

The life of Moses

The Promise

Exodus 19:1 - 5

Chapter 12

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MOSES' PROMISE

“In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai. For they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar reassurance unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine:”
(Exodus 19:1-5)

If we give ourselves to this wonderful study of the life of Moses we will be over whelmed with all that is here for us. There is great insight for us as we begin this study of Exodus chapter nineteen.

In chapter nineteen of the book of Exodus the children of Israel have been in the wilderness for three months. On the anniversary of their departure from Egypt they camped at Sinai. This would prove to be a very important day in their history. God was revealing Himself to the people

while they were in Egypt. He began a new era in His dealings with His people when He passed over them and took the first born of the households of Egypt. He told the people to put the blood of a lamb over the door post of their homes. In doing so, God was pointing them to His lamb, the Lord Jesus Christ, who would shed His blood and be made the protection for all who trust Him. Because of His shed blood we have forgiveness and the promise of a home in Heaven.

Now, at Sinai, God is no longer simply revealing Himself to His people. Now God is going to teach them just what He expects of them as His followers. The remainder of the book of Exodus deals with the giving of the Law. God gave the Moral Law in the form of what we call the Ten Commandments. He gave the Civil Law, which was to govern the nation of Israel. He also gave the Ceremonial Law. These were the rules that Israel would follow as they worshipped Him in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple. In the lesson before us, however, I want us to concentrate on the covenant that God makes with the people. Let us consider the promise and the requirements.

In chapter nineteen and verse four the Scriptures tell us that Moses went up into the mountain of God and God spoke to him. *“Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself.”* To this point the people had seen the mighty hand of God work for them. Arthur Pink says it this way, “Previously, they had seen His judgments upon Egypt; They had beheld His power

displayed at the Red Sea, They had witnessed His guiding hand in the pillar of cloud and fire; they had experienced His mercies in the providing of manna and water from the smitten rock; but they were now to behold His exalted majesty.” God is reminding them of what He had done for them. He had loved them. He had kept His promise to Abraham for them. His people are very precious to Him. He tells them that, *“I bare you on eagle’s wings, and brought you unto myself.”* What a wonderful image of His love for them. It shows the special treatment that the eagle has for its young. They do not just push eaglet from the nest. They are never carried in the razor sharp talons. They are carried on the mother eagle’s back. This acquaints the young with flight. It is a place of protection. No hunter’s arrow can get to the baby. When God is the eagle we can be assured that He will bear us along on His great back and nothing can come to us but first it comes through Him with His knowledge and permission. He shows us just how high our faith can soar as we submit ourselves to Him. Eagle’s wings have some special characteristics. They are swift. Note please the speed with which the people left Egypt that night of the Exodus. Those wings are strong. God defeated the mighty nation of Egypt. This was far beyond the ability of Israel. God gave deliverance by His mighty strength. The wings of the mother eagle are a place of safety for her young. Under God’s care no harm came to the People of God. They were protected from the armies of Egypt. Even the elements of the wilderness could not harm them. Note please also the destination of the eagle’s

wings. God says that they “brought you unto myself.” God had separated from Egypt and the world a people unto Himself.

Next, we see the promise that God makes to the people through Moses. *“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.”* God makes His promise with an “if” provision. He promises to make them His special people “if” they would obey Him. He gave the people a choice. They could follow this wonderful God who had just defeated the army of Pharaoh and brought them across the Red Sea, or they could go off on their own and suffer the consequences. He makes His promise contingent on their obedience. He expects His people to obey His governing hand over them. His covenant is founded on fidelity to Him. It is in some ways spoken like a loving parent to a small child. “Do what I tell you and don’t wander off.” We humans often misunderstand God’s intent here. We see Him sometimes as giving a great many rules. “Do this.” “Don’t do that.” Our nature rebels at taking this kind of restraint. We misunderstand God’s motives for us. The rules that God puts on His people are for their safety not their servitude. His laws bring peace and goodness and not slavery. I love the way the Psalmist put it in Psalm nineteen verses seven through eleven. *“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening*

the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.” As God’s people move in obedience to His Word and will, they find peace, safety and contentment. When we rebel we open ourselves to all the attacks of the Devil. Satan will let us go on for a time with little or no consequence to our sin but, please be assured, consequences will come and those consequences can be dire indeed.

