

Sent: Wednesday, February 3, 2021 2:19 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Exodus 19

"Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation!" (Exodus 19:5-6)

The Mosaic Covenant!

Remember last week, we were introduced to a man named Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, who we concluded was brought into Moses' life by God for a purpose! To be used by God to offer good practical advice to Moses for better managing the children of Israel's day-to-day disputes, and other issues, thus relieving Moses from "micro-management," and "burnout"! And bringing some semblance of order into the camp of Israel, in preparation for God's appearance, and special revelation to the "sons of Israel," which is what our lesson last nite was all about!

With this lesson, we are entering a new section of Exodus. The first 18 chapters were all about "redemption," or "deliverance"! Deliverance of the children of Israel from Egypt! And the promise of His "presence," and the special relationship He wanted with them! The rest of Exodus, beginning with Exodus 19, and our lesson tonight, is about "revelation" and "adoption"! Revelation of His covenant with Israel--the "Mosaic Covenant"--and the promise of His presence demonstrated--adopting them officially as "His people," and giving them laws to live by, beginning with the Ten Commandments.

Constable sums it up this way: "The LORD liberated Israel from bondage in Egypt, and now "adopts" them as a nation for a special relationship to Himself!" Liberated from bondage! Now adopted for relationship!

In last nite's lesson, we saw how God was "preparing" Moses and the children of Israel for His appearance before them on Mt. Sinai and revealing His requirements for them to live as His people. And so, we see Moses, first waiting, and then responding, to God's call to join Him on the mountain, while the people gazed up from below!

We speculated that Moses must have been thinking, as he waited for God, about His first encounter with God, some 40 years earlier, when God called him from the "midst of a burning bush" and told him that He was going to send him to Pharaoh, so that "you might bring back My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt"! And after Moses expressed great reluctance to the idea, Exodus 3:12 says God said: "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain"! This very mountain where Moses was standing! The "mountain of God"! Wow!

Shepherd's Notes states that "The moment of service and worship has arrived!" Task #1 (bringing the people out of Egypt) has been accomplished! Now, task #2, "worshipping (or serving) God on this mountain" was about to begin! (Remember Moses' words to Pharaoh:

"Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let My people go, so they might serve Me in the wilderness!'"

Interesting, in verse 3, that God would identify the people to Moses as "the house of Jacob," and tell Moses to remind them of how "they themselves saw what I (God) did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings (from Egypt, through the Red Sea, through thirst and hunger in the desert, and over enemy armies), and brought you to Myself"! We think of eagles teaching their young ones to fly--pushing them out of their comfort zone when they were ready, then catching them on their wings when they needed support! Teaching them to fly! (Isn't that like God trains His own?)

Notice the ground rules for God's covenant, in Exodus 19:5-6: "If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples (Wow!)...and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests (by being His "mediators" with the rest of the world), and a holy nation!"

And the people were quick to accept it! Verse 8 says that "all the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" Obviously not really understanding all that God would require of them and overestimating (by a long shot!) their own capacity to live like that! God's response is tell-tailing in Deuteronomy 5:29--"Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!"

As Paul Logan shared with us last nite--this was one of six or seven (?) covenants between God and His people--some conditional (like this one) and some unconditional (like the Abrahamic covenant, and the "new" covenant).

Both the Mosaic covenant and the Abrahamic covenant were significant, intimate agreements between God and Abraham's descendants! By observing the Abrahamic covenant, the Israelites could achieve their purpose as a nation and both experience God's blessings and be a blessing to all the nations of the earth (through the ultimate coming of Christ). By contrast, the Mosaic covenant required Israel to fulfill the requirements of the Law in order to obtain God's blessings. And so, the Abrahamic covenant, as well as the Davidic covenant and the "new" covenant of the New Testament, were "unconditional" and given by "grace," with eternal blessing--while the Mosaic was "works oriented" and basically limited to blessings in this life!

John F. Walvoord, noted former professor at Wheaton College, wrote a book on "The New Covenant," observing that "Israel's disobedience to the Mosaic covenant did not abrogate (or invalidate) any of the promises to Abraham, since they did not rest on Israel's obedience"!

Jeremiah 31:31-34 says, "Behold, days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel...not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them, declares the LORD. But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD, 'I will put My law within

them and on their heart, I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people....for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more!"

Well, that is the "big picture" of God's plan of redemption, in the context of the rest of Scripture!

But there is more to our lesson, back in Exodus 19--including God's instructions to Moses for preparing Him, and the people, to approach God at Mt. Sinai--instructions which also have implications for us in approaching and having an intimate relationship with our God!

The LORD said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today, and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, 'Beware that you do not go up on the mountain...' (Note the "third day" implications!) And more! Leviticus 11:44-45 explains: "For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy...For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus, you shall be holy, for I am holy!"

And, specifically for us, in I Peter 1:9-10--"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of God's own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy!" (And it goes on with a bunch of "therefores," which you may want to check out to see what they are there for!)

But back to Exodus 19, where we see God "descending on Mount Sinai...in fire and smoke...with the whole mountain quaking violently...and the sound of the trumpet growing louder and louder...and the voice of God"! Wow! A manifestation of God to His people in a "theophany"! (And, with this, we are reminded of the promise of His coming back into our world someday! I Corinthians 15:52 says, "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed...!"

We talked about various ways we might give a fitting "title" to last nite's lesson, including: "Delivered from Bondage/Rescued for Relationship!" Or, how bout, "Mountain-top Experiences!" Or "Go Tell It on the Mountain!" But perhaps the most applicable of all: "Preparing to Meet God!" And that is something to really think about!

And so, men, go with God this week, and be a blessing!

Lowell