



1 In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. 2 For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. (Ex 19:1-2)

As we have learned previously, it is impossible to understand the full import of the Gospel of Jesus Christ without understanding the formative shadows of that Gospel in the Old Testament. How is it possible to understand Christ as the Lamb of God without understanding the trial sacrifice of Isaac by Abraham, or the First Passover in Egypt? As Israel is being readied to become a nation consecrated to God, they have left their 'resting places' at Rephidim and come to the Mountain of God at Sinai – the same at which Moses was first called by the Lord. There is a lesson herein for the modern Church. Once we have been refreshed by the blessings of God, and are comfortable where we are, it may be that God is ready now to call us to His Mountain to receive a greater revelation of Himself. Though we should always feel the comfort of the Holy Ghost in our spirits, we should not become sedentary in our physical lives, but rather actively pursuing the calling that God has revealed to us – even if in desert or wilderness places. Rising up from a great salvation in the bed of the Red Sea, the people were refreshed with Manna from Heaven and water from the Rock of Horeb adjacent to Sinai. Now God calls them to the wilderness – a quiet place lying beneath that higher ground of Mount Sinai.

The Significance of the Time of This Event (Third month)

If we recall the Passover in Egypt, and its foreshadowing of the ultimate Passover of Christ, we will associate this period being revealed in the Third Month (Sivan) with the impending Day of Pentecost (50th day after Passover as recorded, as well, in the Book of Acts. The explanation given by Adam Clarke in his comprehensive commentary: *The Jews celebrate the feast of Pentecost fifty days after the Passover: from the departure out of Egypt to the coming to Sinai were forty-five days; for they came out the fifteenth day of the first month, from which day to the first of the third month forty-five days are numbered. On the 2d day of this third month Moses went up into the mountain, when three days were given to the people to purify themselves; this gives the fourth day of the third month, or the forty-ninth from the departure out of Egypt. On the next day, which was the fiftieth from the*

celebration of the Passover, the glory of God appeared on the mount; in commemoration of which the Jews celebrate the feast of Pentecost. This is the opinion of St. Augustine and of several moderns. As you will observe, the timing of the Lord is perfect and consistent in its precision.

Just as Christ became our Passover at Mount Calvary, and fifty days later the Holy Ghost was given with great power (Acts 2), so God reveals His mighty presence on Mount Sinai fifty days after that first Passover in Egypt. ³ *And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;* ⁴ *Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.* (Ex 19:3-4) The ministers of God are clearly called to a higher place to receive the counsel of God if they are willing and obedient servants. Moses was called from among the Children of Israel to a higher plain on Sinai. The true minister is more of a message-bearer than one who relates original thought. The original message comes from God, not man. So Moses was to tell the Children of Israel EXACTLY what the Lord has said.

God declares Himself as the victor of the Red Sea and the Savior of His people. He establishes His authority as having its origins in LOVE – *“I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.”* I love eagles, for they exemplify the nature of God here toward His people. A mother eagle does not carry her young in her talons for her talons are too strong and would suffocate the young. She carries them on her back to avoid the strong clutch of her talons. She bears them on her back for another reason, too. Can you guess the reason? From the remote annals of time past, man has been enemy to the eagle. He shoots with his bow at the proud eagle surveying the land below from the heights of heaven. If the archer strikes at the eagle, his arrow will strike the mother eagle only, for she carries her young on her back and upon the confluence of her wings. Jesus exposed Himself to shame, ridicule, and crucifixion for you and me. His death purchased life for us just as does the sacrificial spirit of the great eagle defend her young.

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:* ⁶ *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.* (Ex 19:5-6) Here we find one of the cardinal 'IF's' of the Bible. The Divine IF is a two-edged sword. If His commandments are obeyed, such and such blessings will ensue; but IF His commandments are disregarded, a most tragic fate awaits the disobedient.

God is about to institute a government of laws among His people. When a nation is centered upon the pure law of God, those laws will apply to every citizen with equal force and penalty. This results in the greatest prosperity and liberty possible in the earthly realm. Anarchy leads to the opposite of freedom for the stronger will forever oppress the weaker in the absence of law and order. The covenant God made with Abraham was realized fully in the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who truly know the Lord Jesus Christ as His Elect will be a peculiar people – not just to the Lord, but to all others of the world. The misery of the world is always starkly contrasted to the peace and joy of the Christian believer. Though we suffer the same deprivations, those do not dent our joy in Christ. This the world cannot comprehend. The people of God are to be a kingdom of priests, and the nation of their nativities should be Holy to reflect that disposition of the people of God. America was once such a Holy Nation. What has happened to America? Have we failed to heed the Words of the Lord from the Heights of Sinai?

