

Significant Lessons From The Seemingly Insignificant

#24 - Feast of Weeks: Mt. Sinai

Lev. 23:1-2 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, ² Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, Concerning the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, [divine appointments] even these are my feasts.

The appointed times of the LORD were part of the annual cycle of God's plan of redemption.

The Feast of Weeks gets its name from the fact that it starts seven full weeks, or exactly 50 days, after the Feast of Firstfruits. Therefore, it is also known as "Pentecost" which means "fifty." It is referred to as Shavuot in Hebrew.

Ex. 6:2, 6-7 God spoke unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: ⁷ And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the LORD your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

Interesting Note: The Lord's death was the ultimate fulfillment of all 4 of the promises God made to Moses in Exodus 6:6-7. These promises are represented by the 4 Cups of the Passover celebration: Sanctification, Blessing, Redemption, and Acceptance.

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| 1. Sanctification | I Will Bring You Out From Under The Yoke Of The Egyptians |
| 2. Blessing | I Will Free You From Being Slaves To Them |
| 3. Redemption | I Will Redeem You With An Outstretched Arm & Mighty Acts of Judgment |
| 4. Acceptance | I Will Take You As My People & I Will Be Your God |

The Jews had sacrificed their 1st Passover lambs on Nisan 14. They ate their 1st meal of lamb, unleavened bread and bitter herbs and were spared the judgment of the Death Angel on Nisan 15. God delivered them from Pharaoh and the Egyptians. They emerged alive after the crossing of the Red Sea. All of this occurred during the 1st month, Nisan.

Consider: The Exodus was looked on as a gift from God: His deliverance from the land of Egypt was a type of being held in sin and bondage under the Pharaoh.

Ex. 14:13-14 And Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will shew to you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever. The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.

When the Jews were delivered out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea, God brought them to Mt. Sinai., the "Mount of God." [Ex. 19:1; 4:27; 18:5; 24:13] They traveled the remainder of Nisan and throughout the 2nd month, Iyvar; Enter the Sinai Wilderness the 3rd month, Sivan.

Exodus 19:1-6 God's Announcement: His purpose was to set Israel apart from every other nation and establish a unique relationship with them which required spiritual preparation or readiness.

Ex. 19:1-3 In the third month [Sivan], 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. [Num. 10:11 Israel will remain here for 11 months.] 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;

Note: It was here on Mt. Horeb, which seems to be synonymous with Mt. Sinai, that Moses first encountered God. [Ex. 3 & 4]. At the burning bush, God gave an encouraging promise to Moses that the nation would come to worship Him "At This Mountain." [Ex. 3:12]

Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

Ex. 19:4 Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.

A. Israel's history is proof of God's faithfulness to His covenant.

- He distinguished the Israelites from the Egyptians, delivered them and made them the special object of His care.
- God reminded them of the contrast between their fate at God's hand at the Exodus and that of the Egyptians.

Moses used this image in the song he taught Israel at the close of his life.

Deut. 32:10-12 He [LORD] found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. ¹¹ As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: ¹² So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.

- There were times when it seemed God had abandoned His people.
- In reality, God, like the mother eagle, was simply stirring up the nest, forcing the Israelites to "try their wings."
- The young must learn to fly if they are to fulfill their purpose.
- When Israel thought she was about to perish, God swooped beneath her, bearing her up.
- Israel's past proved that God had dealt graciously with her, while at the same time He destroyed the Egyptians.

Deut. 16:10a, 12 And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the LORD thy God...

And thou shalt remember that you were a bondman in Egypt: and thou shalt observe and do these statutes.

Consider: If our freedom in Christ doesn't lead to maturity, we end up imprisoned in a bondage worse than before. It is a bondage from within and not without.

B. Israel's deliverance was for the purpose of being brought to God so that the nation could be His prized possession and serve Him as a priestly nation.

- In Egypt, the Jews were weary bodies; slaves who did the masters' bidding.
- God purposed to bless other nations by establishing Israel, His servant, as a mediatorial people who would be a "light to the Gentiles," sharing with other nations the way to enter fellowship with the true God.

Ex. 19: 5-6 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.

C. Israel must keep God's covenant in order to maintain this privileged status.

- The calling was to a position of privilege and of responsibility.
To whom much is given, much is required.
- In order to enjoy fellowship with God and to serve as His representative to the nations, Israel must reflect His holiness and purity.

Heb. 12:14 Pursue peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

Their response: 19:7-8 And Moses came and called for the elders of the people and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him.

[Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 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.]

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.

Note: They agreed to do all that God commanded in principle rather than in particular.

The Law had not yet been given. The eagerness with which they anticipated the Law as well as the implicit trust they had in His character reveals they would commit themselves to obedience without knowing what it was they would obey.

