

EXODUS 17-19

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Exodus chapter 17 as we continue our study through the Word of God. Keep in mind that we will finish up the first division of this book, which covers Exodus chapters 1-18, and this section focuses on the Exodus.

We will also begin the second division of this book which covers Exodus chapters 19-24, and this section will deal primarily with the Law.

And in several weeks we will get to the last division of the book which covers Exodus chapters 25-40, and this section primarily deals with the Tabernacle or that portable worship structure for the children of Israel.

So far in our studies here in Exodus we have seen God deliver the children of Israel from their bondage in Egypt.

He brought them through the depths of the Red Sea, destroying the Egyptian army.

He provided water for them, meat for them, and bread for them!

And as we have seen, God brought these trials into their lives not to destroy their faith but to test their faith, to show them what was in their heart and help them to grow, to mature in the Lord!

This evening we will see the children of Israel on their journey to Mount Sinai, the mountain of God, also known as Mount Horeb as they are on their journey to the Promise Land.

And along the way more trials will come their way to test their faith.

Keep in mind that Moses is their leader and as we will see, it is not easy being a leader. People murmur and complain about this and complain about that and Moses will have to deal with this for forty years!

It is interesting because when trouble comes, people tend not to look to the Lord, but they look at the leader and they blame that person for all the trouble they are in.

Leadership is not for the weak at heart, not at all and we will see that here this evening.

With that said, let's begin reading in Exodus chapter 17, starting in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we study His Word.

EXODUS 17

VERSES 1-4

So as they are obeying the Lord, on this journey to the Promise Land, they ran out of water. Not a good thing to run out of water in the desert!

Now let me ask you this.

Was Israel doing what the Lord commanded them to do?

Absolutely, in fact He was the one leading them, and they were just following Him.

Now, for some Christians, they would look at this and say that they must have been outside of God's will for their lives, there must be sin in their lives because they have no water to drink, it is a difficult situation. And folks, they would be wrong!

You see, it is possible and probable that you can be in the center of God's will for your life and experience tough times!

Satan will use this to tempt you and the Lord will use it to test you, to test your faith!

Don't let Satan tempt you away from the Lord but let the trial draw you closer to Him!

So on this journey the children of Israel were camped in Rephidim, which means "*beds*" or "*place of rest.*"

But instead of resting in the Lord they became anxious and blamed Moses for bringing them out of Egypt to die in the wilderness, in the desert!

Like I have said, Moses had it tough, don't you think!

But again, let's look at this situation, because it truly was a problem for the children of Israel. They lacked water and they are in the desert, and that is not just dangerous, it is deadly! And think about it, they needed water for 2 to 3 million people, that is a lot of water!

Again, let's think this through so we don't lose sight of what God is doing here.

First of all, God created this deadly situation, He brought them to this place, and don't you think the Lord who created the heavens and the earth, created something out of nothing, can bring forth water? Of course He can.

But the children of Israel are so mad at Moses that Moses is fearing for his life, thinking that they might stone him!

But instead of complaining to Moses and being mad at him, they should have brought their concerns before the Lord because He alone can bring forth those life sustaining waters in the middle of a desert!

They should have said, ***“Lord, you know the situation that we are in. We come before you and ask that you provide us with water to drink. You have done it before, you are Almighty God, and you can do anything! Thank you, Lord.”***

But that is not what they did. Instead, ***“Moses, what is wrong with you! How can you bring us out into this desert and have no water for us. We were better off in Egypt! Even our livestock are dying!”*** And it was even worse because Moses cries out to the Lord to do something before they stone him to death! That is how bad it was for Moses!

The wonderful thing here, and something we need to take note of, is that Moses does bring his requests before the Lord. That was the right thing to do.

We are so much like the children of Israel many times and we do the same thing that they did. Instead of resting in the Lord over a difficult situation, we become anxious, fearful, angry and-so-on.

Paul, in Philippians 4:6-9 tells us what we are to do. He wrote, **“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy - meditate on these things. The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”**

In other words, give it to the Lord, don't take it out on others and then just rest in Him.

