

## Jan 16, 2022 Moses on Mount Sinai: Exodus 19:16-25

By Senior Pastor Tom Harrison

This week we survey the second half of Exodus. After escaping bondage in Egypt, the Israelites needed a time out corner. Chapters 16-19 tell how God provided for them in the wilderness. They had sweet water from bitter, bread from heaven, and water from a rock. They defeated an enemy as Aaron and Hur held up Moses' arms. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, gave some great advice about delegation. Their exit from Egypt was better than their entrance into the Promised Land. In spite of all God's provisions, the Israelites weren't happy campers. They continually grumbled against Moses' leadership. He grew frustrated and impatient with their complaints. Some tried to sabotage him. Some advocated for a return to the "good old days." They had just left captivity in Egypt. How quickly we forget. The Israelites needed rules of engagement for life, so the Lord gave them a map to help them live a healthy and holy life as individuals within their community. This map is called the "Mosaic Law." Exodus 20 contains the moral law, the "Ten Commandments." Civil and ceremonial laws follow. The Lord's conversation was transmitted with thunder and lightning. This event must have been a spooky time and place. Moses brought them out of their camp to meet God—no wonder they were scared. God was not approachable by the common Israelite. The idea of one God was very different from what they had known in the Egyptian culture. Read through Exodus (including their rebellion with the golden calf in chapter 32). Moses' mountaintop experience crashed in the painful valley below. However, all is not lost. With all the highs and lows of this second book in the Bible, it is encouraging to see Exodus ends like Genesis: on a high note. The final paragraph of Exodus ends with God's glory filling the tabernacle (40:34-48). Twice, it says the Lord was with His people *"throughout all their journeys."* APPLICATION: Our theme this week's is about **God's presence**. God not only provides and redeems, but He is with us in all our journeys of life, too. How has God's presence been with you? What mountaintop and peak experiences have you known? What valleys have you walked through? What other people are journeying with you? Everyone is carrying something. How are you helping others know that God is with them?

### Review:

- 1) **God's Provision (ABRAHAM)**. While God provided a sacrifice for Abraham, the idea of God's provision actually goes back to creation. God provided everything for us.
- 2) **God's Redemption (MOSES)**. Like Genesis 1-2, after God's provision, sin entered the world and separated us from God from each other, and from ourselves. Even creation bears the impact of sin. Yet, God still provided (clothing) for Adam and Eve. Likewise, Moses, had great provisions ("Pharaoh's penthouse") but ended up getting kicked out of the garden of paradise in Egypt. As Adam and Eve went east of Eden, so Moses went east of Egypt and ended up in the wilderness. Yet, God wasn't finished with Moses. Moses didn't want to do it in the first place. He offered 5 excuses to the Lord as to why he wasn't the right person to go back to Egypt to tell Pharaoh to let God's people go. (He had an identity issue: who was he (a fugitive wanted for murder back in Egypt) to do this? And who was this God – Moses hadn't been to seminary and didn't know God's name. Third, he had credibility issues - the people in bondage would never believe him. Furthermore, he didn't have the Talent necessary - he wasn't eloquent in speech. Finally, Moses told the truth – he just didn't want to do it. God countered every argument of Moses – "I will be with you." "I AM" is sending you and they will listen to you. God gives Moses a staff that can perform miracles, and his brother, Aaron, would be his spokesman. Finally, he was just going to do it whether he wanted to or not.)
- 3) **God's Presence (MOSES)** Moses exits them from Egypt and they wound up back in "the wilderness of Sinai." This is when they truly become a nation.

