



“Open Church – Open Bible”

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Sunday Church School

October 4, 2020

“God’s First Instruction to Israel” – Exodus 19:1-9

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“Exodus 19:1-9”

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.

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.

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.

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“Exodus 19:1-9”

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."

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.

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.

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John Adams, one of America’s founding fathers, once declared, “Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.”

Sadly, those who lack the moral base that comes from God and His revelation are often wholly irresponsible.

They see freedom as an opportunity to take advantage of others, spew hatred, destroy property, or demand approval for any and every perverse idea that comes along.

[Press, Union Gospel. Bible Expositor and Illuminator (p. 61). Union Gospel Press. Kindle Edition.]

The phrase “separation of Church and state” appears nowhere in the Constitution, but rather comes from Thomas Jefferson’s comment made many years after the document was written.

- The 1st Amendment says “Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”

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In 1789 when James Madison introduced the 1st Amendment, the Speaker of the House was Rev. Frederick Conrad Mühlenberg, an ordained Lutheran clergyman.

Alexis de Tocqueville, a French diplomat, political scientist, and historian made the following statement about religion and politics in America:

Religion in America takes no direct part in the government of society, but it must be regarded as the first of their political institutions; for if it does not impart a taste for freedom, it facilitates the use of it. Indeed, it is this same point of view that the inhabitants of the United States themselves look upon religious belief. I do not know whether all Americans have a sincere faith in their religion – for who can search the human heart? But I am certain that they hold it to be indispensable to the maintenance of their political institutions.

[Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1:3 | 6]

From the beginning, in the incorporation document of America, there has been legitimate an evidential dichotomy of church and state functionality.

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This ideal does not mean that Christians should only stay in Church and sing and pray and leave governance to the non-Christians.

God’s people in the bible did not shrink from “real world” involvement as witnessed by David who served as the King of Israel.

- Many OT prophets were not hesitant to speak against political issues of their day
- Joseph became Prime Minister of Egypt
- Daniel was Prime Minister of Babylon and later Persia
- Esther was queen of Persia and a bold advocate for the preservation of her people
- Out of scripture, Erastus served as city treasurer of Corinth (Rom. 16:23)

The Israelites were at a crucial juncture in their history.; being freed now from Egypt, God would press upon them a new responsibility objective that would take the focus off false gods and realign them to a relationship with Himself.

LESSON OUTLINE: I. ISRAEL’S ARRIVAL AT SINAI— Ex. 19:1-2 II. GOD’S MESSAGE FOR ISRAEL—Ex. 19:3-6 -- III. ISRAEL’S COMMITMENT TO THE LORD Ex. 19:7-9

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While the preceding chapters in Exodus focus on events, the Israelites' time at Mount Sinai is concerned mostly with legislation and teaching.

- They would remain encamped at the mountain for almost a year (Num. 10:11-12)

John Davis notes “The exodus from Egypt constituted only the first phase of the creation of a nation. The completion of that image and the establishment of particular religious identity took place here at Sinai. It was here that they received the law and the tabernacle. The law provided the way to life; the tabernacle demonstrated the way to worship” (Moses and the Gods of Egypt, Baker).

[Press, Union Gospel. Bible Expositor and Illuminator (p. 62). Union Gospel Press. Kindle Edition]

Moses ascended the mountain to appear before God and he was familiar with this mountain and perhaps went to the place where the Lord had first spoken to him at the burning bush.

God spoke again to him there on the mountain, giving him a message to relay to the people below.

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I. ISRAEL’S ARRIVAL AT SINAI— Ex. 19:1-2

- **In the third month**—according to Jewish usage, the first day of that month—“same day,” mark forty-five days after Egypt
- One day spent **on the mount** (Ex 19:3), **one returning the people’s answer** (Ex 19:7, 8), and **three days** of preparation, making the whole time 50 days from the first Passover to the promulgation of the law.
- Hence the feast of Pentecost (50th day), was the inauguration of the OT church, and the divine wisdom is apparent in the selection of the same reason for the institution of the NT church (John 1:17; Acts 2:1).
 - **John 1:17** For the law was given through Moses, *but* grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
 - **Acts 2:1** When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
- Thus the Holy Spirit was given to the Church on the same day the Law was given to the infant nation Israel

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- **V2a. were come to the desert of Sinai**—This desert has its divisions, distinguished by a variety of names; and the “desert of Sinai” is that wild and desolate region which occupies the very center of the peninsula.
- But for the sake of our observation, it comprises the lofty range to which the mount of God belongs.
- It is a wilderness of shaggy lava rocks and red granite, and of valleys for the most part bare of lush green vegetation.
- **V2b and there Israel camped before the mount**—Sinai (Sin), so called from Seneh, or acacia bush, is also called Jebel Musa and Horeb (waste).
- They made their way into the interior of the mountain cluster to Jebel Musa with their flocks and herds to abundant springs.
- After the previous two water shortages, God brings them to camp as He delivers to them His rules for life
- Here the Nation could spread themselves without limit, waiting for who knows what.

