



*18 For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest. (Heb 12:18)*

It might be observed that God gave abundant evidence of His careful love for Israel in the miracles, curses, and deliveries of them in Egypt. Moreover, He provided graciously for their want of bread and water after their national baptism in the Red Sea in spite of their ungracious murmurings. These were performed in His office as Savior out of His heart of Grace; now He comes to sit upon Mount Sinai in His office as Law-Giver in His role as Judge. Horeb (waters of grace) came by way Sinai (justice by law). Christ conformed to, and satisfied, every provision of the Law in saving us. Had the justice of God not demanded the wages of death to all who sin, it would not have been possible for Christ to satisfy that penalty on our behalf. So, in a sense, grace (Horeb) came by way of the Law (Sinai).

As I write this devotion, the Day of Epiphany has just passed and we remain in Epiphany Season. Epiphany is the revealing of God (the Lord Jesus Christ) to man. It would not be far from the mark to make the claim that the descent of God on Mount Sinai was a precursor of that final Epiphany in Christ. It is the Epiphany of both God the Father, and the Holy Ghost (Pentecost for the date is so designated). Are you beginning to see how completely consistent the story line of the Scriptures is from beginning to end?

*16 And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. (Ex 19:16)* The revelations of Heaven always evoke emotions of fear in their earthly beholders for they represent a suspension of the natural law when Heaven touches earth. It was not simply a dramatic event, but was so intended to be by God. He will have reverence from all who claim Him as Lord. You will remember that there was a Pillar of Fire by night, and cloud by day, that followed (and preceded) the children of Israel in the Wilderness. That Pillar led as a Guide in the Wilderness, and then followed as a wall of protection against Pharaoh's army. Here we see a great and mighty cloud descend upon the heights of Sinai whose coming was proclaimed by great thunders and lightnings. Then comes the blast of the trumpet that was so mighty that the people trembled. The event was awe-inspiring to say the least. The cloud itself was a dynamo of electric impulses with surrounding borders of dark foreboding. Not only were the people terrified at the sight, but so was Moses: *And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. (Heb 12:21)* The fear was made greater by the realization that God's perfect Law was about to be imparted – a matter of grave concern.

The people, before being sanctified, were not permitted so much as to touch the mountain, but now, Moses invites them thither: *17 And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. (Ex 19:17) Though mounting the base of the mountain, they were permitted no further than the skirts thereof. 18 And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the LORD descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. (Ex 19:18)* It is reasonable to conclude that the people were not permitted closer because, not only of the quaking and dangers of the shaking mountain, but their sins, as well, separated them from God. God will brood no sin in His Presence. In order to impress upon them the importance of the Law He was about to proclaim, He first needs to demonstrate His power to enforce that Law for all to see.

*19 And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. 20 And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. 21 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. 22 And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. (Ex 19:19-22)* We see the primitive shadow of a mediator here between God and man – Moses. No man can approach the God of Heaven, perfect in Justice, without a mediator. Who is our mediator today – is it a priest, or a bishop, or a pope? No, it is the Lord Jesus Christ – the perfect Mediator! This is brought out even more clearly in the Book of Hebrews: *28 Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: 29 For our God is a consuming fire. (Heb 12:28-29)* and see, also, *5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time. (1 Tim 2:5-6)*

*23 And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. 24 And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. 25 So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them. (Ex 19:23-25)* Moses is a proper mediator between God and man on this occasion. He does not argue with the Will of God, but simply tries to grasp every word, and share that word with the people. Christ, too, taught nothing apart from the will of His Father. Clergy of today should do no less!

Our ancient commentator, Adam Clarke, interprets this event in the following words: "FROM the very solemn and awful manner in which the LAW was introduced, we may behold it as the ministration of terror and death, 2 Corinthians 3:7 appearing rather to exclude men from God than to bring them nigh; and from this we may learn that an approach to God would have been for ever impossible, had not infinite mercy found out the Gospel scheme of salvation. By this, and this alone, we draw nigh to God; for we have an entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus", Hebrews 10:19. "For," says the apostle, "ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire; nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and to the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more, (for they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: and so terrible was the sight that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake): but ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the MEDIATOR of the NEW COVENANT; and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel;"

Perhaps you have read the text with what you believe is good comprehension? Please try to answer the following questions by writing the answer along side the question without, at first, referring to the indicated verses in which the answers are found:

- 1.
2. What was the appearance and the sound on Mt. Sinai as God came down? (19:16,18)
3. What was the reaction of the people as God came down? (19:16)
4. What did Moses do when the cloud came down? (19:17)
5. What voice came from the mount? (19:19)
6. What warning was given to Moses? (19:21)
7. Why the repetition of the command? (See 19:12)
8. What *priests* are referred to in 19:22?
9. What protest did Moses make about God's warning concerning the people's reaking through? (19:23)
10. Was the warning really needed? (19:24-25)

You may be surprised at how little of the Bible we may grasp by a cursory reading thereof. Even if we peruse the Bible thoroughly without the Guiding Light of the Holy Ghost, we may miss the beauty and truth of it altogether. When we come to love God's Word so much that we cherish every Word, and fathom every deep of it, can we become Wise Men and Women who follow the Light of Promise on the way home to our abode with Christ