You see, as you let His peace fill your life, a peace that is not of this world, it passes all our human understanding. You can be at peace in the midst of this storm, you can rest.

Not only that, but He will guard your heart or your emotions, He will guard your mind or your thoughts. Instead of being anxious, fill yourself up with the things of God, not the things of this world and it is then you will find your Rephidim, your place of rest – ***THE LORD!***

Warren Wiersbe sums it up like this for us. He wrote,

On the map of our lives, how many places ought to be named “Testing and Quarreling” because of the way we’ve complained about our circumstances and failed to trust God?

It’s one thing to sit comfortably in church and sing “All the way my Savior leads me, what have I to ask beside?” and quite something else to be confronted with distress and disappointment and meekly say, “Not my will but Thine be done.”

Corrie ten Boom used to say, “Don’t bother to give God instructions; just report for duty.”

- Warren Wiersbe, The Wiersbe Bible Commentary – OT, p. 175

VERSES 5-6

How important it is to have godly leadership in difficult situations. God wants Moses to lead the people, to take the elders of Israel with Him and let them see faith in action so that they may grow.

If the leaders are in turmoil, if they are fearful, if they are running for their lives, what do you think the people will do?

They will do the same!

Now please understand that from a human perspective this plan made no sense. Take your rod; strike the rock and water will flow from it, but God instructed Moses to do this, and men of faith will walk as Moses did, being obedient to the Lord!

VERSE 7

When you look at the faith of the children of Israel it was immature, it was like a spiritual roller coaster for them. You know how it goes. Things are going well, they are on a high, a mountain top experience and then something changes, things get bad, they get difficult and down, down they go.

Folks, God wants us to trust in Him in all things and not contend with Him or tempt Him for He is with us, He is for us!

It is as Paul said in Romans 8:31-39, **“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”**

So God caused this water to come out of the rock, and many wonder how this was done.

Some say it was an artesian spring that burst forth when Moses struck the rock.

Folks, it is a miracle, God did it and I believe it, I don't have to figure out how He did it!

And think about it. This was not just a little water, but it gushed forth to provide enough water for 2 to 3 million people plus all the livestock!

So Moses smote the rock once, and water came out. Paul picks up on this in I Corinthians 10:4 as he said, “**and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.**”

The Amplified Bible puts it like this, “**And they all drank the same spiritual (supernaturally given) drink. For they drank from a spiritual Rock which followed them [produced by the sole power of God Himself without natural instrumentality], and the Rock was Christ. [Ex 17:6; Num 20:11.]**”

Not only did God provide food for them in a supernatural way, bread from heaven. And the picture there is Jesus is the bread of life.

And here we see that He also provided water to sustain them in their journey and Jesus is our living water! And this Rock followed them through their wanderings, Jesus was with them!

Paul was picking up on a rabbinical tradition that says this very thing, that this Rock that had water flow from it followed them throughout their journey, and as I have said, and Paul tells us that the Rock that sustained them and us is *CHRIST!*

In John chapter 4, as Jesus encounters the woman of Samaria at the well, we are told, **“Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?’ Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.’”** John 4:13-14.

Also, in John 7:37-39 we are told, **“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”**

And again, remember that Paul told us that this Rock in the wilderness that provided water for them to drink followed them wherever they would go.

That same Rock, Jesus Christ sustains us with refreshing, life-giving water through His Spirit.

Now, if we do not take in this life-sustaining water we will drop out of the race, become dried up, and disqualified for service!

One other point here.

In Numbers chapter 20 we see the children of Israel complain once again because they had no water. And the Lord tells Moses to speak to the Rock and it will provide water for them.

What is interesting is that this word, “**rock**” here in Exodus 17:6 is different from what we read in Numbers 20:8, where it means a “*rock lifted up*” or “*lifted high.*”

But instead of speaking to the Rock, Moses struck the rock once again and God said to Moses, “*Son, I need to talk to you!*”

What was the problem?

Jesus Christ, the Rock, was struck once for our sins, lifted up on the cross of Calvary, and now we just need to speak to Him, and we can receive Him into our life by faith or receive that fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Moses blew the picture that God was painting, and because of his anger, he was not allowed to enter into the Promise Land!

