

# Exodus 19 Commentary

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Irving Jensen ([Online](#)) - Used by Permission  
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[View Chuck Swindoll's chart of Exodus.](#)

Summary Chart of The Book of Exodus									
DELIVERANCE FROM OPPRESSION						PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP			
Redemption from Egypt Ex 1:1-18:27						Revelation from God Ex 19:1-40:38			
Getting Israel Out of Egypt						Getting Egypt Out of Israel!			
Narration						Legislation			
Birth of Moses Ex 1-2	Call of Moses Ex 3-6	Conflict with Pharaoh Ex 7-10	Exodus from Egypt Ex 11-12	Red Sea Crossed Ex 13-15	Journey To Sinai Ex 16-18	Law Given Ex 19-24	Tent Plan Ex 25-31	Idol Worship Ex 32-34	Tent Built Ex 35-40
Subjection				Redemption		Instruction			
Suffering and Liberation of People of God				Guidance of God		Worship of God			

Moses and Burdens of Israel		Pharaoh and Plagues Upon Egypt		Red Sea Deliverance	Wilderness Provision	Sinai Instructions			
Bondage and Oppression				Deliverance and Provision		Law Pattern and Construction			
Israel in Egypt Ex 1:1-13:16				Israel to Sinai Ex 13:17-18:27		Israel at Sinai Ex 19:1-40:38			
God's People Enduring Bondage				God's Grace Revealed in Redemption		God's Glory Manifested in Worship			
Egypt 430 Years (15% of Exodus)				Wilderness 2 Months (30% of Exodus)		Mt Sinai 10 Months (55% of Exodus)			
From Groaning									To Glory!

[Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament](#) - online

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[Click for Excellent Map of Route of the Exodus](#)

[Click another Exodus from Egypt](#)

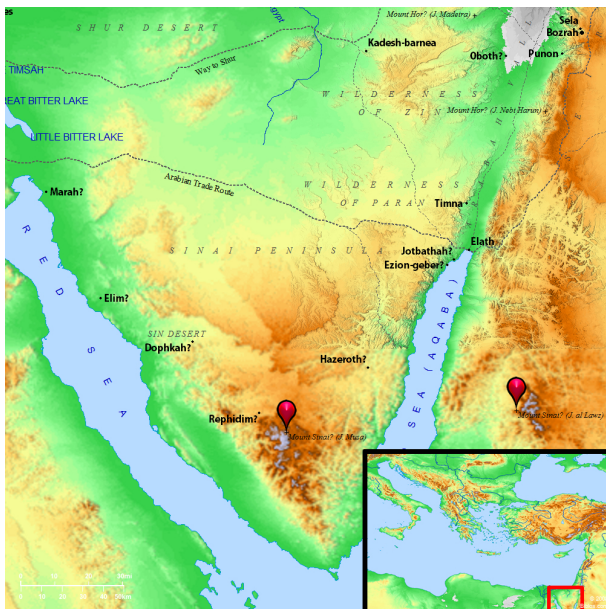
[Click for Events during the Sojourn at Kadesh-Barnea](#)

GENESIS	EXODUS
human effort and failure	divine power and triumph
word of promise	work of fulfillment
a people chosen	a people called
God's electing mercy	God's electing manner
revelation of nationality	realization of nationality

SUMMARY OF THE PENTATEUCH  
(from Believer's Study Bible)

**Exodus 19:1** In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai.

- **the third** - Ex 12:2,6 Lev 23:16-18
- **came** - Ex 16:1 Nu 33:15
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Sinai (Red Marker on left side) - Rephidim to Northwest  
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**In the third month** - Literally in the "third new moon" according to Jewish usage, the first day of the month. **ESV Study note** adds this "puts their arrival at Sinai about seven weeks after the exodus. This coincides with the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), which among other things celebrates the giving of the law (Lev. 23:15–21)."

**In the third month...On that very day** - "on the very day of the third new moon" Since they left Egypt on a full moon, the fact that they arrived on a full moon fixes the elapsed time as 3 lunar months.

**J Ligon Duncan** - Notice that the beginning of the third month is the day that they have gotten there. They are on a lunar calendar; they are roughly fifty days way from the crossing of the Red Sea. They are roughly fifty days away from the Passover. That's the origin, by the way, of the timing of Pentecost, fifty days after the Passover. After the crossing, after the Passover came, fifty or so days later came the giving of the law at Sinai. So, these are origins of the feast of Pentecost. ([Life With God: On Eagles' Wings](#))

**After the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt**- This would be about 2 weeks after Ex 16:1+ when "they set out from Elim, and all the congregation of the sons of Israel came to the wilderness of Sin, which is between **Elim** and **Sinai** (see red marker in map above), on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departure from the land of Egypt."

**On that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai**- This was the desert area around Mount Sinai and was part of the much larger wilderness of Sin. And as explained in the next verse the place of **the mountain** of God. All subsequent events related in the book occur in 'the wilderness of Sinai,' but the exact location is unknown. "Israel stayed in the Wilderness of Sinai until Numbers 10. More than 57 chapters of Scripture are devoted to what happened to Israel in the year they camped at Mount Sinai."

**Alan Cole** - "The word conventionally translated 'wilderness' is not a sandy desert, but grazing country, not settled by man." (See context in [Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Guzik** says "It took them three months of trusting God to get to this place, but they finally arrived." I would beg to differ because they have basically been "distrusting" God for 3 months. Everytime they grumbled they distrusted Him. ([Exodus 19](#))

**Exodus 19:2** When they set out from Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness; and there Israel camped in front of the mountain.

- **Rephidim** - Ex 17:1,8
- **Camped** - Ex 3:1,12 18:5 Ac 7:30,38 Ga 4:24
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## "THE MOUNTAIN" - MOUNT HOREB MOUNT SINAI - THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

When they set out from [Rephidim](#) ("rests"), they came to the wilderness of Sinai and camped in the wilderness- Moses' return to this place was a fulfillment of the prophecy Jehovah had given him in Ex 3:12+ "And He said, "Certainly I will be with you,

and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, **you shall worship God at this mountain.**" Lesson - Jehovah is a promise keeping God! (cf Peter's words in 2 Peter 1:4 regarding God's promises!)

**Warren Wiersbe** sums up this next section of Exodus writing that "God had redeemed His people (Exodus 1–18), and was now going to claim them as His own and enter into a covenant relationship with them (Exodus 19–24), just as He promised. At least eight times, Moses had asked Pharaoh's permission to lead the people into the wilderness where they could worship Jehovah, and each time, Pharaoh had refused. But now Israel would meet their God at the holy mount and worship Him. Many wonderful things occurred at Sinai that day, but the greatest was that God's people heard God's voice speaking to them personally. (See context in [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#))

Jehovah instructed Moses "Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and **I will bring you out** from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and **I will deliver you from their bondage. I will also redeem you** with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. **Then I will take you for My people, and I will be your God;** (THIS IS THE LANGUAGE OF COVENANT) and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.'" (Exodus 6:6–7+).

**And there Israel camped in front of the mountain - There Israel camped** for almost 11 months (10 months and 19 days) - this time is recorded in the remainder of the book of Exodus, all of Leviticus and the first 10 chapters of Numbers (ends in Nu 10:11)! While the text does not specifically say, surely they were led there by the LORD, for earlier we read "The LORD was going before them in a **pillar of cloud by day** to lead them on the way, and in a **pillar of fire by night** to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the **pillar of cloud by day**, nor the **pillar of fire by night**, from before the people." (Ex 13:21-22+)

**Duncan** - They will wander in the wilderness for 38 years or so. Isn't it interesting, friends, that of those 38 years, we are only told about a very small amount in the books of Moses, but of these eleven months, you know what we get? Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers through chapter 10. These eleven months are less than one fortieth of the time that Israel would be in the wilderness, but these eleven months occupy the focus of...from Exodus 19 on through Leviticus, and Numbers 10....Why are long stretches of the history of Israel in the wilderness skipped over and there is all this focus on this meeting? Because the giving of the law is the great distinctive of God's covenant with Moses. ([Life With God: On Eagles' Wings](#))

**In front of** ([neged](#)) is from a root meaning to place a matter high, conspicuous before a person and so the idea is they were camped "prominently before" the **mountain** of God, the very place Moses had first met Jehovah, the [Angel of the LORD](#), in the burning bush. "Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God." (Ex 3:1-11+).

**In front of** ([neged](#)) is used one other time in Exodus (Ex 34:10+) "God said, "Behold, I am going to make a covenant. **Before** ([neged](#)) all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the LORD, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you.

**The mountain of God** (= [Mt Horeb](#) = [Mt Sinai](#)) - Ex 3:1, Ex 4:27, Ex 24:13, 1 Ki 19:8, Ps 68:15, Ezek 28:14, 16

**Exodus 19:3 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 sons of Israel:**

- **went up** - Ex 20:21 Ex 24:15-18 Ex 34:2 De 5:5-31 Ac 7:38
- **called** - Ex 3:4
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **MOSES WENT UP TO GOD**

**Moses went up to God** - It is easy to read this too quickly! A finite man. A sinful man. And somehow the Spirit of God moved Moses to move closer to the very presence of **God**. This is amazing grace indeed! **Went up** pictures Moses ascending the mountain of God.

The verb **went up** ([alah](#)) is used over 800x in the OT, in Ge 17:22 (cf Ge 35:13) describing God going up from speaking with Abraham, in Ex 2:23 of oppressed Israel's "cry for help because of their bondage **rose up** to

God" and in Ex 17:10 when "Moses, Aaron, and Hur went up to the top of the hill" in the battle with the Amalekites. This verb [alah](#) might also be considered a [key word](#) occurring 8 times in Exodus 19 - Ex 19:3, 12, 13, 18, 20, 23, 24 (twice in v24). Whenever someone goes to Jerusalem the direction is always "up" to Jerusalem because of its elevation.

**Alah** uses in Exodus - Ex 1:10; Ex 2:23; Ex 3:8; Ex 3:17; Ex 8:3; Ex 8:4; Ex 8:5; Ex 8:6; Ex 8:7; Ex 10:12; Ex 10:14; Ex 12:38; Ex 13:18; Ex 13:19; Ex 16:13; Ex 16:14; Ex 17:3; Ex 17:10; Ex 19:3; Ex 19:12; Ex 19:13; Ex 19:18; Ex 19:20; Ex 19:23; Ex 19:24; Ex 20:26; Ex 24:1; Ex 24:2; Ex 24:5; Ex 24:9; Ex 24:12; Ex 24:13; Ex 24:15; Ex 24:18; Ex 25:37; Ex 27:20; Ex 30:8; Ex 30:9; Ex 32:1; Ex 32:4; Ex 32:6; Ex 32:7; Ex 32:8; Ex 32:23; Ex 32:30; Ex 33:1; Ex 33:3; Ex 33:5; Ex 33:12; Ex 33:15; Ex 34:2; Ex 34:3; Ex 34:4; Ex 34:24; Ex 40:4; Ex 40:25; Ex 40:29; Ex 40:36; Ex 40:37

**Kaiser** - Moses נָאָה ('ālāh, "went up") the mountain seven times (Ex 19:3, 20; 24:9, 13, 15, 18; and Ex 34:4; also he "went back to the LORD" in Ex 32:31); yet he only "went/came down" four times (Ex 19:14, 25; Ex 32:15; Ex 34:29). Indeed, Moses did make several trips up the mountain, perhaps as many as three or four.

**THOUGHT** - Moses ascended or went up. This recalls the words of a question by David in Psalm 24 asking "Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place?" Dear reader, if you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ, you can answer that one day YOU will ascend into the hill of the LORD and stand in His holy place, because you have been made righteous in the blood of Lamb. And in the Millennium when the Holy One of Israel dwells on earth, we will be able to ascend the hill of Temple Mount and stand in His holy presence and worship Him.

**And the LORD called to him from the mountain**- Recall in Moses' first meeting "God called to him from the midst of the bush." (Ex 3:4+) No man seeks God (Ro 3:11+) but God seeks men and here He **called** Moses. Jehovah is on **the mountain** in some supernatural way not explained.

**Alan Cole** - This is the beginning of a great block of teaching (combined with some narrative background) that stretches from here, through Leviticus, up to Numbers 10 (Nu 10:11). All is represented as being given at Sinai, and within a comparatively short time. From then on, the story deals with the journey to Kadesh Barnea, incidents on the way, and incidents happening there and thereafter. Curiously, little detail is preserved of the long 'wilderness period' (which, in biblical chronology, would have been some thirty-eight years: cf. Deut. 2:14), but such is the way of biblical history. Long periods are passed over in silence if felt to be spiritually insignificant, while short periods often receive detailed treatment. (See context in [Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**Saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel**- Jehovah begins to give instructions to Moses. It is interesting that Jehovah used two names which are essentially synonymous **house of Jacob** and sons of Israel. The former is a much less common designation of the nation (22x - see below), while the designation **sons of Israel** is found 645x in 602 verses (NASB).

**Kaiser** on 2 names to nation - A twofold title is used for the people of God (v.3): "house of Jacob" (a reminder of their humble beginnings; cf. Gen 28:13; 35:11; 49:7) and "the people of Israel" (a statement as to what they had become: a nation).

**Guzik** posits that "With this title (**house of Jacob**) God associated the nation with the weakest and least stable of the patriarchs. At this point they acted more like Jacob than like Abraham or Isaac." ([Exodus 19](#))

Phrase **house of Jacob** occurs 22x in 22v - Gen. 46:27; Exod. 19:3; Ps. 114:1; Isa. 2:5; Isa. 2:6; Isa. 8:17; Isa. 10:20; Isa. 14:1; Isa. 29:22; Isa. 46:3; Isa. 48:1; Isa. 58:1; Jer. 2:4; Jer. 5:20; Ezek. 20:5; Amos 3:13; Amos 9:8; Obad. 1:17; Obad. 1:18; Mic. 2:7; Mic. 3:9; Lk. 1:33

## MOSES ASCENDING AND DESCENDING THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

The following chart is from Warren Wiersbe and is an attempt to identify the multiple times Moses ascended and descended the Mountain of God. Wiersbe writes "It seems that eight times Moses went up the mountain and met with God and then descended to speak to the people. Some of the ascents and descents are implied because you find Moses addressing either God or the nation." (See context in [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#))

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MOSES' TRIPS UP AND DOWN TO MEET WITH JEHOVAH	
Ascended	Descended
Exodus 19:3	Exodus 19:7 (implied)
Exodus 19:8	Exodus 19:14
Exodus 19:20	Exodus 19:25
Exodus 20:21	Exodus 24:1–3 (implied)
Exodus 24:9, 13, 15, 18	Exodus 32:15
Exodus 32:31	Exodus 33:4 (inferred)
Exodus 33:12 (inferred)	Exodus 34:1–3 (inferred)
Exodus 34:4	Exodus 34:29

**Exodus 19:4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself.**

- **seen** - Ex 7:1-14:31 De 4:9,33-36 29:2 Isa 63:9
- **I bore you** - De 32:11,12 Isa 40:31 Isa 63:9 Rev 12:14
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## ON EAGLES' WINGS

**You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians-** Jehovah begins His declaration with Israel's recent past history. Israel had repeatedly grumbled against Moses and God, and seemed to have quickly forgotten the miraculous deliverance from enslavement by the most powerful nation on earth. Therefore Jehovah first reminds Israel of what they had seen in Egypt, through the ten plagues and the final victory at the Red Sea. Recall that "When Israel saw the great power which the LORD had used against the Egyptians, the people **feared the LORD**, and they **believed in the LORD** and in His servant Moses." (Ex 14:31+). But they had quickly forgotten the LORD in the three months after leaving Egypt!

**THOUGHT** - We are all just like Israel. Three months after God has done something marvelous for us (like He did for them), we can hardly recall it. Sadly we are a forgetful people! We need to develop the habit of recording the works of the LORD in our life so that we might review them when we are walking through the "desert times" in our life! Do you keep a spiritual journal? What prayers did you see the LORD answer for you last year? It is difficult to remember if we have no written record!

I am reminded of the word of the apostle Peter - "Therefore, I will always be ready to **remind** you of these things, even though you already know them, and have been established in the truth which is present with you. 13 I consider it right, as long as I am in this earthly dwelling, to stir you up by way of reminder, 14 knowing that the laying aside of my earthly dwelling is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me. 15 And I will also be diligent that at any time after my departure you will be able to call these things to mind.) (2 Peter 1:12-15<sup>+</sup>)

**COMMENT** - What are **these things**? (2 Pe 1:3-4, cf 1Pe 1:3-11<sup>+</sup>) The **things** before and after this verse. The whole chapter is a list of things that we are never to forget. Though we already know them and are already established in them, unless we continue to exercise our minds and exercise our wills in those things, they will slip from our grasp.

**And how I bore you on eagles' wings** ([kanaph](#)) - As Tony Garland says "This phrase speaks of supernatural assistance given by God in a time of human incapability. It describes God's **deliverance** of Israel from Egypt by the parting of the Red Sea. It also connotes supernatural **protection** and **provision**, patterned after the way in which an eagle, when training a youngster to fly,



pushes it out of the nest but also flies with it and catches it to bear it upwards again when needed."

In his parting words, Moses paints a beautiful picture of God bearing Israel as if on the wings of an eagle (Note in **bold** all the things Jehovah did for Israel)...

"He (YAHWEH) **found** him (ISRAEL) in a desert land (EGYPT), And in the howling waste of a wilderness; He **encircled** him, He **cared** for him, He **guarded** him as the pupil of His eye. Like an eagle that stirs up its nest, that hovers over its young, He spread His wings and **caught** them (SEE GARLAND'S COMMENT ABOVE), He **carried** them on His pinions. The LORD alone **guided** him, and there was no foreign god with Him. (Dt 32:10-12)

**Comment** - As **Walter Kaiser** says in Deuteronomy 32 we see the "loving compassion, protection, strength, and watchfulness of God is compared with the majestic bird's attributes."