The Manifestation of God's Glory At Mt. Sinai

1. God made His purpose known: Establish the Position & Authority of Moses

- Moses was at Sinai before and entrusted with a Divine message to Israel:

Ex. 4:1 And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The LORD hath not appeared unto thee.

Ex. 19:9 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 forever. And Moses told the words of the people unto the LORD.

- Now God provides a demonstration of His presence which He expressly says is intended to establish the position of Moses.
- As Israel watched and listened to God speak to Moses, his leadership would be evident to the people.
- The people who saw and heard these dreadful phenomena might believe Moses forever, might permanently acknowledge his authority as a messenger and representative of God.

Exodus 19:10- 15 describes the preparations which were required for God's appearance.

God's Instructions: His Presence Was Unapproachable At Mt. Sinai

1. Then manifestation of God's Power & Glory would not come immediately.
2. They had to wait for it because they needed sufficient opportunity to prepare.

Ex. 19:10-11 And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their clothes, 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.

1. External Commands: Washing of the Clothes
 - a. All the defilements gathered since coming out of Egypt
 - b. All the dust of the conflict with Amalek, a type of our flesh
 - c. Surely, God provided an abundant supply of water.
2. Washing & changing clothes is the equivalent of:

I John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

II Cor. 7:1 Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

3. He required His people through certain symbolic actions to enter into a special state of readiness for Himself.

Billy Graham: "Only when I understand the holiness of God will I understand the depth of my sin."

As God took from the dwellers of the earth the house of Jacob to be His holy nation, He took Mt. Sinai to be a holy place for Himself.

Ex. 19:12-13 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 sounds long, they shall come up to the mount.

1. God was teaching the people the distance between a Holy God and sinful men as well as the danger of presumptuously rushing into the presence of the Lord.
 - Nadab and Abihu would forget this and God would kill them. [Lev. 10]
2. The structure of OT worship emphasized man's sinfulness and God's holiness.
 - ❖ The fence around the tabernacle
 - ❖ The veil before the Holy of Holies
 - ❖ Only the priests could minister in the tabernacle

- ❖ Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies & only ONCE per year.
 - Emphasis was always: Keep Your Distance
 - 3. New Testament worship emphasizes the "nearness of God."
 - ❖ John 1:14 Son of God became flesh and came to dwell on the earth.
 - ❖ Matt. 1:23 His name is Immanuel - God with us.
 - ❖ Heb. 10:1-25 By His death & resurrection, Jesus opened a new & living way into the presence of God.
 - ❖ Heb. 10:22 Let Us Draw Near!
 - 4. The sin which is punishable by death appears to be irreverence which is the byproduct of an inadequate sense of the holiness of God.
 - It was a great defect on the part of the people that they had no adequate sense - it may almost be said they had no sense at all - of the holiness of God.
 - Upon the slightest interference with their self-indulgent desires, they broke out into reproach, almost into rebellion.
 - Rebellion & complaints during the journey to Mt. Sinai
 - 5. He is ever loving and desires our good; but He is also supreme in holiness, and in all our thoughts He must be hallowed as one who, when the need appears, can make terrible manifestations of His power.
 - 6. God will use the "terrors" of Sinai to show He is a God not to be trifled with, but One who demands careful and humble attention at all times when He expresses His will.
 - The manifestation of God on Mt. Sinai would be a spectacular demonstration of God's power and majesty.
 - 7. His coming necessitated preparatory consecration.
- Surely these preparations produced a state of mind full of expectation and suspense.
1. God fixed the very day of His appearing and manifestation.
 2. It was God's mercy that the date of the visitation on Sinai was made known to Israel.

The Manifestation Of God's Glory & Power

Ex. 19:16-19 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. 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.

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.

¹⁹ And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him by a voice.

We are overwhelmed with the splendor and majesty of God as He manifests Himself to Israel on the mountain in all His majesty, purity and power.

1. It seems all the forces of nature have been summoned to salute their Creator.
2. Amidst the thundering and lightning God came down as a consuming fire and blackened the entire summit.
3. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
4. This earthshaking day of visitation, trembling, and betrothal is the birthday of the nation of Israel.
5. Shavuot = Spiritual birthday of Israel brought 12 tribes together into 1 corporate people.
6. God will make a solemn covenant with Israel.
7. It was the marriage of God to His beloved Israel.

Key Points:

God Delivered Israel to:

1. Set Them Apart For A Unique Relationship
2. Be Brought To Himself
3. Be His Peculiar Treasure
4. Be A Holy Nation & Serve As A Priestly Nation

God Manifested Himself At Sinai:

1. To Establish The Position & Authority of Moses as His Messenger
2. The People Would Hear God Speak To Moses and They Would Believe Moses