VERSES 8-11

The Amalekites were nomads of the desert, and they were descendants of Esau through Eliphaz, according to Genesis 36:12.

Now they were not very nice as we are told in Deuteronomy 25:17-18, “**Remember what Amalek did to you on the way as you were coming out of Egypt, how he met you on the way and attacked your rear ranks, all the stragglers at your rear, when you were tired and weary; and he did not fear God.**”

They went after the weak, the old, and the tired!

And so they attacked the children of Israel as they were resting in Rephidim. In response to this unprovoked attack, Moses tells Joshua to gather some men and go out and fight against this enemy.

Meanwhile, Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill to watch this battle in the valley.

Who is this Hur person that went with Moses and Aaron?

Interestingly enough, *“Josephus (Antiquities III, 54 [ii.4]) preserves a Jewish tradition that Hur was the husband of Moses’ sister, Miriam.”* (Kaiser)

Now, what we see here is that as Moses lifted his hands in the air the children of Israel began to win the battle. And as he let down his hands, the Amalekites began to win.

What is this all about?

I believe it is a picture of prayer and how there are those who are in the midst of the battle and then there are those who are prayer warriors praying for victory!

Make no mistake about it, both are important.

Keep in mind that in the Scriptures the Amalekites are a type of the flesh.

Thus, when we are tired, when we are alone, that flesh likes to resurrect itself to destroy us! Our only victory over this enemy is prayer and our Joshua, our Jesus will give us the victory for His name means ***YAHWEH IS SALVATION!***

Thus, crucify the flesh, never give up, and never distance yourself from Jesus! The reason is simple, the flesh will never give up in trying to destroy your life!

VERSES 12-13

Let me ask you this question. Where was this battle won, in the valley with Joshua and his men or on the hill with Moses and his men?

I truly believe that the victory was won through prayer and all Joshua was doing was walking in faith and God would give him the victory.

Yes, it was a battle, but prayer assured them of this victory!

And please understand that I am not saying service is not important. What I am saying is that service without prayer will not give you the victory that God has for the situations you are in!

The famous prayer warrior S. D. Gordon said, *“Prayer is striking the winning blow, service is simply gathering up the spoil.”*

Notice again what we see here in Exodus 17:13, **“So Joshua defeated Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword.”**

I find that interesting because the sword of the Spirit is the Word of God! (Ephesians 6:17)

In saying that, listen to what David wrote in Psalm 119:11, **“Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.”**

How can that be?

Because of what Paul wrote in Hebrews 4:12, **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”**

In other words, the flesh is defeated as we walk in the Spirit, we pray, and we allow the Word of God to expose those areas that need to be dealt with! Amalek is a picture of the flesh, and he was defeated through prayer and the Word of God!

And here is another important point. How important it is to have others support you in prayer, to come alongside and lift you up, encourage you, be that right hand man.

I am thankful that many of you are praying for the leadership of this church and for me. We can't do it on our own, and God does not want us to.

I am very thankful for my wife who prays and prays for me!

And please understand that I am praying for you as well!

Yes, we must trust in Him first and foremost, but then, with the help of others, lift up your prayers to the Lord and walk by faith! Crucify the flesh!

In Luke 18:1 we are told, **“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.”**

Also, in I Timothy 2:8 we are told, **“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”**

And The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, **“I desire therefore that in every place men should pray, without anger or quarreling or resentment or doubt [in their minds], lifting up holy hands.”**

Don't go into battle without prayer! And remember this, we are in a battle every single day! The enemy does not go on vacation, and we carry that enemy with us every day – ***OUR FLESH!***

Thus, as Paul said in Galatians 5:16-17, **“I say then: Walk in the Spirit, and you shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish.”**

VERSES 14-16

What is God's command concerning the flesh?

We are to crucify it, utterly destroy it!

Today, many Christians feel that we need to build ourselves up or build up the flesh. That we can't help others until we take care of ourselves. You will never find anywhere in the Bible where we are called to build ourselves up, but we are to crucify ourselves or the flesh on a daily basis.

