

MOSES ON MOUNT SINAI

Moses - Part 13

Exodus 19

Intro: I have mentioned many times that my chief concern in dealing with the life of Moses, is to focus on those particular passages in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy which deal specifically with Moses, the man of God. We all should be very interested in the development of Moses as a man of God. Or, to put it another way, we need to see those incidents in the life of Moses which were crucial in his spiritual development. To be sure he was one of Israel's greatest leaders, if not the very greatest, and yet the Lord was making Moses into the man that He wanted him to be, just as the Lord does with all of us who are His children. It is true that Moses' life is usually seen in his relationship with Israel, but the Lord's work in his life was especially order by the Lord.

To state it another way, we could use Spurgeon as an example. We think of him in connection with his ministry at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London where he touched thousands of lives through his ministry of the Word. And yet apart from that, and yet connected with that, it is interesting to see how throughout Spurgeon's life God was working with him as an individual child of God just like He does with everyone else. It is this emphasis which makes the study of Moses, or of Spurgeon, or any other great leader of immense practical value to the rest of us in our walk with the Lord. We all have a tendency to be occupied almost totally with the work that God has given us to do, but God's primary emphasis is upon what He is doing *in* us. He is concerned about our growth, our maturity, our sanctification. And there is a vital connection between what the Lord is doing *in* us, and what He is doing *through* us. What He is doing *in* us determines the effectiveness of what He is doing *through* us. So under the hand the Lord, nothing in our lives is really insignificant. The trials which seem to stand in the way of our service, are events God will use to give us greater growth, which, in turn, will lead to greater usefulness, and prepare us in a greater way for heaven and glory.

When we get to chapter 19 it has been three months since the night that the Lord led the children of Israel out of Egypt. A lot had taken place during those three months. And all of those events had touched Moses' life as a man of God as God was working to make Moses more the man of God and the servant of God that God wanted him to be. And the events of Exodus 19 were no exception. They were important for every Israelite,

and they were important for Moses. It is easy to think of Exodus 19 as just a transition to the giving of the Law, but three times in this chapter Moses went up into Mount Sinai to meet with the Lord, and that would have been anything but something that was unimportant for Moses.

In the NT there are two men who are called mediators. One was Moses (see Gal. 3:19); the other is Christ (see 1 Tim. 2:5; Heb. 8:6; 9:15; 12:24). Moses was the mediator of the old covenant. The Lord Jesus is the Mediator of the new covenant. Moses as a mediator was both a prophet and a priest. As a prophet he brought the message of God to the people. As a priest he brought the message of the people to God. So we are justified in saying that Moses was really a type of Christ, and that we see in his work a picturing of the work of our Lord as a Mediator between God and us.

Now in Exodus 19 we see Moses going up to God, not in heaven, but upon Mt. Sinai. We read about Moses' first time with the Lord in verses 1 through 6 (verses 1 and 2 being introductory for the whole chapter).

In verses 7 and the first part of verse 8 we see that Moses gave the Lord's words to the people, and what their response was.

In the latter part of verse 8 Moses went up to the Lord a second time, and it was then that the Lord told Moses what the people were to do to prepare for His appearance unto them. This takes us down through verse 13.

Beginning with verse 14 we see that Moses came down from the mountain a second time to tell the people what they had to do to prepare for the Lord's appearance to them, and then what happened on the third day as the Lord appeared on Mt. Sinai. This takes us down through verse 19.

Then the Lord called Moses up on the mountain a third time in verse 20 where He told Moses that he must give the people further warning. This goes through verse 24.

In verse 24 we read that Moses came down from the mountain a third time and spoke to the people as the Lord had told him to do.

Now when we look at the three times that Moses went up upon Mt. Sinai to meet with the Lord, there were three different purposes:

1) On the first occasion the Lord told Moses about His great love for

Israel.

2) The second time we see that the Lord told Moses how the people were to prepare for His appearance to them.

3) The third time Moses was given a warning for the people that they were to be satisfied with the way the Lord had chosen to reveal Himself to the people, and that they were not to try to get more than God had chosen to give them.

Now let us look at the details of the chapter.

I. THE REVELATION TO MOSES OF GOD'S LOVE FOR ISRAEL (Ex. 19:1-6).

This is the equivalent of John 3:16, but in OT language. And yet it would require the truth of John 3:16 for this to be validated.

Note how God addressed His people in verse 3: “the house of Jacob ... the children of Israel.” Jacob was their original name; Israel was their new name. It was as though the Lord was recognizing what they still were by nature, and what they had become by grace. And it is a fitting picture even for us today. We have a new nature, but we still have the old nature. And these are in conflict with each other. Sometimes the new is more prominent; at others times it is the old that we see. So God was recognizing what His people were.

And then Moses was to remind the people that it was the Lord Who had delivered them from the Egyptians. This they had seen. He had borne them on eagles' wings (where eagles carry their young), and He had brought them, caring for them, leading them, protecting them, not just to Mt. Sinai, nor eventually to the promised land, but God had brought them *unto Himself*. The Lord had saved them because He wanted them for Himself! The Lord had done it all. Israel could take none of the glory for themselves.

