

[*NOTE: this series of lessons are not for the novice Christian. These are for the serious disciple who seeks to press on into all that God has and fulfill his calling. It is assumed that the reader has a basic foundation in the Scriptures and sees that God has an overriding purpose for the consummation of His plan.*]

MOUNT SINAI & PENTECOST

Introduction

Our last lesson in this series looked at why God told Moses to build the Tabernacle so that His presence could be with Israel. It was a dwelling place for God among His people. This was a result of the interaction between God and Israel at Mount Sinai. When the Israelites left Egypt God had not mentioned anything about sacrifices, or the tabernacle, or the law, or any of the other things that came from the Sinai experience.

This lesson will look at the importance of that event and how it relates to us under the New Covenant. Remember that we are dealing with patterns, types and shadows given by God to graphically explain spiritual truth to us.

Israel Arrives at Sinai

It was during the third month of the Israelites leaving Egypt that they came to Sinai.

In the third month after the sons of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that very day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. ([Exodus 19:1 NASB](#))

A quick reading of this and it seems like it was 90 days since leaving Egypt that they arrived at Sinai but that is not the case. This scripture says “on that very day”. What day? “In the third month . . . on that very day” would mean the first day of the third month. Jewish tradition agrees with this.

Israel left Egypt by beginning their journey on the 15th day of the first month [*Exodus Chapter 12*]. The fifteenth day of the second month would be 30 days after leaving Egypt. From the 15th of the second month to the end of the month would be another 15 days making a total of 45 days. The first day of the third month would be the 46th day. This timeline is important because God came down on Mount Sinai on the 50th day, as we will see in a moment.

God commanded Israel to keep a feast every year on the 50th day after Passover. It was called the Feast of Pentecost. The whole experience of Israel at Mount Sinai is a picture, a type or shadow, for us of Pentecost. Understanding this will help us understand the importance of Pentecost in Acts chapter two.

On the 47th day after leaving Egypt, Moses went up Mount Sinai to meet with God. God revealed His plan for Israel, which was to make Israel a kingdom of priests, a holy nation, a people for His own

possession [*Exodus 19:1-11*]. To receive these benefits, God's requirements are simple: obey His voice and keep His covenant.

Moses went back down the mountain and told the people what God had said and they said, "All the Lord has spoken we will do." Moses went back up the mountain and told God that the people agreed with God's purpose. This was then the 48th day since leaving Egypt.

God told Moses to tell the people to consecrate themselves today and tomorrow because He would come down on the mountain on the third day.

The LORD also said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow, and let them wash their garments; and let them be ready for the third day, for on the third day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. (*Exodus 19:10-11 NASB*)

So, our timeline is complete: today = 48th day; tomorrow = 49th day; and the third day = the 50th day. God would come down on Mount Sinai on the 50th day since the children of Israel left Egypt.

When God Came Down

On the 50th day God came down on the mountain in fire and smoke and Mount Sinai became like a furnace of fire. The whole mountain began to shake violently in an earthquake. The trumpet sounded louder and louder. Moses said something to God and God answered him back with a loud voice or, as some say, with thunder. God called Moses to the top of the mountain and told him to go down and tell the people not to come up the mountain.

Since this is all a type and a picture for us of Pentecost, it is important that we understand what really happened on the 50th day.

All the people perceived the thunder and the lightning flashes and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw *it*, they trembled and stood at a distance. Then they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or we will die." Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God has come in order to test you, and in order that the fear of Him may remain with you, so that you may not sin." (*Exodus 20:18-20 NASB*)

Because they were afraid they told Moses that they wanted Him to hear from God and speak what he heard to them. This set the tone for Israel's relationship with God until the Word became flesh and walked among us and spoke to us God's words directly. Even today people want someone else to hear God for them and then tell them what He said.

Moses recaps this experience in Deuteronomy and we get a few more details of what happened and what God did to unfold His plan.

"Remember the day you stood before the LORD your God at Horeb, when the LORD said to me, 'Assemble the people to Me, that I may let them hear My words so they may learn to fear Me all the days they live on the earth, and that they may teach their children.' "You came near and stood at the foot of the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire to the *very* heart of the

heavens: darkness, cloud and thick gloom. "Then the LORD spoke to you from the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form—only a voice. "So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, *that is*, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone. (Deuteronomy 4:10-13 NASB)

While it sounds like God speaking the 10 commandments to them and writing them on stone tablets occurred at the same time, there were actually about 40 days between God speaking the 10 commandments and God writing them on the stone tables. After God spoke the 10 commandments to Israel at Mount Sinai He called Moses to come back up the mountain to speak to Him. This was Moses' fourth trip up the mountain to speak to God [*Exodus chapter 19*]. God had told Moses to go down and come back up and to bring Aaron with him [*Exodus 19:24*]. It was on this occasion that God gave the statutes, ordinances and judgments. These detailed the interactions between the children of Israel, slaves, violence, animals, restitution requirements, Sabbaths, the feasts and God's commandments concerning the heathen living in Canaan. Then God told Moses to bring Aaron and his sons along with the 70 elders on his next trip up the mountain.