Let me give you an example of someone who did not obey the Lord.

God commanded King Saul, the first King in Israel, to utterly wipe out the Amalekites. But he thought he knew better than what the Lord had said, and he did not utterly wipe out the Amalekites.

What happened to King Saul?

He was wiped out by an Amalekite!

Here's the thing. If you don't destroy the flesh, it will destroy you!

Now, as I have said, the Amalekites are a type of the flesh and the Lord said He is going to blot out the Amalekites, but then in verse 16 He says, **“... ‘Because the Lord has sworn: the Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation.’”**

How can that be?

Because the battle with the flesh will continue from generation to generation and we can attest to that fact. It will continue on until we go to be with the Lord, and then, ultimately in the New Heaven and the New Earth there will be no remembrance of Amalek, the flesh.

Thus, we still must do battle with the flesh on a daily basis!

Now, after this battle, notice what Moses does. He built an altar and what did he call it?

He called it – ***THE LORD IS MY BANNER!***

In other words, we can have the victory in the Lord as we walk in the Spirit and thus, we will not leave any room for the flesh to resurrect itself!

EXODUS 18**VERSES 1-6**

If you remember back in Exodus chapter 4, Moses sent his wife and two children back home and he continued on towards Egypt.

Now they are re-united at the Mountain of God as Jethro, Moses' father-in-law brings his family back to him.

One other point here and that is regarding Jethro. We are told that Jethro was the priest of Midian. He was probably a descendant of one of Abraham's other children through Keturah named Midian. (Genesis 25:1-2)

Because of this connection with Abraham he was aware of God, but I don't think he was a believer as yet. As we read on I believe we see him come to know the Lord and he then makes a sacrifice to God. Right now he was polytheistic and probably worshiped many gods, including the Lord!

VERSES 7-12

Can you imagine the stories Moses had for Jethro, all that God had done to deliver the children of Israel and to bring them to this place.

And as Jethro heard all that God had done it caused him to worship the Lord!

I think it is here, after hearing all that the true God had done, that Jethro comes to worship the true and living God!

Notice again what it says here in Genesis 18:11, **“Now I know that the LORD is greater than all the gods, for in the very thing in which they behaved proudly, He was above them.”** You see, **“Now I know that the LORD is greater . . .”**

And for us, every day should be a day filled with worship unto the Lord for all He has done, is doing and will do in our lives!

VERSES 13-23

Can you imagine all the disputes, all the questions over various situations and all these people all coming to Moses for answers and he is able to answer them. But can you imagine how long it took for Moses to do this!

I thought I was busy!

Yes, it needed to be done, but, as you can imagine, Moses couldn't do it all by himself. It would not be good for him, and it would not be good for the people because who knows how long it would take for Moses to hear their case!

So in steps Jethro and he gives Moses some wise instructions – he needed to delegate the work.

For Moses, he was to **“stand before God for the people”** or he was to be praying for them. (Exodus 18:19)

Not only that, but he was also to **“teach them the statutes and the laws”** or he needed to teach them the Words of God. (Exodus 18:20)

You see, if the people know the Word of God, many of the disputes, many of the problems, many of the questions they would be able to answer themselves!

But make no mistake about it, there would still be disputes and thus, he needed to find men, and not just anybody, but godly men.

It is as Paul told Timothy, “**And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.**”

Timothy was to train up men for the work of the ministry and that was what Moses was going to be doing.

But what are the qualifications for this work?

Listen carefully because they still apply today!

Men of ability – able men: This speaks of men that have wisdom, discernment, good judgment.

You see, how can you lead without these things and yet some try, and it doesn't work.

Jude tells us, “**Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, And to present you faultless Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy, To God our Savior, Who alone is wise, Be glory and majesty, Dominion and power, Both now and forever. Amen.**”

Jude 24-25.

Folks, we are only able through Christ, He is the one that supplies us with what we need!

Men of godliness – such as fear God: Without the fear of God, you will not be able to serve man.

Paul put it like this in Ephesians 5:18-21, “**And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.**”

Men of God's Word – men of truth: If you don't have the truth of God how can you minister to others? What are you going to give them except the wisdom that is of this world.

