

Heavy Duty

Preparation for Sunday, May 12, 2013 “The Called to Holiness”

Monday – Tuesday

1. Who We Should Be – Read Exodus 19:1-6

- What does “the third month” in verse 19 refer to?
- In what ways had Israel seen God’s provision in those three months? (God drowned the Egyptian army in the Red Sea (Ex. 14:26-27); provided manna and quail for them to eat (Ex. 16); and water from the rock for them to drink (Ex. 17))
- What specifically has God done for you?
- Verse 5 reinforces the covenant between God and Israel. In a covenant, both parties have a responsibility. What was Israel’s responsibility?
- What was God’s promise?

Summarize: At first glance, it seems as though God was making a conditional statement through Moses: if the Israelites did their part, God would do His part. However, keep in mind how much God had already done. Verse 4 reminded the Israelites that God had been doing His part from the moment they left Egypt. But it goes back much, much further than that. Over 400 years before this, God had told Abraham in Genesis 12:2 that He would make Abraham into a great nation. God had singled out the descendants of Abraham to be His covenant people long, long before this.

- Did the Israelites do anything to deserve their position as God’s royal priesthood? (See also Deuteronomy 7:6-7.)
- What “special diet” were the Israelites fed as God’s royal priesthood?
- As we learned from 1 Peter, Christians today can rightfully count themselves as God’s chosen people. What is our purpose on earth? (See Matthew 28:18-20.)

Read—1 Peter 2:9-10.

- Based on this verse, do you think the call to be a royal priesthood, holy nation, and people for God’s possession applies only to the Jews, or can believers apply this truth to themselves?
- When do you feel least like a royal priest, or part of a holy nation? What are you supposed to do during those times when you don’t resemble what God has said you are?
- What word in verse 10 gives you comfort when you feel this way?

Wednesday - Thursday

2. How We Should Prepare – Read Exodus 19:10-14

- Why did God tell Moses to consecrate the people “today and tomorrow?”

- Why did God establish boundaries between Himself and the people? What was the penalty for crossing the boundary?
- Why isn't going through the motions enough to make you clean?
- Christians today spend more time thinking about God's approachability than about His holiness. And it is true that through Christ, we can "approach the throne of grace with confidence (Hebrews 4:16). But has the character of God changed? Is He any less holy? If not, then how should we apply these verses to our lives today?
- Lots of people seek to stand out from the crowd. How is this different from being consecrated?
- How do we observe the holiness of God today?
- How are we consecrated before entering His presence?
- When it comes to getting ready to enter God's presence, do we tend to take it more seriously or less seriously than we should?

Summarize: The period of consecration for the people was two days, "today and tomorrow." During this time, it can be assumed that they were also to abstain from sexual intercourse. (Source: Anders, Holman OT Commentary on Exodus, Leviticus, & Numbers, page 86) On the third day, God would meet with the people. They needed to be prepared physically and spiritually for the encounter. In our lives, we typically perceive ourselves as either cleaner or dirtier than we actually are. Both are over the edge when it comes to sin. To view yourself as cleaner is pride and an overestimation of your worth. To view yourself as dirtier is to underestimate the grace and forgiveness that God grants.

Friday – Saturday

3. What We Should Expect – Read Exodus 19:16-19

- What were some physical, tangible indications of the presence of God in this passage?
- Do you think the sound of the trumpet came from God, or was there a human trumpeter?
- What was the reaction of the people to all of this?
- Is this always the way God announced His presence in Scripture?
- In what ways have you experienced the dramatic (or even frightening) presence of God?
- How have you experienced the presence of God in a soft, tender, way?

Summarize: It had rained before. The people experienced thunder and lightning. They saw God in a pillar of cloud and fire leading them out of Egypt. Their experience with natural elements and supernatural ones was common. This was different and they shuddered in fear. The combination of these supernatural elements and the crescendo of the trumpet blast must have been a marvel to them. Although familiar, these were not normal elements. Something was clearly different. They were experiencing God's present in a dramatic way.

Additional Ready for this Week:

1. God's Revelation in the Sinaitic Covenant
2. God's Self-Revelation at Sinai
3. Rephidim and the Plain of Encampment
4. The Geographical Challenges of Sinai
5. The Jewish Priesthood