

# Tuesday Morning Bible Study with Ted

Exodus 19:1-9...

April 4, 2021

## **Exodus 19:1-6. If you obey my voice and keep my covenant**

1. *On exactly the third month anniversary of the Israelites leaving the land of Egypt, they came to the Sinai desert. 2. When they had departed from Rephidim, and had come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness; and there Israel encamped before the mountain. 3. Moses went up to God, and Yahweh called to him out of the mountain, saying, "This is what you shall tell 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 my own possession from among all peoples; 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."*

### **1. On exactly the third month anniversary of the Israelites leaving the land of Egypt, they came to the Sinai desert.**

Normally I would leave a sentence out of the study as a "Who Cares". But it is open for discussion.

### **2a. "When they had departed from Rephidim, and had come to the wilderness of Sinai, they encamped in the wilderness**

As we discussed last week, the wilderness of Sinai is the area around the mountain. It is a desert wilderness rather than a forest wilderness—an inhospitable place for human habitation.

### **2b. "and there Israel encamped before the mountain**

In both Old and New Testaments, mountains are places where people encounter God and/or experience some sort of revelation from God:

- At Mount Sinai, Moses will stand in Yahweh's presence and receive the commandments.
- Later, Moses will die at Mount Nebo (Deuteronomy 32:49-50).
- Elijah will defeat the prophets of Baal at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18).
- Solomon will build his first temple at Mount Moriah (2 Chronicles 3), and will build the famous temple at Mount Zion (1 Kings 6).
- Jesus will be revealed in all his glory at the Mount of Transfiguration (traditionally identified as Mount Tabor) (Matthew 17; Mark 9; Luke 9; 2 Peter 1:16-18).
- Prior to his death, Jesus will pray with his disciples at the Mount of Olives (Luke 22:39).

### **3. "Moses went up to God, and Yahweh called to him out of the mountain, saying, This is what you shall tell the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel"**

In Douglas Stuart's commentary, he writes about the poetic content of this verse.

- The first two phrases (each ten syllables in the Hebrew language) make the same point—that Moses went up the mountain to meet with God.
- Stuart sees the word “saying” as a hinge between the first two phrases and the last two phrases.
- The last two phrases (each seven syllables in the Hebrew language) make the same point—that Yahweh told Moses to report to Jacob-Israel (two words referring to the same people) all that Yahweh reveals to Moses.

#### **4a. "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians**

Here's your test...What did Yahweh do to the Egyptians?

#### **4b. "and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to myself**

This refers to their journey from slavery in Egypt to Yahweh's presence at Sinai. Once again, it is a series of salvation stories, from the Red Sea to Marah to Rephidim and finally to Sinai.

“eagles' wings” are a metaphor for strength and majesty. But the power of eagles is nothing compared to Yahweh's power—and it is Yahweh who has saved Israel again and again and again (SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD SERMON SERIES).

### **5. "Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice, and keep my covenant, then you shall be my own possession from among all peoples; for all the earth is mine**

A covenant is an agreement between two parties. Essentially legal contracts, covenants typically describe what is required of each of the parties and the benefits that each can expect to enjoy. THIS VERSE IS ONE EXAMPLE:

1. The first covenant was established by God with Noah, and promised that “all flesh will not be cut off any more by the waters of the flood, neither will there ever again be a flood to destroy the earth” (Genesis 9:11).
2. The next covenant was established between God and Abram. God directed Abram that he leave his father's house and go to the land that God would show him. In return, God promised to make of Abram a great nation and to bless him and to make him a blessing to all the families of the earth (Genesis 12:1-3).
3. Now Yahweh summarizes the responsibilities and promises associated with the covenant. Israel's responsibility is to obey Yahweh. If they will do that, Yahweh will make them “my own possession” among all of the peoples.