Jesus said in John 17:17, "**Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.**"

Men of honor – hating covetousness: If you are doing it for money, for fame, or whatever, then don't do it.

Do it because the love of Christ constrains you and you have a deep love for people and you want to bring them to Jesus or into a deeper relationship with the Lord.

Paul put it like this in Hebrews 13:5-6, "**Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you nor forsake you.' So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'**"

These men were to be in charge and if it is a difficult situation, then Moses would hear the case and make a judgment on it.

Folks, God has not lowered His standards for leadership. You can find the qualifications for leadership in I Timothy chapter 3, and Titus chapter 1 and you can check out our study notes on this subject on our web page, we don't have the time to go through each one in detail.

But keep in mind that having money, having fancy degrees, knowing certain people in high places doesn't make you qualified for leadership. It didn't back then, and it still doesn't today.

A great example of this, of delegating the work is given to us in Acts 6:1-7, where we are told, **“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.”**

What a great lesson this is but keep in mind that they did not just pick people to fill a position, but they looked for men that were filled with faith and the Holy Spirit!

VERSES 24-27

Moses listened to the counsel of Jethro, and it truly was a blessing not only to Moses, not only to the men that God raised up, but also to the people.

I like the way D. L. Moody put it when he said, ***“It is better to set a hundred men to work than to do the work of a hundred men.”***

And here's the thing. God is not looking for men and women who are qualified or have degrees, money or whatever! God is looking for men and women who are faithful in doing the work. That don't have to be hounded to do something, but they see a need and they step forward and do it – ***FAITHFULNESS!***

You see, we all have a role to play in the body of Christ and thus, may we be faithful in the work that we do and allow God to bring forth the fruit.

As this chapter closes, Jethro heads back to his home in Midian and Moses, his family and the children of Israel remain at the mountain of God.

As we move on into Exodus chapters 19-24, we are moving from the Exodus to the giving of the Law!

EXODUS 19

VERSES 1-2

Think about what is taking place here. It is the fulfillment of what God said before the children of Israel were delivered from their bondage in Egypt, even before Moses went down to Egypt!

In Exodus 3:12 we are told, **“So He said, ‘I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.’”**

Now they are there at Mount Sinai just as God had promised them.

And if you remember in Exodus chapter 3, this is the place that Moses encountered God, the burning bush incident!

Keep in mind that the wilderness of Sinai is a strip of land 2½ miles long by a half mile wide. Also, jutting out of this stretch of wilderness was a solid rock known as Mount Horeb also known as Mount Sinai.

Now the traditional site of Mount Sinai is between the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, in the lower portion or southern portion of the Sinai Peninsula in a place called Jebel Musa.

But, as we have seen in our studies, the children of Israel did not cross the Gulf of Suez but the Gulf of Aqaba, which would put them in Arabia, which I believe is where Mount Sinai is located.

In fact, Paul makes that point in Galatians 4:25 when he said, “**for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia . . .**”

I think that makes it clear where Mount Sinai is located!

Now some believe that the Biblical Mount Sinai is known as Jebel El Lawz.

This mountain encircles an area of over 5,000 acres and it could accommodate the millions of people that had gathered there.

Ron Wyatt is one who believes this, and he found that the top of the mountain is blackened, as if charred.

It does seem to fit what Exodus 19:18 tells us, “**Now Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. Its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked greatly.**”

And folks, this is not volcanic rock, but it is granite rock.

Thus, this smoke and thunder that came forth were not from a volcano but from the Lord!

Now can I say with 100% accuracy that this is the location?

Obviously not, but this I do know. That there is a Mount Sinai where God met with the children of Israel. This did take place!

Keep in mind that they spent some 11 months at Mount Sinai according to Numbers 10:11. And this period of time is covered in the rest of the book of Exodus, the entire book of Leviticus, and the first nine chapters of Numbers, some 57 chapters of the Scriptures.

Thus, it is important for us to learn the lessons God was showing the children of Israel and is showing us!