Next God promised that the people would be a *“Peculiar treasure unto me above all people.”* Notice God’s attitude toward His people. He calls them a treasure. What would a treasure be to someone who has everything? He is not concerned with diamonds and jewels. God already has all the riches of the universe at His command. His treasure is us! He sees in us value and worth far above any diamond or ruby. We know that in us there dwells no good thing. (Romans 7:18) God sees in us something that is worth sending His own Son to redeem. We are His special treasure. In verse six God calls these people His *“kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.”* This is the first time that He refers to His kingdom here on Earth. It reminds me of the passage in Matthew chapter four where the Lord Jesus said that He is to *“preach, and to say, repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”* (Matthew 3:2) He was calling a people unto Himself. Scripture tells us in I Peter 3:18, *“For Christ also*

hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit.” God at Sinai will tell the people just what He expected of them if they were to follow Him. He expected their obedience. In return for their faithfulness He promises to make them His special treasure above all other people. We today can claim that same promise. We do not need to keep the Mosaic Law but we must walk in obedience to the commands of Christ. Note what I Peter 2:9 –10 tells us. *“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.”* We obtain mercy by the grace He has showed us in dying for us on the cross. We are, however, His special treasure because of our faith in the Lord Jesus. We are called a chosen generation, a royal priest hood a holy nation a peculiar people. Our purpose in life is not simply to serve our loved ones and ourselves but to bring praise and honor to Him who called us out of our darkness to His wonderful light. We may also testify that He has born us on eagle’s wings. He has never abandoned us. He will never push us away from Him as a lesser bird may push the young from the nest. He does not carry us along with the talons of the Law and fear. He has borne us aloft on His great back. No arrow of Satan that is shot at us will ever cause us harm for He will not allow it. We can know His speed

and strength and safety. Speed, because we were changed in a moment from the child of Hell that we were to a child of God through His Son. His mighty strength broke the bands of sin that bound us and now Satan can no longer destroy us or cause us harm.

Scripture tells us that God sent Moses to the people with the conditions of His promise. He said that if they would obey He would make them His special treasure. Verse eight gives us the people's answer. "*And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD.*" God's expectation of us today is similar. He expects us to obey His word and be faithful to Him. As a good parent seeks to protect the young child and tells the child, "Do what I tell you and stay close to me." Just so God expects us to do what He says and stay close to Him. I wonder if sometimes we as believers give lip service to this idea of obedience. We go to church and do all the expected things but in our hearts we know that we are not really living in obedience to the Lord. You are living your life the way you want and not giving thought at all to the will of God for your life. Admittedly, it is in the heart of every believer to wander away from the Lord. The hymn writer put it this way,

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.
Prone to leave the God I love."

The exhortation then is to you. Come back to Him who gave himself for you. He stands ready to receive you. Be assured that if you do He will forgive and love you. Be assured also that if you do not He will use whatever means necessary to bring you back from the path of disobedience that you are walking. Hebrews twelve tells us, *“And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”* The hymn we just quoted ends with the prayer,

“Here’s my heart, O take and seal it,
seal it for thy courts above.”

Maybe the Lord has your soul but does He have all of your heart? Return to Him today, without delay. *“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”* (I John 1:9) God will chasten us if we reject His offer of reconciliation because He knows that anything that He might do to us to cause us to return is better than our going on in our sin.

God went to great lengths to reintroduce Himself to the people of Israel and to the Egyptians. Now they are in the wilderness at Mount Sinai and he is about to give them the Law. This would tell them just what he expects of them. His requirement

for them was that of obedience. “Do what I tell you and stay close to me.” Obedience and fidelity are what He expected. He expects the same of us today. Let’s demonstrate our love for Him and live lives of obedience and faithfulness. We will then know the blessing of God and the Joy and peace that He promises.

TO AID OUR LEARNING;

1. What are the two conditions of the Mosaic Covenant? _____
2. What was the Mosaic Covenant?
3. What are four characteristics of eagle’s wings?

4. The rules that God puts on His people are for their _____ and not for their _____. His law brings _____ and goodness not _____.
5. Describe God’s “treasure”.
6. How earnestly do you seek the will of God each day for your life?