**Warren Wiersbe** - The eagle is identified with Israel not only in the matter of their deliverance from Egypt (Ex. 19:4) and their maturity (Deut. 32:11–12), but also with reference to their release from Babylonian Captivity (Isa. 40:31) and their future safety during the time of Jacob's trouble described in Revelation 6–19 (Rev 12:13–14+). What do eagles teach us about the life of maturity? At a certain stage in the development of their young, the parent eagles break up the comfortable nest and force the eaglets to fly. The young birds may not be anxious to leave the security of the nest, but they must learn to fly if they're going to fulfill their purposes in life. The adult birds stay near the fledglings and, if they fall, carry them on their strong wings until the young birds learn how to use their wings, ride the air currents, and enjoy the abilities God gave them. The eaglets illustrate three aspects of freedom: freedom from (they are out of the nest, which to us is redemption); freedom in (they are at home in the air, which to us is maturity), and freedom to (they can fulfill their purpose in life, which to us is ministry). True freedom means that we're delivered from doing the bad, we're able to do the good, and we're accomplishing God's will on the earth. (See context in [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary](#))

**TWOT** - The superb protection and care of the LORD for Israel is appropriately likened to that of a neshet (Exo 19:4-6; Deut 32:11-13). Their nests are built on inaccessible ledges with great skill, and the parent bird guards it with great ferocity sometimes by using its talons and beak. It also takes care of its young by shielding the nestlings from too much sun and warming them when a cold wind blows, and feeding them until they are large enough to fly. Then the parent stirs up the nest and lures the nestlings out of it for their first flight. Sometimes the adult birds hover over them and flutter encouragingly around them. When the poet, however, speaks of the neshet beating the young, he is speaking phenomenologically, for the fledglings only appear to be carried at times on a parent's wings but there is no reliable report of any bird actually flying with a smaller bird on its back. (See online [TWOT](#))

**Guzik** has an interesting comment that "It is said that an eagle does not carry her young in her claws like other birds; the young eagles attach themselves to the back of the mother eagle and are protected as they are carried. Any arrow from a hunter must pass through the mother eagle before it could touch the young eagle on her back." ([Exodus 19](#))

This is an interesting description as we know there is coming a future day when Satan will attempt to kill all Jews but God will once again swoop down like an eagle to rescue Israel even as He did when the Egyptians sought to destroy them:

And when the dragon (SATAN) saw that he was thrown down to the earth (MIDPOINT OF THE 7 YEAR TRIBULATION), he persecuted the woman (ISRAEL) who gave birth to the male child (THE MESSIAH). 14 But the **two wings of the great eagle** were given to the woman (ISRAEL), so that she could fly into the wilderness to her place, where she was nourished for a time and times and half a time (1260 DAYS = Rev. 12:6+, 42 MONTHS = Rev 13:5+, 3.5 YEARS = LAST HALF OF TRIBULATION, [THE 70TH WEEK OF DANIEL](#) = TIME OF JACOB'S TROUBLE), from the presence of the serpent. (Rev 12:13-14+)

**Tony Garland** explains - The **woman** will be given supernatural assistance in her flight as well as supernatural protection and provision en route and upon arrival at her destination. Her strength shall be renewed so that she will not succumb to natural weariness (Isa. 40:31+). Supernatural intervention had protected the [Church](#) from the entire "**hour of trial which shall come upon the whole world**" (Rev. 3:10+) (ED: AKA [THE RAPTURE](#)). Here, supernatural intervention protects the woman in the midst of the last half of the hour when "the LORD comes out of His place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity" (Isa. 26:20-21 cf. Zeph. 2:1-3)....**On the "the wilderness to her place"** - It is **her place**: indicating a specific location set aside for her protection. It had been previously prepared by God. She will reside there during the last half of [The 70th Week of Daniel](#).

**And brought you to Myself** - This is a picture of amazing grace (undeserved favor) and tender compassion to a people who had been grumbling and quarreling off and on for almost 3 months! Here I cannot help but see the phrase **brought you to Myself** as picturing Jehovah like a loving Husband drawing His wife in His arms. That may be a bit poetic but I think there is some element of truth for we know that in the Old Testament God considers Israel to be His "wife." In the context of God giving Israel a prophetic promise of the New Covenant, He says it will not be "like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (Covenant He cut with them at Mt Sinai), My covenant which they broke, although I was a **husband** to them," declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 31:32+) In Isaiah 54:5 Jehovah declares "**your (ISRAEL) husband is your Maker**, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth."

**THOUGHT** - The verb **brought** ([bo](#)) is used over 2000x in the OT, but there is a beautiful use by Solomon which seems to parallel somewhat with Jehovah bringing Israel to Himself. Solomon quotes the young Shulamite woman who declares of her beloved - "He has **brought** ([bo](#)) me to his banquet hall, and **his banner over me is love**." (Song 2:4+). Does this not remind us of Yahweh's bringing Israel to Himself? And even more exciting for us NT believers, is this not what our Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ has done for His church, for "Christ also loved (HIS BRIDE) the church and gave Himself up for her." (Eph 5:25+) And in Revelation 7:15+ we read that tribulation believers (who I believe will be joined by all believers in white robes) will be "before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne **will spread His tabernacle over them**."

**NET Note** - The language here is the language of a bridegroom bringing the bride to the chamber. This may be a deliberate allusion to another metaphor for the covenant relationship. . ([Notes](#))

**Rob Salvato explains eagle's wings figure of speech:** Here is this idea that is seen again of the Lord bearing up His People on Eagles wings – seen throughout the Bible – what is this about. It is somewhat confusing to us but would make perfect sense to these people camping in this region, for eagles were prevalent. Eagles have an interesting way of nurturing and training their young. When the mother eagle builds the nest, it is on the side of a cliff. She gathers several somewhat sharp sticks pointing in towards the nest. When the little baby eaglet is born the mother eagle brings it food ( Breakfast lunch & Dinner) and the little eaglet lives there in the comforts of the nest until it gets so big that the sticks begin to poke at it. Suddenly that nest is not quite as comfortable as it once was – but there is a reason for that – The mother eagle doesn't want that little eaglet living in the nest the rest of his life. So then, the mother eagle does a most Interesting thing. She stirs up the nest which causes the baby eaglet to fall out... falling... falling and wondering "What is up with my Mom?" (Call & report her to CPS!) But as the Eaglet falls 100 ft or so, suddenly the mother eagle swoops down, catches the baby eaglet and bears it up on her wings back to nest -safe and comfortable again – accept for the poking sticks! And then the mother repeats this ritual -- over and over until the eaglet spreads out his wings catches a wind draft & begins to fly (soar)! This is the Reason why God does this at times – He stirs up the nest because He wants us to learn what it means to sore how to fly – That is what the Lord was doing with Israel through the previous stops for in each situation He was bearing them up and allowing them to fall a little further so that they would learn to do what was promised in Isaiah 40:31. Now waiting **on** the Lord is different from waiting **for** the Lord – wait – **for** in Acts 1:4 which was fulfilled in Acts 2 at Pentecost, not doing anything until the promise was fulfilled (Acts 1:4). But waiting **on** the Lord is actually an active process, walking in (faith/obedience to) the truths that we know and walking in the Promises that have been declared (2Pe 1:4). God wanted Israel to keep walking and moving on the Journey because He wanted them believing that He was going to do just what He said He would accomplish. So the Lord tells Moses to remind Israel of His Love and How He bore them up on Eagles Wings (On My Back) (Modified from [Exodus 19:1-4](#))

**Woodrow Kroll:** A friend told me that when he was a young boy, he lived on one side of his small town and the school he attended was located on the other. Bus transportation was limited to the students who lived out of the city limit, so he had to walk many blocks both to and from school. "After a tiring day at school," my friend explained, "I would sometimes fantasize on my way home of having wings that would lift me over all the houses and trees and deposit me directly on my front porch."

It was wings like these that God figuratively used to bring Israel to Himself. In spite of the obstruction of Pharaoh and his army, through the barrier of a seemingly uncrossable sea, over the hurdle of a dry and barren wilderness, God lifted His people up and brought them safely to their destination. No obstacle was allowed to stand between Him and those He loved.

Are you facing obstacles today that threaten your joy as a Christian? Maybe these obstacles are health problems, financial struggles or family relationships. Perhaps you are frustrated by circumstances beyond your control. Well, don't fantasize as my friend did. Instead, look to God's mighty wings to lift you up and carry you to where He wants you to be. Remember the promise of Isaiah 40:31: "But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Claim that promise today. (Back to the Bible)

**Dave Guzik:** God's love and care was shown for Israel already, as He bore you on eagle's wings. It is said that an eagle does not



carry her young in her claws like other birds; the young eagles attach themselves to the back of the mother eagle and are protected as they are carried. Any arrow from a hunter must pass through the mother eagle before it could touch the young eagle on her back. The deliverance (I bore you on eagles' wings) was for fellowship (brought you to Myself); God didn't deliver Israel so they could "do their own thing," but so they could be God's people. God intended for Israel to be a special treasure unto Him; a people with a unique place in God's great plan, a people of great value and concern to God. ([Exodus 19](#))

**Scott Grant:** Then the Lord bore the people on eagle's wings. This is a reference to the people's three-month journey from Egypt to Mount Sinai. The Lord led them away from a battle they were not ready for, He crushed Pharaoh's army, He provided them with food and water, He gave them victory over the Amalekites and He brought Jethro to give them important instructions. It's been an incredible trip, one they never could have navigated on their own.

Thus, the picture of an eagle carrying her chick is apt - and beautiful. An eaglet is helpless. It has no ability to provide for itself or get from one place to another. Like an eaglet, Israel was helpless. It would have perished in the wilderness without the Lord. But the Lord, like a strong eagle caring for its helpless chick, led and provided for His people for three months. Like the eagle who tenaciously clings to her chick as she soars through the air, the Lord tenaciously clung to His people. He did not drop them; He could not drop them. In so many words, the Lord is telling the people, "I poured out my heart for you."

If this were all He did, it would be enough to send their spirits soaring. But the journey had a purpose. It was so that He might bring them to Himself. The image here shifts from the Lord as an eagle to the Lord as a king, as we will see in Ex 19:5, 6. The Lord, like an eagle, carries them through the wilderness and deposits them at the foot of Mount Sinai, which is serving as His throne. Then at the mountain, He meets them. ([The Lord's treasure chest](#))

#### Related Resources:

- Play Josh Groban's [On Eagle's Wings](#) (even though primarily based on Psalm 91, "On Eagles' Wings", it's still worth listening to!)
- [Play — "You Are My Hiding Place/As A Deer"](#)
- [Or the version by Selah - You Are My Hiding Place](#)

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#### Our Main Calling

I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself. —Exodus 19:4

Today's Scripture: Exodus 19:1-8

In our performance-driven world, Christians often assume that God's main calling on their lives is to work for Him. But working for Christ should be secondary to our devotion to Him. As Oswald Chambers warned: "The greatest competitor of devotion to Jesus is service for Him."

I encountered this subtle "competitor" soon after the Lord led our family to start a ministry among street addicts. We loved these searching youths, and I devoted my entire attention and energy to helping them experience Christ's saving power.

Then Derek, one of our seekers, ran back to London and to drugs. This loss shocked me into realizing that I had become so absorbed in our work that my devotion to Jesus had lost its importance. God used my distresses as "eagles' wings" to carry me away from my worship of work and back to my first love—Jesus!

God did the same for Israel in Moses' day. He delivered the Hebrews from an impossible taskmaster and brought them on "eagles' wings" back to Himself (Exodus 19:4).

Praise God, Derek soon returned. Meanwhile, I had learned a lesson that's vital for all followers of Jesus. Our God-given work must never compete with our main calling: devotion to Christ. By: Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Striving for souls, I loved the work too well;  
Then disappointments came; I could not tell  
The reason, till He said, "I am thine all;  
Unto Myself I call."  
—Cowman

Many Christians are strong on service but weak on worship.

**Wings** (03671) (**kanaph**) is a noun used to describe a wing, a skirt or corner of a garment. **Kanaph** conveys the basic meaning of to cover or to describe an attached extremity. The first use of **kanaph** describes Jehovah's creation of "every **winged** bird." (Ge 1:21, cp Ge 7:14, Ex 19:4, Isa 8:8). It is used in Scripture as a beautiful illustration of several facets of Jehovah's care for His children as used in Ex 19:4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' **wings**, and brought you to Myself." **Kanaph** is used idiomatically meaning to spread one's wings over another which means to take to wife (Ezek. 16:8). Other idiomatic uses are of an attacking king (Isa. 18:1; Jer. 48:40; 49:22; Ezek. 17:3, 7). Malachi uses **kanaph** to describe the healing wings of God's Sun of righteousness (Mal. 4:2). Jehovah is often pictured as providing a shadow of protection for His people under His wings (Ru 2:12; Ps. 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4).

**Kanaph** is used of wings of cherubim (1Ki. 6:24); seraphs (Isa. 6:2); visionary beings like women (Zech. 5:9); insects (Isa. 18:1). **Kanaph** takes on the sense of the outer edges (garment - 1Sa 15:27), corners, or extremities of something, living or inanimate, and metaphorically for example refers to the end(s) of the world (Isa. 11:12; 24:16; Ezek. 7:2).

**Vine - Kanaph** has maintained its meaning in rabbinic and modern Hebrew. The word "wing" appears 109 times in the Hebrew Old Testament, with particular concentration in the description of the 2 cherubim of wood in Solomon's temple and in Ezekiel's vision of the "creatures," or cherubim. Elsewhere the Bible speaks of "wings" of the cherubim (Ex. 25:20; 37:9) and of the seraphim (Isa. 6:2). As an extension of the usage "**wing**," **kanaph** signifies "**extremity**." The seam or lower part of a garment was known as the **kanaph**. In the "**fold**" (**kanaph**) of the garment one could carry things (Hag 2:12). Saul tore the **edge** (**kanaph**) of Samuel's robe (1Sa 15:27). The **extremity** of a land on the world was also known by the word **kanaph** and is translated by "**corner**" (or **ends**) in English (Isa. 11:12; cf. Job 37:3; 38:13; Ezek. 7:2). In the metaphorical use God is said to protect His people as a bird protects her young with her "**wings**" (Dt. 32:11). The psalmist expressed God's care and protection as a "shadow" of the "wings" (Ps. 17:8; cf. 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4). In keeping with this usage Malachi looked forward to a new age, when "the Sun of righteousness [will] arise with healing in his wings." (Mal 4:2). When the nations are compared to birds, the association is that of terror and conquest. This is best expressed in Ezekiel's parable of the two eagles and the vine (Ezek. 17:3-4). The believer is enjoined to seek refuge with God when adversity strikes him or adversaries surround him (Ps. 91:4). The Septuagint gives the following translations: pteruks ("wing; pinion"); pterugion ("end; edge"); and pteroros ("feathered; winged")

**Kanaph** - 85v in the OT (Are you in need of Word of encouragement from Jehovah? Who isn't? Then set aside a few minutes and meditate on the uses of "wing" in the Psalms) - The **NAS** renders **kanaph** as bird(1), corner(1), corners(4), covering(1), each other(1), edge(5), edges(1), ends(3), fold(2), garment(1), kind(3), skirt(3), skirts(1), sorts(1), wing(14), winged(5), wings(59), wingspan(1). Ge 1:21; 7:14; Ex 19:4; 25:20; 37:9; Lv. 1:17; Num. 15:38; Dt. 4:17; 22:12, 30; 27:20; 32:11; Ruth 2:12; 3:9; 1Sa 15:27; 24:4f, 11; 2Sa 22:11; 1Ki 6:24, 27; 8:6, 7; 2Chr 3:11, 12, 13; 5:7, 8; Job 37:3; 38:13; 39:13, 26; Ps 17:8; 18:10; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 68:13; 78:27; 91:4; 104:3; 139:9; 148:10; Pr 1:17; 23:5; Eccl 10:20; Isa. 6:2; 8:8; 10:14; 11:12; 18:1; 24:16; Je 2:34; 48:40; 49:22; Ezek 1:6, 8, 9, 11, 23, 24, 25; 3:13; 5:3; 7:2; 10:5, 8, 12, 16, 19, 21; 11:22; 16:8; 17:3, 7, 23; 39:4, 17; Da 9:27; Ho 4:19; Hag 2:12; Zec 5:9; 8:23; Mal 4:2

(Ps 17:8) Keep me as the apple of the eye; Hide me in the shadow of Thy **wings**, (What a great prayer to pray!)

(Ps 18:10) And He rode upon a cherub and flew; And He sped upon the **wings** of the wind.

(Ps 36:7) How precious is Thy lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Thy **wings**.

(Ps 57:1) For the choir director; set to Al-tashheth. A Mikhtam of David, when he fled from Saul, in the cave. Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in Thee; And in the shadow of Thy **wings** I will take refuge, Until destruction passes by.

(Ps 61:4) Let me dwell in Thy tent forever; Let me take refuge in the shelter of Thy **wings**. Selah.

(Ps 63:7) For Thou hast been my help, And in the shadow of Thy **wings** I sing for joy.

(Ps 68:13) When you lie down among the sheepfolds, You are like the **wings** of a dove covered with silver, And its pinions with glistening gold.

(Ps 78:27) When He rained meat upon them like the dust, Even **winged** fowl like the sand of the seas,

(Ps 91:4) He will cover you with His pinions, And under His **wings** you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark.

(Ps 104:3) He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He

walks upon the **wings** of the wind;

(Ps 139:9) If I take the **wings** of the dawn, If I dwell in the remotest part of the sea,

(Ps 148:10) Beasts and all cattle; Creeping things and **winged** fowl;

(Mal 4:2-note) "But (Note the dramatic contrast in Mal 4:1!) for you who fear My name the Sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its (His) **wings**; and you will go forth and skip about like calves from the stall.

The **TWOT** explains that...

Only ten of the occurrences of this noun literally refer to a bird. Of these ten references, in at least eight "wing" is used to qualify "bird" (cf. Ge 1:21 "every fowl of a wing").

**Many more references use the term figuratively, most of these referring to God and most having a positive connotation.**

The deliverance from Egypt is twice described in terms of God bearing His people upon eagle's wings (Ex 19:4; Dt 32:11). But mostly he is seen as sheltering his own beneath his wings as a hen does her chicks (Ps 17:8; Ru 2:12).

Commonly some statement of God's proven trustworthiness is related to the statement of an intent to seek shelter under His **wings** (Ps 36:7).

Malachi 4:2 speaks of the **Sun of righteousness** (Messiah Jer 23:6) rising with healing in his **wings**. Evidently this is an appropriation of the winged sun disc symbol which is used throughout the ancient near east as a manifestation of the deity's protection. The appropriation of this ancient theme in a prediction of Christ is very significant. He alone is the true manifestation of God's benevolence and he comes to heal (not merely protect) those who cast away their pride through fear of God.

However those **wings** which offer deliverance and security to those who fear him, can bring terror to those who defy him.

Jer 48:40; 49:22 tell that God will spread his eagle's wings over Moab and destroy them, just as an eagle may swoop upon a hapless rabbit. In Isa 8:8 Assyria is the eagle overshadowing Judah (cf. also Ezek 17:3, 7). (See online [TWOT](#))

In **Deuteronomy 32:11+** we read "Like an eagle (simile) that stirs up its nest, that hovers over its young, He (Jehovah) spread His wings and caught them, He carried them on His pinions.

**Keil & Delitzsch** (Commentary on the Old Testament) has this note...Under the figure of an eagle, which teaches its young to fly, and in doing so protects them from injury with watchful affection, Moses describes the care with which the Lord came to the relief of His people in their helplessness, and assisted them to develop their strength. This figure no doubt refers more especially to the protection and assistance of God experienced by Israel in its journey through the Arabian desert; but it must not be restricted to this. It embraces both the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt by the outstretched arm of the Lord, as we may see from a comparison with Ex 19:4, where the Lord is said to have brought His people out of Egypt upon eagles' wings, and also the introduction into Canaan, when the Lord drove the Canaanites out from before them and destroyed them.... It is rendered correctly by the Vulgate, *provocans ad volandum pullos suos*; and freely by Luther, "bringeth out its young." "Soareth over its young:" namely, in order that, when they were attempting to fly, if any were in danger of falling through exhaustion, it might take them at once upon its powerful wings, and preserve them from harm.... The point of comparison between the conduct of God towards Jacob and the acts of an eagle towards its young, is the loving care with which He trained Israel to independence. The carrying of Israel upon the eagle's wings of divine love and omnipotence was manifested in the most glorious way in the guidance of it by the pillar of cloud and fire (Shekinah glory cloud), though it was not so exclusively in this visible vehicle of the gracious presence of God as that the comparison can be restricted to this phenomenon alone. Luther's interpretation is more correct than this--" Moses points out in these words, how He fostered them in the desert, bore with their manners, tried them and blessed them that they might learn to fly, i.e., to trust in Him,"-- except that the explanation of the expression "to fly" is narrowed too much.

The **psalmist** records...

He (Shaddai in Ps 91:1, Jehovah and **Elohim** in Ps 91:2) will cover you with His pinions, And under His **wings** you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. (Ps 91:4, read Ps 91:1, 2, 3 for context)

**Comment:** In loving condescension, God likens Himself to a mother hen sheltering her young from the hawks of the sky and the snares of the field.(Mt 23:37). By natural instinct she not only protects them, but calls them under that protection when she sees them in danger, not only keeps them safe, but cherishes them and keeps them warm. (cp Ru 2:12). Yahweh's care is both tender and sufficient because he is faithful, i.e., "true" to his people.