VERSES 3-6

Moses is to come before the Lord and as he does the Lord tells him what he is to say to **“the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel.”**

Why does He use Jacob and Israel here?

I believe it is because that is how they lived on this spiritual roller coaster. Sometimes they were Jacob, deceiver and schemers and sometimes they were Israel, governed by God.

May we live our lives like Israel, governed by God as we walk with the Lord!

Notice here in Exodus 19:5 once again, we see that **“if”** you do this **“then”** then Lord will do that!

The Mosaic covenant was a conditional covenant with Israel that they never kept. It was replaced in the New Testament by the New Covenant that is based upon the faithfulness of God.

The old covenant said, **“stay away”** and the new covenant says, **“come near.”**

The old covenant was built on law and punishment and the new covenant is built on love and grace.

Again, what we see here is that *if* Israel was faithful in keeping their part of the covenant, then God would be faithful in keeping His part and they *would* be a special treasure to Him, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

And God's desire for them was to remember how God delivered them to help them in future trials. They will be His special treasure above all the people of this world. He wanted to use them in a special way just as the Lord wants to do with us, as I have said, but they failed in their obedience to the Lord.

You see, they were to be priests or represent God to the people of this world just as the Lord wants us to be and do.

In Revelation 1:6 we are told, "**and has made us kings and priests to His God and Father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.**"

He wants them to be a holy nation, set apart from the rest of the world just as the Lord desires of us.

Peter tells us in I Peter 2:9, "**But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.**"

The key is faithfulness, obeying the Lord and see what God can do in us and through us for His glory.

For the nation of Israel, God's destiny for them would not be fulfilled because of disobedience but God is not done with them yet, for they are His people!

VERSES 7-9

How quickly they were willing to respond to the call of God upon their life without considering the cost. And thus, as soon as conflict came, as soon as it did not fit their lifestyle, what they wanted to do, they broke the vow they made.

How often do we do that? We hear a message, we come back from a retreat, and we are fired up to change our lives and then we get home, and it never comes to pass, why?

Because apart from surrendering to the Lord and obeying Him we will fail!

It is as D. L. Moody said, ***“All that the Lord has spoken we will do.’ Bold and self-confident language. The golden calf, the broken tablets, the neglected ordinances, the stoned messengers, the rejected and crucified Christ, are overwhelming evidences of man’s dishonored vows.”***

A good lesson for us to learn. God’s Word is living and powerful in our lives if we allow it to work, if we are willing to surrender to Him and not want our will to be done, but His!

VERSES 10-13

Before they could approach God, they had to be cleansed and even then, they could not approach a holy and righteous God.

Folks, before we can appear before God we too need to be cleansed and the only way that can happen is by receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior of your life.

It is then that all of our sins are cast as far as the east is from the west to be remembered no more!

Paul tells us in Hebrews 4:14-16, **“Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”**

Then, after we are saved, we must then have that daily cleansing to remove that filth that we pick up during the day when we are in the world.

David said in Psalm 119:9, **“How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.”**

Paul tells us in Ephesians 5:26, **“that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word.”**

And Jesus tells us in John 15:3, **“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.”**

In other words, be in the Word of God and allow God’s Spirit to cleanse you on a daily basis, not for *SALVATION* but for *SANCTIFICATION!*

VERSES 14-19

What a sight this must have been and yes, the people trembled as they stood before the Lord. Why? Because He is holy and righteous, and man is not.

And they knew that they were not perfect people, and they must have been wondering if this was the end for them. They truly had a fear of God and rightly so, but they also needed to understand that He loved them and was going to fulfill His promise to them, they would come into the Promise Land!

VERSE 20

Moses was at least 80 years old at this point and he must have been in good shape.

He went up the mountain to speak with God, then back down to tell the people, and back up and back down, not an easy task, it was a mountain!

And keep in mind that the people are fearful, so how come Moses ventured forward?

I believe that he trusted the Words of God and He understood that God was a loving God and had what was best for their lives and thus, he walked by faith!

You see, it is safe to walk in obedience to the Lord; trouble comes when we are walking in disobedience!

VERSES 21-25

Why all these warning about approaching God?

