

**STORY**

The Giving of the Law - Exodus 19:1-20:24; 24:1-18

TEACHER PRAYER

Heavenly Father, today let me see Your Holiness reflected in Your Law. Use the Law to convict me of my own sins. Also let me today see Your Holiness reflected in the face of Jesus Christ and the glory of the Gospel. Assure me of the forgiveness of my own sins in Jesus that I may teach others. Amen.

VOCABULARY

Law - tells me what I should do and not do and convicts me of sin

Gospel - tells me what God has done for me and assures me of God's love

OUTER AIM

God established His "Old" Covenant with the Nation of Israel at Mt. Sinai.

INNER AIM

The law was given to reveal my sinfulness and my need for a sacrifice for sin.

BACKGROUND

God had promised to Abraham that his descendants would become a great nation. Up until this time, Israel was a "family," a collection of tribes. With the giving of the Law, Israel would become a nation, the covenant people of God. The covenant given at Mt. Sinai is a high point in the Old Testament development of the plan of God's salvation.

God had enabled Israel to defeat the Amalekites (Exodus 17:8-16). Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, appeared on the scene. He appeared, not only to bring back Moses' wife and two sons, but also to express his faith in Jehovah (Exodus 18:11). This is a picture of a later day when Gentiles would sit down in the kingdom of God. Jethro also had some practical observations for Moses. He told Moses to delegate authority instead of trying to do everything by himself (Exodus 18:25-26).

It was the third month when Israel reached the peninsula of Sinai and its mountain ranges. This range is known as HOREB (dried up ground). The one special mountain was known as SINAI (mountain of the thorn). Israel camped on a plain at the base of the mountain.

Mt. Sinai was completely covered with smoke (Exodus 19:18), and it quaked greatly. There was thunder and lightning and the voice of the trumpet. Jehovah came down upon Mount Sinai in His glory. God had taken care of Israel (Exodus 18:4), but He would give them even greater riches of His grace. He would enter into a covenant with them. "And you shall become unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Exodus 19:5-6). Cf. New Testament application in I Peter 2:9 and Rev. 1:5,6,10. These people of God would not be created by the covenant of the law, but by the new covenant (testament) of the Gospel.

The people were to prepare themselves with certain purification rituals which were symbols of the need for inward cleansing. No one could come near the mountain nor touch it. It was not until Jesus died and the veil of the temple was split that men had free access to God through the sacrifice of Jesus. The glory of the Lord in connection with the giving of the Law was so terrifying that the people could not come into the presence of God. They begged Moses to speak with them rather than God (Exodus 20:19).

God revealed His will in the ten commandments of the “ten words.” These were addressed in their original form to the nation of Israel (Exodus 20:2). These “ten words” were arranged in two tables. The numbering of the commandments is not revealed in Scripture. The first table deals with our relation to God and the second table with our relationship to our neighbor. The “ten words” are also found in Deuteronomy 5.

Moses wrote these words of the Lord (Exodus 24:1-8). Then he took the “Book of the Covenant” and read it to the people. This covenant was sealed with blood sprinkled on the people signifying the need for the forgiveness of sin. The sight of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire in the eyes of the Children of Israel. Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights (Exodus 24:18).

Yet the law with all its glory brought only the knowledge of sin. Man could not keep it with its demands for perfect love toward God and man. The Old Testament Covenant with its sacrifices of blood and its Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) pictured the need of a sinful people for a perfect sacrifice of blood for sin. The saving glory of the Lord was revealed in connection with the coming of Jesus, the Son of God, to die for the sins of the world (John 1:17).

STUDENT PRAYER

Dear Jesus, God’s holy law reveals to us our own deep sinfulness. We are not holy and can not come to You. However, You sent Jesus to reveal to us the forgiveness of our sins. May we today learn more about Your holy Law and Your blessed Gospel. Through Jesus, make us a kingdom of priests. Amen.

PRESENTATION

Review the promises made to Abraham that the Lord would make a great nation of his descendants also how after 430, Jehovah led His people out of Egypt. The Lord would now make of this people a nation, out of whom would come the Savior. The covenant made at Sinai was basically a covenant of law. “You shall be holy for I the Lord, your God, am holy.” It stressed the need for perfect holiness and obedience on the part of God’s people. The Sinai Covenant also pictured the need for a sacrifice for the sins of the people. It was a “shadow” picture of Jesus and His death on the cross as an atoning sacrifice (Colossians 2).

Talk about the things the people had to do in Exodus 19 which emphasized the fact that God was a holy God and only those who were holy could come into His presence. Think of the contrast with modern theology which pictures God as a benevolent grandfather or Santa Claus figure.

As you have time, briefly go through the Ten Commandments as given by God on Mt. Sinai. Realize that these commandments in this form were given to the nation of Israel i.e. the Sabbath. Explain that God required His people to love Him (first through third commandments) and their neighbor (fourth through tenth commandments). Also realize that many other civil laws and religious ordinances were contained in the law as given on Mt. Sinai.

The glory of the holy God was indeed a consuming fire. This sinful people needed a mediator to go to God on their behalf and bring God’s words back to them. How different is the coming of Jesus! In Jesus, the glory of God is revealed in connection with the salvation God provided for us, lost sinners. The glory of God is revealed in connection with the cross where Jesus died for the sins of the world. This is the “new” covenant of the forgiveness of sins the Gospel that Jesus established through His death and resurrection.

APPLICATIONS

It is important that the children learn of the holiness of God in connection with the Law and the “old” covenant at Sinai. It is more important that they know the Gospel and the “new” covenant at Calvary. The importance of Jesus’ sacrifice for sin cannot be understood unless a person realizes his own personal sinfulness under the Law.

Discuss the significance of how the holiness of God is contrasted with the sinfulness of the people and how this applies to your children.

Apply some of the “Ten Commandments” to show that we have sinned against God and His holiness.

What did God have to do in order to save us from our sins? Lead them to an appreciation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

Leviticus 19:2 - *You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.*

Middle any of the above and...

John 1:14 - *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Upper any of the above and...

Romans 3:20 - *Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin*

Romans 3:22-24 - *For there is no difference; for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*

HYMN CHOICES

“The Law Of God Is Good And Wise” (TLH #295)

“Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty” (TLH #246)

“God Loved The World So That He Gave” (TLH #245)