

Ex. 19:1 In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they *into* the wilderness of Sinai.

Ex. 19:2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come *to* the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount.

This chapter starts with the information that it has now been three months since they left Egypt to arrive in the Desert of Sinai. Israel camped there in front of the mountain.

Ex. 19:3 And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

Ex. 19:4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

Ex. 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine:

Ex. 19:6 And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.

These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.

Then we are told that Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain. It makes me think that he went back to the area where God had spoken to him from the burning bush. He evidently went up the mountain expecting to hear from the Lord. The Lord did speak and instructed him what to tell the people of Israel. He is to remind them that they had seen what God had done to Egypt and how He had carried them to Himself. I think this is terminology that they understood. The eagle is a bird of strength and power, and they had been provided for by the strength and power of Almighty God. Then Moses is to tell the nation as a whole that if they obey God fully and keep His covenant, then out of all nations Israel would be His treasured possession. God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were unconditional, but His promise to this group of people is conditional. God emphasizes that the whole earth is His, but they would be special and holy, a kingdom of priests. It was their choice to make.

Ex. 19:7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

Ex. 19:8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.

Moses goes back and gathers the elders of the people and tells them God's message. Whether the people were gathered as well with the elders up front or after the fact after having the message relayed, I don't know. But we are told that "the people answered together" (or did the elders have the power to express the will of the people)—their response was "ALL that the Lord hath spoken, we will do." So Moses brought their answer back to the Lord. The next verse explains the reasons for this recognizable exchange of information between God and Moses—it is not for God's benefit; it is for the people.

Ex. 19:9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

Ex. 19:10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes,

Ex. 19:11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

Ex. 19:12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, *that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death:*

Ex. 19:13 There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether *it be* beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount.

The Lord tells Moses that He is going to come to Moses in a thick/dense cloud so that the people would hear Him talking to Moses; this would help strengthen their trust in him as God's representative to them. So the Lord gives Moses instructions on how to prepare/consecrate the people for God's presence. They are to wash their clothes and be ready by the third day—the day the Lord would come down on Sinai in the sight of all the people. He is to put limits—boundary lines—around the mountain and warn them not to cross the boundaries to go up the mountain or even touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain will surely be put to death. They are not to even touch it with their hand; if they do, they are to be stoned or shot through (I assume with an arrow). This applies to animals as well as to men. Any creature that goes past the boundary in any way is to be killed. When they hear the long sound of the trumpet, they are to come to the mount.

God is emphasizing His holiness and our complete unworthiness before Him.

In my study of prophecy, I found verse 10 referenced as a type regarding Jesus' second coming. After providing for our deliverance at His first coming, He will allow two days for us to prepare for His return as King. (Using a day equals a thousand years.)

2Pet. 3:8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day *is* with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

It is thought provoking. That return will occur in two parts--first to take His bride, the church, to heaven and second to return to earth and establish His earthly kingdom. The first part of that return will be announced with a trumpet (cf v16 below).

1Thessalonians 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

1Thessalonians 4:17 Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Ex. 19:14 And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.

Ex. 19:15 And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at *your* wives.

Moses goes down the mountain to consecrate the people. They washed their clothes, and he tells them to prepare for the third day. Then we are told of the added instruction to abstain from sexual relations. Purity and cleanness before a holy God is again being emphasized.

Ex. 19:16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that *was* in the camp trembled.

Ex. 19:17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount.

Ex. 19:18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.

Ex. 19:19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice.

On the morning of the third day a thick cloud covered the mountain; it was accompanied by lightning and thunder and a very loud trumpet blast. Obviously this trumpet blast was originating from the heavens. Everyone in the camp was scared. Moses led them out of the camp to meet God at the foot of the mountain. As they got close to the mountain, the cloud was revealed to be smoke because the Lord had descended in fire. There was lots of smoke, and the mountain was shaking and the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered Him.

I'm trying to imagine being part of that crowd. They have already witnessed some pretty amazing miracles. It hasn't stopped them from complaining yet. Now they evidently are seeing a whole mountain on fire and shaking and hearing a pretty loud trumpet. Yet, when Moses speaks, God hears him and answers him. Would I not be afraid of doing anything that might incur the wrath of such a being with such awesome presence and power?

Ex. 19:20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top of the mount; and Moses went up.

Ex. 19:21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.

Ex. 19:22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.

Ex. 19:23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.

Ex. 19:24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them.

Ex. 19:25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

The Lord calls Moses to the top of the mountain and tells him to go down and warn the people again not to force their way through to see the Lord or they will perish—including the priests. Moses tries to explain that it is not necessary since He had already told them to put limits around the mountain to designate the area that was holy. (I don't know how Moses is so comfortable with "talking back" to God. How could he dare to think that he could tell God anything He did not already know? I'm sure there is much that we aren't being told about the development of their relationship. Moses obviously considers God his friend and vice versa.)

The Lord sends him back anyway and tells him to bring Aaron back with him. We are told that he went back and warned the people again—but we assume that he obeyed the rest and brought Aaron back because the next thing we hear is God speaking the commandments.

I don't think that assuming Moses' complete obedience is wrong since we have yet to see him disobey. I don't think I have ever heard that Aaron was with Moses when God gave the commands and laws the first time. I've read the scripture many times and this has never jumped out at me before.

I can't help but wonder what the functions of the priests were at this time. How were they chosen? God has not revealed anything to us regarding their establishment and function as of yet. We just know that at least from the time of Melchizedek in Genesis, it is an established position before God.