Because you can't approach God any way you want!

In John chapter 4 Jesus is speaking to a woman of Samaria by a well, Jacob's well, and we are told starting in verse 20, **“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.’”** John 4:20-24.

That is exactly what Jesus is telling us, what He was telling the children of Israel, that we can't approach Him anyway that we want!

We first must worship Him in Spirit, we must be saved and then we must worship Him in truth, according to the Word of God and not outside the Word of God!

Chadwick made this comment regarding the thundering and fire and trembling on Mount Sinai, *“Awe is one thing: submission of the will is another.”*

In other words, be obedient to what the Lord is saying and don’t just stand there with your mouth wide open!

As awesome as this mountain of God was, Paul tells us in Hebrews 12:18-24 that we come to a different mountain. He wrote, **“For you have not come to the mountain that may be touched and that burned with fire, and to blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words, so that those who heard it begged that the word should not be spoken to them anymore. (For they could not endure what was commanded: ‘And if so much as a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned or shot with an arrow.’) And so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, ‘I am exceedingly afraid and trembling.’) But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel.”**

Folks, our relationship with God, our salvation is not based on Mount Sinai, but it is centered on Mount Zion – *CALVARY!*

Look at how they compare, and they really don't!

- Sinai speaks of fear and terror, but Zion speaks of love and forgiveness.
- Sinai is in a dry desert, but Zion is the city of the Living God.
- Sinai, with all its fear and power is earthly; but the Mount Zion we come to is heavenly and spiritual.
- At Sinai, only Moses could come and meet God; at Zion, there is an innumerable company, a general assembly.
- Sinai had guilty men in fear, but Zion has just men made perfect.
- At Sinai, Moses is the mediator, but at Zion, Jesus the mediator.
- Sinai put forth an Old covenant, ratified by the blood of animals; Zion has a New Covenant, ratified by the blood of God's precious Son.
- Sinai was all about barriers and exclusion; Zion is all about invitation.
- Sinai is all about Law, Zion is all about grace.

Paul speaks of this conflict that is going on between the Law and Grace and how they cannot coexist together.

In Galatians 4:21-31 we are told, **“Tell me, you who desire to be under the law, do you not hear the law? For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar - for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children - but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. For it is written: ‘Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband.’ Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? ‘Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman.’ So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.”**

We are under Grace and not the Law for our salvation because the Law can't save us, only Grace can! The Law shows us our sin, grace gives us what we don't deserve –

SALVATION!

Make no mistake about it, what we see here is that God is stressing in no uncertain terms that the people were forbidden from drawing near the mountain to try to get a glimpse of His glory.