Then He said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you shall worship at a distance. "Moses alone, however, shall come near to the LORD, but they shall not come near, nor shall the people come up with him." (Exodus 24:1-2 NASB)

So, Moses went down and told the people all that the Lord had said. Moses wrote these things in a book of covenant before building an altar, offering sacrifices, reading the book of the covenant to the people, and sprinkling the blood on the people.

Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!" Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words." (Exodus 24:3-8 NASB)

After doing all of this and completing the process of establishing God's covenant with the people, Moses went back up the mountain with Aaron, Aaron's sons, and the 70 elders.

Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they saw God, and they ate and drank. Now the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction." So Moses arose with Joshua his

servant, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. But to the elders he said, "Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a legal matter, let him approach them." Then Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the mountain top. Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights. (Exodus 24:9-18 NASB)

About 75 people went up the mountain and saw God, worshiped, ate, and drank: Moses, Joshua, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and 70 elders. Then, God called Moses further up the mountain to speak to him and Moses told the others to wait there for him to return. While on the mountain with God this time, Moses receives the instructions on how to build the tabernacle along with its furnishings and the anointing of the priests and their garments, and the procedures for the sacrifices and offerings.

Apparently while Moses was with God on the mountain for 40 days, Aaron and his sons along with the 70 elders became impatient waiting on Moses as he had instructed them and decided to go back down the mountain to the people.

Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, "Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." Aaron said to them, "Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me." Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought *them* to Aaron. He took *this* from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, "This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt." Now when Aaron saw *this*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, "Tomorrow *shall be* a feast to the LORD." So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. (Exodus 32:1-6 NASB)

A few days previously (we don't know how long they waited before coming back down to the people), Aaron had seen the Lord in His glory, ate and drank before Him, and worshiped Him. Now he seems to quickly yield to the people to make an idol along with an altar to it. He even calls the thing Jehovah.

On the mountain, God tells Moses what's going on below and also tells him that He will wipe them out and raise up a new people from Moses. However, Moses intercedes for them and God stays His hand.

Moses goes back down the mountain and sees the idol's worship party going on and he throws down the stone tablets, which broke, signifying the broken covenant. He asks who is on the Lord's side and the tribe of Levi steps forward. He tells them to pull their swords and kill their brethren, which they did, killing about 3,000 men. Because of their obedience and commitment, the tribe of Levi became priests instead of the whole nation, who had defaulted from that calling through idolatry.

Application for Us

Israel didn't learn a proper fear of the Lord at Mount Sinai. They didn't obey. They walked according to their own council and according to their own carnal mind and stubborn heart.

God's purpose was a people for His own possession who would be a kingdom of priests. They were to go up the mountain of God's purpose. Instead they backed away and stood at a distance. This is true of the people of God today. They want the blessings of God but want someone else to seek God for them and then lay hands on them and “impart” the blessings and prophesy the words of God.

Israel asked God to appoint a man over them who would hear His voice and come and tell them what He said, then they would do it. We still seek the “appointed” man today. We want a “pastor”, a “prophet”, an “apostle”, a “spiritual father”, a “set man” to hear God for us—to tell us what to do.

God ordained a feast every year so that Israel would remember their experience at Mt. Sinai. It was called variously “The Feast Of The 50th Day”, “The Feast Of Weeks”, “The Feast Of Harvest”. This feast began on the 50th day after Passover. It was on this very day that God poured out His Spirit in Acts chapter 2, the first day of the Feast Of The 50th Day—The Feast Of Pentecost. Mount Sinai is the shadow, Pentecost is the reality. Israel rejected God's plan at Mount Sinai. Some of the church has rejected God's plan at Pentecost and some who have accepted the Feast Of Pentecost have not experienced all of the reality of what God shows in type at Mount Sinai.

