

THE LORD ON MOUNT SINAI

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Reading: Exodus 19:14-25.

We have just read how the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai. Suppose you were one of the children of Israel, standing below looking up at the mountain when the Lord came down in all His glory! Why would you have been there? Because the Lord had sent Moses to free you from being a slave in Egypt. Yes, if you were a boy or girl of the children of Israel, you would have just recently escaped from Egypt. Back there you would have been a slave, and you would have had to work long hours, perhaps making bricks from mud and straw.

You wouldn't have liked that at all, would you? But worst of all you wouldn't have known anything about the Lord. You wouldn't have had His Word and you would not have even known the difference between right and wrong. You would have been very ignorant, perhaps even worshiping an Egyptian idol.

But then the Lord sent a man to save you from this slavery and ignorance. He sent Moses. He gave Moses power to bring great plagues upon the Egyptians and their wicked king, Pharaoh. There were ten such plagues, and these plagues ruined Egypt and frightened the Egyptians so much that they let the children of Israel go free.

If you were one of the children of Israel, Moses would have led you out of Egypt to the Red Sea where the Lord performed the great miracle of dividing the sea so that the Israelites could cross over on dry ground. Then Moses would have led you through the wilderness where, through miracles, you were given water and bread—the wonderful manna.

And where was Moses leading you all this time? To Mt. Sinai—the holy mountain—the Mount of God. And why did Moses lead you there? Because the Lord was going to come down upon the mountain and give His Word—His Ten Commandments—so that the Israelites could know Him and know His Divine laws.

When they got there, the Lord called Moses up into the mountain and told him to get all the people ready for His coming down upon the mount. Moses went down to the people and told them that on the third day the Lord would come upon the mountain. They were to put boundaries round about the bottom of Mount Sinai, and no one was to go beyond these boundaries, or they would surely die. Perhaps these boundaries were piles of stones. If you were there

maybe you would have helped set up these boundaries. Also, all the people were to wash their clothes to help get themselves ready. If you had been there, you would have washed your clothes too.

And then the morning of the third day came. What would you have seen and heard? First you would have heard great thunder and seen great lightning and a thick cloud upon the mountain. And you would have heard something else—the very loud sound of a trumpet. Next, smoke went up from Mount Sinai, and the whole mountain shook violently.

If you close your eyes, perhaps you can almost hear the thunder and see the lightning and the thick cloud. Perhaps you can almost hear the voice of the trumpet growing louder and louder and see the smoke, looking as if it came from a great furnace. Perhaps you can almost feel the mountain shaking violently. All the people trembled.

And then the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, and Moses went up to meet with Him. Moses spoke, and the Lord spoke with him! What a great miracle! And what did the Lord say? Why did all these wonderful things happen? They were for the most important event of all. For the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai to give His Ten Commandments to the people. At that very time the Lord gave His Commandments. And then Moses went down the mountain and told the people what the Lord had said. If you were one of the boys or girls of Israel, you too would have heard what Moses said.

And God spoke all these words saying:

“I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt....

“You shall have no other gods before Me....

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain....

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy....

“Honor your father and your mother....

“You shall not murder.

“You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not steal.

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house;

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s” (Exodus 20:1-17).

It was to receive these Ten Commandments that the Lord had led the children of Israel out of Egypt to Sinai. It was to show how holy they are that He had caused all the miracles upon the mountain.

If you had been there and heard and seen all this, you would know beyond any doubt that the Ten Commandments are very holy. But you, too, can know they

are very holy because you have now learned how they were given. And even more important, you can know they are holy because they are laws given by the Lord—laws given for our safety and happiness.

Each one of us is to keep these commandments every day. If you follow these Ten Commandments because you love the Lord and want to do what He wants, then you will be one of His people. He will be able to protect you during your life in this world. And He will lead you to heaven where you can be with Him forever and be safe and happy.

Learn these commandments well, and do your best to obey them. Then the Lord will write them on your heart forever.

Amen.