**Spurgeon comments:** He shall cover thee with thy feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. A wonderful expression! Had it been invented by an uninspired man it would have verged upon blasphemy, for who should dare to apply such words to the Infinite Jehovah? But as He himself authorized, yea, dictated the language, we have here a transcendent condescension, such as it becomes us to admire and adore. Doth the Lord speak of His feathers, as though He likened Himself to a bird? Who will not see herein a matchless love, a divine tenderness, which should both woo and win our confidence? Even as a hen covers her chickens so does the LORD protect the souls which dwell in Him; let us cower down beneath Him for comfort and for safety.

#### Under His Wings

Under His wings I am safely abiding,  
Though the night deepens and tempests are wild,  
Still I can trust Him; I know He will keep me,  
He has redeemed me, and I am His child.

#### **Refrain**

*Under His wings, under His wings,  
Who from His love can sever?  
Under His wings my soul shall abide,  
Safely abide forever.*

Under His wings, what a refuge in sorrow!  
How the heart yearningly turns to His rest!  
Often when earth has no balm for my healing,  
There I find comfort, and there I am blessed.

Under His wings, oh, what precious enjoyment!  
There will I hide till life's trials are o'er;  
Sheltered, protected, no evil can harm me,  
Resting in Jesus, I'm safe evermore.  
by W O Cushing

Through the prophet Isaiah God encourages wayward Israel that

"Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait for the LORD will gain new (literally exchange their strength for His strength!) strength. They will mount up with **wings** like eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not become weary." (Isa 40:31)

I rest beneath the Almighty's shade,  
My griefs expire, my troubles cease;  
Thou, Lord, on Whom my soul is stayed,  
Wilt keep me still in perfect peace.  
- Charles Wesley (cp Is 26:3)

## THE EAGLE

A bird of prey Job 9:26; Mat 24:28

Unclean Lev 11:13; Deu 14:12

Different kinds of Lev 11:13,18; Eze 17:3

Called the eagle of the heavens Lam 4:19

## DESCRIBED AS

- - Long-sighted Job 39:29
- - Swift 2Sa 1:23
- - Soaring to heaven Pro 23:5

Strength of its feathers alluded to Dan 4:33

Greatness of its wings alluded to Eze 17:3,7

Peculiarity of its flight alluded to Pro 30:19

Delights in the lofty cedars Eze 17:3,4

Dwells in the high rocks Job 39:27,28

Feeds her young with blood Job 39:29,30

## ILLUSTRATIVE

- - Of wisdom and zeal of God's ministers Eze 1:10; Rev 4:7
- - Of great and powerful kings Eze 17:3; Hos 8:1
- - (Renewed strength and beauty of,) of the renewal of saints Psa 103:5
- - (Mode of teaching her young to fly,) of God's care of his people Exo 19:4; Deu 32:11
- - (Wings of,) of protection afforded to the church Rev 12:14
- - (Upward flight of,) of the saint's rapid progress toward heaven Isa 40:31
- - (Swiftness of,) of the melting away of riches Pro 23:5
- - (Swiftness of,) of the swiftness of hostile armies Deu 28:49; Jer 4:13; 48:40; Lam 4:19
- - (Height and security of its dwelling,) of the fancied but fatal security of the wicked Jer 49:16; Oba 1:4
- - (Increase baldness of, in the moulting season,) of calamities Mic 1:16
- - (Hasting to the prey,) of the swiftness of man's days Job 9:26

Was the standard of the Roman armies Mat 24:15,28

**Exodus 19:5 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;**

NET Exodus 19:5 And now, if you will diligently listen to me and keep my covenant, then **you will be my special possession** out of all the nations, for all the earth is mine,

NLT Exodus 19:5 Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, **you will be my own special treasure** from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me.

ESV Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, **you shall be my treasured possession** among all peoples, for all the earth is mine;

LXE Exodus 19:5 And now if ye will indeed hear my voice, and keep my covenant, **ye shall be to me a peculiar people** above all nations; for the whole earth is mine.

KJV Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then **ye shall be a peculiar treasure** unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:

NIV Exodus 19:5 Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you **will be my treasured possession**. Although the whole earth is mine,

ASV Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then **ye shall be mine own possession** from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine:

CSB Exodus 19:5 Now if you will listen to Me and carefully keep My covenant, you will be **My own possession** out of all the peoples, although all the earth is Mine,

NKJ Exodus 19:5 `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.

NRS Exodus 19:5 Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be **my treasured possession** out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine,

YLT Exodus 19:5 'And now, if ye really hearken to My voice, then ye have kept My covenant, and be **unto Me a peculiar treasure** more than all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;

NAB Exodus 19:5 Therefore, if you hearken to my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be **my special possession**, dearer to me than all other people, though all the earth is mine.

NJB Exodus 19:5 So now, if you are really prepared to obey me and keep my covenant, you, out of all peoples, shall be **my personal possession**, for the whole world is mine.

GWN Exodus 19:5 If you carefully obey me and are faithful to the terms of my promise, then out of all the nations **you will be my own special possession**, even though the whole world is mine.

BBE Exodus 19:5 If now you will truly give ear to my voice and keep my agreement, **you will be my special property** out of all the peoples: for all the earth is mine:

- **if you will indeed obey My voice** - Ex 23:22 24:7 De 11:27 28:1 Jos 24:24 1Sa 15:22 Isa 1:19 Jer 7:23 11:4-7 Heb 11:8
- **keep My covenant** - De 5:2 Ps 25:10 103:17,18 Isa 56:4 Jer 31:31-33
- **My own possession** - Dt 4:20 Dt 7:6 Dt 14:2,21 Dt 26:18 Dt 32:8,9 1Ki 8:53 Ps 135:4 Song 8:12 Isa 41:8 43:1 Jer 10:16 Mal 3:17 Titus 2:14
- **all the earth** - Ex 9:29 De 10:14 Job 41:11 Ps 24:1 Ps 50:11 Da 4:34,35 1Co 10:26,28
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Titus 2:14+ (Christ Jesus) Who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.

### JEHOVAH DESCRIBES THE BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE

Notice this is a conditional promise = "If...then" and sadly, for most of Israel's history she failed to keep the "if"! That said, remember that Jehovah has always (and will always in the future have) a believing [Remnant of Israel](#).

**Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant** - Now Jehovah gives a prophetic picture of the potential for the nation of Israel. This is a preview of coming attractions for Jehovah would soon reveal His obligations to Israel. Note **obey** and **keep** are relatively synonymous for they both speak of obedience. Sadly the preview was not "watched" by most of the nation of Israel and it will not be until the last days that this prophecies of Israel as Jehovah's possession and priests will be consummated (see discussion below).

**NET Note on obey My voice** - Literally "listen to my voice." The construction uses the imperfect tense in the conditional clause, preceded by the infinitive absolute from the same verb. The idiom "listen to the voice of" implies obedience, not just mental awareness of sound.. ([Notes](#))

**Covenant** ([01285](#)) ([berit/berith/beriyth](#))

**Wiersbe** writes that "That the Jews are God's chosen people doesn't mean they're better than any other nation, only that they're different, set apart by the Lord for His special work. Romans 9:4-5<sup>+</sup> reminds us of some of the spiritual treasures God has given Israel that they might be a blessing to the whole world, for "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22+). Because Israel has these treasures and privileges, they also have a greater responsibility to love and obey God; for "from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked" (Luke 12:48NIV+). (See context in [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#))

**Then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples** - I love the old King James' translation of **'a peculiar treasure.'** This incalculable blessing of being Jehovah's **own possession** is conditioned on their obedience. **Among all the peoples** speaks of Israel having been chosen by God (read Dt 7:7,8+), His election of them as His holy nation, through which He would reach the



entire world, indeed **all the peoples**.

This concept of Israel as God's special **possession** is repeatedly emphasized by Moses to the next generation of Israel who was preparing to enter the promised land. They would soon be confronted by many "gods" with a little "g" who would seek to entice them to commit spiritual harlotry and thus the reason for the many reminders of who they were and Whose they were, to Whom they belonged.

Deuteronomy 4:20+ "But the LORD has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, **to be a people for His own possession**, as today.

Deuteronomy 7:6+ "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you **to be a people for His own possession** out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 14:2+ "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you **to be a people for His own possession** out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 14:21+ "You shall not eat anything which dies of itself. You may give it to the alien who is in your town, so that he may eat it, or you may sell it to a foreigner, for **you are a holy people to the LORD your God**. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

Deuteronomy 26:18+ "The LORD has today declared you to **be His people, a treasured possession** as He promised you, and that you should keep all His commandments;

Deuteronomy 32:8; 9+ "When the Most High gave the nations their inheritance, When He separated the sons of man, He set the boundaries of the peoples According to the number of the sons of Israel. 9 "For **the LORD'S portion is His people**; Jacob is the allotment of His inheritance.

**THOUGHT** - Is that not true for us today? Believers are the Bride of Christ, His very own possession (Titus 2:14<sup>+</sup> 1 Pe 2:9<sup>+</sup>, Ro 14:7-9<sup>+</sup>, 2Co 5:15<sup>+</sup>). We are not our own but have been bought with a price (Christ' precious blood - 1 Pe 1:18,19<sup>+</sup>) and given a holy purpose (to glorify God with our bodies)(1 Cor 6:19-20<sup>+</sup>) and yet the so-called "gods" of this fallen world continually seek to tempt us to be unfaithful to our Husband, the Lord Jesus Christ (cf 2 Cor 11:2)! Wuest puts it plainly "Christians are the private possession of God." These truths beg the question - Do my thoughts, words and deeds over the last 24 hours support Wuest's description of "Who I am" and "Whose I am" (or "To Whom I belong?")? This has always been God's desire from the beginning that His chosen people be a Holy People, His very own peculiar and special possession.

**Possession** (05459)(**segullah**) is related to an Akkadian cognate, sikiltu, means "private possessions." Segullah refers to a treasured possession, that which is valued personal property, that which is owned by someone and in which the owner has special affection or holds special value (Ex 19:5; Dt 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; Ps 135:4; Mal 3:17). Segullah most frequently occurs in reference to something God chooses, here referring to Israel, who God choose from all the nations of the world (Ex 19:5, Dt 7:6, 14:2). Segullah speaks of personal wealth in 1Chr 29:3, Eccl 2:8.

The Septuagint translates **possession** with the noun **periousios** which describes the property one owned as a rich and distinctive possession, a possession which is of very special status. **Periousios** also means possessed over and above, that is, specially selected for one's own; exempt from ordinary laws of distribution. Hence correctly represented by **peculiar**, derived from **peculium**, a private purse, a special acquisition of a member of a family distinct from the property administered for the good of the whole family.

**Segullah** - 8x in 8v - possession(5), treasure(2), treasured possession(1).

Exodus 19:5 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own **possession** (Lxx = **periousios**) among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine;

Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own **possession** (Lxx = **periousios**) out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 14:2 "For you are a holy people to the LORD your God, and the LORD has chosen you to be a people for His own **possession** (Lxx = **periousios**) out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 26:18 "The LORD has today declared you to be His people, a **treasured possession** (Lxx = **periousios**), as He promised you, and that you should keep all His

commandments;

1 Chronicles 29:3 "Moreover, in my delight in the house of my God, the **treasure** I have of gold and silver, I give to the house of my God, over and above all that I have already provided for the holy temple,

Psalms 135:4 For the LORD has chosen Jacob for Himself, Israel for His own **possession**.

Ecclesiastes 2:8 Also, I collected for myself silver and gold and the **treasure** of kings and provinces. I provided for myself male and female singers and the pleasures of men—many concubines.

Malachi 3:17+ (A FUTURE PROPHECY) "They will be Mine," (LANGUAGE OF COVENANT - Jer 31:31-34+) says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare My own **possession**, and I will spare ([chamal](#)) them as a man spares his own son who serves him."

**Comment - My own possession** - Remember that in context God is speaking to Israel not the church, so it is Israel who will be His "**own possession**" or His own **jewels** (or "peculiar treasure" in the KJV), on that day when He spares them (In the Time of Jacob's Trouble; Read Zechariah 12:10-14+, Zechariah 13:1+, Zechariah 13:8-9+). Israel deserved annihilation, but because of His mercy (not giving them what they deserved) and grace (giving them what they did not observe), he will spare a [righteous remnant](#) of Israel (read "all Israel will be saved." = Ro 11:25-29+)

**For all the earth is Mine** - As Moses writes in Dt 10:14 "**Behold**, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the highest heavens, the earth and all that is in it." All the nations of the earth belong to the Lord, because He's their maker and their sustainer (Ex 9:29+; Ps 24:1; Ps 50:12; Acts 14:15–17+; Acts 17:24–28+). But what is Yahweh explaining? He owns everything. But His special **possession** was to be Israel! Jehovah has chosen Israel to be His own special, peculiar, treasured possession not because of Israel's merits, because they had none (Dt. 26:5–11), but because of God's love and sovereign grace (Dt 7:6–8), the same reason He has chosen you dear believer in Christ! Like Israel we have nothing to boast about, but let him who boasts, boast in the LORD (1 Cor 1:31). Israel's assignment from God involved intermediation. They were not to be a people unto themselves, enjoying their special relationship with God and paying no attention to the rest of the world. Rather, they were to represent him to the rest of the world and attempt to bring the rest of the world to him.

**Stuart comments** - Several important theological implications reside within the sanctions promises. First, although God is Creator and Father of all people and people groups, he announced here his intention to create for himself a particular people, a "treasured possession." This represents the separation of his chosen people from the general world population, or, stated in terms of the overall biblical plan of redemption, the beginning of the outworking of his intention to bring close to himself a people that will join him for all eternity as adopted members of his family. Second, full monotheism is expressed in the words "although the whole earth is mine." This is one of the clearest early statements of monotheism in the Bible and certainly must have represented a sudden education for many of those present to hear Moses first relay these words to the people, since so many of them had grown up polytheists. (NAC-Ex)

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### **A peculiar Treasure unto Me. - F B Meyer**

Our Savior told of a man who, in plowing his field, heard his plough-share chink against buried treasure, and hastened to sell all that he had in order to buy it. In speaking thus, He pictured Himself as well as us. He found us before we found Him. The treasure is his people, in purchase whom He gave up all that He had, even to his throne (Matthew 13:44). "Ye are an elect race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God's own possession, that ye may show forth the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9, R.V.).

Where his treasure is, there is a man's heart. If it is in ships on the treacherous sea, he tosses restlessly on his bed, solicitous for its safety. If it is in fabrics, he guards against moth; if in metal, against rust and thieves. And is Christ less careful for his own? Does He not guard with equal care against all that would deteriorate our value in his esteem? Need we fear the thief? Will not the Only-begotten keep us, so that the evil one shall not touch us (Matthew 6:19–20)?

God's treasure is his for ever. "They shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in the day that I do make, even a peculiar treasure." He will hold his own, as men cling to their treasure, binding it about their loins, in a storm at sea (Malachi 3:17, R.V.).

Let us mind the conditions: to obey his voice, and keep his covenant; then on eagles' wings He will bring us to Himself. Compliance with these is blessed in its results. God regards us with the ecstasy of a love that rejoices over us with singing; and counts on us as a mother on her child, a miser on his gold.

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### **God's Special Treasure**

But you are . . . God's special possession. 1 Peter 2:9

Today's Scripture & Insight: 1 Peter 2:4–10

Imagine a vast throne room. Seated on the throne is a great king. He's surrounded by all manner of attendants, each on their best behavior. Now imagine a box that sits at the king's feet. From time to time the king reaches down and runs his hands through the contents. And what's in the box? Jewels, gold, and gemstones particular to the king's tastes. This box holds the king's treasures, a collection that brings him great joy. Can you see that image in your mind's eye?

The Hebrew word for this treasure is *segulah*, and it means "special possession." That word is found in such Old Testament Scriptures as Exodus 19:5, Deuteronomy 7:6, and Psalm 135:4, where it refers to the nation of Israel. But that same word picture shows up in the New Testament by way of the pen of Peter the apostle. He's describing the "people of God," those who "have received mercy" (1 Peter 2:10), a collection now beyond the nation of Israel. In other words, he's talking about those who believe in Jesus, both Jew and gentile. And he writes "But you are . . . God's special possession" (v. 9).

Imagine that! The great and powerful King of heaven considers you among His special treasures. He has rescued you from the grip of sin and death. He claims you as His own. The King's voice says, "This one I love. This one is mine." By: John Blase

Can you recall a time when someone genuinely called you "special"? What effect did it have on you? What does it mean for you to know that you're precious to God?

High King of heaven, my identity is found entirely in You, and You call me Your special treasure. I know this isn't because of anything I've done, but because of everything You are. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**Exodus 19:6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel."**

- **a kingdom** - De 33:2-4 Isa 61:6 Ro 12:1 1Pe 2:5,9 Rev 1:6 5:10 20:6
- **and a holy nation** - Lev 11:44,45 19:2 20:24,26 21:7,8,23 De 7:6 26:19 28:9 Isa 62:12 1Co 3:17 1Th 5:27 1Pe 1:15,16
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JEHOVAH'S TWO PURPOSES FOR ISRAEL

**And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests-** This means a **kingdom** that is composed of **priests**. This describes those who belong to Yahweh's **kingdom** as all having a priestly function, all mediating between the men of the other unholy nations and the Holy God. All Yahweh's priests were (are) to manifest His truth and share His blessings with the lost world, that they might come to know Him as Redeemer and King. God chose Israel for this purpose that He might clearly demonstrate to the idolatrous, pagan, godless world of Gentiles that there is but ONE truth and living God and His Name is Jehovah. As we see even in Exodus, Israel failed miserably to fulfill God's purpose for her as priests who would point to Him, for instead they repeatedly were ensnared and enslaved by idolatry of the surrounding Gentile nations. Their idolatry in fact was the main reason Jehovah was forced to bring disciplining judgment on the nation, allowing the fierce Babylonians to destroy the Holy Temple, the Holy City Jerusalem and capture the people that they might experience 70 years of exile in Babylon. Although many modern writers foolishly and falsely believe that Jehovah is through with His treasured possession, Israel, they too will witness God's outpouring of mercy, grace and love on the nation of Israel in the last 3.5 years of this present evil age (Gal 1:4+), when the nation (1/3 of the nation Zech 13:8-9+) will confess Yeshua as their Messiah and Redeemer (Zech 12:10-14+, Zech 13:1+, Ro 11:26-27+, et al). In that glorious future day Isaiah says that the truth of Exodus 19:6 will finally, fully, be fulfilled (Hallelujah!)

