



# MT. SINAI

Exodus  
19:16-25



## EXPLORATION

### Central TRUTH

God comes in a violent storm on Mount Sinai to covenant and tabernacle with his people.

16 On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God; and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. 18 And Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain quaked greatly. 19 And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. 20 And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, to the top of the mountain; and the Lord called Moses to the top of the mountain, and Moses went up. 21 And the Lord said to Moses, "Go down and warn the people, lest they break through to the Lord to gaze and many of them perish. 22 And also let the priests who come near to the Lord consecrate themselves, lest the Lord break out upon them." 23 And Moses said to the Lord, "The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai; for thou thyself didst charge us, saying, 'Set bounds about the mountain, and consecrate it.'" 24 And the Lord said to him, "Go down, and come up bringing Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the Lord, lest he break out against them." 25 So Moses went down to the people and told them.

*In the Bible, there are references to a Mount Sinai and a Mount Horeb, but they are the same mountain!*

# EXODUS

## A TALE OF TWO STORIES

### Ch. 1-18

These chapters are all about Ancient Israel being rescued from Egypt.

*When talking about the Exodus, this is what people are referring to*

### Ch. 19-40

These chapters are how God covenants and tabernacles with his people including the 10 Commandments and instructions for the sacred tent.

#### Exodus 19

*This is right before God gives Moses the 10 Commandments*

Exodus chapter 19 sets up the rest of Exodus and bridges the two narratives of Exodus together. It's important to spend some time here to help us understand the importance of the covenant and the tabernacle.

The Israelites find themselves at the base of a mountain called Mount Sinai. It is here that God's presence comes down to the mountain in the form of a violent storm cloud. Now let's get into this a bit before we get to chapters 20-24. God's presence is the important thing to look at. At the beginning of the Bible, humanity was in God's presence in the Garden of Eden and they had a close relationship with him and it was good. But humanity rebelled and the relationship was fractured and access to God's presence was lost.

But God promised Abraham that he would restore His blessing to all of the nations and that includes this restoration of relationship and access to God's presence. So here right now, God's presence is right in front of them at Mt. Sinai and it is actually quite frightening. God is here to invite Israel into this unique and close relationship with Him. The word used to describe this relationship is covenant. It's really a legal agreement between God and Israel.

It's unique because God hasn't asked Israel to do anything, just to trust him. But now, God is asking them to do something, a lot of things actually. He is giving them laws that include the 10 Commandments (10 Words). And if they obey these commands, they will become the people of God who represent God to the nations. He calls them to be a "Kingdom of Priests" (Exodus 19:6).

And then we have several chapters of detailed instructions on architecture for the tabernacle and what is to be placed in the tent and around it. Everything has meaning and a specific purpose as to why God included it in His sanctuary.

# COVENANT

Exodus  
20:1-17



## EXPLORATION

### Central TRUTH

God begins his will for his people by giving them the 10 words and other instructions about how to live in everyday life.

*The 10 Commandments are often called the 10 words or the general words.*

1 And God spoke all these words, saying, 2 “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 “You shall have no other gods before me. 4 “You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. 7 “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. 8 “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; 11 for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it. 12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you. 13 “You shall not kill. 14 “You shall not commit adultery. 15 “You shall not steal. 16 “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”



# COVENANT

## Commandments 1-3

These commands are all about how we can love God: "no other gods, Lord's name, and sabbath"

## Commandments 4-10

These commands are all about loving our neighbors well: "parents, murder, adultery, stealing, false testimony, covet neighbor's house, and covet neighbor's wife"

Exodus 20:21-23:33

 This is all about God how to live the 10 Commandments specifically

The 10 Commandments are simply God's will for his people, but it would always leave the people asking, "Well, how do I do those things specifically?" And so God goes even further to talk about everyday life. The Book of the Covenant addresses fundamental issues faced by Israel as it applied the Ten Commandments to its way of life in the Promised Land.

