

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

MARCH 20 - 24, 2023

Welcome to the

Story

Lenten Series 2.26 - 3.26



MONDAY

Read **Exodus 19:1-8, Hebrews 12:18-24**

I loved camping ... when I was younger. But now that I'm older ... I love "glamping." My body and mental constitution cannot handle a sleeping bag on the ground, smokey fires, and feeling gritty. So when I think about the Israelites traveling to the wilderness of Sinai and then camping in that wilderness (little did they know then that it would be for 40 years), I can only imagine the hardships: children rolling their eyes with boredom, wives looking for a restaurant, and men looking for a KOA.

However, the Israelites took three months to just get from Egypt to Mount Sinai—THE mountain! The mountain of God! God's presence was right there with them as it had been in the pillar of fire and pillar of cloud! He brought them out of Egypt to worship HIM! He had a plan. He knew what He was doing. The only thing the people had to do was trust Him. Or, at the very least, trust Moses who trusted God. And, thus, the camping begins in earnest.

This spot was already chosen by God as evidenced when God called Moses from the burning, not burning, bush. The region of Mount Sinai is "a wilderness of shaggy rocks ... and of valleys ... bare of verdure ... abundant springs ... the longest, widest, and most continuous of all the valleys ... Israel would find ample room for their encampment." (Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown) God's mercy placed them here, and His provision would sustain them. He delivered them from slavery to a place of salvation. It is here that they would

agree to covenant with Him. It was here that they would first break that covenant, the first of many.

I am so thankful that God made His covenant with us. He never broke His covenant with the Israelites, even though they did numerous times, and He will never break His new covenant in Christ Jesus with those who trust in Him. His mercy covered the Israelites, and His grace covers believers in Christ. Hunker down and camp with God. Even when you feel like you are in a desert, He can be trusted. He will provide for you. He will lead you in the way of salvation.

QUESTIONS

When people say they feel like they are in a desert with their faith, how can you encourage them that this doesn't have to mean it's a bad place?

PRAYERS

For Living Room International Ministries

Living Room's vision is to create a community of compassion for Kenyans in need of hospice care. Pray for the staff of 100+ Kenyans who daily show up to care for the patients and their families. Pray for mercy and grace.

TUESDAY

Read **Exodus 19:1-8; Hebrews 12:18-24**

Moses went up to God to receive God's proposal to the Israelites. Moses is instructed to remind the Israelites about all that they had seen Him do—how He dealt with the Egyptians and how He carried the Israelites on eagle's wings. Why? *"I brought you to Myself,"* He said. He brought them to a place so holy, *"if even an animal touches the mountain, it shall be stoned"* (Hebrews 12:20). But what a tender picture of the eagle bearing up her young on its wings as the young learns to fly in freedom. God is showing the Israelites His love and tender care because they are His children.

God was calling the Israelites to Himself to be set apart, holy, for His own purposes. God has a proposal for Israel: "A divine constitution given to Israel with promises on condition of obedience and penalties for disobedience, in the form of tables of the covenant." (F. Brown, S. Driver, C. Briggs)

The Maker and Keeper of this covenant, God demonstrates His love and mercy for the Israelites. It foreshadows the future covenant Jesus established, which demonstrates not only God's love and mercy, but also God's grace. Psalm 145:8-9 says, *"The LORD is gracious and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and His tender mercies are over all His works."*

God knew the Israelites were going to blow it by disobeying and disregarding Him, and they had to atone for the sin they committed. A blood sacrifice of atonement was all that was acceptable.

In His mercy, God provides a way for the people to cleanse themselves and live righteous lives through faith. This, too, was a foreshadow of the ultimate sacrifice of His Son Jesus, shedding His blood for us that we might enter into a new covenant with God. But with this new covenant, those who trust in Jesus have been cleansed for good. *“For Christ also suffered for sins once for all time, the just for the unjust, so that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit”* (1 Peter 3:18).

Praise our Heavenly Father for His compassion, mercy, and grace shown to us. He is the same God then, now, and always. Thank Him for His faithfulness to us.

QUESTIONS

God has a proposal for you. What does “new covenant living” mean to you?

PRAYERS

For Living Room International Ministries

Living Room believes every person is created in the image of God. More than treating a disease, we are committed to caring for a person holistically—physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Please pray for these patients, whom we refer to as *wageni* in Swahili (guests), to experience the love of Jesus in tangible ways.

WEDNESDAY

Read **Exodus 19:1-8, Hebrews 12:18-24**

Coming to Mt. Sinai, the Israelites had to make a decision about how they were going to live their lives. Would they acknowledge the Most High God, obey Him, and keep His covenant? Or would they not? The answer was “Yes” and “Yes.”

Look at the benefits of obeying Him. They would be called God’s own possession among all the peoples. “He took them under His special care and protection, as a treasure that is kept under lock and key. He distinguished them from, and dignified them above all people, as a people devoted to Him and to His service.” (Joseph Benson) They would be to God a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

There’s that word “holy” again—holy, set apart. Holy, not because of what they did, but because of who He is. Priests who are entitled to draw near to God in prayer without an intermediary. Priests who can bring Him their offerings, pay Him their vows, and hold communion with Him in heart and soul. This is what a believer in Jesus has access to as well. Peter echoes these sentiments: *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light”* (1 Peter 2:9).

