

Sunday, February 11, 2024 pm

JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE (24)

At Mount Sinai - 1

(Exodus 19-24)

Tonight, we continue our journey through the Bible. We have addressed 5 of the 17 time periods of Bible history. In our last lesson, we noted Israel's exodus from Egypt up to their arrival at Mt. Sinai. We discussed leaving Egypt, the Red Sea crossing, YHWH begins to sustain the people providing water for them as well as daily bread (manna). As we concluded, they arrived at Mt. Sinai. They are going to spend the next year there (Num. 10:11-12) and be introduced to God's law for them presented by Moses. While it is not our task to present a detailed discussion of everything that occurred, we do want to notice several things that take place while at Mt. Sinai. We will devote 2-3 lessons to this task.

At Mt. Sinai, Israel will be given the Law that is to govern their conduct, the tabernacle will be built, the Aaronic priesthood will be established. We will also see the people rebelling against God and how Moses intercedes on their behalf. In scripture this time frame is Exodus 19 – Numbers 10.

NOTE: In establishing the history of the Bible, this is a very important section as it sets the groundwork for the rest of the Old Testament.

I. God's Covenant with the people (19)

- a. Exodus 19:1-2, we read that in the 3rd month after leaving Egypt they come to the wilderness of Sinai and they set up their camp.
- b. Moses is instructed to speak to Israel (4-6)
 - i. Vs. 4, "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians..." – He had proven His sovereign power.
 - ii. Vs. 5-6, the promise, "*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. And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*" From the very outset, YHWH promises to treat them as special. They would be to Him DIFFERENT from the rest of creation. ALL nations belonged to Him, BUT Israel would be His chosen FAMILY (Children).
- c. The people respond (7-8) – the people under the direction of the elders, accept the covenant.
- d. The LORD promises to be with Moses (9).
- e. The people are called upon to consecrate themselves – consecrate means to cleanse and set apart (10-15). In 3 days, the LORD was going to appear before them and they needed to be pure. They were to wash their clothes and husbands were not to come near their wives for that time. They were strongly WARNED to not come near the mountain. And boundaries were to be set up. Anyone OR anything who came near was to be put to death. The LORD is saying, "STAY AWAY! You cannot come near Me."
- f. 16-25 – on the 3rd day, the scene on the mountain was terrifying. Thundering and lighting, and thick cloud of smoke. Trumpets sounded and got louder and louder. The LORD descended upon it in fire. Moses was called up to the top of the mountain, but again he was told to warn the people to NOT cross the boundaries.

II. The 10 commandments (20)

- a. God SPOKE the 10 commandments to the people. I am the LORD your God...
- b. You shall have no other gods before Me (3)

- c. You shall not make carved images (4-6). He declares that He is a jealous God (fiercely protective and unaccepting of disloyalty).
- d. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain. (7)
- e. Remember the Sabbath (8-11) Here, it is elaborated upon by noting that God created the world and rested on the seventh day. No work was to be done, including servants and animals.
- f. Honor your father and mother that you days may be long (12)
- g. You shall not murder (13)
- h. You shall not commit adultery (14)
- i. You shall not steal (15)
- j. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor (16)
- k. You shall not covet – your neighbor’s house, wife, servant, animals or anything. (17)
- l. The people respond with great fear (18-21). They trembled and kept their distance. They told Moses, “You speak to us... but do not let God speak to us lest we die.” Moses assures them to not be fearful – “God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.” UNDERSTAND that LORD got their attention in a way they should never forget!

III. Various laws (21-23)

- a. Beginning with Exodus 20:22, a number of miscellaneous laws associated with every aspect of life are mentioned. Many of these will be further developed as the Law was refined. A few that are worthy of note (NOTE: Let me encourage you to read the chapters – if you are following the annual reading, you should have read these chapters this past week).
- b. 20:22-26 – instructions were given to not make gods of silver or gold. AND any alter that was to be built, it was to be of natural materials (with the exception of the altars associated with the tabernacle). NOTE vs. 26, do not build steps, lest your nakedness be exposed – God DID care about modesty!
- c. 21:12-14 – premeditated or deliberate murder was a capital offense (death penalty)
- d. 21:15-17 - So was striking one’s parents, kidnapping, cursing his parents.
- e. 21:22-24 – if men fight and strike a woman with child and the baby dies it called for the death penalty. Injuries also required punishment commensurate with the injuries (eye for eye, etc.). NOTE that “fetus” is considered a human being BY GOD!
- f. Ch. 21:28-22:15 - Laws were given concerning animals and property – just laws.
- g. 22:16-31 gives more moral laws including the death penalty for: sorcery, bestiality & sacrificing to other gods.
- h. Treat strangers with respect remembering that you were a stranger in Egypt (treated well prior to their slavery).
- i. 22:31, “You shall be holy men to Me.” NOTE: This will be elaborated upon extensively in the book of Leviticus.
- j. Chapter 23 deals with showing proper justice to all equally. Do not show partiality, help your neighbor, etc. This is followed by a brief description of Sabbath years (every 7 years they were to let their land rest) and 3 annual feasts they were to observe.