For the 10 Commandments, God spoke from Mount Sinai directly and immediately to Israel. The people stood far from the mountain because of the thunder, lightning, and smoke that came from its top. God spoke the following instructions to Moses on the mountain and Moses was to relay them to Israel.

In these further instructions God gives concrete and specific applications of the ten general words to the various dimensions of Israel's life. Exodus 21:1 calls them "laws." They do not exhaustively treat every possible situation, but they do illustrate how the ten words should be applied in various typical situations. Unlike the general statements of the ten words, many of the following judgments state the penalty for a given infraction. They are often expressed in a law form: "If so-and-so happens, then do this."

These judgments or ordinances were addressed to Israel. The ancient Israelites were God's people, an assembly called to faith in the true God, but ancient Israel was also a nation and a state. It was, in fact, a nation ruled by God, and so God revealed laws that were to regulate all aspects of life. Therefore, we find here civil laws as well as religious and moral laws all mixed together.

The church today, which the New Testament calls a new Israel (Galatians 6:16), is only a church and no longer a nation. So these civil laws no longer apply directly to us Christians. The church today does not, for example, exercise the power of punishment for civil crimes. Even still, these laws are still worth understanding. In many cases they are a practical application of one of the ten "words" or commandments.

# RATIFICATION

Exodus  
24:3-12



## EXPLORATION

### Central TRUTH

God takes the initiative and delivers his people from bondage and brings them to himself.

*You're probably wondering, did they actually see God? Yes they did! But notice how they don't describe God, just what he was standing on*

3 Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do." 4 And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. 6 And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. 7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." 8 And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the Lord has made with you in accordance with all these words." 9 Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, 10 and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. 11 And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank. 12 The Lord said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction."



# COVENANT

## Exodus 24:1-18

Human covenants are treaties or agreements that two parties make with each other. God's covenant with Israel also was a relationship between two parties, God and Israel. However, in contrast to human pacts, which are bilateral (each party places obligations on the other), God's covenant with Israel was unilateral. God committed Himself to Israel and called Israel to be faithful to Him, but Israel could not place obligations on God. Also, unlike human covenants, Yahweh and Israel did not meet each other halfway. Rather, Yahweh took the initiative and delivered helpless Israel from Egyptian bondage and brought them to Himself (19:4).

The covenant that God makes with Moses and Israel flows from the covenant that God made with Abraham. God had promised to give Abraham numerous descendants, to bless him and his descendants, and to give them the land of Canaan. Because Yahweh faithfully remembered this covenant He made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, He graciously brought their descendants out of Egyptian bondage to Himself. At Sinai God confirmed this grace-faith relationship with Israel. Exodus 24 records the ratification of this covenant.

All the people then respond with one voice (v. 3), "Everything the LORD has said we will do." This was a sincere response; they sincerely intended to lead a life worthy of their calling. They did not receive God's words piecemeal, accepting this word but denying that one. God's Word comes as a whole, a unified package. They received it whole and said Amen to it all. So then Moses builds an altar and makes a sacrifice to God. They burned some of the animal and gave other parts to God and separated the blood into two basins, one of which was splashed on the altar. Here's how the sacrificial system worked: sinners forfeit their right to life before the holy and just God, but instead of taking the sinners life, the animal is a substitute. The offering of blood turns away the wrath of God by means of sacrifice. God and the sinner are now one.

Then Moses takes the other basin of blood and throws it onto the Israelites. By having the covenant blood splashed on them, the people were made the recipients and beneficiaries of the covenant God made with them. By this rite God confirmed Israel's status as God's forgiven people. Notice that the sentence says "the covenant that the LORD has made with you" (v. 8). Israel did not make the covenant relationship; God did, and Israel passively received it. Moses drew their attention to the blood just splashed on them with the phrase (v. 8), "This is the blood of the covenant." By splashing the people with blood, God through Moses was cleansing them and consecrating them to Himself.

As we look forward, we see the same blood sacrifice made perfect through Jesus' death on a cross. This finally sacrifice satisfied the wrath of God and we are all now one with God because of the work of Christ Jesus.