

Introduction

Now that the Exodus itself has been completed, the people of Israel arrived at Mount Sinai. It had been three months since they left Egypt. At this significant location, God appeared to Moses and the people and gave the Law to them.

Observations from Chapter 19

1. This is the start of the fifth dispensation, the Law or Mosaic economy. It is at this stage that Israel is constituted a national entity with a body of laws. Previously, they were a people-group but had not been bound together as a nation.
2. Notice that the covenant here is conditioned on the proper response of the people (v. 5).
3. The purpose of Israel's existence was to be a special treasure to God (v. 5) and to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (v. 6).
4. The people accepted the Lord's "if" in v. 5, at least initially.
5. The presence of God demanded special preparation by Moses and the people beforehand (vv. 9-15).
6. The LORD then appeared on Mount Sinai with fire and smoke accompanying his presence (vv. 16-25)

Observations from Chapter 20

1. The Ten Commandments are recorded in chapter 20. Sometimes folks get confused on which are the ten. Here they are:
 - a. The "First Table" of the Law
 - i. You shall have no other gods before Me, v. 3.
 - ii. You shall not make a graven image, v. 4-6.
 - iii. You shall not take the name of the LORD in vain, v. 7.
 - iv. Remember the Sabbath day, vv. 8-11.
 - b. The "Second Table" of the Law
 - i. Honor your father and mother, v. 12.
 - ii. You shall not murder, v. 13.
 - iii. You shall not commit adultery, v. 14.
 - iv. You shall not steal, v. 15.
 - v. You shall not bear false witness, v. 16.
 - vi. You shall not covet..., v. 17.
2. Several things should be observed in the 10 commandments.
 - c. Is the 10 commandments the whole law? Not even close!
 - d. Notice how the law is summarized by Jesus and Paul.
 - i. Matt. 7:12 – "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets." This seems to refer to the "second table" in our relations to other people; it does not address our relation to God directly.
 - ii. Matt. 22:37-40 – "Love the Lord your God...love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." Notice again the treatment of the Law in two sections.
 - iii. Gal. 5:14 – For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
 - iv. Rom. 13:8-9 – Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying,

namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Here the second table is listed, except honoring father and mother. Of course, Paul mentions that in Eph. 6:1-3.

- e. Note the uniqueness of God in the first commandment.
 - f. Images are not allowed. What about the cherubim in the tabernacle (25:18)?
 - g. Taking the name of the LORD in vain is common today, of course. Be careful about what you attribute to God and others.
 - h. Note the view of creation in the fourth commandment: the heavens and earth and everything in them was created in six days!
3. The people of Israel could be characterized with one word: AFRAID! Notice the difference between them and us mentioned in Hebrews 12:18-30.

Observations from Chapter 21

1. Note that slavery is assumed to exist; it is regulated in vv. 1-11
2. Injuries or death caused by another person are the subject of vv. 12-27.
3. Note that the unborn baby which is killed requires "life for life." This is probably the clearest statement in the Bible that an unborn baby is a LIFE.
4. Injuries or death caused by another person's animal are the subject of vv. 28-36.
5. Note that if an animal kills a person, that animal must be killed.
6. If it was known that the animal was violent before, and the owner let it go loose so that it killed a person, the owner would suffer the death penalty as well since he inflicted death on another person by his negligence. However, apparently a fine or penalty of money could be extracted instead of the life of the owner, depending on what the judges determined.
7. The law was slightly different for an injured servant—a monetary fine was imposed to allow the owner to get another servant.
8. Fair exchange is to be made when one's carelessness causes the injury or death of another's animal.
9. This is very relevant today, as in the case of a pit bull which kills a person. It must be put to death. And the owner has to be held responsible as well. I don't know any cases of the death penalty being imposed on the owner, though I suppose it could be if the owner purposefully used the animals to do that.

Observations from Chapter 22

1. The first part of this chapter deals with stolen property and restitution, vv. 1-15.
2. The chapter then talks about miscellaneous judgments regarding the interactions of people.
3. Someone violating the virginity of a young woman caused the loss of the bride-price to the family of the girl and thus the man is responsible to pay the family and may have to have her as his wife. The father of the girl may refuse this latter option.
4. Sorcery, bestiality, and pagan sacrifice all call for the death penalty.
5. People like alien residents, widows, and orphans are to be treated kindly.
6. Money was to be lent to Israelites without interest, v. 25.
7. A man's garment could not be kept as a pledge overnight, as he would need it to sleep (vv. 26-27)!