

God's Mountain

Have you ever had a mountaintop experience? What was it like?

Exodus 19:1. On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. 2. They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. There Israel encamped before the mountain, 3. while Moses went up to God. The Lord called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: 4. 'You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; 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 people of Israel."

What did God want the people of Israel to remember (v. 4)? What was God's promise and under what conditions (vs. 5-6)?

1 Peter 2:9. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

How are the passages from Exodus and 1 Peter similar? How are they different?

Exodus 19:7. So Moses came and called the elders of the people and set before them all these words that the Lord had commanded him. 8. All the people answered together and said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." 9. And Moses reported the words of the people to the Lord. And the Lord said to Moses, "Behold, I am coming to you in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe you forever."

What was the peoples' response to the Lord's commands (v. 8)? Why was it important that the people hear God speak to Moses (v. 9)?

Exodus 19:9. When Moses told the words of the people to the Lord, 10. the Lord said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments 11. and 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. 12. And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying, 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death. 13. No hand shall touch him, but he shall be stoned or shot; whether beast or man, he shall not live.' When the trumpet sounds a long blast, they shall come up to the mountain."

Why was it important for the people to be consecrated? Why do you think the people (except for Moses and Aaron) were not allowed to touch or go up the mountain?

Exodus 19:16. On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. 17. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. 18. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly. 19. And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses

spoke, and God answered him in thunder. 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.

How was God's presence on the mountain known? What was the response of the people? What would have been your response? What was the people of Israel to learn from this experience?

Exodus 20:1. And God spoke all these words, saying,

2. "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

3. "You shall have no other gods before me.

4. "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5. You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, 6. but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

8. "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10. but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 11. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

What did God remind the people of Israel (v. 2)? How does that fact relate to the first four commandments? What was God's desire for the people?

Exodus 20:12. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

13. "You shall not murder.

14. "You shall not commit adultery.

15. "You shall not steal.

16. "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's."

What do these commandments relate to? How do they relate to the first four? Why did God give us these commandment or words?

Exodus 20:18. Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off 19. and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die." 20. Moses said to the people, "Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin." 21. The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

Why didn't the people want God to speak directly to them (v. 19)? What did Moses say was God's purpose for the frightening scene? Have you ever been tested by God?