We have access directly to God with our prayers and supplications through our Mediator Jesus Christ. Israel had to present their sacrifices to represent the shedding of blood and atonement for their sin, but we have a Savior who shed His blood, the perfect Lamb of God. When God looks on us now, He sees us covered in the blood of His Son. He sees Jesus in us.

From His provision for Israel to now, God has been providing a way of salvation for those who are truly seeking Him. To those who obey His voice and keep His covenant, they will be called His own possession. Believe in your heart and profess with your lips that Jesus Christ is Lord. He is the same God then, now, and always.

QUESTIONS

How have you experienced God's protection and care for you?

PRAYERS

For Living Room International Ministries

Living Room's ministry extends quality physical, psychological, and spiritual care to patients and their families on two campuses in Western Kenya. Pray for the leaders as they continue to grow that they will have wisdom and favor as they seek to follow God's lead.

THURSDAY

Read **Exodus 19:1-8; Hebrews 12:18-24**

And so, Moses came down from the mountain and told the people all that God had said. It was time for the people to either accept or reject this proposal. *“Then all the people answered together and said, ‘All that the Lord has spoken we will do!’”* (Exodus 19:8). Moses, as a mediator, returned the words of the people to God. “Thus Christ, the Mediator, as a Prophet, reveals God’s will to us, His precepts and promises; and then, as a Priest, offers up to God our spiritual sacrifices, not only of prayer and praise, but of devout affections, and pious resolutions, the work of his own Spirit in us.” (Matthew Henry)

There was so much self-confidence in the people as they answered affirmatively to God’s conditions. However, they would soon tire of waiting for Moses to come back down from the mountain. They would soon look back over their shoulders and wish for the slavery that was known rather than the God and His promises that were unknown.

Moses knew God, though, because he had been spending time getting to know Him. They walked together as friends even. *“The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend”* (Exodus 33:11a). The Israelites let their fear of the unknown and careless contentment of their slave status in Egypt win out over their new faith in God.

But don't we all to some degree give in to the known over the unknown? Don't we all place our trust in what we can see over what we can't see? Oftentimes we are bigger fans (fanatics) of a sports team than we are of our own Heavenly Father.

But He waits patiently for us. He is long-suffering. He is a jealous God and wants us to be His own possession and obey His voice and live in His covenant. He wants us to live freely and place all our faith (F.A.I.T.H.—**F**orsaking **A**ll **I** Trust **H**im) in His Son Christ Jesus. He keeps the covenant. We don't. We just need to obey His voice. We just need to seek His heart.

Father God, protect our hearts, souls, and minds from distractions that keep us from spending time with You. Holy Spirit, woo us unto Yourself that we might know You more.

QUESTIONS

What is keeping you from becoming a close friend of God?

PRAYERS

For Living Room International Ministries

Living Room's dream is to extend our reach by constructing an education center to train additional health care providers. Pray for provision and favor, for God to teach us how to empower these doctors and nurses.

FRIDAY

Read **Exodus 19:1-8; Hebrews 12:18-24**

A covenant community was established, but the Israelites, coming near to God, still were far off from their holy God. The voice of God was too terrible and made even Moses tremble and feel terrified. True and inner communion with God would not be revealed until the new covenant. The people first needed the Law to lead them to the painful realization that sin prevents such communion, so a longing for that sin to be taken away by a Messiah would intensify.

“Under the New Covenant, no longer is a tangible mountain the place of a divine revelation made from afar; but heaven is thrown open, and a new super-sensuous world in which God is enthroned is opened to admit us, opened through the Mediator of the New Covenant, accessible in virtue of His atoning blood” (Charles John Ellicott quoting Franz Delitzsch) Hebrews says, *“But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem”* (12:22). We now have access to the celestial city, which is the exact counterpart of the earthly Jerusalem. This is the new covenant community Jesus invites us into.

Look who makes up this community: *“myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus”* (vv. 23-24). What a crowd! Hebrews 12:1 says,

“Therefore, since we also have such a great cloud of witnesses surrounding us ...” There is a community watching our progress, cheering us on. This is reminiscent of the faithful mentioned in Hebrews 11, the list of faithful men and women. We are not alone! We are in good company!

God is still with us. The Triune God has not left us at any time throughout man’s existence. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have been in communion for eternity. God just wanted to share it with us. He extended His love, grace, and mercy to us through His covenant with the Israelites and then the new covenant through Jesus. He is the same then, today, and tomorrow. What a great God we have!

Thank our Heavenly Father for the sacrifice of His Son that we might have true, inner communion with Him—that we might approach His throne boldly and make our requests known to Him.

QUESTIONS

What is the most encouraging thing about being in God’s “covenant community”?

PRAYERS

For Living Room International Ministries

Please pray for Titus and Juli Boit, as well as their children, Sharon, Alice, Ella, Geoffrey and Ryan. Pray for God’s protection and favor to be upon this family.

Sources

- Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset and David Brown, *Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary* [1882], taken from <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/jfb/exodus/19.htm>.
- F. Brown, S. Driver and C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon* [1906] (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2018, 18th printing), taken from Unabridged Electronic Database, Copyright © 2002, 2003, 2006 by Biblesoft, Inc.
- Joseph Benson, *Benson Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* [1811], taken from <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/19-5.htm>.
- Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible* [1710], taken from <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/mhc/exodus/19.htm>.
- Charles John Ellicott, *Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers* [1905], taken from <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/hebrews/12-22.htm>.