God would be the King of the Nation of Israel. He would continue so even until

the anointing of the first king, Saul. You will recall that Israel was not happy being a 'peculiar people' among the inhabitants of the region. Samuel told them that they would be oppressed and treated harshly if they opted for a king other than God. The elders came to Samuel with their demand: *now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.* (1 Sam 8:5) This reminds me of the constant drumbeat to have the American social and legal system conform more and more to Europe where time has proven it to fail to meet the yearnings of liberty of the people. God gave them what they asked for, and they paid a heavy price in blood, treasure, and personal freedoms.

7 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him. 8 And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD. (Ex 19:7-8) God has negotiated fairly and squarely his covenant with the people, and they have fully acceded to His demand. How fickle is man in his somber resolutions. In a few days these same men would be melting their treasures into a molten image of a calf (Idol) for the purpose of worship – a golden calf that had no consciousness or power at all to bless or to comfort the people. The mighty arm of the Lord in bringing them out of Egypt by miracles and great power were so quickly forgotten. Now they turn to an inanimate object for their worship.

The two-way nature of prayer is illustrated in the next verse: *9 And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.* (Ex 19:9) Moses acted as an intercessor for the people with God, but we no longer need an intercessor for Christ Himself is our intercessor. The Word of God comes to the people; the word of the people is given to God; and the people await God's further answer. How many desperate prayers are offered without awaiting the clear Counsel of God for which we have prayed? God desires that the people have a greater witness than simply the word of Moses. He desires that the people hear His voice first hand. He desires the same today. The preacher shares the Word of God in his sermons, but God desires that we come to the brook and drink of the water first hand as well.

Next we find an admonition of God to the people that they sanctify themselves before coming to the base of Mount Sinai to hear the voice of the Lord. They are to be clean and clear of conscience: *10 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, and let them wash their clothes.* (Ex 19:10) Does this bear a relevance to our modern attitude of worship? Many churches are opting for a sloppy, come-as-you-are attire for worship. In the Anglican tradition, we dress as if we are to meet the President of the nation, for God is our King; and we observe a silent reverence in prayer prior to the beginning of the worship hour. We are not to consider our meeting with God as the casual hour. He is our Sovereign and His Majesty must be respected and revered.

11 And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai. (Ex 19:11) God has reminded us of His intentions on the Third Day in other passages of Scripture, but men never fully understood. Even the Apostles forgot the promise of Christ to arise on the Third Day! But we are to be ready always for the coming of the Lord. Why can we not simply take the plain and solemn Word of God as accomplished fact!

What purpose does the Book of Common Prayer serve in our Church? Does it establish doctrine? No. Does it contain the whole counsel of God? No. Then what purpose does it serve? It sets bounds for worship beyond which we do not venture. It directs us to solemn and reverential worship and prevents worldly innovation from exceeding the limits set by God to Divine Worship. *12 And thou shalt set bounds unto the*

people round about, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: ¹³ There shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned, or shot through; whether it be beast or man, it shall not live: when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. (Ex 19:12-13) The penalty for disrespect of God's Holiness bears a heavy price. It does so today as well. The penalty is remitted in our day and delayed for the last appearance of the Lord. Those who worship God in irreverence, shouting out demands in prayer, and speaking in a babbling which they themselves do not understand, is the very thing that defines them as dead in trespasses and sin. They cannot KNOW God through such depraved worship. They are, as Ephesians 2 counsels, walking dead.

¹⁴ And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. ¹⁵ And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives. (Ex 19:14-15) Such an epic event as the coming down of the Lord requires thought and preparation beforehand. Our worship in Church also requires thought and preparation beforehand. Our minds must be prepared for worship, and our souls purged of unclean thoughts and desires. The Lord Jesus Christ is coming again. He will descend at the sound of the Trumpet. But though those of the Church in the Wilderness could not ascend to God in the Cloud in the days of Sinai, the saints of the New Testament Church (along with those of the Old) shall do that very thing: ¹⁶ For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: ¹⁷ Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. (1 Thess 4:16-17)

You are situated in the Days of Preparation for that Coming of Christ. ¹⁴ Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. (Rev 22:14) Are you obedient through love to the Commandments of God – you cannot be obedient in any other way. Note the complete contrast in meaning between the counsel giving in the Received Text (above) and that of the NIV and other perverse modern translations of the same verse: “Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city.” (Rev 22:14 - NIV)

Do you believe the lie of the NIV that you can actually wash your robes of sin, or do you believe that your robes must be washed in the Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ?