

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

Good morning church,

We are continuing our study through the book of Exodus – we are going to be in chapter 19 this morning.

In Chapter 19, we are going to see God prepare His people.

They have arrived at Mt. Sinai – Mt Sinai is the place where God is going to give them the Ten Commandments and the rest of the law – 600+ do's and don'ts.

And we will see God begin to give the Children of Israel the law next week in chapter 20.

However, before God chooses to reveal His law to His people, He actually asks them to be prepared.

God wants them to be prepared so that He can speak to them.

I think there is definitely an application here for us as oftentimes, we want God to speak but we are actually not willing to pay the price.

We have to ask ourselves, are we willing to do what is necessary so that can hear from God???

The Bible says that at times, God speaks in a still small voice –so in order to hear God’s still small voice, we have to put ourselves in a place where we can hear it.

We have to prepare ourselves to hear His whisper.

Let’s pray...

[Exo 19:1-25 NKJV] 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.

It took the Children of Israel three months to get from Egypt to Mt Sinai.

These were three months where they learned to trust the Lord.

There were three months where they saw God not only deliver them at the hands of the Egyptians, they witnessed God’s power as He opened up the Red Sea in order for them to cross, they also saw His provisions in the manna that fell from the sky and the water that came flowed out of the rock and they also saw God provide them protection and victory over their enemies.

So they arrive at Mt. Sinai – this is the same place where Moses had the encounter with the burning bush back in chapter three –

I had you make a note that they camped there because they will remain here for 11 months –

For the remainder of the book of Exodus, they will be at the Mt. Sinai.

Throughout the book of Leviticus and a good chunk of the book of Numbers, they will be at Mt. Sinai.

Not only will they receive the Law at Mt. Sinai, they will also get instructions on building the tabernacle as well as the Ark of the Covenant.

**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.**

I want you to notice in verse three that Moses here in functioning as a mediator – as a priest for the people.

The people weren't going to God – Moses was going and then coming back and reporting.

So Moses is standing before God as a representative of the people.

Why is this important???

Because that is exactly what Jesus Christ did for you and I –

Any attempt to approach God by our own merits or good deeds will end with us perishing on the Day of Judgment, just as the Israelites would have perished if they had tried to break through to God on the mountain without a mediator.

Jesus is the new and better Moses.

Jesus is the mediator that God provided.

Jesus is the mediator between us and God

Without Jesus, we would not have access to God.

We can be able to draw close to God by putting our trust in Jesus Christ.

So God calls Moses and tells him to remind the people of all that God had done on their behalf.

He wants the Children of Israel to remember that it was God who delivered them from the plagues and from the Egyptians and it was God who provided for their needs in the wilderness.

You see, God is about to give them the law – He is about to ask them to do something for Him.

But before He does that, He wants them to remember what He has already done for them.

You see church, it works the same for us as believers.

God desires to do a good work in us.

But we don't do them because we desire to earn favor from God – we do it in response to what He has already done on our behalf.

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.

Back in the book of Genesis, God entered into a covenant with Abraham –

Here, He enters into a covenant with an entire nation.

God is choosing them – He was inviting the Children of Israel to hold a special place among the nations of the world; to be His crown jewel.

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."

A “priest” represents God to people, and people to God.

God's intention for His crown jewel was that Israel (and each Israelite) represent Him to the rest of the world.

To that effect they were to be “holy,” meaning set apart.

They were to live after God's standards and not the world's standards.

The ceremonial laws, the rites and rituals, the diet and days they were to observe - all these set them apart from Gentiles.

And the reason was to minister to the world.

The gentiles/world would see that they were set apart and they would begin to inquire – they would start to ask questions and that would give the His people an opportunity to share with them about the Lord.

Listen to what Peter writes regarding believers -

[1Pe 2:9 NKJV] 9 But you [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

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.

So when Moses reveals to the people what God had spoken to him – the people respond with, “Yes – we will do whatever God asks of us”

Now, it appears that there is a willingness on the part of the Children of Israel to obey what God is going to tell them.

They have no clue of what they are approving of.

They didn't understand this obligation that they were entering with God.

The problem is that they really don't have a clue who God is.

The know of some of His attributes -

They know He is all powerful, they know He is compassionate, they know He is merciful and graceful – they saw that He gave Pharaoh multiple opportunities to repent.

But they didn't understand that He is holy as well.

Over the next couple of weeks, God is going to give them the laws and upon hearing them, they will be quick to respond with the same words, "All that the Lord has spoken, we will do"

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.

God would come in the thick cloud so the people could actually hear God speaking, but without seeing Him.

We must remember that no one in these present, flawed, sinful bodies can see God and live.

God would tell Moses later:

(Exo 33:20 NKJV) ..."You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."

It's when we die and leave these flawed bodies and go to heaven that we will see Him face to face.

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.**

The people need to clean up a bit before they can approach God – remember, they really don't understand that God is holy so God has commanded Moses to tell the people to prepare themselves because God is going to reveal Himself to them.

"Ready" is the key word. You see, their readiness would be symbolized by two things:

1. They would show they were ready by waiting until the third day.
2. They would show they were ready by washing their clothes.

