

Exodus 19: 10-25 (KJV)

¹⁰ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, 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. ¹² 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 soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. ¹⁴ And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes. ¹⁵ And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at *your* wives. ¹⁶ 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 spake, and God answered him by a voice. ²⁰ And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses *up* to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. ²¹ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. ²² And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them. ²³ And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. ²⁴ And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. ²⁵ So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

Prepare to Meet Thy God

OUTLINE

- (1) Sanctified (v10—15)**
- (2) Sanctity (v16-25)**

INTRODUCTION

The awesome, awe-inspiring and awful presence of God, for Who He is, demands that men come with fear and trembling, utmost reverence and quiet waiting, order and attentiveness. In Mount Sinai, God will give Israel, His people, the nation's constitution. He will give them His Law, and as FB Meyer said, "writing His Name, not on tablets of stone merely, but on the entire course of human history."

When a man meets with God, they come in touch with the infinite, eternal and unchangeable wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth of God. It will transform his life forever. God imparting him even a minute portion of Himself in any of His communicable attributes will influenced him for good considerably.

When God Himself walked on earth in the Person of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ, this truth was clearly seen.

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Luke 6:18-19 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and **they were healed**. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him (Jesus): **for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all**.

Luke 8:46-48 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And He (Jesus) said unto her, **Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace**.

Matthew 11:28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Exodus 33:14 And He said (to Moses), My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

(1) Sanctified (v10-15)

¹⁰ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go unto the people, and sanctify them to day and to morrow, 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.

The LORD instructed Moses sanctify the people as they prepare to meet their God. The word “sanctify” means “to make holy” or “to set apart”.

We observe here the outward putting away of soiled clothing, they would clean themselves. It is rightly so that we take away the physical filth surrounding us so that we can be clean as we come to God in worship. It is God honouring. It is interesting that God gave them 3 days to prepare themselves. Do you take time to prepare yourself for worship on the Lord’s Day? Or is it always a rush and coming to God is haphazard, unprepared? How many days before do you begin preparing? Perhaps preparing your Sunday clothes, cleaning and ironing, cleaning your shoes so that they will be clean and stately when you step into God’s House.

¹² 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 soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. ¹⁴ And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people; and they washed their clothes.

There is an order by which God is to be approached in worship. There is an observed sanctity in the presence of God. The instruction given was that the mount is to be secured so that no Israelite or their animals will wantonly wander around and enter. We observe here the severe judgment upon trespassers, the death penalty.

Matthew Henry observed well the spiritual significance when he said, “The solemn manner in which the law was delivered, was to impress the people with a right sense of the Divine majesty. Also, to convince them of their own guilt, and to show that they could not stand in judgment before God by their own obedience. In the law, the sinner discovers what he ought to be, what he is, and what he wants. There he learns the nature, necessity, and glory of redemption, and of being made holy. Having been taught to flee to Christ, and to love him, the law is the rule of his obedience and faith.”

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He further added, “That humble awful reverence which ought to possess the minds of all those that worship God. We are mean creatures before a great Creator, vile sinners before a holy righteous Judge; and therefore, a godly fear and shame well become us.

Hebrews 12:28 *Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:*

Psalm 2:11 *Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling.*

... The distance at which worshippers were kept, under that dispensation, which we ought to take notice of, that we may the more value our privilege under the gospel, having *boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.*

Hebrews 10:19 *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.”*

¹⁵ *And he said unto the people, Be ready against the third day: come not at your wives.*

Matthew Poole observed here, “Abstain from the use of the marriage-bed, partly because your wives may haply have their uncleanness upon them, though unknown to themselves, at least to you, whereby you may be legally defiled.

Leviticus 15:18 *The woman also with whom man shall lie with seed of copulation, they shall both bathe themselves in water, and be unclean until the even.*

1 Samuel 21:4 *And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.*

And partly that your minds may be abstracted from all sensual delights, and wholly employed about this great and holy work and service.

Hebrews 13:4 *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

1 Corinthians 7:5 *Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.”*

(2) Sanctity (v17-25)

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.*

It was the first time that the people of Israel saw the awful presence of God by fire and earthquake. FB Meyer said well, “God set Himself to teach them concerning certain of those great qualities, the knowledge of which lay at the foundation of all right dealings between people and Himself. And in order to achieve His purpose, He made use of outward significant signs; which did more than the most elaborate discourse to instruct the ignorant and sensual people whom He had taken for His own.”

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¹⁹ And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake, and God answered him by a voice. ²⁰ And the LORD came down upon mount Sinai, on the top of the mount: and the LORD called Moses up to the top of the mount; and Moses went up. ²¹ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the LORD to gaze, and many of them perish. ²² And let the priests also, which come near to the LORD, sanctify themselves, lest the LORD break forth upon them.

Meyer further observed well, “God clearly designated Moses to be the organ and channel of His communication to man, “Lo I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee and believe thee forever.” (Exodus 19:9).”

