**Exodus V Mt. Sinai: God Gives Israel a Law and a Covenant.**

Last two weeks:

Plague #10 Passover. The sacrifice of a lamb without defect, spread on the wooden beam above their doors, saved Israel from the certain death, and finally convinced Pharaoh to set God’s people free.

But… Although they left for the Wilderness in haste, with their bread unleavened, they were still in Egypt!!! They thought they were free, but, literally, you do not leave Egypt until you pass through the water.

This is a foreshadow of our leaving slavery to sin when we are baptized. Romans 6:4f “Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ were baptized into his death…” and “anyone who has died (in baptism) has been freed from sins.

So, Israel was saved by God’s mighty arm, and Pharaoh’s army, like sin which “so easily entangles” (Heb 12:1) was literally washed away.

So… Israel has arrived at the Promised Land, right? NO!!!!!

We have now entered into the true wilderness, where, as disciples, we will learn how to rely on God for our spiritual sustenance.

Which brings us to Exodus 16, in which, despite their unfaithful grumbling, God provides bread/manna for them

(Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of YHWH (Deut 8:3)

And… Exodus 17 We were grumbling (“why did you bring us up out of Egypt to make us and our children and livestock die of thirst?”)

As God explained in Hosea 11:2, even as they were leaving Egypt, they were already looking back to Egypt.

Despite this, God gave them water from the rock.

Moses gives manna, Jesus gives bread and is the bread of life.

Moses gives water, Jesus gives us the water—the Holy Spirit—a spring of water welling up to eternal life (John 4:14)

Today: We will arrive at Sinai, where the second of two paradigmatic moments in all of salvation history and in the history of Israel will come about.

God will give Israel a covenant and a law.

But first… a couple of events.

Exodus 17:8-16 Defeat of the Amalekites.

The Amalekites are Bedouin tribes, descended from Edom, who were hoping to plunder Israel for the “treasures” they had taken with them from Egypt.

v. 11 As long as Moses held up the staff with his hands, Israel defeated Amelek, but when Moses could no longer hold up the staff with his arms, Amelek rallied and turned the battle against Israel.

So… Aaron and Hur (Hur a companion of Moses from tribe of Judah) hold up Moses’ arms.

Is the point of this that we need our fellow disciples to hold up each other’s arms in the spiritual battle against the world? Maybe.

Probably not the message to Israel. The message is that victory is of God, not of human strength.

Proof: Ex 17:15 Moses built an altar called it The Lord is my banner.

In ancient times (and even in the US Civil War) who held up the battle flag/banner was a HUGE thing. Remember the movie Glory?

*YHWH nissi* God is my protector/banner.

The message: God is our protector, but he protects us, in part, as we hold up one another’s arms.

Exodus 18:1-27 (not reading it) Advice from Jethro

Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law and a worshipper of the one true God, who had remained in Midian, brings Zipporah and their two sons to Moses near Mt. Sinai.

Ex 18:13-23 The message: Is this a commandment that God’s leaders need to be willing to delegate their work? Maybe Probably not.

Is this a commandment that God’s church ought to be organized in a top-down hierarchical structure? Definitely not!

Why had God not revealed this “truth” to Moses?

What I learn is that when God speaks to an issue in the Scripture we listen to, understand and obey Scripture.

But sometimes God speaks to us through getting wise advice from counselors. Seeking the advice of wise counselors does not mean that we are not relying on God. It is one way we rely on God.

God spoke to his people at Sinai, but God also reveals his will through seeking advice and putting practical experience into practice.

Also, God is not as exclusive to his people Israel as Israel may think. Moses too, advice from a non-Jew.

Now, the main event!!!!!!

Exodus 1-18 Moses/Jesus as Savior

Exodus 19-40 Moses/Jesus as lawgiver-as one who establishes covenant between God and his elect people.

Today: Covenant Next week: Law

God’s plan:

To choose a man of faith—Abraham

Through his descendants to create a people. Jacob have I loved.

Through Jacob’s sons in Egypt, to create a nation.

To save them from captivity in Egypt as a foreshadow of God saving us through the second Moses.

Now: To create a covenant with them and to give them a law.