"But you (ISRAEL) will be called the priests of the LORD; You will be spoken of as ministers of our God. You will eat the wealth of nations, And in their riches you will boast." (Isaiah 61:6)

**Stuart** - Israel's assignment from God involved intermediation. They were not to be a people unto themselves, enjoying their special relationship with God and paying no attention to the rest of the world. Rather, they were to represent him to the rest of the world and attempt to bring the rest of the world to him. In other words, the challenge to be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" represented the responsibility inherent in the original promise to Abraham in Gen 12:2–3. Priests stand between God and humans to help bring the humans closer to God and to help dispense God's truth, justice, favor, discipline, and holiness to humans. Israel was called to such a function. (NAC-Ex)

**NET Note** - W. C. Kaiser ("Exodus," EBC 2:417) offers four possible renderings of the expression: 1) apposition, viz., "kings, that is, priests; 2) as a construct with a genitive of specification, "royal priesthood"; 3) as a construct with the genitive being the attribute, "priestly kingdom"; and 4) reading with an unexpressed "and"—"kings and priests." He takes the latter view that they were to be kings and priests. However, due to the parallelism of the next description which uses an adjective, this is probably a construct relationship. This kingdom of God will be composed of a priestly people. All the Israelites would be living wholly in God's service and enjoying the right of access to him. And, as priests, they would have the duty of representing God to the nations, following what they perceived to be the duties of priests—proclaiming God's word, interceding for people, and making provision for people to find God through atonement (see Deut 33:9, 10).. ([Notes](#))

**Walter Kaiser** elaborates on position #4 above - The emphasis here is not on the individual but on the whole nation (Ex 19:3, 6); and the expression is more a compound noun than it is construct.... Israel was to be kings and priests to God on behalf of the nations; they were to be mediators of the gospel as missionaries to the nations ("in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," Gen 12:3b,cp Gal 3:16), and they were to be partakers in the present aspects and coming reality of the "kingdom of God."The whole nation was to act as mediators of God's grace to the nations of the earth. (See context in [The Expositor's Bible Commentary](#))

**Alan Cole** has an interesting description that "God's 'particularist' choice of Israel has a wider 'universalist' purpose. (See context in [Exodus: An Introduction and Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - Today **EVERY BELIEVER** in Jesus Christ is a **PRIEST TO GOD**. Priests are not priests of God because they belong to a specific denomination but because they belong to Jehovah by grace through faith in Jesus Christ!

The apostle Peter wrote

"you also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a **holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ (OUR GREAT HIGH PRIEST - Heb 3:1, 10:21). (1 Peter 2:5+)

"A CHOSEN RACE, **A royal PRIESTHOOD**, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that (TERM OF PURPOSE = HERE IS OUR PURPOSE!) you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9+)

John writes that

"Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the firstborn of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him Who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood and He has made us to be a kingdom, **priests** to His God and Father, to Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen." (Revelation 1:5-6+).

"You have made them to be a kingdom and **priests** to our God; and they will reign upon the earth." (Rev 5:10+)

Of course for believers, all of who are now priests, one of the greatest blessings is that we all now can have bold, free access to the throne of grace (Heb 4:16+, cf Ro 5:2+).

In Exodus 22:31+ God says

"You shall be **holy** (Heb - [qodesh](#); Lxx - [hagios](#) - used of NT "saints") men to Me, therefore you shall not eat any flesh torn to pieces in the field; you shall throw it to the dogs."

Jehovah's call to Israel to **be holy** is in a sense almost the "theme song" of the entire book of Leviticus...

For I am the LORD your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and **be holy, for I am holy**. And you shall not make yourselves unclean with any of the swarming things that swarm on the earth. 45' For I am the LORD who brought you up from the land of Egypt to be your God; thus **you shall be holy, for I am holy.**" (Lev 11:44-45+, cf Lev 19:2+, Lev 20:7,26+, Lev 21:8+)

**THOUGHT** - The same charge **BE HOLY** is given to all NT believers -

As obedient children, **do not be conformed** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, 15 but like the Holy One who called you, **B E** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) holy yourselves also in all your behavior; 16 (WHY BE HOLY?) because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." 17 (WHAT SHOULD MOTIVATE US TO BE HOLY?) If (NOT "IF" BUT "SINCE") you

address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, **conduct** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves in (HOLY, REVERENTIAL, GODLY) FEAR during the (VERY SHORT) time of your stay on earth; (AND IF YOU NEED FURTHER MOTIVATION - THEN REMEMBER THE PRICE PAID THAT MIGHT EVEN GIVE YOU THE GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE HOLY LIVES IN THIS SHORT LIFE!) 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ. (1 Peter 1:14-19<sup>+</sup>)

**Are you daily in the Holy Word (Mt 4:4) and learning to rely on the Holy Spirit (cf Gal 3:3)?** If so, be encouraged (Heb 12:3<sup>+</sup>, cf Gal 6:9,10<sup>+</sup>), for you are pursuing holiness without which no one will see the Lord (Heb 12:14KJV<sup>+</sup>) and the Spirit of holiness (Ro 1:4<sup>+</sup>) will take the Word (cf Jn 17:17) and progressively work a miracle in your heart day by day, just as Paul wrote explaining that "we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (BEST BEHELD TODAY IN THE GLORIOUS WORD OF GOD), are **being transformed** (SPIRITUAL MATURATION IS A PROCESS - DON'T LOSE HEART! - SEE PROGRESSIVE SANCTIFICATION) into the same image (THE IMAGE OF JESUS CHRIST = "CHRIST-LIKENESS") from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit (THE LIVING SPIRIT USES THE LIVING WORD BUT IF YOU ARE NOT IN THE LIVING WORD DAILY HE HAS LESS TO WORK WITH)." (2 Cor 3:18<sup>+</sup>)

**And a holy nation** - What's the meaning of this phrase? This is straightforward. God is holy and desires His chosen nation of Israel to be holy as He is holy. They are to be distinct, different, separate, not profane. What would be the purpose? In the midst of the Canaanite cesspool of immorality and idolatry, Israel was to stand out as group of people who were different because their God was different. And their holy behavior was to attract and draw the unholy people of the idolatrous nations to Jehovah so that He Alone might be worshipped and glorified in all the earth. As we will see Israel failed but regardless of their failure this desire of Yahweh will one day be fulfilled for Habakkuk promises "the earth will be filled With the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, As the waters cover the sea." (Hab 2:14<sup>+</sup>).

**THOUGHT** As noted above believers are now a **HOLY NATION** with a holy purpose "to proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9<sup>+</sup>). If we as God's people today believe and behave as who we were destined to be, a HOLY NATION, we will "**Let** our light **shine** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) before men in such a way (SUCH A WAY MEANS THEY ARE NOT ATTRACTED TO US BUT) that they may see our good works (GOOD BECAUSE THEY ARE SUPERNATURAL, NOT NATURAL - THEY RUN COUNTER TO THE WAY THE WORLD DOES THINGS, TO THE WAY THE WORLD ACTS, ETC), and glorify (GIVE A PROPER OPINION OF THE UNSEEN GOD THROUGH THE VISIBLE "GOOD WORKS" HIS SPIRIT DOES THROUGH US, HIS LIGHTS IN THE THIS DARK WORLD) your Father Who is in heaven." (Mt 5:16<sup>+</sup>)

And empowered by the Holy Spirit Who continually energizes us with the DESIRE and POWER (Php 2:13NLT<sup>+</sup>), we will "**Do** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) **ALL THINGS without grumbling or disputing**; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, **among whom you appear as lights in the world**, holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain. (Php 2:14-16<sup>+</sup>)

**Wiersbe** offers some wise words on what it meant for Israel to be a **holy nation** - In every area of life, Israel's activities were governed by the fact that they belonged to God, and that included what they ate, what they wore, who they married, how they buried their dead, and especially how they worshiped. During the plagues in Egypt, God put a difference between them and the Egyptians (Ex. 11:7), because the Jews were not to live like the pagan Gentile nations. The Jewish priests were to set the example and also teach the people to "put a difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean" (Lev. 10:10; Lev 11:47). The priests failed to do this (Ezek. 22:26; see Ezek 42:20; 44:23; 48:14-15), and their sin helped to lead the nation into defilement and destruction (Lam. 4:13). (See context in [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#))

**NET Note on holy nation** - They are to be a nation separate and distinct from the rest of the nations. Here is another aspect of their duty. It was one thing to be God's **special possession**, but to be that they had to be **priestly** and **holy**. The duties of the covenant will specify what it would mean to be a holy nation. In short, they had to keep themselves free from everything that characterized pagan people (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 171). So it is a bilateral covenant: they received special privileges but they must provide special services by the special discipline. . ([Notes](#))

**These are the words that you shall speak to the sons of Israel**- Oh, that Israel would have had ears to hear these beautiful, encouraging words! Note the specificity of Moses' instruction - **these are the words**! The elders were to be like "heralds" who are



charged with the authority and responsibility of accurate communication of a superior's message. The elders were to be giving out the words of Jehovah, not their own words, not their interpretation of His Words, not a cliff-notes version of Yahweh's words.

**Stuart on the words that you shall speak** - Verse 6 ends with a command to Moses to be sure that the Israelites heard Yahweh's call to a covenant relationship ("these are the words you are to speak to the Israelites"), a command that found fulfillment immediately following. (See context in [Exodus](#))

As **Warren Wiersbe** says "When God spoke to His people, by His grace He called them to a very special life." ARE YOU STANDING IN GRACE, WORSHIPPING IN GRACE, WALKING IN GRACE, WORKING IN GRACE? (See context in [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#))

Some 40 years later Moses would remind the second generation of this unique time in the history of Israel (and the world for that matter)...

Deuteronomy 4:33 "Has any people **heard the voice of God** speaking from the midst of the fire, as you have heard it, and survived?

Deuteronomy 5:23-27 "And when you heard the voice from the midst of the darkness, while the mountain was burning with fire, you came near to me, all the heads of your tribes and your elders. 24 "You said, 'Behold, the LORD our God has shown us His glory and His greatness, and we **have heard His voice** from the midst of the fire; we have seen today that God speaks with man, yet he lives. 25 'Now then why should we die? For this great fire will consume us; if **we hear the voice of the LORD our God** any longer, then we will die. 26 'For who is there of all flesh who **has heard the voice of the living God speaking from the midst of the fire** as we have, and lived? 27 '**Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says**; then speak to us all that the LORD our God speaks to you (MOSES), and we will hear and do it.'

**Exodus 19:7 So Moses came and called the elders of the people, and set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him.**

- **the elders** - Ex 3:16
- **set before them** - Ex 4:29,30 1Co 15:1
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **MOSES CALLS THE ELDERS AND COMMUNICATES THE WORD OF JEHOVAH**

**So** - Therefore - Term of conclusion. Base of the mountain top revelation, Moses now calls a meeting.

**Moses came** - He came down the mountain from the presence and presentation of the LORD's will for the nation of Israel

**And called the elders of the people**- With 2 million people Moses could not announce Jehovah's words to all of them and perhaps learning from the advice of Jethro in Exodus 18, he calls in the elders who can then be his emissaries throughout the populace of Israel.

**And set before them all these words which the LORD had commanded him** - Set before is an interesting thought. It is almost like Moses had a precious cargo in a container and was setting it down before the elders. To be sure Jehovah's Word is always weighty!

**Stuart** - Moses functioned as a faithful prophet, making up nothing on his own but simply relaying verbatim what God had given him to speak as his messenger ("summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak"). (See context in [Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**Exodus 19:8 All the people answered together and said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do!" And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.**

- Ex 20:19 Ex 24:3,7 De 5:27-29 26:17-19 Jos 24:24 Ne 10:29
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## A GOOD START IS NO GUARANTEE OF A GOOD FINISH!

An enthusiastic beginning does not guarantee a God glorifying ending!

**All the people answered together and said** - Whether this was a meeting of the entire nation in unison or smaller groups under the elders, the text does not say.

**All that the LORD has spoken we will do!**" - This was a good start. The key words are "all" and "do" which describe their affirmation that they would obey. But good intentions need to be backed up by good actions. They express confidence they will succeed. But confidence can sometimes reflect pride, not genuine heart commitment.

**THOUGHT** - The deception that we are all prone to is to equate saying with doing, i.e., saying we will obey the LORD but then later failing to follow through with our promise. James spoke to this common self-deception commanding his readers (us) to "**prove** ([present imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves **doers** of the word, and not merely **hearers** who (CONTINUALLY) delude ([paralogizomai](#) in the [present tense](#) = continually deceive by false reasoning) themselves. 23 For (TERM OF EXPLANATION) if anyone is a **hearer** of the word and not a **doer**, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten (HERE IS OUR PROBLEM! THAT IS WHY I STRONGLY RECOMMEND REGULAR [BIBLE MEMORIZATION](#) AS AN "ANTIDOTE"! AND SO YOU WON'T HAVE ANY EXCUSES HERE ARE [Memory Verses by Topic](#). NOW, GO FOR IT!) what kind of person he was. 25 But one who looks intently ([parakupto](#)) at the perfect law, the law of liberty ([eleutheria](#) - LIBERTY IS NOT THE RIGHT TO DO AS YOU PLEASE, BUT THE POWER TO DO AS YOU SHOULD TO PLEASE OUR FATHER!), and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does." (James 1:22-25+) Therefore, beloved, let us daily look intently at the Word of Truth and Righteousness and wholly rely on the Holy Spirit to enable us to abide by the Word, that we might experience abundant life in Christ Jesus for the glory of our Father Who art in Heaven. In Jesus' saving Name. Amen.

We see a similar "unanimous" [acquiescence](#) by the nation of Israel to the commandments God had given to Moses...

Exodus 24:3; 7 Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "**All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!**"....7 Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "**All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!**"

## MOSES ASCENDS THE MOUNTAIN AGAIN

**And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD**- Moses again ascends up the mountain to meet with Yahweh. Moses fulfills his role as an "[intermediary](#)" or "[mediator](#)" acting in a very real sense like a **priest** between Israel and Jehovah. How? There is no mention of writing this message on tablets so he is relying on his memory of what Jehovah had told him. Moses is functioning like a [herald](#) who often served as a close confidant of a king (cf "Moses the friend of God" - Jas 2:23, cf Ex 33:7-11+), and would travel throughout the realm announcing to the people whatever the king wished to make known. Moses like a [herald](#) received the instructions from the king (JEHOVAH) and went forth to boldly, clearly and loudly proclaim the message in the king's (IN THE CASE JEHOVAH'S) authority without adding or subtracting from the message he was given.

**G Campbell Morgan** wrote "Their answer was sincere, but it was ignorant. Even so with us. We say, 'All that Jehovah hath spoken we will do,' **and we fail**. But God never fails. He waits and pursues His own way of grace and government."

While Israel may have considered their response as sincere, the problem with Israel (like all of us) is the problem of our heart. We are prone to wander. Jeremiah says "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9) The answer to Jeremiah's question is that God understands the heart and He knew Israel's heart...

Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says; then speak to us all that the LORD our God speaks to you, and we will hear and do it.' 28 "The LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. **They have done well in all that they have spoken**. 29 'Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!" (Deut. 5:27-29).

**Exodus 19:9** The LORD said to Moses, "**Behold**, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever." Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

- **Behold**- Ex 19:16 20:21 24:15,16 De 4:11 1Ki 8:12 2Ch 6:1 Ps 18:11,12 Ps 97:2 Isa 19:1 Mt 17:5 Mk 9:7 Lu 9:34,35 Rev 1:7
- **so that the people may hear**- De 4:12,36 Joh 12:29,30
- **and may also believe in you forever** - Ex 14:31 2Ch 20:20 Isa 7:9 Lu 10:16
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Mt Sinai - Yahweh in a Thick Cloud

## ISRAEL TO BEHOLD HIS GLORY DESCENDING

**The LORD said to Moses** - The text does not say, but presumably Moses has ascended again to the Mountain of God to meet with Yahweh.

**Behold** ([hinneh](#)) "is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!" (C H Spurgeon)

**I will come to you in a thick cloud**- Note that Yahweh specifically is coming to Moses, but clearly all Israel would be able to witness His coming (Ex 19:11). The verb **brought** ([bo](#)) is frequently used as here to describe the great condescending mercy and grace of Yahweh coming to His people. In the next chapter we read "Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin." (Ex 20:20+).

NET Note - The construction uses the deictic particle and the participle to express the imminent future, what God was about to do. Here is the first announcement of the theophany.. ([Notes](#))

**Matthew Henry** - This **thick cloud** was to prohibit curious enquiries into things secret, and to command an awful adoration of that which was revealed.

We see other allusions to Yahweh presenting Himself in a thick cloud:

2 Chr 6:1 Then Solomon said, "The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud.

Ps 18:11 He made darkness His hiding place, His canopy around Him, Darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.

### Related Resource:

- [Shekinah glory cloud](#)
- [See commentary](#) on Hebrews 12:18ff "For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind..."

**So that** - This [terms of purpose](#) is valuable to observe for it always introduces the purpose for what has just been said in the preceding context.

**The people may hear when I speak with you** - Moses' role as Israel's leader is hereby authenticated, so to speak. Clearly Yahweh is bestowing peculiar honor and distinction on Moses. The purpose of Yahweh's coming in a thick cloud is for the sons of Israel to see (visual - the cloud) and **hear** (audible) the words that Yahweh would speak to Moses. This would be a clear indication to the people that Moses was God's man to speak for Him. Moses was God's spokesman and would serve as their "[mediator](#)" with Him, even as Moses had functioned as a mediator regarding the peoples' disputes in Exodus 18:13-16+.

Onto this "pulpit" Moses comes to speak and God answers him with a voice like thunder. What a awesome, fearful day this was! The people were visibly, physically assaulted with the holiness and majesty of God. The display of God's power on Sinai communicated far more than any sermon ever could and it was one all could comprehend! And why such a frightening scene? Clearly this was to teach the people that God is unapproachable by any sinful human being. God is holy, set apart and for the people to touch the

symbol of His holiness meant certain death. And to emphasize His holiness, even an innocent animal accidentally contacted the [Mount Sinai](#) he would die! God's holiness is serious business!

**THOUGHT** - We forget that in our modern society. Sadly even true believers (I speak from personal experience) forget this truth! What effect might it have on our heart and mind if we were to frequently come back to meditate on Exodus 19? I think the Spirit would use the words of Moses to renew our sense of God's perfect holiness. May it be so Lord God. Amen.

**Warren Wiersbe** - The fact that God spoke with Moses personally should have given the people confidence in their leader, but subsequent events proved differently. What a privilege it was for Israel to have a leader such as Moses, and what a tragedy that they repeatedly made life difficult for him! (See context in [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#))

**Matthew Henry** suggests some interesting parallels of the divine cloud coming specifically to Moses individually and not the Israel's corporately - Thus the correspondence was to be first settled by a sensible appearance of the divine glory, which was afterwards to be carried on more silently by the ministry of Moses. In like manner, the Holy Ghost descended visibly upon Christ at his baptism, and all that were present heard God speak to him (Matt. 3:17+), that afterwards, without the repetition of such visible tokens, they might believe Him. So likewise the Spirit descended in cloven tongues upon the apostles (Acts 2:3+), that they might be believed. Observe, When the people had declared themselves willing to obey the voice of God, then God promised they should hear his voice; for, if any man be resolved to do his will, he shall know it, John 7:17. ("If anyone is willing to do His will, he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or whether I speak from Myself.")

**and may also believe in you forever." Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD**- "Thus he would make plain to the people of Israel the fact of his communication to Moses, thus reducing the likelihood that the people would doubt Moses when he claimed to be delivering to them words from God. God wanted this confidence in Moses as his reliable prophet to be continuous and permanent.' (Stuart)

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**Come** (0935) (בֹּא) is "the fourth most frequently occurring verb in the OT, is used 2570 times, for the most part with everyday meanings of "go, arrive, enter a house," or, more idiomatically, "to die" (go to the fathers) or for sexual relations (come in to her). A synonym is ה'לַק "go"; an antonym is י'פֹּא "go out."

Theologically the verb בֹּא appears in varied but significant contexts. Four aspects can be identified.