²³ And Moses said unto the LORD, The people cannot come up to mount Sinai: for thou chargedst us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it. ²⁴ And the LORD said unto him, Away, get thee down, and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the LORD, lest he break forth upon them. ²⁵ So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them.

The people saw the greatness, majesty and power of God’s presence that indeed causes men to fear and tremble at His holiness and bow in humble worship and obedience.

Israel saw the care of God since they left Egypt. There was at no time any lack that was not supplied. God was there to provide and protect them in the harsh hostilities of the wilderness. They experienced the goodness of God in the barrenness of the wilderness. All their children and cattle were kept safe by God.

It must invoke a sense of gratitude and thanksgiving. And God stipulated how He is to be approached with great reverence and fear.

May this account teach us how are to approach God when we come to His House for prayer and worship. This the house of prayer and we are to observe its sanctity.

The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy concerning the sanctity of God’s house when he said, “**14** These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: **15** But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. **16** And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”
1 Timothy 3:14-16 (KJV)

The Apostle Paul instructs how believers should behave in the church, how Christians should conduct themselves in God’s House? There is a right conduct in which believers are to approach God in worship, but not just in worship, the Apostle Paul is instructing us the fundamentals truths concerning how the affairs of the church should be conducted.

The first truth is to acknowledge the Headship of God in the church.

(a) Acknowledging the Headship of God

He says in end of verse 15a that the church is the house of God and therefore God gives it the direction. The church is not a man concocted institution but a God ordained one established by the will of God, God is the Head when God the Father, involuntarily, send forth His Son, the second Person of the Godhead in human flesh to complete the

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redemption plan for fallen man, John 1:11-13 *“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

God initiated this, God planned it. In fact in the very first verse of the book of Romans chapter 1 verse 1, Paul called this intervention, this plan to save mankind, the Gospel of God, the good news that is entirely of God, which Paul is called to declare. There is now a God-provided righteousness that is available to help us to make us right with God, all who received it is added to this community of God, this community belongs to God and we are members of the household, the family of God when we receive by faith Jesus as our Lord and Saviour is the meaning of the “house of God”.

By the phrase the church of God we mean the body of believers, but more broadly we are speaking of the local church as Paul would call it in 1 Corinthians 1:2 *“Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours.”* We acknowledge that in the local church, we have believers and unbelievers together.

And more specifically, the word “house” does refer to a building in certain usage in the New Testament but here in this context, the reference is “to the church as a body of believers”, in which God dwells.

To give us a better understanding of the privilege of being a part of the family of God, the Apostle John says in **1 John 3:1** *“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.”* We, who know Him, acknowledge His Headship that we belong to Him.

Therefore, none of us own the house of God but the true owner is God Himself, and more specifically His Son who is the Head of the church because He died to redeem us as lively stones, as Peter says, that built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood.

Moses went to the Pharaoh and said to him, *“Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve (worship) me.”* When God finally sent a great deliverance upon Israel, and they left the idolatry and pollution of Egypt, setting themselves apart to worship God according to His directions and His ways.

(b) Observing the Sanctity (v15b)

which is the church of the living God...

The church of God belongs to God and under the Headship of God is called the church of the living God. Let us take this slowly. The word “church” consists of the preposition “out of” and the verb “to call”. The church literally means “called out ones”, set apart for the worship of the living and true God. The emphasis here is that the church has been called out of the world to stand as a testimony for the living and true God.

Israel was called the church in the wilderness - Acts 7:38 *“This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us.”*

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Indeed, in Exodus 19, we read this account of how Israel is set apart by God as a witness for God just as the church is set apart as a witness for God today.

The presence of God with His people attested by the “thick cloud” that they witnessed, was proof that God dwelt in their midst. And indeed, there is a sense of the holiness of God with them.

The people are to prepare themselves purifying, with clean clothing, more importantly, prepare their hearts to come before God.

They prepare to receive God’s instructions when the 10 commandments were given to them - Exodus 20:20 *“And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.”*

(c) Keep Pure the Truth

- the pillar and ground of the truth.

The church is the house of God; He dwells there.

The church holds forth the Scripture and the doctrine of Christ, as a pillar holds forth a proclamation.

When a church ceases to be the pillar and ground of truth, we may and ought to forsake her; for our regard to truth should be first and greatest.

16 *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.*

The mystery of godliness is Christ. He is God, who was made flesh, and was manifest in the flesh. God was pleased to manifest himself to man, by his own Son taking the nature of man. Though reproached as a sinner, and put to death as a malefactor, Christ was raised again by the Spirit, and so was justified from all the false charges with which he was loaded. Angels ministered to him, for he is the Lord of angels. The Gentiles welcomed the gospel which the Jews rejected. Let us remember that God was manifest in the flesh, to take away our sins, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These doctrines must be shown forth by the fruits of the Spirit in our lives.

CONCLUSION

- (1) Sanctified (v10—15)
- (2) Sanctity (v16-25)

Amen.