IV. Behold, I send an angel before you (23:20-33).

- a. As Israel prepared to wander toward Canaan, the LORD promised that he would be with them sending His Angel before them and protect them in the land IF they faithfully follow Him.
- b. We find here the first instructions to drive out the idolatrous enemies and have nothing to do with them and their idols. Again, if they obey, God would be with them.

V. Israel affirms their covenant (24:1-8)

- a. Worthy of note is that Moses speaks to the people and then writes down the commands he was given (3-4). He is with Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and 70 elders of the Israel who are approaching toward God on the mountain (Only Moses will actually go).
- b. Moses then in the morning builds an altar at the foot of the mountain and twelve pillars “according to the twelve tribes of Israel.”
- c. They offer burnt offerings and peace offerings to the LORD. Moses takes half the blood and sprinkles it on the altar. Then he takes the “Book of the Covenant” and reads it.
- d. NOTE: The people declare, “All that the LORD has said we will do and be obedient.” This is repeated twice (vs. 3 & 7).
- e. THEN Moses takes the rest of the blood and sprinkles (actually spatters) it on the people, sanctifying them.

VI. Moses goes on the Mountain (24:9-18)

- a. The LORD then invites these leaders to approach Him. They all see His feet (25:10) and ate in His presence.
- b. Then Moses is told to come up on the mountain where the LORD would give him tablets with the law and commandments that He wrote on. Here we are told that Moses was on the mountain with God for 40 days and nights.

VII. Israel breaks the covenant (32). If we move ahead to chapter 32 we find here that Israel breaks the very covenant they had made with God. We will address that in another lesson.

VIII. Lessons to consider:

- a. We are God’s special people. 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9 where some of the very terms YHWH used for Israel are applied to us as His people.
- b. We see the holiness of God manifested on this occasion – Hebrews 12:28-29. NOTE the context leading up to that statement in vs. 18-27. It is a reference to our text.
- c. The 10 commandments were the foundation of Israel’s law. We are NOT under that law today. ***How many of the 10 commandments do we keep today?*** The answer is **NONE!** The law was nailed to the cross (Ephesians 2:14-15, Colossians 2:13-14, 2 Corinthians 3:7 described it as “the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones...” This is CLEARLY the 10 commandments. It was part of the LOM and the rest of that law was based upon it.
- d. What about the argument that we keep 9 or the 10 commandments today? NO! We keep the New Law which repeats 9 of the 10 commandments today. Consider the following.
 - i. #1 - Do not worship other gods – 1 Corinthians 8:5-6
 - ii. #2 – No graven images – 1 John 5:21, cf. Acts 17:24-25
 - iii. #3 – Do not take His name in vain – Romans 2:24, 1 Timothy 6:1
 - iv. #5 – Honor your father and mother – Ephesians 6:1-3
 - v. #6 – Do not murder – Romans 13:9, 1 Peter 4:15, Revelation 21:8
 - vi. #7 – Do not commit adultery – 1 Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19
 - vii. #8 – Do not steal – Ephesians 4:28, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
 - viii. #9 – Do not bear false witness – Revelation 21:8, Ephesians 4:25 (clearly bearing false witness is a type of lying).
 - ix. #10 – Do not covet – Colossians 3:5, Ephesians 5:3-5, Hebrews 13:5, etc.
 - x. The only command that is NOT repeated is to remember the Sabbath day. We ARE commanded by precept and example to assemble on Sunday – Hebrews 10:25, Acts 20:7, etc. Worthy of note is NEVER do we read of Christians assembling on the Sabbath (Saturday). Sabbath is ONLY mentioned once in the epistles (Colossians 2:16 – where

Paul is clearly telling us it is NOT to be bound. If you choose to observe the Sabbath yourself – do it, but do NOT bind it! Even in Acts (mentioned 9x, it was always about Paul going to Jews on the Sabbath to try and teach them about Jesus. He went because that was WHEN they would assemble.

- xi. So, since we are under the New Law, we obey God therein. The principles of the 10 commandments are repeated in the New Testament, EXCEPT the Sabbath and even that one has a replaced with Sunday. That is WHY we keep them.
- e. Do we set aside a day to remember God? Acts 20:7, etc. As we have noted, we should assemble on Sundays to worship God (and at other prescribed services).
- f. Do we regard God as holy? Much more will be emphasized about this in coming lessons and throughout this ENTIRE study. Here I simply mention, 1 Peter 1:15-16.
- g. We are sprinkled with the blood of Jesus! Just as the Israelites were sanctified with blood, so we, when we obey the gospel are sanctified with the blood of Jesus. Hebrews 13:12, notes that Jesus sanctified us with His own blood.

And thus, we can see Israel at Mt. Sinai. It was a powerful time and worthy of much study. Much of what was instructed there was clearly presented with a view toward us. But, we will leave that for another time. I conclude by asking, How do you view God? Think about it!