



This happened
when I was 19
years old

Look at all the elements
in this picture and guess
what I'm trying to tell.

I was reprimanded by my older
brother for not being more
prepared for worship because I
was writing the offering check
on the drive to church.

That's not my brother and I in
the picture. It is an AI generated
picture.

What Do You Do To Prepare To Meet God



A dramatic illustration of Mount Sinai erupting with fire and lightning. The sky is dark and stormy, with several bright lightning bolts striking down. The mountain is covered in thick, dark smoke and fire. In the foreground, a large crowd of people, presumably the Israelites, are gathered in a desert landscape. Many are wearing traditional robes and head coverings. Some are standing, while others are kneeling or prostrate on the ground, suggesting a scene of awe and worship. The overall atmosphere is one of divine power and a significant religious event.

Meeting God

Exodus 18-19

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6/7/206

Exodus 18:1-12

“Now Jethro, the priest of Midian and father-in-law of Moses, heard of everything God had done for Moses and for his people Israel, and how the LORD had brought Israel out of Egypt.” 18:1



“⁸ Moses told his father-in-law about everything the Lord had done to Pharaoh and the Egyptians for Israel’s sake and about all the hardships they had met along the way and how the LORD had saved them.” 18:8

What does vs. 8 describe Moses doing?

“⁹ Jethro was delighted to hear about all the good things the LORD had done for Israel in rescuing them from the hand of the Egyptians. ¹⁰ He said, “Praise be to the LORD, who rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians and of Pharaoh, and who rescued the people from the hand of the Egyptians. ¹¹ Now I know that the LORD is greater than all other gods, for he did this to those who had treated Israel arrogantly.” ¹² Then Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, brought a burnt offering and other sacrifices to God, and Aaron came with all the elders of Israel to eat a meal with Moses’ father-in-law in the presence of God.” 18:9-12

How did Jethro respond to Moses’ testimony?

What did Jethro recognize from Moses’ testimony that led him to worship the Lord?



Meeting God Through Testimony
Exodus 18:1-12





Exodus 18: 13-27

Organizing A Governing System

Moses was wearing himself out (Ex 18:13-18)

¹³ The next day Moses took his seat to serve as judge for the people, and they stood around him from morning till evening. ¹⁴ When his father-in-law saw all that Moses was doing for the people, he said, “What is this you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge, while all these people stand around you from morning till evening?”

¹⁵ Moses answered him, “Because the people come to me to seek God’s will. ¹⁶ Whenever they have a dispute, it is brought to me, and I decide between the parties and inform them of God’s decrees and instructions.”

¹⁷ Moses’ father-in-law replied, “What you are doing is not good. ¹⁸ You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.

Jethro's Advice (18:19-23)

You must be the people's representative before God and bring their disputes to him.



²⁰ Teach them his decrees and instructions, and show them the way they are to live and how they are to behave.

²¹ But select capable men from all the people—men who fear God, trustworthy men who hate dishonest gain—

and appoint them as officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.

²² Have them serve as judges for the people at all times,

but have them bring every difficult case to you; the simple cases they can decide themselves.

That will make your load lighter, because they will share it with you.



²³ If you do this and God so commands, you will be able to stand the strain, and all these people will go home satisfied.”



Meeting God at Mount Sinai

Exodus 19:1-25



The Covenant With The People Of Israel

"³ Then Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain and said, 'This is what you are to say to the descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: ⁴ 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, ⁶ you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites." 19:3-6

Is this the first time God call the Israelites the people of Israel?

- "Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the tendon attached to the socket of the hip..." Gen 32:32
- "These are the names of the sons of Israel (Jacob and his descendants) who went to Egypt:" Gen 46:8
- "Look, the people of Israel have become far too numerous for us." Ex 1:9
- "Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them..." Ex 3:16

The Covenant With The People Of Israel

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Is there a difference between “Israelites”, “the Sons of Israel”, and the people of Israel”?

