

**Meeting God at Mt. Sinai**  
Message 6 of 8 in the series: "Exodus"

I. **Two months after leading the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt, God brought them to Mt. Sinai where they would spend the next year becoming God's people.**

"Exactly two months after the Israelites left Egypt, they arrived in the wilderness of Sinai. After breaking camp at Rephidim, they came to the wilderness of Sinai and set up camp there at the base of Mount Sinai. Then Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God. The Lord called to him from the mountain and said, 'Give these instructions to the family of Jacob; announce it to the descendants of Israel: "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. **Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation.**" This is the message you must give to the people of Israel.' So Moses returned from the mountain and called together the elders of the people and told them everything the Lord had commanded him. And all the people responded together, '**We will do everything the Lord has commanded.**' So Moses brought the people's answer back to the Lord." Exodus 19:1-8 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** God's desire for the Israelites was to create a people set apart for Himself so they could be a kingdom of priests who would demonstrate His power, goodness, and love to all the other nations on earth. Although they initially promised to love and obey the Lord, the Israelites failed miserably at being people devoted to Him. "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: **This is Jerusalem, which I have set in the center of the nations, with countries all around her.** Yet in her wickedness she has rebelled against my laws and decrees more than the nations and countries around her. She has rejected my laws and has not followed my decrees." Ezekiel 5:5-6 (NIV)

Priest = an intermediary between God and people. Holy = set apart.

**IMPORTANT!** God's desire hasn't changed. He is still placing His people in the center of families, businesses, schools, neighborhoods, etc. so that we can demonstrate His power, goodness, and love to all of the people around us. "**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...** Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us." 1 Peter 2:9 & 12 (NIV)

II. **On the morning of the third day after their arrival, God appeared to the people of Israel in a thick cloud that covered the top of Mt. Sinai. From the cloud, He spoke to them, laying out the terms of His covenant with them, the Ten Commandments.**

"Then the Lord said to Moses, '**I will come to you in a thick cloud, Moses, so the people themselves can hear me when I speak with you. Then they will always trust you.**' Moses told the Lord what the people had said. Then the Lord told Moses, 'Go down and prepare the people for my arrival. **Consecrate them today and tomorrow, and have them wash their clothing.** Be sure they are ready on the third day, for on that day the Lord will come down on Mount Sinai as all the people watch. Mark off a boundary all around the mountain. Warn the people, "**Be careful! Do not go up on the mountain or even touch its boundaries. Anyone who touches the mountain will certainly be put to death.**" ... On the morning of the third day, thunder roared and lightning flashed, and a dense cloud came down on the mountain. There was a long, loud blast from a ram's horn, and all the people trembled. Moses led them out from the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. All of Mount Sinai was covered with smoke because the Lord had descended on it in the form of fire. The smoke billowed into the sky like smoke from a brick kiln, and the whole mountain shook violently. As the blast of the ram's horn grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God thundered his reply. The Lord came down on the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses climbed the mountain." Exodus 19:9-12 & 16-20 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** At Sinai, God was beginning to teach His people about His holiness and their sinfulness. "**But your iniquities have separated you from your God;** your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear." Isaiah 59:2 (NIV)

**IMPORTANT!** Jesus summarized the Ten Commandments with just two. "**You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.**' This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: '**Love your neighbor as yourself.**' The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

Matthew 22:37-40 (NLT) (*Deuteronomy 6:5, Leviticus 19:18*)

A. The first four commandments are about loving God.

1. **No other gods.** "I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other god but me." Exodus 20:2-3 (NLT)
2. **No idols.** "You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods." Exodus 20:4-5a (NLT)
3. **Don't misuse God's name.** "You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name." Exodus 20:7 (NLT)
4. **Observe the Sabbath.** "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work." Exodus 20:8-10a (NLT)

B. The last six commandments are about loving others.

5. **Honor your parents.** "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you." Exodus 20:12 (NLT)
6. **Don't take your neighbor's life.** "You must not murder." Exodus 20:13 (NLT)
7. **Don't take your neighbor's wife.** "You must not commit adultery." Exodus 20:14 (NLT)
8. **Don't take your neighbor's stuff.** "You must not steal." Exodus 20:15 (NLT)
9. **Don't lie.** "You must not testify falsely against your neighbor." Exodus 20:16 (NLT)
10. **Don't covet.** "You must not covet your neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor." Exodus 20:17 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** When God appeared to the Israelites in power at Mt. Sinai, they wanted to distance themselves from Him. "When the people heard the thunder and the loud blast of the ram's horn, and when they saw the flashes of lightning and the smoke billowing from the mountain, they stood at a distance, trembling with fear. And they said to Moses, '**You speak to us, and we will listen. But don't let God speak directly to us, or we will die!**' 'Don't be afraid,' Moses answered them, 'for God has come in this way to test you, and so that your fear of him will keep you from sinning!' **As the people stood in the distance**, Moses approached the dark cloud where God was." Exodus 20:18-21 (NLT)

**IMPORTANT!** Jesus came to mediate a new covenant between sinful people and Holy God because none of us could keep the old one. "Not a single person on earth is always good and never sins." Ecclesiastes 7:20 (NLT)

"The day is coming, says the Lord, when **I will make a new covenant** with the people of Israel and Judah. This covenant will not be like the one I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand and led them out of the land of Egypt. **They did not remain faithful to my covenant**, so I turned my back on them, says the Lord. But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel on that day, says the Lord: **I will put my laws in their minds, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people...** And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins." Hebrews 8:8b-10 & 12 (NLT) (*Jeremiah 31:31-34*)

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**Connect Group Questions:**

1. Read Exodus 19:1-6 & 1 Peter 2:9-12. Does it surprise you that in both the Old and New Testaments God wants His people to see themselves as a kingdom of priests? What would our church look like if we did?
2. Read Exodus 19:9 & 20:18-21. Why did God appear in such a powerful way to the Israelites at Mt. Sinai? How did the Israelites respond? How would you have responded?
3. Discuss the Ten Commandments together with New Testament teachings about them.
  - No other gods. (Exodus 20:2-3, Matthew 4:10, 1 Corinthians 8:5-6)
  - No idols. (Exodus 20:4-6, Colossians 3:5, 1 John 5:21)

- Don't misuse God's name. (Exodus 20:7, Matthew 5:33-37 & 6:9)
  - Observe the Sabbath. (Exodus 20:8-11, Mark 2:27-28, Colossians 2:16-17)
  - Honor your parents. (Exodus 20:12, Ephesians 6:1-2)
  - Don't take your neighbor's life. (Exodus 20:13, Matthew 5:21-22)
  - Don't take your neighbor's wife. (Exodus 20:14, Matthew 5:27-28)
  - Don't take your neighbor's stuff. (Exodus 20:15, Ephesians 4:28)
  - Don't lie. (Exodus 20:16, Matthew 12:36, Ephesians 4:25)
  - Don't covet. (Exodus 20:17, Luke 12:15, James 4:1-3)
4. Read Matthew 22:34-40. How was Jesus able to summarize the Ten Commandments with just two? Why is love the key? Where do we get that kind of love?
  5. Why did Jesus need to mediate a new covenant between sinful people and Holy God? What was wrong with the first one? (Ecclesiastes 7:20, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 8:6-13, Luke 22:20)