Exodus 19:1-6

Here it is. This is God’s covenant with his people. This is the greatest promise God ever made to Israel!!!

If we obey him fully and keep the requirements of this covenant we will be:

1. A treasured possession. God’s personal favorite

2. A kingdom of priests. The one God uses to reach out to the world

3. A holy nation. Forgiven of all our sin.

Q: Which is your favorite? (talk to your neighbor)

But… remember… v. 5 “If you fully obey me.”

Leviticus 18:5 Ahh. There’s the rub. If you do these things you will live by them.

Exodus 19:7-8 The people respond: “We will do everything the Lord has said.”

If only that were so.

In Christ, we ARE all of these things!!! God makes us ALL these things!!!

1 Peter 2:9 Chosen… Royal Priesthood… Holy Nation….

Covenant at Sinai: If you do this you will be these things.

In Christ: You are these things! A better covenant!!!

Look at the awesomeness of this great event—the giving of the Law and the establishing of a covenant.

Exocus 19:9-19 A pre-enactment of the Mt. of Transfiguration. Mark 9:2-8, Matthew 17:1-8

v. 9 A dense cloud. Mark 9:7

v. 9 They will hear me speaking to you. = Moses my “son.” Listen to him.

Mark 9:7

v. 10 Consecrate yourselves and wash your clothes. A solemn event. Mark 9:3

Jesus’ clothes dazzling white.

v. 12 Put a fence around the bottom of the mountain to emphasize the holiness of God and the people’s separation from that holy God.

Do not approach God!!!

v. 13 Anyone who crosses the fence is to be stoned to death if they come back.

Or… if they do not, shoot them with an arrow, but do not go and retrieve their bodies.

v. 13 Wait for the shophar, for the “all clear.”

Wow!!!

v. 11 v. 15 On the third day. v. 16 On the morning of the 3rd day. Coincidence?

v. 16 Thunder, lightning, a loud trumpet blast (what was that like??)

v. 17 Moses leads them to the fence to observe God.

Our job as leaders is to bring people out to meet/confront God.

v. 18 Fire, smoke, an earthquake. A theophany. God is revealing himself to his people.

Exodus 19:20-23.

Q: Do you come to God with a reverent kind of “fear.”

I know, “perfect love casts out fear.” (1 John 4:18)

But “Our God is a consuming fire!” (Hebrews 12:29)

Hebrews 12:18-24 We have a different kind of covenant!

Spend a lot of time here!!!!

Our covenant is not like that at Sinai.

Ours is the covenant of Mt. Zion (Jerusalem)

This is the same mountain where Abraham offered his one and only son.

Exodus 19:12 Anyone who touched Sinai was to be put to death! This is a mountain you can approach with boldness (Heb 10:19)

Heb 12:25-28 We still must worship with reverent fear, but we have an approachable God. We, like Peter, James and John, can go up on the Mt. of Transfiguration with Jesus.

Skipping Ex 20:1-17 for now. The Ten Commandments

Ex 20:18-20 Summary of this section: “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”

In this sense, we are to fear God.

Deut 4:10 that they may fear me all their days.

The desired result is not the emotion of fear, but the desire for obedience.

As a father, I do not want my children to cringe at the thought of my angry outburst, but to live in respect and even in obedience to my words.

Deut 5:24 YHWH our God has shown us his glory and his greatness and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire.

I wanted to look at Exodus 24:1-18 and esp. 24:8 The covenant is sealed with blood. (as mentioned in Heb 12:24) But… no time.

Finish:
Hebrews 8:6-13 A better covenant.

The covenant at Sinai was truly awesome!!! But it was just a pre-enactment of the one we have in Christ.

We have a so-much-better covenant.

We are God’s chosen people, a royal priesthood and a holy nation.

v. 10 Law on human hearts, not on stone. I will be their God

v. 11 All will know me. Holy Spirit. True living water.

v. 12 Sins forgiven

Summary:

Battle with Amelek: The Lord is our banner YHWH nissi—victory is of God.

Jethro: When God has not directly spoken, seek wise counsel

God’s awe-inspiring, mind-blowing, fear-inducing Covenant.

A treasured possession

A royal priesthood

A holy nation!!!