Moses was given the pattern for the Tabernacle after he had ascended to the top of the mountain the 5th time. Our problem is that we think one time is all it takes to hear God's complete plan. God's plan is revealed in stages and according to His people's response. It was the 5th time up the mountain that God gave Moses the plan for the priesthood of Aaron and his sons. They were appointed to minister to God. Their garments were carefully specified. Their consecration was carefully ordained, even to the filling of their hands. After the priests fully consecrated themselves to His purpose, God said He would consecrate the priests to minister TO HIM. God also called craftsmen of all kinds and filled them with the Spirit of God in all wisdom and understanding, in knowledge and in special craftsmanship to make the appointments for the tabernacle [*Exodus 31:3*].

God appointed a priesthood to stand in the people's place to do the work of service in the tabernacle and to stand before the Lord to minister to Him. God also appointed the priesthood to stand before the people to minister to the people as a substitute for God ministering to the people Himself.

God's original offer was to make all of Israel a kingdom of priests. Then why did God choose the Levites as the next level of priests? First, the Levites stood on God's side at Massah when there was no water. The rest of Israel quarreled with Moses and said “why have you brought us out of Egypt to kill us and our children with thirst?” At that time the Levites observed the word of the Lord and kept God's covenant. Again at Mount Sinai when Israel made the golden calf, the tribe of Levi did not participate. Moses called all those who would stand on the Lord's side, and who would stand against the ones who had worshiped the golden calf, to stand by him. The tribe of Levi stood on God's side and against those who had worshiped the idol.

Even the tribe of Levi didn't respond to God's offer to come up the mountain. However, they were

chosen as priests because of their faithfulness at Massah and at Mount Sinai.

All that happened at Mt. Sinai was a picture for us of what God wants to do at the fulfillment of the reality at Pentecost. If we understand the shadow, the reality will be much clearer. All this confusion about Pentecost is not necessary. Mount Sinai is the shadow. Pentecost is the reality.

This confusion could be reduced if we could just accept that Pentecost is much more than speaking in tongues. The whole year spent at Mount Sinai is the unfolding revelation of Pentecost. No one thing says it all. Tongues is the introduction, but surely not the complete, comprehensive experience. We also can't stand "at a distance" and think we see the whole picture. Mount Sinai stands alone in all the other experiences of Israel. Nothing else takes its place. It is the place of covenant.

What happened at the Red Sea was tremendous. The manna from heaven was tremendous. The water out of the rock was tremendous, but Mount Sinai stands alone in its own blessing. None of the other experiences can substitute. How can we compare the cloud leading Israel out of Egypt with the mighty presence of God at Mount Sinai. Israel wasn't afraid of the cloud. God didn't shake the earth at the Red Sea. God didn't reveal his purpose at Elim. If we look objectively, and honestly at Mount Sinai, we will see it stands alone. If we look objectively, and honestly at Pentecost we will see it also is unique.

Pentecost

Mount Sinai was the place of Covenant, the place of hearing God speak, the place of receiving the Law, the place of calling and appointment of priests, the place of the revealing of the plan and purpose of God, the place of the presence of God. As this was the type under the Old Covenant, so it is for us in the New Covenant with Pentecost. Just as there were experiences before Sinai such as the Passover where they were redeemed by the blood of the lamb on the doorpost and the Red Sea where they were baptized unto Moses [*I Corinthians 10:2*], we have experiences before Pentecost such as repentance and water baptism for the forgiveness of sins [*Acts 2:38*].

There is much more to Pentecost than speaking in tongues. Pentecost is when God in the form of the Holy Spirit came down to dwell in His people. At Sinai they received the Law on tablets of stone. At Pentecost we receive the Holy Spirit who will write the law on our heart and mind [*Jeremiah 31:33*]. At Sinai they were called to be a nation of priests but rejected God's plan. At Pentecost we are called as a Holy nation, a royal priesthood [*I Peter 2:9*].

We have not come to a physical mountain as was Mount Sinai, which was a shadow of the spiritual mountain.

For you have not come to *a mountain* that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind, and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words which *sound was such that* those who heard begged that no further word be spoken to them. For they could not bear the command, "IF EVEN A BEAST TOUCHES THE MOUNTAIN, IT WILL BE STONED." And so terrible was the sight, *that* Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling." ([Hebrews 12:18-21 NASB](#))

We have come to the reality—Mount Zion.

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to 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, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than *the blood* of Abel. See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned *them* on earth, much less *will* we *escape* who turn away from Him who *warns* from heaven. (Hebrews 12:22-25 NASB)

If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how will we escape who have all of the benefits of the reality in Pentecost, “for our God is a consuming fire.” (Hebrews 12:29 NASB)