

# Two stories in one

Christ Church: 5<sup>th</sup> November 2023 10.00 am. & online  
Exodus 19:1-19; 20:1-2 1 Peter 2:1-10

## What's going on here?

We need to see this passage in two different time frames.

### 1: The exodus story

We have had slavery in Egypt, plagues, Passover, Red Sea and this is the next major event: the giving of the law (which comes 20:3-).

Chapter 19 is a defining moment in the story. It starts a new section. They thought they were heading for the Promised Land, but God leads them first to Sinai (they were there almost a year, Numbers 10:11). He has vital business to do with them! He speaks and creates a specially chosen people through a covenant. Much of chapter 19 is about their required preparation for this encounter.

Sinai is on the peninsula between the two forks of the Red Sea. It's probably where Moses met God in the burning bush (called Horeb there – see Exodus 3:12) and it's where Elijah escapes to after the Baal incident. The name is given to the desert there and the special mountain. This was God's destination for them for now.

### 2: The eternal story

Go back to the covenant with Abraham in Genesis, now see it refined in the covenant with Moses in these verses, see the concept of the community people of God. Then go forward to the establishment of the church of Jesus Christ and the community of which we are part if we are disciples of his. Peter (see below) and Paul (Titus 2:14) link this idea of a special people with the Church, as we shall see.

*This passage is NOT an Old Testament 'Sunday School' story but a vital part of God's eternal rescue plan for humanity.*

## Exodus story: What did God do for his people then?

A covenant is a binding contract between two parties: God and his people. His part is fourfold:

### 1: Freedom from slavery

This has already been achieved but the people are not to forget it. So 19:4 ('You have seen what I did in Egypt') and 20:2 ('I brought

you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery') – reference to Passover. God has rescued them and now he can work on them by creating a framework for how they are to live (so the ten commandments follow straight on from this). Note that grace comes before law.

### 2: My treasured possession

'Out of all nations you will be my treasured possession' (19:5). An *amazing* statement for such a rabble of moaning people!

### 3: A kingdom of priests

'Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests' (19:5,6). They would all have access to God himself – no need for an intermediary – what a privilege! Sadly this all went pear-shaped with the golden calf so one tribe, Levites, became the priests.

### 4: A holy nation

See 19:6. Note that God is not to be approached on the holy mountain partly because of his majesty but mainly because of his holiness. The people trembled (19:16). Signs of lightning, thunder, fire, smoke. God however sees them as holy, separated from others.

## Eternal story: What does God do for his people now?

Now read 1 Peter 2:4-10 and see where Christians fit into this story.

### 1: Freedom from slavery

'... God called you out of darkness into his wonderful light' (v9). Free from the penalty of sin, no longer slaves to sin because of the lamb slain for us. This is a gift for those who follow Christ, not a requirement to be able to do so!

### 2: My treasured possession

'a chosen people ... God's special possession (v9). Amazing, given what we are like at heart – but true in Exodus, true for us!

### 3: A kingdom of priests

'to be a holy priesthood' (v5). 'you are a royal priesthood (v9) – and unlike what happened to the Children of Israel, true for *all* of us.

### 4: A holy nation

'a holy nation' (v9). Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God' (v10). We are forgiven through the cross of Jesus and so are holy, set apart, to tell others the story of salvation (v9). *It is utterly amazing.*