Exodus Chapter 19 Verses 1 – 2

* In a sense, everything that they had gone through up until this point was meant to bring them ***here.*** Back in Exodus Chapter 3 Verse 12, while Moses was tending the flocks of Jethro, God appeared to him in the burning bush and said, *“I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”*
* It’s been over a **year.** Ten plagues. The oppression and miraculous defeat of the Egyptian army. The provision for the millions. The manna… The water from the rock. All the while, the problems and frustrations with the people… ***and yet just as God had promised, Moses arrives.*** I like that. I’m a middle-aged man now. My kids are no longer little. I’m more than halfway through a typical 30-year career at my place of work and almost at the place in terms of ministry as well… My childhood which used to dictate so much in my heart…seems like it was a ***lifetime*** ago now…
* Schooling, college, grad school…losing those that were everything to me. First my grandfather, then my grandmother, then my father and then my mother…meeting and marrying April, even coming to the Lord, planting this church…**seem so long ago at times**… Life is funny that way, I guess… And now it’s almost like that mountain is just ahead, perhaps I’m *already* on it…I do know that the best is yet to come…***because nothing is lost, nothing is wasted and nothing means nothing in the life of a child of God.*** Chuck Smith used to say, *“Everything is preparation for the next thing.”*
* It’s true with you, it’s true with me…***God is at work in my life and in you…preparing us for what is yet ahead.*** It’s an amazing truth…faith and following the Lord, trusting God and allowing Him to take me where I need to be, where I ought to go…**it is truly the work of the moment.** Just being faithful right here, right now. ***The simplest steps of faith will be the most solid of faith.*** God right now, unseen and almost unbeknownst is preparing you for what is yet ahead.
* I think about Madison getting married. **I’m not prepared for that yet**…HA. But having her at 12 and loving her and being her dad now…I know that’s preparing her…and also me. I think about Link getting a driver’s license. **The world is not prepared for that yet!!** Maybe y’all will luck out and we’ll have *self-driving* cars by then! HA! You see I know great things are ahead… The church growing. People getting saved. Folks meeting Jesus. Finding out He’s all they’ve ever wanted and needed…I can’t get enough of that…
* But I also know that there is perhaps great challenges yet ahead and life right now, trusting God and continuing to grow in Him the best I can…**will prepare me for what may be ahead.** ***Equip me*** to help and handle those that need it…and ***arm me*** against the rush of the enemy on my life and those that I love. All that Israel had gone through, all that Moses had gone through…all to bring him here. And this chapter is the preparation for the next…when God will reveal to Moses, the people and to us the revelation of righteousness in giving of the law.

Exodus Chapter 19 Verses 3 - 6

* Here we get a glimpse of **God’s plan for Israel.** Israel as a nation, yes but I also remember *Israel as a man.* His father Isaac, his father Abraham. His son Joseph… Yes, Israel as a nation but there is also a respect in my heart towards these men that walked with God, trusted God, lived in that trust…and then I consider the nation…
* God says to them, *“You shall be a special treasure to Me above all people; for all the earth is Mine.”* God was prioritizing, He was positioning. He ***wasn’t not*** thinking about the rest of the world…He speaks of **all** the earth in the same breath. He was setting an **order** in place such that the earth might be filled with His *truth, grace, mercy and provision.* ***“You shall be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”*** In no way does that mean they are something more or better. No great church or religious character or fantastic pastor is any better or loved any more by God than anyone else!
* Why am I on this, because we know, you and I know that Paul said in Romans 2:11, *“There is no partiality with God.”* Acts 10:34, Peter proclaimed, *“God shows no favoritism.”* So we need to see and understand…God wasn’t making Israel His favorite, He was ***proving through the order*** He is putting place that God so loves all of the world…
* **That’s what order does.** Position and purpose and calling…why God has called the husband to lead the home, the pastor to lead the church, even the national authorities and governmental officers that protect and serve…it’s not to make some lesser than others but rather to provide what is good for all. God says, *“If you will obey Me and keep my covenant,”* in other words **if you will trust God**…***then God will use you too.*** A special treasure… *“cegullah”* in the Hebrew and it simply means, *“My property, My possession…”* If God isn’t using you in your marriage, in your family, in your life…my question is this…***are you trusting Him?!***
* 2 Timothy 2:20-21, *“But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work.”* Special treasure above all people (like protection man), a kingdom of priests and a holy nation…all that is…is to be called out, set apart, sanctified…

Exodus Chapter 19 Verses 7 – 9

* What’s interesting is that **this is before the giving of the law.** Before God lays out the Ten Commandments, the revelation of righteousness and really the revelation of sin in the hearts of men, He says…, *“Trust Me. Hear Me. Listen to Me. I’ll take care of the rest.” “Obey My voice, keep My covenant…”*  **These were first.** These still are first and these are exactly consistent with what Jesus taught. Matthew 22:35-40. *“On these two, hang all of the law and the prophets.”*
* **Trust God and keep His covenant.** That’s really just to say *trust God and trust God.* Why? What was *“His covenant?”* Go all the way back…the first time the word *“covenant”* is used in the Bible is with Noah…eight times God promises Noah that he will be saved, him and his family…and then after the flood, God speaks of covenant again in the rainbow…that never again will the earth be destroyed by flood. What was Noah’s *play* in that? **Trusting God**…which manifesting in him building the ark…
* Then Abraham…God proclaims a covenant of blessing on Abraham and when it came time to seal it, to make the commitment, God caused a ***deep sleep*** to come upon Abraham and **God sealed the covenant Himself.** His only ask of Abraham in the keeping of the covenant was circumcision… That him and his decedents would be a people among people, holy, sanctified, called out…interesting how later in the New Covenant Paul transfers this covenant to the heart…(Romans 2)
* But let’s go even further back…before Abraham, before Noah…God made a promise to the first man and the first woman…Genesis Chapter 3, verses 14 - 15…This is called the *Protoevangelium*…, the original, the ***first promise*** of the Messiah…They asked Jesus how do we live for God? John 6:28. In other words, *“how do we keep God’s covenant?”* Jesus responded, John 6:29, Jesus answered and said to them, *“This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.”* ***It’s still the same…hear His voice…the physical expression of His distinct Person…and trust Him….***
* This is the simplicity of the keys of life and death, man…God has never changed…***from the perfection of the Garden lost…to the perfection upheld at the cross***…to today and where you are at…**trust the Lord.** Open your heart to Him, seek Him, obey Him. Follow His lead…that is the very beginning of wisdom in your situation…and really where the light of life begins to finally overwhelm the darkness…if God isn’t using you right now, are you trusting Him? **Faith is a work of the moment.**