#### **(1) First, בֹּא is found with reference to YHWH as one who comes to his people.**

At the founding of Israel as a nation he came in thick clouds to Mount Sinai (Exo 19:9; Exo 20:20). From Sinai he came with his ten thousands to fight for his people (Dt 33:2-5; Hab 3:3). In accordance with his promise that he would come to every place he chose to cause his name to be remembered (Ex 20:24), he came to Mount Zion with his ten thousands of holy ones (Psa 68:17). Thus he comes to fight for Israel throughout her history (Isa 30:27), which is an earnest that in the future he will give Israel an ultimate and universal victory over evil (Psa 96:13; Psa 98:9). As in the past he fulfilled his promise to judge the nations (cf. Isa 19:1; Jer 25:31), so he will come in the future to judge the evildoers (Isa 66:15). He will come as a mighty warrior bringing back his people from the ends of the earth (Isa 40:9-11), and he will dwell in Jerusalem (Zech 2:10). The notion that the Lord is a God who comes with salvation is succinctly captured by Hosea: "Let us press on to know YHWH; his going forth is sure as the dawn; he will come to us as the showers, as the spring rains that water the earth" (Hos 6:3). This anticipation which characterizes the OT finds its fulfillment in part in Jesus Christ of whom it can be enthusiastically heralded, "Blessed be he who enters (בֹּא "cometh," ASV) in the name of the Lord" (Ps 118:26). God's coming to save is essentially an intervention and almost always regarded as imminent.

But he also comes to judge sinful Israel (Psa 50:3). In fact, one of the last prophecies of the OT is that YHWH will suddenly come to his temple as a refining fire (Mal 3:1).

But in addition to these statements regarding his personal coming, other texts reveal various ways in which he comes: in a dream to Abimelech (Gen 20:3); through messengers closely identified with him and yet distinct from him (Jud 6:11; Jud 13:6-10); in connection with the ark (1Sam 4:6-7); and in the word of a prophet (Num 22:38; 1Sam 2:27).

#### **(2) Secondly, "coming" (בֹּא) is associated with the promise-fulfillment motif.**

The verdict concerning the words (i.e. promises) of God by Joshua is that "all have come (בֹּא) to pass" (Josh 23:14). John Bright observes that as best he can tell, on every occasion when בֹּא is used of God's word or purpose, it has the force of "come to pass," "come true" (John Durkam & J. R. Poner, eds., Proclamation and Presence, John Knox, 1970, p. 206). The test of a true prophet is that his words must come to pass (Deut 18:22). Of course, the words of a false prophet may also come true, and thus one must examine the theological content of the word as well (Deut 13:3).

By bringing to pass either his threats or his promises YHWH demonstrates his dominion over history (Josh 23:15; 2Kings 19:25; Isa 31:2). Frequently the predictions use the causative Hiphil stem with *bô* showing clearly that it is YHWH who is sovereignly guiding history (Exo 11:1; 1Kings 21:29; *passim*). In a passage that extols YHWH above graven images one reads, "Behold the former things have come to pass" (Isa 42:9). Gods are challenged to declare "things to come" (*bô*) (Isa 41:22). The promise of land and progeny to the patriarchs is only one of many promise-predictions that have come to fulfillment and which argue for the superiority of YHWH.

A characteristic expression referring to the future, but not necessarily to the final days of the world history, is "days are coming" (participle of *bô*). Although employed by Amos (Amos 8:11; Amos 9:13) and Isaiah (Isa 27:6; Isa 39:6), it is Jeremiah who most frequently uses it as an introductory phrase, sometimes to announce judgment (e.g. Jer 9:26 [H 24]; Jer 19:6; Jer 48:12; Jer 49:2) but also to announce salvation (Jer 16:14), including the establishment of the new covenant (Jer 31:31) and the appearance of a kingly messiah (Jer 23:5).

In a word *bô* is used in the announcements of threat and promise. Thus even as *bô* is used in the announcement of judgment against Eli (1Sam 2:31) and against Hezekiah (2Kings 20:17), the pre-exilic prophets use it in the form of a prophetic perfect with reference to the judgment coming upon Israel (Amos 8:2; Hos 9:7; Mic 1:9; Mic 7:12). For Zephaniah it is the coming day of the Lord's fierce anger (Zep 2:2); for Jeremiah it is a day of calamity also for Egypt (Jer 46:22) and Babylon (Jer 50:27); for Ezekiel it is the day of distress (Ezek 7:7, 10); and for Joel a day of destruction from Shaddai (Joel 1:15). This judgment will come because the people refused to repent (Isa 5:19; Jer 25:8-11; Zeph 2:3).

Our verb is also used in the proclamations of salvation that Israel will come back to the land (Mic 4:8; Isa 35:10; Isa 51:11; Zeph 3:20; Ezek 11:16; Ezek 34:13). Ezekiel, moreover, saw the glory of the LORD coming into the new temple (Ezek 43:4) and Haggai foresaw the wealth of all the nations coming to the temple (Hag 2:7). Ezra was among those of the Diaspora who came back to the house of God (Ezra 3:8).

### **(3) Thirdly, the word is used in connection with the coming "Messiah" who will bring salvation**

Although Gen 49:10 is fraught with text-critical matters, it is at least certain that Jacob speaks of a ruler that will come from the tribe of Judah. Ezekiel and Zechariah further this hope for the "coming" one (Ezek 21:27; Zech 9:9ff.). According to Zechariah this triumphant king is poor, and comes riding on a donkey, a symbol of his lowliness.

**(4) Finally,** *bô* is used with reference to the man who comes to the sanctuary in company with his community in order to pray and bring sacrifices (Deut 12:5; Deut 31:11; 2Sam 7:18; Isa 30:29; Jer 7:2, 10; Psalms 5:7; Psalm 42:2).

Whereas priests had to satisfy specific regulations in order to enter this sacred sphere (Exo 28:29 ff.; Exo 29:30; etc.), all who enter must exhibit righteous behavior (Psalms 15; ; Psalm 24). Foreigners also could come to pray (1Kings 8:41), but eunuchs were excluded from the cultic community (Deut 23:1 [H 2]). When the people came to the sanctuary they also went to the priests (Deut 17:9). They also went to the prophet to inquire of the Lord (e.g. 1Kings 14:3, 5; 2Kings 4:42; Ezek 14:4, 7). (TWOT)

There are over 2290 uses of **bo** in the OT so only the uses in Genesis are listed below:

Ge 2:19; Ge 2:22; Ge 4:3; Ge 4:4; Ge 6:4; Ge 6:13; Ge 6:17; Ge 6:18; Ge 6:19; Ge 6:20; Ge 7:1; Ge 7:7; Ge 7:9; Ge 7:13; Ge 7:15; Ge 7:16; Ge 8:9; Ge 8:11; Ge 10:19; Ge 10:30; Ge 11:31; Ge 12:5; Ge 12:11; Ge 12:14; Ge 13:10; Ge 13:18; Ge 14:5; Ge 14:7; Ge 14:13; Ge 15:12; Ge 15:15; Ge 15:17; Ge 16:2; Ge 16:4; Ge 16:8; Ge 18:11; Ge 18:19; Ge 18:21; Ge 19:1; Ge 19:3; Ge 19:5; Ge 19:8; Ge 19:9; Ge 19:10; Ge 19:22; Ge 19:23; Ge 19:31; Ge 19:33; Ge 19:34; Ge 20:3; Ge 20:9; Ge 20:13; Ge 22:9; Ge 23:2; Ge 23:10; Ge 23:18; Ge 24:1; Ge 24:30; Ge 24:31; Ge 24:32; Ge 24:41; Ge 24:42; Ge 24:62; Ge 24:63; Ge 24:67; Ge 25:18; Ge 25:29; Ge 26:10; Ge 26:27; Ge 26:32; Ge 27:4; Ge 27:5; Ge 27:7; Ge 27:10; Ge 27:12; Ge 27:14; Ge 27:18; Ge 27:25; Ge 27:30; Ge 27:31; Ge 27:33; Ge 27:35; Ge 28:11; Ge 29:6; Ge 29:9; Ge 29:13; Ge 29:21; Ge 29:23; Ge 29:30; Ge 30:3; Ge 30:4; Ge 30:14; Ge 30:16; Ge 30:33; Ge 30:38; Ge 31:18; Ge 31:24; Ge 31:33; Ge 31:39; Ge 32:6; Ge 32:8; Ge 32:11; Ge 32:13; Ge 33:1; Ge 33:11; Ge 33:14; Ge 33:18; Ge 34:5; Ge 34:7; Ge 34:20; Ge 34:25; Ge 34:27; Ge 35:6; Ge 35:9; Ge 35:16; Ge 35:27; Ge 37:2; Ge 37:10; Ge 37:14; Ge 37:19; Ge 37:23; Ge 37:25; Ge 37:28; Ge 37:30; Ge 37:32; Ge 38:2; Ge 38:8; Ge 38:9; Ge 38:16; Ge 38:18; Ge 39:11; Ge 39:14; Ge 39:16; Ge 39:17; Ge 40:6; Ge 41:14; Ge 41:21; Ge 41:29; Ge 41:35; Ge 41:50; Ge 41:54; Ge 41:57; Ge 42:5; Ge 42:6; Ge 42:7; Ge 42:9; Ge 42:10; Ge 42:12; Ge 42:15; Ge 42:19; Ge 42:20; Ge 42:21; Ge 42:29; Ge 42:34; Ge 42:37; Ge 43:2; Ge 43:9; Ge 43:16; Ge 43:17; Ge 43:18; Ge 43:21; Ge 43:23; Ge 43:24; Ge 43:25; Ge 43:26; Ge 43:30; Ge 44:14; Ge 44:30; Ge 44:32; Ge 45:16; Ge 45:17; Ge 45:18; Ge 45:19; Ge 45:25; Ge 46:1; Ge 46:6; Ge 46:7; Ge 46:8; Ge 46:26; Ge 46:27; Ge 46:28; Ge 46:31; Ge 46:32; Ge 47:1; Ge 47:4; Ge 47:5; Ge 47:7; Ge 47:14; Ge 47:15; Ge 47:17; Ge 47:18; Ge 48:2; Ge 48:5; Ge 48:7; Ge 49:6; Ge 49:10; Ge 50:10

## CLOUD OF GLORY

### Torrey's Topic List

First manifestation of Ex 13:20,21

#### **CALLED**

- - The cloud Exo 34:5
- - Pillar of cloud and pillar of fire Exo 13:22
- - Cloudy pillar Exo 33:9,10
- - Cloud of the Lord Num 10:34
- - The presence of God Exo 33:14,15

God's glory manifested in Exo 16:10; 40:35

God came down in Exo 34:5; Num 11:25

God spoke from Exo 24:16; Psa 99:7

#### **WAS DESIGNED TO**

- - Regulate the movements of Israel Exo 40:36,37; Num 9:17-23
- - Guide Israel Exo 13:21; Neh 9:19
- - Show light to Israel Psa 105:39
- - Defend Israel Exo 14:19; Psa 105:39
- - Cover the tabernacle Exo 40:34; Num 9:15

Was dark to the enemies of Israel Exo 14:20

Was the Shekinah over the mercy-seat Lev 16:2

Continued during the journeyings of Israel Exo 13:22; 40:38

Manifested in the temple of Solomon 1Ki 8:10,11; 2Ch 5:13; Eze 10:4

#### **SPECIAL APPEARANCES OF;**

- - At the murmuring for bread Exo 16:10
- - At giving of the law Exo 19:9,16; 24:16-18
- - At sedition of Aaron and Miriam Num 12:5
- - At the murmuring of Israel on the report of the spies Num 14:10
- - At the rebellion of Korah &c Num 16:19
- - At the murmuring of Israel on account of Korah's death Num 16:42
- - At Christ's transfiguration Mat 17:5
- - At Christ's ascension Act 1:9

Our Lord shall make his second appearance in Luke 21:27; Act 1:11

#### **ILLUSTRATIVE OF**

- - The glory of Christ Rev 10:1
- - The protection of God's people Isa 4:5

**Exodus 19:10 The LORD also said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments;**

- **consecrate them-** Ex 19:15 Lev 11:44,45 Jos 3:5 7:13 1Sa 16:5 2Ch 29:5,34 30:17-19 Job 1:5 1Co 6:11
- **wash** - Ex 19:14 Ge 35:2 Lev 11:25 15:5 Nu 8:7,21 31:24 Zec 3:3,4 Heb 10:22 Rev 7:14

## TWO DAYS OF CONSECRATION

**The LORD also said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow-** The NLT is a good paraphrase " "Go down and prepare the people for my arrival." The English translation of the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) gives us an added sense of the solemnity of God's charge to Moses and Moses' charge to the people rendering it "Go down and **solemnly charge** ([diamarturomai](#) in the [aorist imperative](#) command in the people." To consecrate (see word study below) means to dedicate themselves solemnly, looking toward the goal of their meeting with Yahweh. The Septuagint translates the Hebrew verb [qadash](#) with the Greek verb [hagiazō](#) which describes external purity but also carries the thought of the resultant holiness of character in the one who is consecrated. The rituals associated with external cleansing were always to point to the necessity of internal cleansing! It does not hurt to wash the outside, but it often "hurts" (humbling ourselves, confession, repentance) or "costs" to cleanse ourselves inside! Ouch! So for two days the sons of Israel are to take special care to restrain themselves from ordinary activities.

**Matthew Henry** - "Call them off from their worldly business, and call them to religious exercises, meditation and prayer, that they may receive the law from God's mouth with reverence and devotion.

**Consecrate** (Sanctify, make holy) ([06942](#))([qadash](#)) means to set apart for a specific use. Removed from common use. To be holy. To show one's self to be holy. To consecrate or dedicate. To set apart a person or thing from all common or secular purposes to some religious use. Everything consecrated to God was separated from all profane use. **Webster's 1828 Dictionary** definition for consecrate is convicting "make or declare sacred; especially **devote irrevocably to worship of God** by a solemn ceremony." **Qadash** could refer to anything reserved exclusively for God (Ex 13:2, 12, 13; Nu 18:15) **Qadash** signifies an act or a state in which people or things are set aside for use in the worship of God, i.e., they are consecrated or made sacred for that purpose. They must be withheld from ordinary (secular) use and treated with special care as something which belongs to God (Ex 29:21). Otherwise, defilement makes the sanctified object unusable (cf. Dt 22:9; Eze 44:19; 46:20).

**Qadash** in Exodus = Ex 13:2; Ex 19:10; Ex 19:14; Ex 19:22; Ex 19:23; Ex 20:8; Ex 20:11; Ex 28:3; Ex 28:38; Ex 28:41; Ex 29:1; Ex 29:21; Ex 29:27; Ex 29:33; Ex 29:36; Ex 29:37; Ex 29:43; Ex 29:44; Ex 30:29; Ex 30:30; Ex 31:13; Ex 40:9; Ex 40:10; Ex 40:11; Ex 40:13

**Qadash** is used with various objects:

- people of Israel - Ex 19:10, 14; Joshua 7:13
- altar in the Temple - Ex 29:36; 1Ki 8:64
- priests - Ex 28:41; 29:1; 1Sa 7:1
- mountain - Ex 19:23
- Sabbath - Ge 2:3; Ex 20:8
- new building - Neh 3:1
- fast - Joel 1:14; 2:15

**Warren Wiersbe** writes that "The emphasis in this chapter is on the sanctity of the nation as the holy people of God, and three images stand out: the changing of their clothes, the distance set between the people and God, and the storm on Mount Sinai. We today are accustomed to having soap and water readily available, and extra clothes hanging in our closets, but people in Bible days didn't enjoy such luxuries. They couldn't take showers daily, and only the wealthy had stores of extra garments. That's why bathing and changing clothes often marked a new beginning, such as when God restored Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:21) or when Jacob and his family returned to Bethel (35:2)....Washing and changing clothes is the Old Testament equivalent of 1 John 1:9+ and 2 Corinthians 7:1+." (See context in [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#))

**And let them wash their garments** - This is an interesting instruction for God made the dust of the earth, so this must be symbolic of something deeper. To be sure we want to be externally clean before Jehovah, but the washing of the external most likely points to "washing" of the internal.

**Matthew Henry** comments that "while they were washing their clothes he would have them think of *washing their souls* by repentance (**ED: AND FOR US TODAY "BY THE WASHING OF THE WATER WITH THE WORD"** - Eph 5:26+, cf Jn 13:7-10) from the sins they had contracted in Egypt and since their deliverance. It becomes us to appear in *clean clothes* when we wait upon great men; so *clean hearts* are required in our attendance on the great God, who sees our hearts as plainly as men see our clothes. This is absolutely necessary to our acceptably worshipping God. See Ps. 26:6; Isa. 1:16-18; Heb. 10:22.



**CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS** - Bob Deffinbaugh - Some years ago, I had the most unusual conversation with a person who professed to be a Christian. The individual had divorced some years before, and was hoping to re-marry another person. I asked what biblical grounds there were for the divorce. The woman responded, "Well, you know the Bible teaches that 'cleanliness is next to godliness', and my husband was a very dirty man." I've heard some pretty far out perceptions of what the Bible taught, but this statement caught me off guard. But before we dismiss this woman's statement too quickly, let's think about it. Is cleanliness considered to be next to godliness? It certainly was in the minds of many Jews, not only in Peter's day, but through much of Israel's history.

**Exodus 19:11 and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people.**

- **the LORD will come down** - Ex 19:16,18,20 Ex 3:8 34:5 Nu 11:17 De 33:2 Ps 18:9 Ps 144:5 Isa 64:1,2 Hab 3:3-6 Joh 3:13 6:38
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PREPARATION FOR JEHOVAH'S PRESENTATION

**and let them be ready for the third day** - This is not a good suggestion but a command (as shown by Septuagint). So important is this command that Moses repeats it in Ex 19:15. The charge to the sons of Israel is to be ready and willing, having one's heart, soul and spirit so disposed to receive the Holy One. The call is to be prepared and available. Hearts are to be focused on God, not the things of the world. They are to be mentally attuned to meeting God. In short, the people were to be in a state of preparedness for one of the most incredible meetings in the history of the world!

**COMMENT** - The Septuagint translates **be ready** as a command with verb **be** (ginomai) and the adjective [hetoimos](#) which means readiness. In a parallel to Moses making ready the way for Jehovah, John the Baptist made ready (verb [hetoimazo](#)) the way of the Lord Jesus (Mt. 3:3+). Amos summoned the people "Prepare (verb [hetoimazo](#)) to meet your God, O Israel." (Amos 4:12). Israel, like Moses, must be ready to receive God's revelation (Ex. 19:11, 15). In the NT **readiness** is demanded as readiness for good works (Titus 3:1+), readiness for witness (1 Pe 3:15+ = "always being ready [hetoimos](#) to make a defense"; Eph 6:15+ = "preparation [cognate - [hetoimasia](#)] of the Gospel of peace"), and readiness for the Lord's return (Mt 24:44). **Readiness** gives the Christian life a distinctive dynamic character driven by the sure expectation of the consummation of our salvation at the return of our Bridegroom, Christ Jesus. Readiness to see Him at any moment, makes us ready to redeem the time now at every moment! Are you ready? Or do you find yourself entangled? If so you might want to take some time and read [Are You Entangled?](#)

**Matthew Henry** - When we are to attend upon God in solemn ordinances it concerns us to sanctify ourselves, and to get ready beforehand. Wandering thoughts must be gathered in, impure affections abandoned, disquieting passions suppressed, nay, and all cares about secular business, for the present, dismissed and laid by, that our hearts may be engaged to approach unto God.

**THOUGHT** - What is my attitude toward the thought of worship of Jehovah on Sunday morning? Do I truly realize that I am being given the incredible opportunity to worship the LORD in His holiness? If so, then I need to seek to be holy as He is holy. I need to make myself ready. I need to confess and repent of any known sins which would hinder the work of His Holy Spirit and Holy Word in my heart. Other "things" in my heart (including sin, desires, plans for the rest of the day, etc, etc) will diminish my worship of the One True God. He is a jealous God and will tolerate no pretenders or competitors! To worship Him, I must determine, enabled by His Spirit, to worship Him in spirit and in truth. When I do these things, I can enter into His presence expectantly and with joy.

