

Exodus 19

After leaving Egypt, where did the Israelites end up after three months of traveling (vv. 1-2)? The Israelites found themselves camped in front of Mt Sinai. They would remain camped there for the next 57 chapters of the Bible -- the rest of the book of Exodus, all of Leviticus and the first ten chapters of Numbers.....a time period of close to a year.

What message did the Lord give to Moses from the mountain to pass to the Israelites (vv. 3-4)? He was telling them to remember....essentially saying to them, *You saw what I did in Egypt....I redeemed you out of slavery to Pharaoh and now I'm redeeming you to myself.* The clear message to the people was -- Make no mistake about it...You are my people, my chosen nation. You belong to Me now.

What was the Lord talking about in vv. 5-6? He was talking about a covenant He would be making with Israel. If Israel would be obedient to God, then He would do three things for the nation:

1. Israel would become God's special treasure. This meant that Israel would enjoy a unique relationship with God compared with all other nations. This was not due to any special goodness on the part of Israel, but strictly due to the sovereign choice of God.

2. Israel would become a "kingdom of priests." A priest stands between God and human beings. Israel would become a nation of mediators standing between God and the other nations, responsible for bringing them to God and introducing God to them. Israel would not be a kingdom run by politicians, depending on strength and wit, but a kingdom of priests, depending on faith in God: a servant nation rather than a ruling nation.

3. Israel would become "a holy nation." Holy means "set apart" and therefore different. The Israelites would become different from other peoples, because they would devote themselves to God, and separate themselves from sin and defilement as they obeyed the law of God. And God would use that difference to attract the other rebellious nations. He was determined to use Israel to reach the world.

In short, Israel could have become a great testimony to the whole world of how glorious it can be to live under the government of God.¹

What kind of covenant was this designed to be? It was a conditional covenant. The promises of God were conditioned upon the Israelites' obedience.

God gave the Mosaic Law specifically "to the house of Jacob ... the sons of Israel" (v. 3). This is an extremely important fact to observe. It was law designed to govern the Israelite nation, not all of God's people throughout history.²

What did Moses do next (v. 7)? He went back and told the people exactly what the Lord had told him to convey to the people.

How did the people respond (v. 8)? With great enthusiasm they agreed to keep the conditions of the covenant the Lord proposed. **How'd that work out?** Forty days later, they were dancing around a golden calf (Chapter 32).

The reaction of the Israelites to God's promises was understandably positive, and God approved their reaction. However, they overestimated their own ability to keep the covenant, and they underestimated God's standards of holiness for them. This twin error is traceable to a failure to appreciate their own sinfulness and God's holiness. The Mosaic Law would teach them to appreciate both more realistically.³

When Moses brought their answer back to the Lord, what did He say to Moses (v. 9)? He was going to speak with Moses in a dense cloud so the people could hear Him speaking with Moses. As a result, they would always put their trust in Moses.

How else did the Lord respond to Moses (vv. 10-11)? He also told Moses to tell the people that He was coming to visit them in three days. In anticipation of the covenant, God ordered the people to separate themselves from impurity and to consecrate themselves to God. The three-day purification ritual included washing their garments

and abstaining from sexual intercourse.⁴ Outward preparation to meet God symbolizes the inward consecration God requires of His people.

God said He was going to appear to Israel in a spectacular way, and before this could happen, the people had to prepare themselves physically and spiritually. We see in v. 10 to the end of chapter, Moses is directing and the people are preparing to worship their God.

Application: In this scene, God is saying....When you come to worship me, it will be according to my terms, not yours, and here they are (v. 10 – end). He is not concerned so much with the structure of worship but more with the hearts of those doing the worshipping. He wants a people who stand in awe of Him, have a healthy fear of Him and treat Him with reverential respect – none of this “big guy upstairs” stuff.

What were the limits of where the people could go (v.12a)? They could not go up the mountain or even touch the foot of the mountain.

What would be the consequences of violating the Lord’s command (v. 12b-13a)? Instant death by stoning or being shot through with an arrow from a distance. Not a hand was to be laid upon the transgressor.

When could they go up on the mountain (v. 13b)? Only when the ram’s horn sounded a long blast.

After Moses came down from the mountain, what did he and the people do (v. 14)? He consecrated them and they washed their clothes as the Lord had directed.

What command did Moses then give to the people (v. 15)? Prepare yourselves for the Lord’s appearance and abstain from sexual relations.....because it would leave the participants ceremonially unclean.

What happened on the morning of the third day (v. 16)? The Lord descended to Mt. Sinai with a display of thunder, lightning, and a thick cloud over the mountain and a loud trumpet blast. Everyone was afraid.

What did Moses do next (v. 17)? He led them out of the camp to the foot of the mountain where God would meet with them.

How would you describe Mt. Sinai (vv. 18-19)? It was covered with smoke from the presence of the Lord and the whole mountain trembled violently and the trumpet got louder and louder.

What did the Lord do next (v. 20)? He descended to the top of the mountain and called Moses to come up.

When Moses went up to the top of the mountain what did the Lord say to him (vv. 21-22)? Warn the people to stay where they are and do not try to come up the mountain or they will die. And the priests must consecrate themselves or the Lord would be angry and punish them.

What did Moses say to the Lord (v. 23)? He repeated the Lord’s instructions (12)..... The people cannot come up the mountain because you yourself warned us not to and put limits where the people can go in order to set the mountain apart as holy.

What was the Lord’s reply (v. 24)? Go down and get Aaron and bring him up the mountain. But the priests must stay where they are and not come up the mountain or the Lord would be angry and punish them.

What did Moses do next (v. 25)? He went down and told the people what the Lord had said.

Application: One question we always need to ask ourselves.....**What does this chapter tell us about our God?** Everything God does, ordains or wills is designed with one end game in mind -- His glory. That’s the whole reason He created us.....to bring Him honor and glory (not because He was lonely or needed companionship).

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Exodus, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 176.

² Ibid., 175.

³ Ibid., 177.

⁴ John D. Hannah, “Exodus,” in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 138.