

Message #35**Exodus 19:1-8**

We come now to one of the most significant moments in the history of the nation Israel. God is going to give Israel His Law and He is going to demand that she construct a Tabernacle. These two themes take up the rest of the book of Exodus (Exodus 19-40).

Now Paul would tell us that the thing that prompted God to give the Law to Israel was because of all of the transgressions that were occurring (Gal. 3:19). As we have seen in the infant days of her deliverance, Israel is not developing a track record of faithfulness to God. So God decided to give her the Law. This Law did several things for Israel:

- 1) It revealed the majestic holiness and righteousness of God.
- 2) It revealed how sinful and corrupt people were (I Tim. 1:8-10).
- 3) It revealed that no Jew or Gentile can ever measure up to God's standard (Rom. 3:19-20).
- 4) It revealed that blood sacrifices could make it possible for people to have a relationship with this majestic holy God.
- 5) It pointed to the need of Jesus Christ as the only means of saving righteousness (Gal. 3:24).
- 6) It revealed how God's covenant people should govern themselves by giving certain restrictions and disciplinary corrections.

Now as we come to this section, there is a key point you do not want to overlook because Israel overlooked this point. Israel thought she could gain righteousness that would permit her to enter her kingdom by keeping the Law. When Jesus Christ came to Israel to give her the righteousness she needed, she rejected him and stuck with the Law.

Don't you ever make the same mistake. We are saved by grace and that is how we live (Titus 2:11-13). Jesus Christ put an end to the Law and gives righteousness necessary to go to heaven.

GOD PROMISES ISRAEL THAT IF SHE WILL OBEY HIS WORD, SHE WILL BE HIS SPECIAL NATION AMONG ALL THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD.

This seems to be a simple thesis point. All you have to do is fully obey the Word of God and you will experience all of the great blessings of God. Let us say it the way James said it—all you have to do is live your whole life never missing the mark of the righteousness of God one time because of you miss the mark in any area of God's commandments, you are guilty and you miss the mark of the righteousness of God (James 2:10).

Now there is no question that we may begin now with a focus on the importance of the Word of God. There are six historical facts we want to observe:

HISTORICAL FACT #1 – Israel came to the wilderness of Sinai exactly three months after leaving Egypt. **19:1-2**

In the Hebrew religious calendar, the month is Sivan which correlates to our months of May-June.

So exactly three months after leaving Egypt, God brought them to the wilderness of Sinai and they camped in front of the mountain. Now we may recall that they had camped in Rephidim and they made a move from there to this camping spot in front of Sinai.

Israel would actually camp here for the next 10 months and 19 days (Num. 10:11). So this place would be home for a while.

Now we may remember that when God first called Moses to do this job, He promised him that He would bring him back to this mountain with Israel and they would worship Him there (Ex. 3:12).

What we see here is that God is always true to His Word. He fulfills prophecies literally. Even though it had been some years since God told Moses this, it was now literally fulfilled.

HISTORICAL FACT #2 – Moses goes up the mountain to meet with God. **19:3**

By this point, all of Israel would have known that Moses has a special relationship with God and he is our leader. He was the one God used in the plagues. He was the one God used to lead them across the Red Sea. He was the one used by God to provide water and food for them. He was used by God to defeat the Amalekites.

Moses never believed any victory was due to him, but he always gave the credit to God. Now when Moses got up the mountain, we learn that God basically informs Moses that your primary job will be to go and tell the people My Word.

Now there have been many attempts throughout history to pinpoint this mountain. Actually, Mt. Sinai is a mountain range that has many impressive mountain peaks. Dr. Cummings says that there is a very large, grand, dark mountain peak that stands at the end of a valley of ground that is absolutely majestic. You cannot see a tree or shrub or blade of grass, but it is a rugged mass of granite. Dr. Cummings said that when he looked at this mountain range, he had never felt “a thrill of stronger emotion” (*Exodus*, pp. 154-157).

HISTORICAL FACT #3 – God tells Moses what to say to Israel. **19:4-6**

Now it is very clear from **verse 3** that this is not addressed to the Church or is it addressed to the United States. **This text is addressed specifically to Israel**. This point is critical to see because many miss this point and immediately try to say this is for us.

Now it is true that Scripture is applicable to us; but this text is specifically for Israel. Any political leader in the world could go to this mountain area today and this will not happen for them or to them. Any church group could go to this area today and this will not happen for them or to them. This is a special relationship that God has with Moses and with Israel.

Now there are a series of four special messages God wanted Moses to communicate to Israel:

Message #1 - Remind Israel of what they themselves saw Me do to the Egyptians. **19:4a**

Now here is something you and I need to realize, God literally did this for Israel, He has not literally done this for us. In other words, you and I have never seen God do to any of our enemies what Israel actually saw Him do to the Egyptians.

What did God do to the Egyptians? He warned them and did plagues against them and gave them opportunity to respond to Him and then He destroyed them.

Message #2 - Tell Israel that I bore her on eagles' wings. **19:4b**

In other words, Israel was in Egypt and I got her and took her for a ride right out of Egypt and to this very spot. All she did was go along for a ride. The ride was a fast ride. God moved swiftly.

Message #3 - Tell Israel that I brought her to Myself. **19:4c**

Israel did not bring herself to God, God brought Israel to Himself. She is God's chosen nation. So what God does is He starts out by reminding Israel that she has been the recipient of "free grace."