Waiting with washed clothes meant nothing.

It's important to understand the rituals themselves were powerless.

These things Israel was told to do to be ready were symbols that communicated they were willing to obey the Lord. They were an outward show of their inward beliefs.

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.

God commanded Moses to tell the people that they were not allowed to come within a certain distance from the mountain.

It was not that the mountain had any powers – it was that the presence of God was on the mountain –

You may remember Moses' encounter at the burning bush – The Lord spoke to Moses and told him to take his sandals off because the ground he was walking on was holy.

So this perimeter was there to teach the Children of Israel that God is holy – and if anyone came in contact with the mountain, they were killed.

This perimeter also communicated to the Children of Israel that God had already made one way to have a personal relationship with them – and that was through the mediator that God provided, Moses.

" 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."

In addition to waiting and washing, they were to abstain from normal sexual relations within their marriages.

Now, this doesn't mean that God sees sexual relations between married couples as dirty or sinful.

This was a temporary fast, intended to focus the mind away from self and onto God.

They were to prepare themselves.

I believe that we as believers need to do this regularly – we need to take some time to consecrate ourselves before the Lord, to set ourselves apart and not follow our normal routine and setting some time seeking the Lord and asking the Lord to meet us in a special way.

Now, before we continue – I want you to turn to the book of Hebrews 12

The writer of Hebrews is exhorting persecuted Christian Jews about returning to Judaism – many were turning back because they were being persecuted – so the writer reminds the believer that there is Someone better and he uses an illustration between two mountains.

Mt Sinai and Mt Zion.

First we are going to see Mt Sinai -

[Heb 12:18-24 NKJV] 18 For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, 19 and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard [it] begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. 20 (For they could not endure what was commanded: "And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow." 21 And so terrifying was the sight [that] Moses said, "I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.")

Now, we are going to see Mt Zion,

22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn [who are] registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of

the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than [that of] Abel.

As we read the account of the Children of Israel before Mt. Sinai, and as glorious it must have been to witness the cloud coming before them, we must remember that it doesn't compare to what we have in Jesus.

We don't look back at Mt. Sinai, and the keeping of the laws and the rules and the diets – we look forward to the imminent coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As believers, we must also be ready and waiting –

[1Pe 3:15 NKJV] 15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and **always [be] ready to [give] a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;**

[2Thess 3:5 NKJV] 5 Now may the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God and into the patience of Christ.

Our waiting, and washing, and fasting, is spiritual and Holy Spirit empowered.

Ours is a freedom in Jesus no previous dispensation experienced.

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.

What Israel saw and felt in the thunder, lightning, the cloud, the smoke, and the earthquake was terrifying; but each of these are natural (though frightening) phenomenon.

Yet the sound of the trumpet did not come from within the camp, but from heaven itself. No wonder that all the people who were in the camp trembled.

Paul tells us in 1 Thess that one day, the Lord Himself will descend from Heaven with shout and with the trumpet of God.

The entire world will be able to hear the trumpet – and then we will be caught with Him not to the top of Mt. Sinai but to the top of clouds where we will meet the Lord in the air. This of course is in reference to the rapture of the church – which can happen at any time.

17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 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.**

So Moses brings all the Children of Israel to where the perimeter had been set – where no one was allowed to come any closer to the mountain.

And it got smokier and smokier, the earthquakes were getting stronger and stronger and the thunder and the trumpet sounds coming from heaven were getting louder and louder.

Forty years later, Moses would remind the Children of Israel that those that stood on the base of Mt Sinai thought they were going to die.

So Moses speaks – and then God speaks to him and everyone in the camp was able to hear the voice of the Lord.

They all experienced His presence.

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.

God proceeds to call Moses up the mountain so the He can send him back down the mountain so that he can make sure to warn the Children of Israel that they have to respect the boundary/perimeter around the mountain and if they cross it – they will certainly die.

As I was reading this – I was thinking – poor Moses having to repeatedly go up and down the mountain – God could have just spoken to him from anywhere at any time.

But that is how God chose to reveal Himself to the people.

I think about the ministry in the same way – God has all these resources at His disposal to spread the gospel throughout the world – yet He chooses you and I to do the work.

22 "Also let the priests who come near the LORD consecrate themselves, lest the LORD break out against them." 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.

God commands Moses to bring Aaron with him up the mountain.

But He also reminds Moses that just because He is allowing Aaron to go up the mountain – it doesn't mean that the rest of the nation is allowed to go up into His presence.

The point is that God is really, really serious about holiness.

I think that sometimes we don't truly appreciate grace because we don't truly understand holiness.

Sometimes people make God's grace out to be kind of cheap – they think that since God is gracious that they will just do whatever they want and figure they will simply ask God for forgiveness afterwards.

We must remember that grace isn't cheap – it cost Him everything.

[Heb 12:28 NKJV] 28 Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

One of the lessons we'll be working on through the rest of Exodus is learning to grasp the holiness of God.

And when we begin to understand God's holiness, we will also learn to appreciate God's grace.

Amen,

Let's pray...