Note: The Greek word for “possessions” refers “to a king’s personal treasury, in distinction from what we might call the public purse”. **We have heard Public Purse in relation to British Monarchy.**

#### **6a. “and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation**

Yahweh instructs Moses to tell the Israelites that, if they obey his voice (v. 5a), they will become two things:

1. Israel will be **“a kingdom of priests.”** The Israelites will have priests of their own (the priesthood has not yet been established). Aaron will be the first priest.

2. Israel will be **“a holy nation.”** How could a nation called to be a “a kingdom of priests” be anything other than holy? My answer is...Israel must be holy, because Yahweh is holy. **YOUR THOUGHTS?**

#### **6b. “These are the words which you shall speak to the children of Israel**

Yahweh tells Moses to give Yahweh’s words to the Israelites—to all the people.

#### **Exodus 19:7-8a. All that Yahweh has spoken we will do.**

*7. Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Yahweh commanded him. 8. All the people answered together, and said, “All that Yahweh has spoken we will do.”*

#### **7. “Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which Yahweh commanded him**

Yahweh commanded Moses to give his words to all the Israelites, so Moses calls the elders together to give the words to them. This is not an act of disobedience.

The only feasible way for Moses to carry out his task is to tell the elders what Yahweh has told him—and to allow the elders to take that word to the particular groups under their care.

Gerald answered this question for us last week in regard to the tribes leaders receiving messages and taking the words to a next level, next level, and so on...

#### **8a. “All the people answered together, and said, ‘All that Yahweh has spoken we will do**

While Moses spoke only to the elders, all the people respond that they will do what Yahweh requires. This constitutes their formal acceptance of the covenant terms stipulated by Yahweh in verses 5-6.

However, as we will see later, the Israelites will keep their part of the covenant only periodically and defectively. 8b. in this verse says: Moses reported to the Lord what the People said..

9. Yahweh said to Moses, “Behold, I come to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever.” Moses told the words of the people to Yahweh.

This verse sets the stage for what happens next...so there is a little change in our format.....

The following is an assignment for all of you. Please read these verses and be ready to discuss your thoughts and feelings on the story. I believe these verses are prime for *Imagineering* and open discussion is appropriate.

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<sup>10</sup> Yahweh said to Moses, “Go to the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments, <sup>11</sup> and be ready for the third day; for on the third day Yahweh will come down in the sight of all the people on Mount Sinai. <sup>12</sup> You shall set bounds to the people all around, saying, ‘Be careful that you don’t go up onto the mountain, or touch its border. Whoever touches the mountain shall be surely put to death. <sup>13</sup> No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether it is animal or man, he shall not live.’ When the trumpet sounds long, they shall come up to the mountain.”

<sup>14</sup> Moses went down from the mountain to the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. <sup>15</sup> He said to the people, “Be ready by the third day. Don’t have sexual relations with a woman.”

<sup>16</sup> On the third day, when it was morning, there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain, and the sound of an exceedingly loud trumpet; and all the people who were in the camp trembled. <sup>17</sup> Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the lower part of the mountain. <sup>18</sup> All of Mount Sinai smoked, because Yahweh descended on it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. <sup>19</sup> When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice. <sup>20</sup> Yahweh came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain. Yahweh called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.

<sup>21</sup> Yahweh said to Moses, “Go down, warn the people, lest they break through to Yahweh to gaze, and many of them perish. <sup>22</sup> Let the priests also, who come near to Yahweh, sanctify themselves, lest Yahweh break out on them.”

<sup>23</sup> Moses said to Yahweh, “The people can’t come up to Mount Sinai, for you warned us, saying, ‘Set bounds around the mountain, and sanctify it.’”

<sup>24</sup> Yahweh said to him, “Go down! You shall bring Aaron up with you, but don’t let the priests and the people break through to come up to Yahweh, lest he break out against them.”

<sup>25</sup> So Moses went down to the people, and told them.

Brueggemann, Walter, *The New Interpreter’s Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus*, Vol. 1 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994)

Stuart, Douglas K., *The New American Commentary: Exodus*, Vol. 2 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2006)