) So Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before them all these words which the LORD commanded him. (8) Then all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." So Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.

The first meeting on the Mountain was uneventful but critically important. The LORD was about to inaugurate a new Covenant with the Children of Israel. The Covenant was conditional:

IF Obey by Voice and Keep my Covenant THEN

The results of this obedience were for God to consider them a "special treasure" above all peoples. They would also be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

This was, in effect, a preamble of the Mosaic Covenant where by the Children of Israel would have a special **relationship** with God, and they would **represent** Him as holy priests...all of them! The proof of His keeping His part in the Covenant was already seen in what He did to the Egyptians so that He could **bring them to Himself!** Again, God desired a relationship with the Children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Yes, He redeemed them and rescued them but that was so that He could bring them to Himself.

So, Moses told the elders and they told the people and they declared before Moses AND God "All that the LORD has spoken we will do." Perhaps they thought it would be easy to do 2 things!

(Exodus 19:9) And the LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I come to you in the thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and believe you forever." So Moses told the words of the people to the LORD. (10) Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes. (11) And let them be **ready** for the **third day**. For on the third day the LORD will come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.

Moses returns to the Mountain to tell the LORD what the people had said.

The LORD told Moses that He will come in a thick cloud to speak to Moses so that the **people will hear and believe**.

The next thing they had to do was to “consecrate themselves” so that would be ready to see the LORD (in the clouds) and hear His voice.

The word “consecrate” is a translation for a Hebrew word that means to make something clean or to be holy. The word is most often translated “**sanctify**”. The first use is in **Genesis 2:3** Then God blessed the seventh day and **sanctified** it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. The next time was **Exodus 13:2** “**Sanctify** to Me all the firstborn, whatever opens the womb among the children of Israel, *both* of man and beast; it is Mine.”

The idea is to separate oneself from the mundane and profane and often involves dedicating the person or animal to the LORD. When one separates him/herself it is assumed that it is for the sake of cleanliness and holiness. The Hebrew word for “consecrate” has the idea of giving something or someone wholly to the LORD.

It is interesting that in order to sanctify themselves the people had to wash their clothes. Moses added that the men must not have relations with their wives. I found this interesting because the LORD seemed to deal with the Israelites from the outside in. Many of the Laws dealt with clothing, hair, tattoos, jewelry etc. I don’t believe that that was His intention but rather, He was meeting them where they were in their “walks” and they would best understand the spiritual aspects by seeing concrete examples.

This was to be completed within three days for on the third day the “LORD *would* come down in the sight of all the people”.

(**Exodus 19:12**) You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Take heed to yourselves *that* you do *not* go up to the mountain or touch its base. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. (13) Not a hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot *with an arrow*; whether man or beast, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come near the mountain." (14) So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. (15) And he said to the people, "Be **ready** for the **third** day; do not come near *your* wives."

The LORD continues with His instructions. Moses was to ensure that the people could not even touch the Mountain and not try to go up. Some sort of fencing or hedge was erected around the Mountain. The penalty was severe! **Death** by stoning or by an arrow. This was also the commandment for their herds and flocks. This **WAS** the Mountain of God. Moses experienced something similar:

(**Exodus 3:5**) Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground."

Their signal was the long blast of the shofar (rams’ horn).

Again, the LORD reminds Moses to make sure the people are **ready!**

(Exodus 19:16) Then it came to pass on the third day, in the morning, that there were **thunderings and lightnings**, and a **thick cloud** on the mountain; and the **sound of the trumpet** was very loud, so that all the people who *were* in the camp **trembled**. (17) And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.

As promised 2 times before, on the third day, something began to happen that caused all the people in the camp to tremble. There were thunderings and lightning; a thick cloud settled on the Mountain and then a very loud Shofar (ram's horn) sounded!

Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God!

(Exodus 19:18) Now Mount Sinai *was* completely in smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. (19) And when the blast of the trumpet sounded long and became louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by voice.

Added to the trumpet, thunder and lightning are **earthquakes** that shook the entire Mountain and **fire** was seen as the LORD descended upon the Mountain. Its smoke rose up like the **smoke of a furnace**. Finally, Moses cries out to God. It's not recorded what he said but listen to Hebrews 12:21:

Hebrews 12:21 And so terrifying was the sight *that* Moses said, "I AM EXCEEDINGLY AFRAID AND TREMBLING.")