**For** - A glorious, expectant term of explanation in this context, explaining readiness as preparation for meeting with one's Maker!

**On the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people** - Note that the LORD comes after the people prepare their hearts. Note also He will come down from a higher location than Mount Sinai which implies He will descend from His Throne Room in Heaven. This extraordinary sight will be visible to all Israel, even the grumblers! Is this not matchless mercy and amazing grace?

**Stuart** - They had seen him regularly in the **pillar of cloud/fire** that went ahead of them during their wilderness travel so far, but

these instructions suggest there would be something especially awesome about Yahweh's visible manifestation "in the sight of all the people" in the cloud at the top of the mountain. (See context in [Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

In this first coming down of Yahweh, there is a foreshadowing of the last coming down of Yahweh, one yet future to our day but one we will see (returning with Christ - Rev 19:14+) and described gloriously by the prophet Habakkuk

(THIS IS A DESCRIPTION WHEN THE LORD WILL COME DOWN AT HIS [SECOND COMING](#)) God comes from Teman, And the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, And the earth is full of His praise (Read Revelation 1:7+). 4 His radiance is like the sunlight; He has rays flashing from His hand, And there is the hiding of His power. 5 Before Him goes pestilence, And plague comes after Him. 6 He stood and surveyed the earth; He looked and startled the nations. Yes, the perpetual mountains were shattered, The ancient hills collapsed. His ways are everlasting. (Hab 3:3-6+)

**THOUGHT** - One cannot miss the play on words **on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai** with the New Testament truth that on the third day the LORD came up from the death having fulfilled every requirement of the Law at Mount Sinai. Let us shout "Hallelujah! Thank you LORD Jesus for coming down that you might be lifted up on Calvary for our transgressions and raised up for our justification (Ro 4:25+) on the third day (1 Cor 15:3-4+)." Amen and amen.

**Exodus 19:12** "You shall set bounds for the people all around, saying, '**Beware** that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it; whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.

- **set bounds** - Ex 19:21,23 Jos 3:4
- **Beware** - Ex 10:28 34:12 De 2:4 4:9
- **touch** - Heb 12:20,21
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SPIRITUAL DISTANCING!

I am writing these notes in 2020 in the midst of the global pandemic of Coronavirus that has caused the phrase "social distancing" to become a household word. Social distancing keeps you from contracting a potentially fatal virus infection. Spiritual distancing protects one from a potentially fatal divine encounter!

**You shall set bounds for the people all around** - What the **bounds** consisted of is uncertain, but clearly it seems to have been some sort of physical restraint because in Ex 19:21 the people are threatening to break through. This sounds like more than Moses drawing a line in the sand! God desired in this way to teach his people the seriousness of dealing with him.

**Stuart** - Although people specially prepared and consecrated to encounter God may approach him more closely than would otherwise be the case, no human in this world can get as close to him as any person in heaven can....If a king required approaching with the greatest of care, should not the King of Kings be honored even more carefully and respectfully? (See context in [Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**THOUGHT** - The Septuagint uses the verb [aphorizo](#) which has a parallel use in the NT in Paul's exhortation (quoting Isaiah 52:11) "Therefore, **COME OUT** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) FROM THEIR MIDST AND **BE SEPARATE** ([aphorizo](#) - [aorist imperative](#))," says the Lord. "AND **DO NOT TOUCH** ([present imperative with a negative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) WHAT IS UNCLEAN; And I will welcome you." While "crossing" the NT "boundary" commanded by Paul (by God of course) does not result in our death, it definitely will impact our sense of fellowship and communion with Jehovah Who desires to "welcome" us into His presence, but cannot do so when we "defile" ourselves (our hearts) with the profane, even overtly evil things of this fallen, godless world system which is under the control of God's archenemy Satan, the evil one (1 Jn 5:19+). Are there some practices, relationships, etc, that the Spirit is now bringing to your mind that you know without a doubt you must separate from if you are to experience close communion with God? As the saying goes if you do not feel close to God, guess who moved? Or in this context, guess whose fault it is that you feel distant from a Holy God? Confess, repent and walk in the light (read 1 Jn 1:6-7+).

**Matthew Henry** on the meaning of the **bounds** - This was to intimate, (1.) That humble awful reverence which ought to possess the minds of all those that worship God. We are mean (ignoble, base) creatures before a great Creator, vile sinners before a holy

righteous Judge; and therefore a godly fear and shame well become us, Heb. 12:28<sup>+</sup>; Ps. 2:11. (2.) The distance at which worshippers were kept, under that dispensation (THE OLD TESTAMENT), which we ought to take notice of, so that we may all the more value our privilege under the Gospel of having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Heb. 10:19<sup>+</sup>.

**THOUGHT** - The book of Hebrews is trying to show the first century Jews who were still clinging to the OT Law (and were vainly attempting to obey it) that the old covenant was obsolete (Heb 8:13<sup>+</sup>) and that there was not a better covenant (Heb 7:22<sup>+</sup>, Heb 8:6<sup>+</sup>) providing a better way to approach Jehovah. Indeed, now we can have confidence "to enter the holy place by **the blood of Jesus**, by **a new and living way** which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh" (Heb 10:19-20<sup>+</sup>). Have you believed in Jesus Christ that you might draw near to God through His once for all time sacrifice?

**Set bounds** (01379) (**gabal**) means to set bound or limits around something or making a boundary (Ex 19:12, 23; Dt. 19:14). **Gabal** also depicts something that bounds or limits an area, such as the Jordan, which served to bound the territory of Benjamin on the east (Josh. 18:20). In Zech 9:2 it describes a border with another land.

The Septuagint translates **gabal** in Ex 19:12 with the verb **aphorizo** (**apó** = off from, apart + **horizo** = mark out the limit) means to mark off the boundaries, to appoint, set one apart for some purpose. It is used of the final **separation** of the righteous from the wicked (Mt 13:49; Mt 25:32); of the separation of the disciples from the world (Lk 6:22); and of the setting apart of apostles to special functions (Acts 13:2). **Aphorizo** is also used of the divine separation for service (Ro 1:1, Gal 1:15). In the NT believers must already separate themselves as a people of salvation (2 Cor. 6:17; cf. Is. 52:11).

**Gilbrant** - Boundaries were established for a variety of reasons in the ancient Near East. These boundaries, though physically demarcated and rigidly observed, were more than just property markers. The two Hiphil usages in Exo. 19:12, 23 attest to this. In this passage, a boundary is established between the sacred and profane, as Israelites were not allowed to tread upon Mount Sinai after Yahweh revealed himself to Moses through the giving of the Law. The boundary between sacred and profane was absolute, as humans were not permitted to defile areas which were deemed sacred by the presence of the deity. This principle can be viewed by the elaborate ordering of space in the Tabernacle and Temple, and the accompanying gradation of sacred materials used in construction of the structures (e.g., inner regions used gold objects contrasted to the bronze objects in the courtyard). Purely geographic boundaries are also established through this verb. International boundaries are formed, as reference is made to the boundary between Hamath and Damascus in Zech. 9:2. The boundaries of the tribe of Benjamin are established in Josh. 18:20. Property lines are also established using this verb (Deut. 19:14). This verb demonstrates elasticity in its rare usages, covering the gamut between divine to individual property. (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Gabal** - Exod. 19:12; Exod. 19:23; Deut. 19:14; Jos. 18:20; Zech. 9:2

**Saying, 'Beware that you do not go up on the mountain or touch the border of it-** Moses is to give this strong warning to the people. Not only are they forbidden to do "mountain climbing" in an attempt to do some "divine sight seeing," they are warned not to even **touch the border** of the mountain!

**Beware** (be careful, guard, keep, observe, watch) (08104) (**shamar**) means to keep, watch, preserve, to guard, to be careful, to watch over, to watch carefully over, to be on one's guard. The dominant idea is to exercise great care over something. Obedience to this commandment would be good practice for Israel, because **shamar** expresses the careful attention to be paid to the obligations of a covenant, to laws, statutes, etc. And of course Jehovah is getting ready to formalize the covenant and the laws of the Mosaic covenant. The Septuagint translates **shamar** here with the verb **prosecho** (command in the **present imperative**) which means to make a volitional choice to turn one's mind to something, be in a state of high alert and thus to pay close attention and be on guard. **Prosecho** is used in to translate **shamar** in warnings in Ex 34:11 and Ex 34:12.

**Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death-** To fail to keep this command will result in death. Notice how God is using this dramatic picture (of crossing the boundary) to teach His stubborn people the danger of transgressing His laws. He is using this picture of a set boundary to teach them that obedience is the way of life and disobedience results in cursing. In fact this recalls Moses' clarion charge to the next generation of Israel who were preparing to enter the Promised Land...

"I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you **life** and **death**, (THINK OF THE BOUNDARY MOSES HAD SET - ONE SIDE WAS LIFE, THE OTHER SIDE DEATH!) the blessing and the curse. So choose life in order that you may live, you and your descendants, by loving the LORD your God,

by obeying His voice, and by holding fast to Him; for this is your life and the length of your days, that you may live in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them." (Deut 30:19-20)

The writer of Hebrews alludes to Exodus 19 and in this passage we learn that it was not just the sons of Israel but also Moses who trembled at the manifestation of the glory of Yahweh...

For they (ISRAELITES IN EXODUS 19) could not bear the command, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED." And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling." (Heb 12:20,21<sup>±</sup>)

**Guzk** adds "If there is anything basic to human nature, it is that we need boundaries. In setting these boundaries and providing the death penalty for breaching them, God showed Israel that obedience is more important than their feelings. We don't doubt that some bold Israelites felt like going beyond the boundaries, but they were to submit their feelings to obedience."

**Exodus 19:13 'No hand shall touch him, but he shall surely be stoned or shot through; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the ram's horn sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain.'**

- **whether beast or man**- Ex 21:28,29 Lev 20:15,16
- **ram's horn sounds**, Ex 19:16,19 1Co 15:52 1Th 4:16
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Sounding the Shofar

## TRESPASSING BOUNDARIES PUNISHED BY DEATH!

**No hand shall touch him** - Why? The implication is he is defiled, unholy, unclean. Another thought is that one could not venture into the forbidden area to get the man lest he too be guilty!

**Currid** adds that the Hebrew construction is "a very severe form of negation (it begins eight of the ten commandments of the Decalogue). No one, absolutely no one, is to touch the violator; by doing so, they themselves might become violators infected by one person's disobedience. The people are to wait until the transgressor returns from the mountain; then they must execute him (from a distance)." (EPSC-[Exodus](#))

**But he shall surely be stoned or shot through** - Death by stoning was a horrible way to die. Note the adverb "surely" emphasizing this was an inescapable certainty and reminds one of the first "surely" in the Bible when God warned Adam "from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall **not** eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will **surely** die." (Ge 2:17) As an aside the next "surely" was for the great counterfeiter Satan who confidently told the woman "You surely shall not die!" (Ge 3:4+) And this lie is still being actively, even aggressively perpetrated today for I recently exchanged a series of communications with a woman chastised me for my belief in and article on eternal punishment. She was very sincere, but sadly like Eve, very deceived and deadly, eternally wrong in her conclusion that all would be saved, even claiming that those who were thrown into the lake of fire at the Great White Throne would eventually be saved, yes, even including the likes of such unspeakably evil men as Adolph Hitler and Joseph Stalin! And in her deception, she was actively promoting a false Gospel against which Paul twice gave the strongest of warnings that such a person would be **accursed!** (Gal 1:6-9+) (See [Is universalism / universal salvation biblical?](#))

**Whether beast or man, he shall not live** - This would serve to teach the people that if it meant death to a dumb, uncomprehending animal, how much more would it mean death to those who understood the warning! This stipulation emphasizes the exclusive nature of God's holiness, in that even innocent animals could not approach Him! The warning here is clear - tie up your donkeys and put your livestock in a pen.

**When the ram's horn sounds a long blast** - This refers to the famous [shofar](#). Listen to [the sound of a shofar being blown](#). This one is blown by men but is distinct from the supernatural **sound of the trumpet** in Ex 19:19.

**Ram's horn** ([03104](#))([yobel](#) from **yabal** = to conduct, bear along) It is used in the phrase qeren yôbēl, "horn of a ram" (Josh. 6:5) or in the phrase šôperôt hayyôbēlîym "shophars (rams' horns) of rams" which is rendered as "trumpets of rams' horns" (e.g., nasb, Josh. 6:4).

**They shall come up to the mountain** - NLT = "However, when the ram's horn sounds a long blast, then the people may go up on

the mountain." It is like being at a sold out concert and the doors have just been opened to let the patrons inside. This of course was the "greatest concert" in the history of the world! Presumably the **ram's horn** blast was loud enough to be heard by the entire congregation. Note the verb **come up** indicates they were in the plain below and would ascend in elevation presumably to the base of the Mountain of God.

**Warren Wiersbe** - In a dramatic way, God was teaching the people the distance between a holy God and sinful men and women, as well as the danger of presumptuously rushing into the presence of the Lord. Later, Nadab and Abihu would forget this principle, and God would kill them (Lev. 10). The structure of Old Testament worship emphasized man's sinfulness and God's "otherness": the fence around the tabernacle; the veil before the holy of holies; the fact that only the priests could minister in the tabernacle and only the high priest could enter the holy of holies, and that but once a year. The emphasis was always "**Keep Your Distance!**" But the New Testament emphasizes the nearness of God, for the Son of God became flesh and came to dwell on earth (John 1:14), and His name is "Immanuel—God with us" (Matt. 1:23). By His death and resurrection, Jesus opened a new and living way into the presence of God (Heb. 10:1–25), and the New Testament banner reads: "Let us draw near!" This doesn't mean that we should get "chummy" with God and act like we're His equals, but He is our Father and He welcomes our love. See Hebrews 12:18–29. (See context in [The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: Old Testament](#))

**Exodus 19:14 So Moses went down from the mountain to the people and consecrated the people, and they washed their garments.**

- **and consecrated**- Ex 19:10
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE OBEDIENCE OF MOSES

**So** - We see Moses does not question, quarrel or grumble but obeys immediately

**Moses went down from the mountain to the people**- Moses comes down from the mountain of God and the presence of God.

**And consecrated the people**- Of course Moses did not perform this for the 2 million people, but he did instruct them of the necessity to consecrate themselves. Consecration is a personal pursuit. These procedures were teaching the people that God Himself was separate, distinct, holy. Remember they had been in Egypt where the gods were hardly classifiable as holy! So they had to be taught of this essential attribute of Jehovah and these procedures were like classroom lessons for them to visualize God "separateness."

**Consecrated** (Sanctify, make holy) ([06942](#)) see note above on [qadash](#) ([Septuagint - Lxx](#) = [hagiazō](#))

**And they washed their garments** - It is interesting that they did not grumble or quarrel but seem to have obeyed this instruction.

**Exodus 19:15 He said to the people, 'Be ready for the third day; do not go near a woman.'**

- **Be ready** - Am 4:12 Mal 3:2 Mt 3:10-12 24:44 2Pe 3:11,12
- **the third** - Ex 19:11,16
- **do not go near** - 1Sa 21:4,5 Joe 2:16 Zec 6:3 7:3 12:12-14 1Co 7:5
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BE READY BY ABSTINENCE

**Abstinence** means the choice to refuse to indulge a desire, usually a sensual one. It implies the necessity of making a volitional choice or a definite choice of one's will. In the present context it implies the willful avoidance of gratifying one's desire, with the goal of focusing one's desires on something far higher, far greater, far more gratifying, in this case meeting with Yahweh.

**THOUGHT** - As you ponder these thoughts about the importance of our desires, where those desires are focused and how this all affects our meeting with Jehovah, you might prayerfully pause and play [Joy of My Desire](#).



**He said to the people, "Be ready for the third day** - So important is this coming meeting with Jehovah that Moses reiterates the importance of readiness for the sons of Israel. They would have two days to prepare to meet Him and hopefully much of the preparation would be in their hearts!

**Do not go near a woman** - NIV "Abstain from sexual relations." Plainly stated Moses is saying "Do not have sexual relations ("with your wife" would seem to be implied)." This instruction in no way demeans marital intercourse or suggests anything unclean about God ordained relations in marriage. The point would be that one's desires (and this for a man is always one of his greatest desires) are to be [subjugated](#) so to speak, and submitted to the Lordship of Jehovah, so that He Alone would be the focus of their deepest desires. "Self" was to take second seat to Savior!

To **go near** is used of the priests who come near to the LORD in Ex 19:22. Moses is saying don't go near a woman so you can come near to the LORD! The first use of "near" is Abraham approaching Christ in a Christophany in Genesis 18:23 Abraham came **near** and said, "Will You indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked?"

**Stuart** - OT holy war required temporary abstinence from sex (e.g., 1 Sam 21:4) and/or from food (1 Sam 14:28; 2 Sam 11:11); NT special times of prayer and/or prayer and fasting specify temporary avoidance of sex (1 Cor 7:5); and when fasting, obviously, of food. (See context in [Exodus: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**NET Note** is interesting - B. Jacob (Exodus, 537) notes that as the people were to approach him they were not to lose themselves in earthly love. Such separations prepared the people for meeting God. Sinai was like a bride, forbidden to anyone else. Abstinence was the spiritual preparation for coming into the presence of the Holy One.. ([Notes](#))

**Go near** (05066)(**nagash**) root signifies coming into very near proximity to the object. **Nagash** most commonly denotes the act of approaching in ambulatory fashion (e.g., Ge 27:21). It is also frequently used in a military context, of the clash of opposing forces (e.g., 1 Sam. 7:10; Jer. 46:3). It can be a euphemism for sexual intercourse (Ex 19:15) or interlocking objects (Job 41:16), including shackles (2 Sa 3:34). It is also employed to describe a royal representative (Gen. 45:4) or Yahweh in role of king (Jer. 30:21). Another common nuance of the verb is as a legal technical term, as when plaintiffs approached judges with their claims (Gen. 18:23; Exo. 24:14) or disputing parties approached each other in court (Isa. 50:8). Another common meaning describes drawing near to Yahweh or into His presence. Priests "approach the altar to minister in the holy place" (Ex. 28:43). The idolatry and syncretism of the Levites led to their prohibition from temple service in Ezekiel's eschatological temple - "they shall not **come near** to Me to serve as a priest to Me, nor **come near** to any of My holy things" (Ezek. 44:13). The purpose of coming near was that offerings were presented to Yahweh (e.g., Lev. 2:8; Mal. 1:11) so that relationship could continue.