And then He promised them that if they would obey Him, submitting themselves to His authority, they would be “a peculiar treasure” unto Him, “above all people.” The Lord could have chosen any people that He wanted because the whole earth is His, but He chose Abraham and his seed. Furthermore, they would become “a kingdom of priests,” with access to the very presence of the Lord, and “an holy nation.” This sounds very much like 1 Peter 2:9, doesn't it?

It is impossible for us to fully understand the love of God for His people. But this is what the Lord wanted Moses to tell the people of Israel for their own comfort and encouragement.

II. THE FAITHFULNESS OF MOSES AND THE RESPONSE OF THE PEOPLE (Ex. 19:7-8).

There were times when what Moses was to tell the people, was not a very pleasant message, but how he must have delighted in being able to tell the people what the Lord told him to tell them.

But there was just one thing that the Lord wanted from them: He wanted them just to obey Him. And the people said that they would. Let's give them the benefit of the doubt, that they really meant what they said they would do. But they did not know how impossible it would be, nor how often they would fail, until they were faced with what God required. How different Israel's history would have been, and would be today, if they had only realized that it was only by the Spirit that they could obey God even in little things.

III. THE PREPARATION OF THE PEOPLE FOR THE APPEARANCE OF THE LORD (Ex. 19:9-15).

Here we have something that was especially for Moses. His leadership had been questioned a number of times both during the plagues and even after Israel's deliverance from Egypt. The people were going to hear when the Lord spoke to Moses so that they would never had any reason to doubt but that Moses was their God-appointed leader.

The Lord gave them two days in which they were to prepare for the appearance of the Lord. They were to be sanctified which must have meant repentance and the confession of sin as they sought to be clean before the Lord. And their inward cleansing was to be witnessed to by the washing of their clothes. After all, when we come to meet together in the presence of the Lord, shouldn't we be careful about the way we dress. If I were invited to go to the White House to meet the President, Lucille would probably want me to buy a new suit for the occasion. How much more should we be concerned when we meet with the Lord!

Notice that the Lord set the time when He was going to appear to them. We never know when the Lord is going to meet with us, not like He did at

Mt. Sinai, but there are times when He moves in special ways in our lives. Evangelists and pastors are always setting dates when there will be a revival, but it is not in our power to say when God is going to move in some special way.

There was a lot of preparing that they people needed to do, and probably most of them had a hard time getting ready in two days! But they had no choice.

The Lord has not set a special day when we are to observe the Lord's Supper – just that we are to observe it. We are planning to observe the Lord's Supper tonight. Mr. Larry Bell is going to speak to us before we observe the Lord's Supper. If we haven't been preparing ourselves for this evening's service, we don't have much time to get ready. But we need to be prepared, and let's make sure that we are prepared.

Getting back to our chapter, the next thing we read about is:

IV. THE APPEARANCE OF THE LORD (Ex. 19:16-20).

The Lord did not appear in some form which the people might have copied by making some kind of a graven image before which to worship. The Lord appeared with thunder (which is likened in Scripture to His voice), and lightning, and a thick cloud, and the loud sound of a trumpet. The display and the loud sound caused the people to tremble in fright. And the longer all of this went on, the louder it got. "Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice." See verse 19.

It was designed to show the awesomeness of God, the unapproachable nature of God, His tremendous power and overwhelming glory. It was all designed in support of Moses, and it was to make the people fear Moses as God's appointed leader of His people. It was surely a display of the presence of the Lord that none of the people would ever forget.

But then the chapter closes with a solemn warning.

V. THE SOLEMN WARNING (Ex. 19:21-25).

While all of this was going on, Moses was called to go up upon the mountain, and to warn the people again that they were not to break through the boundary that the Lord had set around the mountain, lest they

die! In spite of how terrifying this display of the presence of the Lord was, it was possible that some brave souls might step over the boundary that they might “gaze” at all that was going on in order to see more than most of the people were able to see. The penalty for such a thing was death!

There were people then, and there always have been people, who have not been satisfied with what God has seen fit to reveal about Himself. And so they either twist Scripture to say what it doesn't say, or they rely on what they claim to have had, some special revelation of God. There are solemn warnings in Scripture about adding anything to what God has revealed, or about taking away anything that He has revealed. From this display the people had evidence that the God of Israel was a living God. They heard His voice. They saw His power. They knew that He was so holy that the people could not approach Him.

It was all quite different when the Lord Jesus Christ came and died on the Cross. The sun was hidden so that darkness was extensive. But the veil in the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom, indicating that the way into the holy of holies was open to all who had been cleansed from their sins through the sacrifice of blood which our Lord made in our behalf.

Concl: May this chapter make all of us stop and think about how amazing our God is, how we should fear Him, revere Him, and love Him. And he still asks that we show our love for Him by keeping His commandments, not to make ourselves more secure, but to express our deep gratitude for His death for us on the Cross. The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, and the door of salvation is open to all. But death, eternal death, is the only prospect for those who do not trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Consider what all of this must have meant to Moses who was permitted to have such a place of fellowship with the living God, and the pledge of support that God gave him that He would be with Moses to bless and prosper him the work that he had been called to do.