Many believe this was taken from an ancient writing. And while it is not "canonical", it certainly is believable!

Whatever Moses said got the LORD attention and He spoke to Moses.

(Exodus 19:20) **Then the LORD came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mountain.** And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. (21) And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to gaze at the LORD, and many of them perish. (22) Also let the priests who come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them."

Prior to verse 20, the LORD was descending onto the Mountain. Now, Moses is summoned up to the top.

After Moses went up, the LORD tells him to go back down to warn the people and the priests. The warning was for the people not to touch the mountain and to the priests to consecrate themselves. The LORD did not want the people to get any closer so that they would not see Him and somehow make an idol from what they saw.

The "priests" were not "true" priests in the same sense as the Aaronic Priesthood because that came later. Most believe that these were the heads of the household who had similar duties, especially the family sacrifices. Others believe they could be the Elders.

The LORD says, “get down the hill!”. The LORD knew more than Moses. Evidently, the LORD knew that the people would try to break through and come up the mountain to see the Face of God. He also knew that the sanctification of the priests was not as complete as Moses had thought.

(Exodus 19:23) But Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for You warned us, saying, 'Set bounds around the mountain and consecrate it.' " (24) Then the LORD said to him, "Away! Get down and then come up, you and Aaron with you. But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, lest He break out against them." (25) So Moses went down to the people and spoke to them.

Moses tries to correct the LORD because he did what was asked of him. There's a fence around the base of the mountain and it is “sanctifying” the Mountain by setting it apart in Holiness!

The LORD argues with no one. He simply repeats what He already told him to do. “Get down from here”. Go down and come back up with **Aaron**. Make sure the priests and people cannot break through. I don't know why Aaron was to join him. Perhaps we'll understand in an upcoming chapter.

This chapter is truly a prelude

Now, many people, including myself, have used this to compare and contrast the giving of the Law with the giving of the Holy Spirit. There is some notable things like the way the LORD God descended upon the Mountain verses how God the Holy Spirit came like a mighty rushing wind with tongues of fire. But what about the covenants?

The Mosaic Covenant was given on top of the Mountain of God as described in this Chapter. It contained frightening effects of thunder and lightening as well as fire and quaking. A shofar was heard that became almost deafening. Beforehand, the people had to be consecrated and kept back from touching the Mountain or trying to climb up to see God.

The New Covenant was given in a quiet room where Jesus and His disciples ate a Passover meal. This was an intimate setting where Jesus washed the Disciples feet before dinner. There was no fanfare. There was no hedge around Jesus...ever. The Son of God was accessible to all, sinners, unrighteous religious leaders, men, women, and children and even Gentiles. There was no shofar to call people to Himself. Just a quiet “Follow Me”. The followers of Jesus didn't have to clean up their lifestyle in order to be with Him.

The MC was mediated by one man, Moses, who represented the Israelites.

The NC was mediated between God the Son and God the Father and given to all mankind. This involved the “blood of the everlasting covenant” in Hebrews 13:20.

The Mosaic covenant was conditional on the perfect obedience of the people.

The NC is unconditional and only depends on the faithfulness of Christ Jesus.

We will learn (any many of us know) that the MC came with blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience. These are both associated with the material world and not the spiritual world.

The NC comes with blessings that are spiritual in nature: treasures in heaven are to command our attention. Curses, I believe, are the direct consequence of utterly forsaking the New Covenant, that is, Jesus. You cannot lose your salvation as a direct act of God. You can only lose your salvation if you choose to no longer **believe** God and choose another to take His place (usually yourself).

Curses are spoken of in the NC but we have this assurance:

[Galatians 3:13](#) Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE").

[Romans 12:14](#) Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

[1 Corinthians 16:22](#) If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!

[Galatians 1:9](#) As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed.

In both covenants, salvation was by grace through faith. In the OT, it was faith that what God said, what He promised, He would do!

This chapter has given us a good basis for Chapter 20 and beyond.

Don't just glance at the differences but appreciate them. The traditional Jews of today are in bondage to the Law and its demands and those who are secular are in bondage to a world that will never satisfy their deepest desire. The religious cannot work enough to be with God. The secular can never understand the Love of God by what they learn from the world philosophies.

And just to be sure you understand, this actually applies to any other religious group – including those that call themselves Christian but act as if they are not.

More on these themes as we continue. 0