Now these first three messages have nothing to do with her obedience. In other words, God chose this nation and brought this nation to Himself regardless of whether or not she obeyed Him. This was pure grace.

So the Law that is about to be given is not given to Israel as a means of salvation because this nation is already saved. She was not saved by works; she was saved by God's sovereign election. J. Vernon McGee said, "God never gave the Law as a means of salvation. No one was ever saved by keeping the Law. You can't mention a single one" (*Exodus*, p. 263).

The Law is given so that the saved nation Israel may accomplish and fulfill everything God wants her to accomplish and become everything God wants her to become.

Message #4 - Tell Israel that if she will obey My voice and keep My covenant, I will do some wonderful things for her. **19:5-6**

Now if Israel would purpose to obey God, she would experience some wonderful blessings: Now the covenant that Israel is supposed to keep is what we would call the Mosaic Covenant.

It is a covenant given by God to Moses to give to Israel starting here in Exodus.

As we will see, this Mosaic covenant for Israel contains three parts:

Part #1 - It contains commandments that express the righteous will of God for Israel (Ex. 20:1-26).

Part #2 - It contains the judgments that express social life for Israel (Ex. 21:1-24:11).

Part #3 - It contains the ordinances that govern religious life for Israel (Ex. 24:12-31:18).

These three parts form what is called in the N.T. as the O.T. Law (i.e. Matt. 5:17-18).

Now if Israel would obey God, God would grant three amazing blessings to her:

Blessing #1 - If Israel would obey Him she would be God's own possession among all the people's of the earth. **19:5**

God stresses that the whole earth belongs to Him and Israel will be the premier nation of the whole earth. God is the creator of the earth and all people, but He has singled out one nation as His chosen nation to stand out from all of the general populations of people all over the world. The nation is Israel.

Obviously something has gone wrong with this because hardly any nation in existence esteems Israel.

Blessing #2 - If Israel would obey Him she would become an entire "kingdom of priests." **19:6a**

This is the first mention of the word "kingdom" in the O.T. and it is clearly connected to Israel and it is also clearly connected to a kingdom reign on this earth.

I understand this to mean that the entire nation Israel would become the priestly ministers of God for everyone else in the world. In other words, there would be a worldwide kingdom and in that worldwide kingdom Israel would be God's kingdom of priests. She would represent Him and lead all nations to Him.

Well, obviously something has gone wrong here because Israel is not a nation that is known for leading people into a true worship of God. She certainly is not a kingdom of priests; she is more of a kingdom of oppression.

Blessing #3 - If Israel would obey Him she would become a holy nation. **19:6b**

There is obviously a major distinction between being a saved nation and being a holy nation.

Douglas Stuart said if Israel would obey God (*Exodus*, p. 423),

- 1) She would be an example of God to all the nations of the world.
- 2) She would proclaim God's truth to all the nations of the world.
- 3) She would intercede as priests for all of the nations of the world.
- 4) She would be an example of a blessed people who get blessings by obeying God's Word.

Now it is clear that none of these things have happened yet, but we believe they literally will happen. During the 1000-year millennium, Israel will fulfill every one of these things.

At the end of **verse 6**, God tells Moses go down and tell the people this. You go tell Israel this.

HISTORICAL FACT #4 – Moses called the elders of the people and told them exactly what God commanded. **19:7**

Israel's numbers are growing and the elders had the responsibility to take this instruction that Moses gave them and take it to the people.

HISTORICAL FACT #5 – All of Israel said they would do every thing God told them. **19:8a**

What happened here was a unanimous response in which all the people of Israel say, "we will do everything." Listen to the confidence they have in themselves. They think they can and will measure up to all of the commandments of God.

Dr. McGee said there is nothing that makes a greater hypocrite out of a person than for him to say, "I keep the law." "Bring it on, we are ready to keep it." It is a display of arrogance and self-confidence (*Ibid.*, p. 263). Yet the tragedy of this is that millions of religious people claim they keep the Law when in fact God has said no one has kept it.

Now when everybody in the nation said we will keep the Law, from what we already know about Israel in the manna episode we could say, "no way"; "chances aren't real good." It is obvious from the state of Israel today that something has gone wrong.

Now by making this statement, Israel, who to this point has been sailing along on eagles' wings by pure grace, is verbally agreeing to exchange the system of grace for the system of law.

HISTORICAL FACT #6 – Moses went back to God and reported what the people said. **19:8b**

They verbally responded right. In fact, **God says you have spoken well with your mouths (Deut. 5:28); but the problem is you don't have the heart to do what you say (Deut. 5:29).**

Now I want to make some critical N.T. application to this Mosaic Law. Paul calls this O.T. Law the "ministry of death" and "ministry of condemnation" (II Cor. 3:7-9).

He also says that the N.T. believer is not under this Mosaic Law system, we are in a system of grace (Rom. 3:21-27; 6:14-15; Gal. 2:16; 3:10-14, 16-18, 24-26; 4:21-31; Heb. 10:11-17). The Law was given as a schoolmaster to point us to our need of Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:24).

The Law dispensation that begins here at Mt. Sinai will last until the cross of Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ went to that cross, God the Father nailed that O.T. Law to that cross (Col. 2:14).

You cannot ever gain heaven by a feeble attempt to keep the O.T. Law, but if you will believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, He will take you there on eagles' wings by pure grace.