- “The Sons of Israel” is about lineage
- “The People of Israel” from Ex 19 on is about the community of people, the Nation of Israel.
- “Israelites” from Ex 19 onward is about the nation of Israel with whom God made a covenant in Mt. Sinai

The Covenant With The People Of Israel

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The covenant God made with the nation of Israel here is a conditional covenant, but what is it based upon? **God’s Grace**

What is God’s purpose for the nation of Israel in redeeming them from a life of slavery in Egypt?

- Belong to God
- Represent God
- Display God to the nations

God Speaking To People

- God spoke to Adam and Eve
- God spoke to Noah
- God spoke to Abraham
- God spoke to Moses
- God speaks to the Nation of Israel in a very different way



The Preparation – Consecrate Them

- *“The LORD said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you.” Then Moses told the LORD what the people had said.” 19:9*
- *“And the LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and **consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes**”¹¹ and be ready by the third day, because on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. ¹² Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, ‘Be careful that you do not approach the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain is to be put to death. ¹³ They are to be stoned or shot with arrows; not a hand is to be laid on them. No person or animal shall be permitted to live.’ Only when the ram’s horn sounds a long blast may they approach the mountain.” 19:10*

The Limits – Cannot Approach Until...

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- “And the LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and **consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes** ¹¹ and be ready by the third day, because on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. ¹² Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, ‘**Be careful that you do not approach the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain is to be put to death.**’ ¹³ They are to be stoned or shot with arrows; not a hand is to be laid on them. **No person or animal shall be permitted to live.**’ **Only when the ram’s horn sounds a long blast may they approach the mountain.**” 19:10

This not the first time God appeared to people, so what makes this time so different?



Connecting it back to Exodus 19:6

“you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

The Preparation
– Consecration
as priests

The Limits –
Reverence as
priests

God Speaks To The Nation of Israel

“¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled.

¹⁷ Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently.

¹⁹ As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.” 19:16-19



Hebrew 12: 18-24

Do vs. 22-24 mean
we no longer need
to have reverence
for the Lord?

¹⁸ You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; ¹⁹ to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, ²⁰ because they could not bear what was commanded: "If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death." ²¹ The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, "I am trembling with fear."

²² But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, ²³ to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

New Testament Connection

“⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” 1 Peter 2:5

“⁹ 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 5:9



Meeting God In His Raw Holiness
Exodus 19:1-25



Connecting Ex 18 and 19

Meeting God

Through Testimony (Ex 18)

- Jethro meets God second-hand through Moses' testimony
- People can come to worship God through shared life stories
- It's intimate and personal

Meeting God

In His Raw Holiness (Ex 19)

- The meeting is a first-hand experience
- It is a terrifying supernatural experience
- It demands reverence for God

Freedom To Worship

Exodus 18

- Slaves don't have laws or a judicial system; they just have masters.
- By setting up judges, Israel learns how to live as a free society.
- True freedom to worship God requires order, peace, and justice within the community.
- If Moses burned out and the people were frustrated, their community would collapse before they even received the Commandments.

Exodus 19

- Throughout the plagues, Moses repeatedly told Pharaoh, *"Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the wilderness."* Exodus 19 is the fulfillment of that request.
- They are finally free, standing at the mountain, about to receive the law.

Freedom To Worship

The Connection:

- True freedom isn't the right to do whatever you want; it is the freedom to belong to the right Master.
- God frees them from Pharaoh's heavy yoke to bring them onto "eagles' wings" to Himself (Ex 19:4).
- Their freedom to worship is codified in becoming a "kingdom of priests"—a whole nation dedicated to mediating God's presence.



Discussion

- Jethro noticed Moses' burnout before Moses did. Why is healthy structure and delegation in our church essential for our personal relationship with God?
- The physical boundaries around Sinai emphasized God's holiness and distance. How does the New Testament change this reality for us, while still requiring us to hold onto that same reverence? (Heb 12:18-24)
- If the purpose of freedom is to worship and serve God, in what ways do we modern Christians accidentally misuse our freedom?
- What do you do to prepare to worship?