Coppes says "The simple use of the root signifies proximity, i.e. near enough to touch (Genesis 27:21; Genesis 29:10), eat (Genesis 27:25), kiss (Genesis 27:27), embrace (Genesis 48:10). When used in a military context (cf. qārab) it is often accompanied by "to do battle" (cf. Judges 20:23; 1 Chron. 19:14). This is not always true, however. In Joel 3:9 [H 4:9] nāgash by itself signifies being arrayed for battle (paralleled to 'ārak (q.v.), and is in conjunction to bō' (q.v.). See 1 Samuel 17:16, 40. The root can also represent the actual engaging in battle and the result. So in Ezekiel 9:6 the elect being marked with a taw are not to be slain (hārag parallel to 'al nāgash). Israel who proudly boasts that death (the sword) will not overtake or meet them is condemned by God (Amos 9:10). The sovereign covenant God, therefore, guides and controls the sword keeping the elect safe even in the midst of war (Psalm 91:7) and punishing the wicked. The root can be used of approaching a person of exalted position with all the respect due his position (Genesis 43:19; Genesis 45:4; 2 Kings 5:13). God says that a king from his people would so approach him in the eschaton (Jeremiah 30:21). Men approach God through his servants to learn his will (Jeremiah 42:1; cf. the use of the ephod, 1 Samuel 23:9, and the lot, 1 Samuel 14:38). This represents God as king and judge. Sometimes the line between approaching the servant and approaching God himself is difficult to discern (cf. Joshua 14:6; Joshua 21:1). Yet clear examples of approaching God the judge are evidenced, i.e. coming into a courtroom prepared to argue a case (Genesis 18:23). God summons men to come and hear his pronouncement (Joshua 3:9). This image of a courtroom is used forcibly by the prophet Isaiah to call Israel and the nations into account (Isaiah 41:1, 21; Isaiah 45:20-21). The servant of the Lord boldly proclaims God as his advocate before his enemies. He has no fear of being proven wrong (Isaiah 50:8). God sits as judge over his people (Joshua 3:9), and he designates men to represent him in this capacity (Exodus 24:14; Deut. 25:1). Elijah calls the people into court as witnesses in his controversy with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:30). Men also are to approach God the great king and judge as the great and holy savior. Hence our word is used cultically. To approach God properly requires purification (Exodus 19:22; Exodus 20:21; Exodus 28:43; Exodus 30:20; Leviticus 21:21) and appointment (e.g. Numbers



4:19). Our word is used interchangeably with qārab I (q.v.), representing both the presentation of an offering to the priests (Leviticus 8:14) and their presenting it before God (Leviticus 2:8). Like Jeremiah (Jeremiah 12:2, qārab), Isaiah (Isaiah 29:13) reports God's displeasure at his people being close to him with their mouths, and far removed in their hearts. Malachi uses our word six times and always in the sense of making an offering (e.g. Malachi 1:7-8). The root, like qārab I, is used of sexual relations in Exodus 19:15. (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

**Nagash** - 112v - approach(7), approached(12), bring(10), bring here(1), bring forth(1), bring forward(1), bring near(2), bringing(1), brought(10), brought close(2), came close(2), came closer(1), came forward(1), came near(18), come(3), come close(2), come closer(1), come forward(1), come near(14), coming near(1), draw near(7), drew near(5), go(2), go near(3), here(1), make room(1), near(1), offered\*(1), overtake(2), present(4), presented(1), presenting(1), presents(1), put(1), set forth(1), stand(1), touch(1), went(1). Gen. 18:23; Gen. 19:9; Gen. 27:21; Gen. 27:22; Gen. 27:25; Gen. 27:26; Gen. 27:27; Gen. 29:10; Gen. 33:3; Gen. 33:6; Gen. 33:7; Gen. 43:19; Gen. 44:18; Gen. 45:4; Gen. 48:10; Gen. 48:13; Exod. 19:15; Exod. 19:22; Exod. 20:21; Exod. 21:6; Exod. 24:2; Exod. 24:14; Exod. 28:43; Exod. 30:20; Exod. 32:6; Exod. 34:30; Exod. 34:32; Lev. 2:8; Lev. 8:14; Lev. 21:21; Lev. 21:23; Num. 4:19; Num. 8:19; Num. 32:16; Deut. 20:2; Deut. 21:5; Deut. 25:1; Deut. 25:9; Jos. 3:9; Jos. 8:11; Jos. 14:6; Jos. 21:1; Jdg. 6:19; Jdg. 9:52; Jdg. 20:23; Ruth 2:14; 1 Sam. 7:10; 1 Sam. 9:18; 1 Sam. 13:9; 1 Sam. 14:18; 1 Sam. 14:34; 1 Sam. 14:38; 1 Sam. 15:32; 1 Sam. 17:16; 1 Sam. 17:40; 1 Sam. 23:9; 1 Sam. 28:25; 1 Sam. 30:7; 1 Sam. 30:21; 2 Sam. 1:15; 2 Sam. 3:34; 2 Sam. 10:13; 2 Sam. 11:20; 2 Sam. 11:21; 2 Sam. 13:11; 2 Sam. 17:28; 1 Ki. 4:21; 1 Ki. 18:21; 1 Ki. 18:30; 1 Ki. 18:36; 1 Ki. 20:13; 1 Ki. 20:22; 1 Ki. 20:28; 1 Ki. 22:24; 2 Ki. 2:5; 2 Ki. 4:5; 2 Ki. 4:6; 2 Ki. 4:27; 2 Ki. 5:13; 1 Chr. 19:14; 2 Chr. 18:23; 2 Chr. 29:23; 2 Chr. 29:31; Ezr. 4:2; Ezr. 9:1; Job 40:19; Job 41:16; Ps. 91:7; Isa. 29:13; Isa. 41:1; Isa. 41:21; Isa. 41:22; Isa. 45:20; Isa. 45:21; Isa. 49:20; Isa. 50:8; Isa. 65:5; Jer. 30:21; Jer. 42:1; Jer. 46:3; Ezek. 9:6; Ezek. 44:13; Joel 3:9; Amos 5:25; Amos 6:3; Amos 9:10; Amos 9:13; Mal. 1:7; Mal. 1:8; Mal. 1:11; Mal. 2:12; Mal. 3:3

**Exodus 19:16 So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled.**

- **thunder** - Ex 9:23,28,29 20:18 1Sa 12:17,18 Job 37:1-5 38:25 Ps 18:11-14 Ps 29:3-11 50:3 77:18 97:4 Heb 12:18,19 Rev 4:5 8:5 11:19
- **thick cloud** - Ex 19:9 Ex 40:34 2Ch 5:14
- **sound of the trumpet** - Rev 1:10 4:1
- **all the people** - Jer 5:22 Heb 12:21
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THUNDER AND LIGHTNING ON THE THIRD DAY

**So it came about on the third day when it was morning that there were thunder and lightning flashes-**This scene serves to emphasize the greatness, power and awesomeness of Jehovah. In Ex 19:13 we see the people are summoned by the blast of the ram's horn, but here they are in effect summoned by the thunder and lightning from God.

A similar scene is encountered in Exodus 20

All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood at a distance. (Ex 20:18+)

**Matthew Henry** - The introductions to the service were thunders and lightnings. These were designed to strike an awe upon the people, and to raise and engage their attention. Were they asleep? The thunders would awaken them. Were they looking another way? The lightnings would engage them to turn their faces towards him that spoke to them. Thunder and lightning have natural causes, but the scripture directs us in a particular manner to take notice of the power of God, and his terror, in them. Thunder is the voice of God, and lightning the fire of God, proper to engage the senses of sight and hearing, those senses by which we receive so much of our information.

**And a thick cloud upon the mountain** - More clear manifestation of the greatness of God! Recall Jehovah's promise "Behold, I will come to you in a **thick cloud**, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever." (Ex 19:9)

**And a very loud trumpet sound** - This is not a trumpet from the camp but a different trumpet (**shophar**) sound than in Ex 19:13 "When the ram's horn sounds a long blast," for there the word ([yobel](#)) is different than in this verse. Also the text couples this **very loud trumpet sound** with the thunder, lightning and thick cloud, so that the first horn is blown by men, but the second horn not by men (? angel trumpeters). As aside the trumpet sound would strongly weigh against the naturalistic explanation that the phenomena described here on Mount Sinai were related to the eruption of a volcanic mountain. Natural men are constantly trying to explain the supernatural, but that is why it is called "[super](#)" (above, beyond) natural!

**Trumpet** ([07782](#))(**shophar**) a trumpet or horn made out of a curved ram's horn hollowed out for blowing. It was not used as a musical instrument but rather served a number of functions centering upon summoning such as to signal a time of meeting together or a significant event, especially at Sinai (Ex. 19:16, 19; Lev. 25:9; Josh. 6:4-6, 8, 9, 13, 16, 20). The **shôphâr** announced movements of the Ark of the Covenant (1 Chr. 15:28). It was used at the time of proclaiming a new king in Israel (1 Ki. 1:34, 39, 41; 2 Ki. 9:13). It was sounded at the celebration of God as King over all the earth (Ps. 47:5). It also warned of approaching danger (Hos. 5:8; 8:1); especially the Day of the Lord (Joel 2:1, 15). The shôphâr was used to announce ritual events and to herald the Year of Jubilee (Lev. 25:9). It was employed to denote a fast before Yahweh, to avoid the effect of Yahweh's blow of the shôphâr announcing his attack on Judah through repentance (Joel 2). The shôphâr was also used to announce the establishment of a legally binding oath to worship Yahweh, to summon Yahweh as a witness (2 Chr. 15:14). "The usage of the noun was restricted to environments in which Yahweh was present, either as a participant or an observer of events which were done to appease Him." (Gilbrant)

**Shophar** - 63v - Ex 19:16; Ex 19:19; Ex 20:18; Lev. 25:9; Jos. 6:4; Jos. 6:5; Jos. 6:6; Jos. 6:8; Jos. 6:9; Jos. 6:13; Jos. 6:16; Jos. 6:20; Jdg. 3:27; Jdg. 6:34; Jdg. 7:8; Jdg. 7:16; Jdg. 7:18; Jdg. 7:19; Jdg. 7:20; Jdg. 7:22; 1 Sam. 13:3; 2 Sam. 2:28; 2 Sam. 6:15; 2 Sam. 15:10; 2 Sam. 18:16; 2 Sam. 20:1; 2 Sam. 20:22; 1 Ki. 1:34; 1 Ki. 1:39; 1 Ki. 1:41; 2 Ki. 9:13; 1 Chr. 15:28; 2 Chr. 15:14; Neh. 4:18; Neh. 4:20; Job 39:24; Job 39:25; Ps. 47:5; Ps. 81:3; Ps. 98:6; Ps. 150:3; Isa. 18:3; Isa. 27:13; Isa. 58:1; Jer. 4:5; Jer. 4:19; Jer. 4:21; Jer. 6:1; Jer. 6:17; Jer. 42:14; Jer. 51:27; Ezek. 33:3; Ezek. 33:4; Ezek. 33:5; Ezek. 33:6; Hos. 5:8; Hos. 8:1; Joel 2:1; Joel 2:15; Amos 2:2; Amos 3:6; Zeph. 1:16; Zech. 9:14

**So that** - This [term of purpose/result](#) summarizes the result - a whole lot of shaking going in the camp of the sons of Israel!

**All the people who were in the camp trembled** - This is real fear of God, the shaking kind of fear! This is not the same type of fear described in Dt 4:10 when Moses declared "Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words **so they may learn to fear Me** all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.'" The latter **fear** is what we would refer to as reverential fear, but even a reverential fear always has an element of a trembling type of fear. The verb **trembled** ([charad](#)) in the imperfect tense (over and over they were shaking with fear!) and is translated in the Septuagint with the verb ptoeo which means to be terrified, alarmed, frightened (used in Lk 12:4+, Lk 21:9+; Lk 24:37+). To give you a sense of the great fear in the people note that this same verb ([charad](#)) is used in Ex 19:18 describing "the whole mountain **shaking violently**!"

While the sons of Israel **trembled** Matthew Henry comments that when "the mountains saw YAHWEH, and trembled and were witnesses against a hard-hearted unmoved people, whom nothing would influence." In other words Henry is saying though the people trembled, they had a serious heart problem for their hearts remained hardened and they went astray in their hearts as described by the Psalmist

Do not **harden your hearts**, as at Meribah, As in the day of Massah in the wilderness, 9 "When your fathers tested Me, They tried (TESTED - Ex 17:2, 7+) Me, though they had seen My work. 10 "For forty years I loathed that generation, And said they are a people **who err in their heart**, And they do not know My ways (THIS IS THE MOST CONDEMNING STATEMENT - THEY DID NOT **KNOW** JEHOVAH). 11 "Therefore I swore in My anger, Truly they shall not enter into My rest." (Ps 95:8-11).

**Comment** - In short, they had hearts of **unbelief** for "to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were **disobedient**?" So we see that they were not able to enter because of **unbelief**." (Heb 3:18-19+)

**Trembled** (were startled frightened, made afraid, terrified) ([02729](#))([charad](#)) conveys the the idea of movement resulting from agitation, usually trembling coming from emotional trauma as when Isaac realized Jacob had deceived him and received Esau's blessing (Ge 27:33) or when Joseph's brothers who had abandoned him in a pit met him in Egypt (Ge 42:28). In the future [Millennium](#) Israel will forget her disgrace and treachery against Yahweh and will live securely in the promised land "with no one to **make them afraid**." (Ezek 39:26+, cf Micah 4:4+, cf Mic 4:1-3, also Zeph 3:13+) It can describe the shaking of a mountain or the flitting of a bird, but it is most commonly used to describe trembling or shuddering from some sort of fear. It means to

tremble, quake or shudder and describes human trembling before some strange or fearsome event. For example after Jonathan and his armor bearer had slaughtered about 20 Philistines, "there was a **trembling** (noun form **charadah**) in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. Even the garrison and the raiders **trembled** (verb - **charad**), and the earth quaked so that it became a great **trembling** (noun form **charadah**)" (1Sa 14:15, cf Da 10:7).

**Stuart** - The fact that "everyone in the camp trembled" reflects not merely the combination of impressive sights and sounds (and perhaps already the impressive sensation of the earth trembling, if the mention of the mountain's trembling in v. 18 is intended as further description of what had been going on all morning, not just what happened subsequently) but the realization of God's impending presence and the dangers associated with it. (See context in [Exodus](#))

**Exodus 19:17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.**

- De 4:10 Dt 5:5
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES MEDIATES ISRAEL MEETING GOD

**And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God**- In Ex 19:13 when they heard the horn they were to come out to mountain. But here it says **Moses brought** them out, implying they were too frightened to assemble at the blast of the ram's horn.

**And they stood at the foot of the mountain** - In Deuteronomy Moses said he was "standing between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain." (Dt 5:5)

**Stuart** - The trip from the Israelite encampment near the mountain to the foot of the mountain itself may have taken some hours, as the thousands of Israelites moved in organized fashion behind Moses. It is not clear whether they ringed the entire mountain or merely gathered around the base of one side, though the latter seems more probable....Gathering together in one large body at the foot of the mountain may also have made it easier to keep the rule about not breaching the boundaries, since everyone was able to watch everyone else under such conditions, as opposed to having the people scattered around the entire base of the mountain where isolated groups or individuals might have been tempted in the absence of oversight to go partway up the slope for shade, a better view, or the like. (See context in [Exodus](#))

**Guzik** - At the sound of the trumpet, Moses led the people up to the barrier at the base of Mount Sinai, where they could see, smell, hear, and virtually taste the fire which covered the mountain—as well as feel the earth shake under their feet when the whole mountain quaked greatly. ([Exodus 19](#))

**Exodus 19:18 Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.**

- Ex 19:13 Isa 6:4 Rev 15:8
- **mount Sinai** - Ex 20:18 De 4:11,12 Dt 5:22 Dt 33:2 Jdg 5:5 Ps 68:7,8 104:32 144:5
- **in fire** - Ex 3:2 24:17 2Ch 7:1-3 2Th 1:8 2Pe 3:10
- **smoke** - Ge 15:17 19:28 Ps 144:5 Rev 15:8
- **whole** - 1Ki 19:11,12 Ps 68:8 77:18 114:7 Jer 4:24 Na 1:5,6 Zec 14:5 Mt 24:7 Heb 12:26
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Mt Sinai by Eizen

## MOUNT SINAI SMOKING AND SHAKING

**Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently** - It seems almost irreverent to comment on this verse and as startling as the picture above is, even it does not do this description justice! Mount Sinai was Jehovah's "pulpit" with the thick cloud overhanging it. The Hebrew word for quaked is same word in the description when the people **trembled** (Ex 19:16).

**Stuart** - "As for Mount Sinai, smoke, all of it," suggesting that when the Israelites looked up the mountain, they saw virtually the whole engulfed in smoke rather than simply seeing smoke surrounding the pinnacle. ...Descriptions of other storm theophanies not uncommonly include earthquakes as well. E.g., Judg 5:4; 2 Sa 22:8 = Ps 18:7; 1 Kgs 19:11; Ps 68:8; 77:18; 29:6; sometimes the theophany is not per se a storm theophany but still involves an earthquake, as in Zech 14:5. All this was accompanied by the sound of the horn/trumpet, apparently concomitant with the conversation of Moses and Yahweh (a better translation of v. 19 might be, "Then as the sound of the trumpet kept getting much louder, Moses was speaking and God was answering him"). The Israelites saw all of this happening at once. (See context in [Exodus](#))

The writer of Judges says

"The mountains quaked at the presence of the LORD, This Sinai, at the presence of the LORD, the God of Israel." (Jdg 5:5+)

The writer of Hebrews alludes to this incredible, indescribable scene

See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven. 26 And His voice shook the earth then, but now He has promised, saying, "YET ONCE MORE I WILL SHAKE NOT ONLY THE EARTH, BUT ALSO THE HEAVEN." 27 This expression, "Yet once more," denotes the removing of those things which can be shaken, as of created things, so that those things which cannot be shaken may remain. 28 Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; 29 for our God is a consuming fire. (Heb 12:24-29+)

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Handfuls of Purpose - James Smith

## THE GIVING OF THE LAW

Exodus 19; 20

The prophetic and priestly character of Moses as a type of Christ comes out very clearly here. As a prophet He tells the people "words which the Lord commanded" (chap. 19:7). As a priest He tells the "words of the people unto the Lord" (v. 9). As a prophet Christ reveals to us the will of God, as a priest He makes intercession for us. The giving of the law was accompanied with all the solemn symbols of its terrible, yet holy character (chap. 19:16). The giving of the Spirit at Pentecost was also accompanied with the signs that ought to characterise this present dispensation (Acts 2:4). Both dispensations have a special ministry. The law was given to reveal sin (Rom. 7:7), the Spirit came to reveal the Saviour and give dominion over sin. Look at the order—

I. The Solemn Promise. "The people answered, All that the Lord hath promised we will do" (chap. 19:8). What an outburst of self-conceit and ignorance! Until the greatness and holiness of God is seen, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin felt, man is ever ready to make his empty promises to God. The young ruler is a typical case (Mark 10:17–22).

II. The Divine Purpose. "Lo, I come" (chap. 19:9). "To prove you" (chap. 20:20). The people had agreed to do His will, now He comes to prove them. Those who would be saved by their work have a severe and fiery trial to undergo. They must meet God as a righteous Judge, not as a merciful Father. "The law is holy, just, and good," a perfect standard. It is the divine measure whereby the character of man is proved and tested. It is the fan in the hand of God the Spirit that separates the chaff from the wheat with infallible rectitude. The law, like a fan, cannot show mercy. It sifts, proves, justifies, or condemns. It is an officer to drive us into the school of Christ.

III. The Needful Preparation. "Be ye ready, for the Lord will come, whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death" (chap. 19:11, 12). The Lord was coming to prove them; a note of warning was given that much preparation was needed. "Prepare to meet thy God" (Amos 4:12). Holy, holy, holy is the Lord. If one but touch the mount he shall die. "He that offendeth in one point is guilty of all" (James 2:10). Only touch a forbidden thing and the sentence of death is passed upon you. Because sin (not sins) has entered the world death has entered. "The soul that sinneth it shall die." How can a man be just with God? Never "by the deeds of the law" (Rom. 3:20).

IV. The Awful Presence. "The Lord came down" (chap. 19:16–20). His coming by the law is heralded by a sevenfold, or perfect expression of His terribleness. "Thunder, lightning, cloud, fire, smoke, quaking, trumpet." There is nothing here to encourage, attract, or pacify. Such is His character as the JUDGE. Here we have no blood of ATONEMENT, so there is no hope for man this way. Alas, for the bloodless theology of the present day (Heb. 9:22). Who shall be able to stand when He appeareth? "Our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29).