### **Exodus 19:1-9 (NOT 19:16-25.....have assisting pastor read w. congregation to help my voice)**

v1-2 Note the divide – Moses is on the mountaintop - they are in the wilderness. I understand they had to begin somewhere, but they are unequally yoked. The people were coming out of a totally pagan culture. They didn't personally know God's presence. They were layered out of it. The God they will encounter is scary: thunder, lightning, a thick cloud, and loud trumpets. (Many people today are like this – scared of the God of retribution. They live under a dark cloud of fear – they haven't done enough; God will get them. James Bryan Smith talked about this in his book, "The Good and Beautiful Story.") Had the Israelites chosen faith, not fear, could have entered into the Promised Land. Instead, they wandered in the wildness for 40 years until they died off and a new generation arose. They needed the PRESENCE of God. Moses continually tried to tell them the Lord was present with them

v3 – Moses is God's mouthpiece.

v4 – Moses tells them to **REMEMBER**. Remember what God has done. They saw God's presence by the deliverance from the Egyptians and by Him bearing them on eagles' wings. Other birds carry their young with their feet because an eagle knows another bird won't swoop down and grab its young from its wings. The eagle is supreme and flies higher. This is how God shows He cares for His people. They have seen it. You can trust God. He will take care of you. God will protect them.

v5 – Moses tells them to **RESPOND**. Keep my covenant. On the one hand, the covenant will be revealed (Chapters 20-23 with all the laws, including the 10 Commandments). On the other hand, God's covenant of provision was given to Abraham (and to Noah). God would save them, not just for their own benefit, but now they had a responsibility to be a blessing to the whole world. This is not just about or for them.

v5-6 "You shall be" – this is their three-fold identity: *"my treasured possession among all peoples, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."*

v9 **Exodus 4:1 Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'** We've come full circle – Moses' initial fear was he would fail. God will take care of things. Moses saw it happen. And he will see even greater things.

Dennis Prager's radio show ("Religion on the Line"): *"Sir this is the RC Priest. God chose the Jews. Get a life."* That's one way to end a conversation. "How Odd for God to choose the Jews."

Application: God's fulfillment of His promise is two-fold:

1.) **Jesus.** When Moses said, "What shall I tell the people is your name?" and God said, "I Am." Not "I Was," or "I will be" but present tense. God's presence with us here and now; not just in the past or someday in the future, but here and now. Jesus is the fulfillment of that. He said, "*I am: the bread of life, the light of the world, the door, the good shepherd, the resurrection & the life; the way/truth/life; the true vine.*" Jesus is not the scary God of thunder, lightning, dark clouds, and loud trumpets. Jesus is the perfect illustration of "Confident Humility." He was confident in His identity and in His role, but was humble in the way He approached people. Children, women, the sinners who needed redemption and the sick who needed healing came to Him. He is approachable. He comes not to condemn, but to save. He comes to tell us "God Is Love."

2.) **His Church.** **1 Peter 2:9-10** *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. 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.* This is our identity. And our purpose = proclamation. As Moses told the Israelites, so the Israelites were to tell the world. Now Christians are to do the same.

What do I want you to know today: Who God is. The fullest revelation of who God is revealed in Jesus. That's what Christmas is— God moved into our neighborhood and we have received His witness. That's what Easter is — God redeeming us from sin and from the curse of death by dying for our sins and being resurrected to new life. I want you to know that God PROVIDES, REDEEMS, is PRESENT. We do not redeem ourselves. God does that work for us. But we get to respond to what God has done. Not to respond is to miss the reason for our redemption. If you've felt abandoned, broken, crushed, rejected; if you've felt God is abstract and removed from your life; or that God is scary and is always coming after you with judgment and condemnation; here's wonderful news: we have a redeemer, Jesus, who provides and is present with us in a way those ancient Israelites could never know. He has given us a wonderful, extraordinary gift — the Holy Spirit, to help us understand our new identity and to live into our mission to be salt and light to the world.

Just as Exodus began with darkness, oppression, and misery in Egypt, and just as there are lots of twists and turns in the narrative — a lot of suspense — here's the surprising thing about the Book of Exodus. Like Genesis, Exodus ends well. It ends on a triumphant note, because of the Presence of God. It's actually called "The Shekinah Glory" of God. It is the brilliant illumination of God's glory.

We're headed for the Shekinah Glory of God, too. There will be nothing like it. Have you given your life to Him? As followers of Jesus, we cannot lose. "*If God be for us, who can be against us?*" As we receive the sacrament of Holy Communion this is the day the Lord has made — let us open our hearts to His presence.