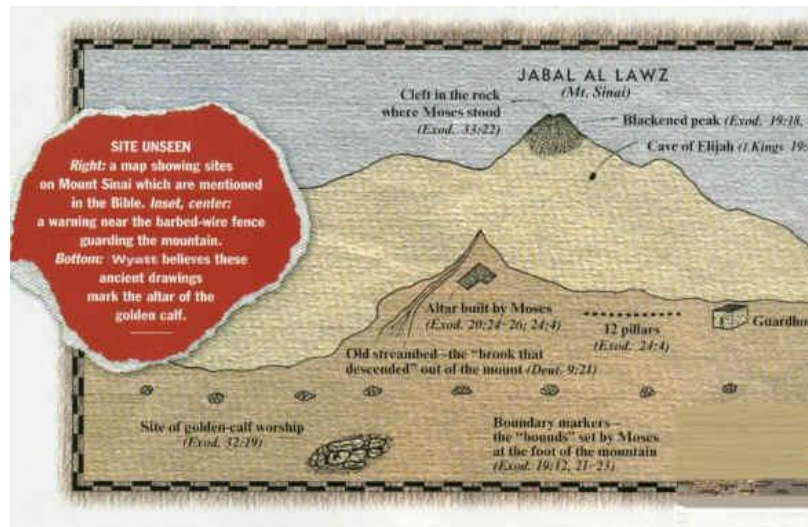
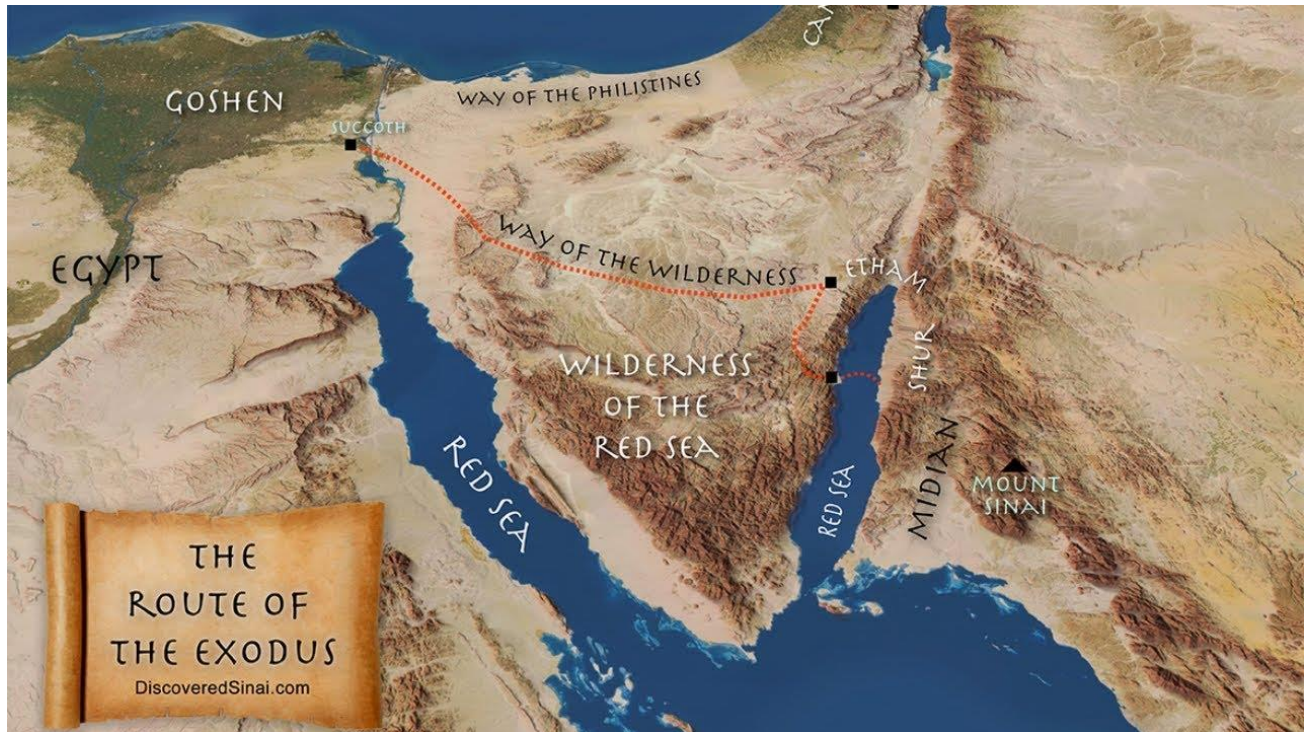
People who try to approach God on their terms instead of His terms, through Jesus, will experience the judgment of God someday.

One writer put it like this, *“Many today feel we need to get more of the thunder and fire and trembling of Mount Sinai into people as a way of keeping them from sin. Yet, not forty days from this, the whole nation would have an orgy around a golden calf, praising it as the god that brought them out of Egypt.”*

It just shows that law is inferior to love as a motivation to obey God. It is His love, His grace that draws us to the Savior!

Jabal Al Lawz – Mount Sinai





Mr. Wyatt is the original modern-day discoverer of the real Mount Sinai. The upper 200 feet of Jebel el Lawz is burned black, as we have seen in previous photos above. The Saudi Government will confiscate any photographs of the mountain and will not allow any tourists into the country, but U.S. Government satellite photos and a few private photos smuggled out of the country reveal the secret mountain by its unique blackened peak. Unlike the traditional site, there are thousands of acres in which to encamp at the base of this mountain, while clearly being visible from the mountaintop.