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II. GOD’S MESSAGE FOR ISRAEL—Ex. 19:3-6

- 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**:
- Here we have Moses about to engage in dialogue with the Shechinah, within the cloud (Ch. 33:20; John 1:18).
 - **Exodus 33:20** And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.
 - **John 1:18** No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*
- V 3b **Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob**—The object for which Moses went up was to receive and convey to the people a general announcement of the terms on relationship with which God demanded.
- Moses, who was but a servant, would be the mediary between God and His people – a role which he interjected himself in an illegitimate manner earlier in his life (Exd. 2:11-14).

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II. GOD’S MESSAGE FOR ISRAEL—Ex. 19:3-6

- Now it is true the only Mediator we have is Jesus Christ [1 Tim. 2:5; Heb 12:24], but Moses representing the law is a forerunner of Christ’s role (Matt 5:17-18)
- **V 4** Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on **eagles’ (nesher- large bird of prey) wings** and brought you unto myself.
- The Bible references how the eagle carries its young on its wings when they grow weary of flying, or catches them on their wings when they are fluttering in failure (Deut. 32:11).
- Alternatively, there could be a metaphoric implication which is political in nature, for in Egypt the goddess Nekhbet is the vulture goddess who served as a protecting deity for Pharaoh and the land.
 - Israel was protected in Egypt until Yahweh brought them to himself.
- **V 5** “....then you shall be a **peculiar treasure**” or “treasured possession” which is common expression to describe accumulated assets, whether through division of spoils or inheritance from an estate.

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- **V 6. ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests**—As the priestly order was set apart from the common mass, so the Israelites, compared with other people, were to sustain the same near relation to God;
- They were called upon to be a community of spiritual sovereigns —**a holy nation**—set apart to preserve the knowledge and worship of God.
- God’s purpose was for them to obey Him and thus serve as His unique representatives in the world as “a kingdom of priests” and a “holy nation”
- As a kingdom of priests, the people would serve as intermediaries between the Lord and other nations.
- This designation was not just for them to enjoy their relationship with the Lord and keep Him to themselves.
- By planting Israel in a unique place at the crossroads of ancient civilization, God in effect would bring the world to them so that they might tell the world of the one true God.

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III. ISRAEL'S COMMITMENT TO THE LORD Ex. 19:7-9

- With the words the Lord had given him, Moses returned to the people; and . this pattern continues in the following chapters as Moses goes up and down the mountain, hearing from the Lord and conveying His words to the people.
- The “elders” in V 7 are the clan leaders of Israel who served as a ruling assembly overseeing the leadership of a village or community
- They represented the people in accepting a **covenant arrangement**, now a **national agreement** with commitment expected beyond the family covenant made with Abraham centuries earlier.
- V 8 When Moses shared this good news with the people, they enthusiastically promised to obey everything God told them to do (Ex 19:7-8).
- They may have been sincere, but God knew that their hearts were prone to do evil (Deut 5:27-29).
- The fact they repeated this vow two more times didn't change their hearts or strengthen their wills (Ex 24:3,7), and it wouldn't be long before Israel would succumb to the idolatry that lurked in their hearts and make a golden calf (Exd. 32)



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“ADVANCE YOUR KNOWLEDGE”



1. To what mountain did Israel come?
2. By what titles did the Lord refer to Israel?
3. What recent events did the Lord want the people to remember? Why did they need recall of those events?
4. In what way would Israel's obedience make them God's "peculiar treasure" (Ex. 19:5)?
5. How would Israel fulfill the call to be a "kingdom of priests" (v. 6)?

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TODAY'S AIM

Facts: to look at what God said to the people through Moses and at their response.

Principle: to understand that a response to God's Word must include obedience on our part.

Application: to determine that when we hear His word through His appointed source

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