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- **when** - Ex 19:13,16
- **Moses** - Heb 12:21
- **God** - Ps 81:7
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

TRUMPET - SHOFAR

## GOD DIALOGUES WITH MOSES IN A VOICE OF THUNDER!

**When the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder** - It was a "very loud trumpet sound" in Ex 19:16, but here Moses records it **grew louder and louder**! The idea is the trumpet became very loud—continually! Who blew the shofar? Very likely it was the angels (cf the angelic trumpets sounding in Rev 8:6-7ff+). In Deut 33:2 Moses recorded "The LORD came from Sinai, And dawned on them from Seir; He shone forth from Mount Paran, And He came from the midst of **ten thousand holy ones**; At His right hand there was flashing lightning for them." **Henry Morris** comments on Dt 33:2 writing "Evidently there were myriads of holy ones with God on Mount Sinai as His right hand wrote the commandments for Israel on tables of stone. Note also references to angels at the giving of the law in Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19; and Hebrews 2:2." Nelson's NKJV Study Bible notes agree writing "God came down to Israel and revealed His covenant and law to them at Mt. Sinai. Poetically, Moses referred to Seir and Paran located northeast of Mt. Sinai. With these references, Moses implied that God's revelation took place throughout the whole wilderness journey (Judg. 5:4, 5). ten thousands of saints: Angelic beings attended the giving of the law (compare Acts 7:53; Gal. 3:19; Heb. 2:2)."

**Stuart** - This is the beginning of the extended encounter with God at Sinai that Moses would experience, earning him the distinction of being the prophet with whom God spoke "face to face" (Exod 33:11; Deut 34:10). (Ibid)

**Trumpet** (horn, ram's horn) (07782) (**shophar/shopar/sopar**) is masculine noun referring to a trumpet or a ram's horn and is made out of a curved ram's horn. At Mt Sinai the trumpet was the signal that Israel could approach the awesome site (Ex 19:16; 19; 20:18). It was used to signal the year of Jubilee (Lev 25:9). Seven trumpets were to be carried before the Ark of the Covenant as the priests and blown on the seventh day after marching around the city seven times (Josh 6:4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 16, 20). The trumpet was used by Gideon and his men to route the enemy (Jdg 7:8, 16, 18-20, 22). In short, these first three uses of the shophar were all associated with miraculous events! The shophar was sounded to announce a new king in Israel (1 Ki. 1:34, 39, 41; 2 Ki. 9:13). The trumpet was sounded at the celebration of God as King over all the earth (Ps. 47:5). The trumpet sound was used to warn of approaching danger (Hos. 5:8; 8:1), and in Joel, to warn of the dread Day of the Lord (Joel 2:1, 15).

**Mills** - The Old and New Testaments use the trumpet as the **symbol of God's intervention in history** (e.g., Ex. 19:16, 19; Isa. 27:13; Joel 2:1; Zep. 1:16; Zec. 9:14; Mat. 24:31; 1Cor. 15:52-53; 1Th. 4:16). A trumpet blast can mean one of three things in Scripture: **first**, an alarm; **second**, a fanfare to announce royalty; **third**, a summons to battle.

## ISRAEL HEARS JEHOVAH SPEAK FROM MOUNT SINAI

**Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder** - **Spoke** and **answered** are both in the imperfect tense emphasizing repeated action. S. R. Driver translates it "kept speaking" and "kept answering." One pictures a divine dialogue between Yahweh and Moses! Amazing grace indeed! Recall that in Exodus 19:9 "The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that **the people may hear when I speak with you** and may also believe in you forever." So the purpose was that Israel might hear Yahweh speaking with Moses. This should have engendered a healthy fear of the LORD and a healthy respect for Moses!

The question arises as how did the LORD speaking to Moses in thunder provide him with an answer he could comprehend as well as the people in Ex 19:9? One solution is that the Hebrew word for **thunder** (qol) is used over 400x and almost 300x is translated as **voice**. The **NAS** has a marginal note on "**thunder**" which says "or **a voice**; literally **a sound**." Another passage in Deut 4:12 says "**Then the LORD spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form—only a voice.**" In this Deuteronomy passage Moses was reminding Israel that when God revealed Himself at Sinai, His presence came through His voice or the sound of His words and that they did not see Him. **Cassuto** concludes that Yahweh "was answering him with a loud voice so that it was possible for Moses to hear His words clearly in the midst of the storm."

As alluded to above, the writer of Hebrews apparently describes this scene "And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling." (Heb 12:20,21<sup>+</sup>) Even Moses was fearful at this demonstration of the glorious manifestation of the LORD!

**Exodus 19:20 The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up.**

- **The LORD came down on Mount Sinai** - Ex 19:11 Ne 9:13 Ps 81:7
- **Moses went up** - Ex 19:3 Ex 24:12,13,18 Ex 34:2,4 De 9:9
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **YAHWEH COMES DOWN CALLS MOSES UP!**

**The LORD came down on Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain-** Earlier recall that "on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people." (Ex 19:11)

Nehemiah 9:13 "Then (CONTEXT - Neh 9:12) You came down on Mount Sinai, And spoke with them from heaven; You gave them just ordinances and true laws, Good statutes and commandments.

**And the LORD called Moses to the top of the mountain and Moses went up-** [See table summarizing Moses' movement](#) up and down the mountain numerous times. Moses was 80+ years but he was in good shape and had to be to go up and down the mountain. Here Yahweh calls him up to tell him to go down (Ex 19:21)! One can only imagine the courage that Moses must have had to summon up to go up into such an awesome scene!

**Exodus 19:21 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, 'Go down, warn the people, so that they do not break through to the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish.**

- **warn the people-** Ex 19:12,13
- **break** - Ex 3:3,5 33:20 1Sa 6:19 Ec 5:1 Heb 12:28,29
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **ANOTHER TRESPASS WARNING**

**Then the LORD spoke to Moses** - Moses had just come up but Yahweh is going to reverse Moses' path.

**Go down, warn the people** - [See table summarizing Moses' movement](#) up and down the mountain numerous times. Yahweh gives Moses 2 commands here for the people and in the next passage instructions for the priests. Warn is an interesting Hebrew verb ([ud](#)) which means to bear witness to them, in a sense to put them under oath or solemnly warn them (Septuagint = [diamarturomai](#) in [aorist imperative](#) = "Don't delay! Solemnly warn then now!" as in 2 Ti 4:1<sup>+</sup>)

**So that** - Term of purpose. What purpose? Clearly to warn the people lest they die.

**They do not break through to the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish** -No sooner had Moses got up a little way towards the top of the mount than he was sent down again to keep the people from breaking through to **gaze**. Their curiosity might tempt them to look to try to see a form and the Septuagint translates Hebrew for gaze ( ) the verb katanoeo which speaks of intense sensory perception (in other words not just a passing glance but an attentive fixing of their eyes in an attempt to see a divine form). God forbids them to do this and thus the severe penalty imposed. The Hebrew word for **break through** ([haras](#)) is not the same as the verb **break out** ([parats](#)) in Ex 19:22. **Perish** is literally fall, which the **NAB** paraphrases "be struck down."

**Exodus 19:22 "Also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves, or else the LORD will break out against them."**



- **the priests** - Ex 24:5 Lev 10:1-3 Isa 52:11
- **consecrate** - Ex 19:5,14,15
- **break out** - 2Sa 6:6-8 1Ch 13:9-11 15:13 2Ch 30:3,15,18,19 Ac 5:5,10 1Co 11:30-32
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PRIEST MUST CONSECRATE

**Also let the priests who come near to the LORD consecrate themselves-** This is the first mention of Hebrew priests (Jethro was a Midianite priest Ex 2:16, Ex 3:1, Ex 18:1). Priests are described in more detail later in Exodus, but it appears that the priesthood had in some manner been instituted at this time. The important point to emphasize is that the priests were those who would stand before God for the people. And standing before God is not to be seen as a mundane ritualistic event, but in fact as the greatest opportunity afforded a sinful being. Entering into the presence of the holy One requires proper preparation of life, and especially of their heart.

**Consecrate** (Sanctify, make holy) (06942) see note above on [gadash](#) (Septuagint - Lxx = [hagiozo](#)) In the Septuagint of this verse [hagiozo](#) is a command in the [aorist imperative](#) (do it now!)

**Or else the LORD will break out against them-** What does **break out** picture? Was a plague threatened? Was it descriptive of an angel like at Passover? Or was it some other form of death? The text does not give us a specific description, but the result is clear stating that many would potentially **perish** (Ex 19:21). The priesthood was deadly serious business (pun intended) and necessitated them to be holy to come near to the Holy LORD! The verb for break out is the same used in the death of Uzzah when "David became angry because of the LORD'S outburst (literally "*the LORD broke out* [[parats](#)] *with a breaking out* [cognate noun - [peres](#)]) against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day." (2 Sa 6:8 - see [Why did God strike Uzzah dead for touching the Ark of the Covenant?](#))

**Break out** (06555) ([parats](#)) is used some fifty times in the OT, often in a military or disaster situation. When God is the subject, AS IN THIS PASSAGE **parats** describes God's punitive activity upon Israel herself (1Ch 15:13; Isa 5:5; Ps 60:1; Ps 80:12, Ps 89:40); upon one of her priests (Ex 19:22, 24); upon an individual (2Sa 6:8; Job 16:14 ); upon a recalcitrant king (2Ch 20:37 ); upon Israel's enemies (2Sa 5:20 ; 1Ch 14:11). **Parats** speaks of power that sweeps all obstacles before it, effectively undermining and demolishing all that would resist it. It is a presentation of the LORD as a warrior overthrowing His enemies (Isa. 42:13; Jer. 9:16-19). Here in Ex 19:22 [parats](#) is translated in the Septuagint with the verb [apallasso](#) which can actually mean to deliver but Liddell-Scott says can have the meaning of to put away or remove a thing (in Ex 19:22 the "thing" is their life!) from a person.

We later see of Yahweh **breaking out** against two priests who did not consecrate themselves or their offering ("strange fire")...

Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took their respective firepans, and after putting fire in them, placed incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which He had not commanded them. 2 And fire came out from the presence of the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD. 3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "It is what the LORD spoke, saying, 'By those who come near Me I will be treated as holy, And before all the people I will be honored.'" So Aaron, therefore, kept silent. (Lev 10:1-3+)

**Exodus 19:23 Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You warned us, saying, 'Set bounds about the mountain and consecrate it.'"**

NET Exodus 19:23 Moses said to the LORD, "The people are not able to come up to Mount Sinai, because you solemnly warned us, 'Set boundaries for the mountain and set it apart.'"

NLT Exodus 19:23 "But LORD," Moses protested, "the people cannot come up to Mount Sinai. You already warned us. You told me, 'Mark off a boundary all around the mountain to set it apart as holy.'"

ESV Exodus 19:23 And Moses said to the LORD, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for you yourself warned us, saying, 'Set limits around the mountain and consecrate it.'"

- **Set bounds** - Ex 19:12 Jos 3:4,5
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES SAYS YOU ALREADY WARNED US!

**Moses said to the LORD** - In response to the LORD's commands **Go down, warn the people** (and the priests) Moses says that the LORD had already given them this same warning in Ex 19:12. The **NLT** paraphrases this verse "You already warned us. You told me, 'Mark off a boundary all around the mountain to set it apart as holy.'" The people needed to fully understand that even though Moses and Aaron had been allowed to go up, this was not an open invitation to the rest of Israel!

**The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai, for You warned us, saying, 'Set bounds about the mountain and consecrate it-**  
NLT = "set it apart as holy." NET Note explains that "Moses' response to God is to ask how they would break through when God had already charged them not to. God knew them better than Moses did!". ([Notes](#))

Note Moses adds one detail not found in Ex 19:12, equating the setting of bounds around the mountain with consecrating the mountain or making it holy (Septuagint = [hagiazō](#) - make holy, sanctify).

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### TRUE WORTH-SHIP

Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling (Psalm 2:11).

My father was a stickler for showing reverence to God. He became indignant when someone quoted a Bible verse in a humorous vein or referred to God lightly. He insisted that all his children sit up straight when he read the Bible at the table, which he did at every meal. He addressed the Lord in a manner that demonstrated his wonder that we as sinful creatures could communicate with the holy Maker of all things. Thus, he instilled in all eight of his sons a healthy fear of God—an attitude that led to sincere worship and grateful obedience.

The Almighty God wants us to call Him "Father," and He invites us to come boldly into His presence. Yet hundreds of Bible passages in both the Old and the New Testaments make it clear that we must never lose an attitude of reverential awe. Exodus 19 records a unique combination of awesome events that gave the Israelites a proper sense of reverence. God caused a huge fire to rise from the top of the mountain. He produced deafening roars of rolling thunder and blinding flashes of fierce lightning. He made the mountain quake. He generated a trumpet sound that grew louder and louder. And the sound of His voice when He spoke to Moses filled the people with profound respect and reverential fear.

How great and holy is our God. How small and weak are we humans. A continual awareness of this contrast will cause us to "serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling." —Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread](#). Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

True worship acknowledges the true worth-ship of God.

**Exodus 19:24 Then the LORD said to him, "Go down and come up again, you and Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, or He will break forth upon them."**

- **you and Aaron with you** - Ex 19:20
- **but do not let the priests**- Ex 19:12,21 Mt 11:12 Lu 13:24 16:16 Joh 1:17 Heb 4:16 10:19-22 Heb 12:18-25,29
- **He will break forth upon them** - Ex 19:22 Ro 4:15 2Co 3:7-9 Ga 3:10,11,19,22
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## IF PEOPLE BREAK THROUGH JEHOVAH WILL BREAK OUT!

**Then** - This marks progression in the scene.

**The LORD said to him go down and come up again, you and Aaron with you** - [See table summarizing Moses' movement](#) up and down the mountain numerous times. Moses summoned up Mount Sinai again.

**Stuart** comments that "The command to "go down and bring Aaron up with you" must not be understood to mean "bring Aaron up with you right away" but rather represents part of the plan for eventually bringing Aaron and others (the high priestly family and elders, 24:1–4; Joshua, 24:13) up the mountain on subsequent occasions. It was, in other words, a call for Aaron to ascend the

mountain with Moses the next time Moses went back up rather than an indication that Aaron would either immediately or always be with Moses when he was atop Sinai." (See context in [Exodus](#))

**But do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, or He will break forth upon them-** As noted above the word describing the danger that the people might **break through** ([haras](#)) is not the same as the word describing what would have if Yahweh broke **forth** ([parats](#)) **upon them**.

**Stuart** - Under normal conditions even specially sanctified people (Ex 19:10–11, 14–15) can come only somewhat near his presence, but with God's own permission, some can more closely enter his presence. For God to be willing to enter their presence, dwelling within them, would be extraordinary under the terms of the Old Covenant relationship of God with his people but, *mirabile dictu*, is routine in the New Covenant. Thus Jesus asserted that great as John the Baptist was among the Old Covenant worthies, the least individual in the kingdom of heaven is even greater because the indwelling of God through his Spirit is such a spiritual advantage for any person, an advantage uniformly granted in the New Covenant to all converts, not just those of distinction (Matt 11:11 and par). Possession of the Spirit and access to God are hallmarks of the superiority of the New Covenant to the Old. (Ibid)

**Guzik** comments that "The whole idea at Sinai was exclusion. Exodus 19 describes the awe and fear each Israelite must have felt at Mount Sinai. It is easy to think that this alone inspired them to a holy lifestyle. 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." "Awe is one thing: the submission of the will is another." (Chadwick) Israel had plenty of awe, but little submission of their will. ([Exodus 19](#))

**Matthew Henry** has an interesting comment - In divine things we must not covet to know more than God would have us know; and he has allowed us as much as is good for us. A desire of forbidden knowledge was the ruin of our first parents. Those that would be wise above what is written, and intrude into those things which they have not seen, need this admonition, that they *break not through to gaze*. The restraints and warnings of the divine law are all intended for our good, and to keep us out of that danger into which we should otherwise, by our own folly, run ourselves. (2.) It is at our peril if we break the bounds that God has set us, and intrude upon that which he has not allowed us; the Bethshemites and Uzzah paid dearly for their presumption. And, even when we are called to approach God, we must remember that he is in heaven and we upon earth, and therefore it behoves us to exercise reverence and godly fear.

#### Exodus 19:25 So Moses went down to the people and told them.

- Ex 19:24
- Exodus 19 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE END OF THE "PRE-LAW" NARRATIVE

**So Moses went down to the people and told them** - [See table summarizing Moses' movement](#) up and down the mountain numerous times. He told them they were not to not to break through the boundary set around the mountain and gaze at the sight or they would die (Ex 19:21<sup>±</sup>).

**NET Note** - The passage has many themes and emphases that could be developed in exposition. It could serve for meditation: the theology drawn from the three parts could be subordinated to the theme of holiness: God is holy, therefore adhere to his word for service, approach him through a mediator, and adore him in purity and fearful reverence. A developed outline for the exposition could be: **I.** If the people of God will obey him, they will be privileged to serve in a unique way (Ex 19:1–8); **II.** If the people of God are to obey, they must be convinced of the divine source of their commands (Ex 19:9); and finally, **III.** If the people of God are convinced of the divine approval of their mediator, and the divine source of their instructions, they must sanctify themselves before him (Ex 19:10–25). In sum, the manifestation of the holiness of Yahweh is the reason for sanctification and worship. The correlation is to be made through 1 Peter 2 to the church. The Church is a kingdom of priests; it is to obey the Word of God. What is the motivation for this? Their mediator is Jesus Christ; he has the approval of the Father and manifests the glory of God to his own; and he declares the purpose of their calling is to display his glory. God's people are to abstain from sin so that pagans can see their good works and glorify God. ([Notes](#))

## COMPARISON OF MOUNT SINAI

## WITH MOUNT ZION

Table is made from notes by David Guzik ([Exodus 19](#))

Hebrews 12:18–24<sup>+</sup> says clearly that under the New Covenant we come to a different mountain, that our salvation and relationship with God is centered at Mt Zion not Mount Sinai

Hebrews 12:18-24<sup>+</sup> For you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, 19 and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. 20 For they could not bear the command, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED." 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling." 22 But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

COMPARISON OF MOUNT SINAI WITH MOUNT ZION	
Mount Sinai	Heavenly Mount Zion
Fear and terror	Love and forgiveness
A dry desert	City of the Living God
Earthly	Heavenly and spiritual
Only Moses could meet God	Innumerable company a general assembly
Guilty men in fear	Just men made perfect
Moses the mediator	Jesus the mediator.
Old Covenant, ratified by the blood of animals	New Covenant, ratified by the blood of the Son of God
All about barriers and exclusion	All about invitation
All about Law,	All about grace

**David Guzik** comments - Therefore, we shouldn't come to Zion as if coming to Sinai. We must put away our hesitation and get bold in coming to God. Even so, there is much for us to learn at Mount Sinai. We learn of God's holy requirements and what we have to do before we can come to Him. In a similar manner to those at Mount Sinai, there are things we must do to meet with God. ([Exodus 19](#))

- We must receive God's word
- We must be set apart
- We must be cleansed
- We can only come after the third day
- We must respect God's boundary
- We must restrain the flesh
- We must know we come to a holy God

**Adam Clarke** - "Reader, art thou still under the influence and condemning power of that fiery law which proceeded from his right hand? Art thou yet afar off? Remember, thou canst only come nigh by the blood of sprinkling; and till justified by his blood, thou art under the curse. Consider the terrible majesty of God. If thou have his favour thou hast life; if his frown, death. Be instantly reconciled to God, for though thou hast deeply sinned, and he is just, yet he is the justifier of him that believeth in Christ Jesus.

Believe on him, receive his salvation; OBEY his voice indeed, and KEEP his covenant, and THEN shalt thou be a king and a priest unto God and the Lamb, and be finally saved with all the power of an endless life. Amen.”