

# Up From Slavery

A man / A people / A plan

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FACING FREEDOM:  
WHEN GOD COMES TO CHURCH  
EXODUS 19

# Exodus 18

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## Background

In the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on the very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai. <sup>2</sup>After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.

- Revelation

<sup>3</sup> Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, “This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: <sup>4</sup> ‘You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. <sup>5</sup> Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, <sup>6</sup> you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites.”

- Response

<sup>7</sup> So Moses went back and summoned the elders of the people and set before them all the words the LORD had commanded him to speak. <sup>8</sup> The people all responded together, “We will do everything the LORD has said.” So Moses brought their answer back to the LORD.

- Preparation

<sup>9</sup> The LORD said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, so that the people will hear me speaking with you and will always put their trust in you.” Then Moses told the LORD what the people had said.

<sup>10</sup> And the LORD said to Moses, “Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow. Have them wash their clothes <sup>11</sup> and be ready by the third day, because on that day the LORD will come down on Mount Sinai in the sight of all the people. <sup>12</sup> Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, ‘Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death. <sup>13</sup> He shall surely be stoned or shot with arrows; not a hand is to be laid on him. Whether man or animal,

he shall not be permitted to live.' Only when the ram's horn sounds a long blast may they go up to the mountain."

<sup>14</sup> After Moses had gone down the mountain to the people, he consecrated them, and they washed their clothes. <sup>15</sup> Then he said to the people, "Prepare yourselves for the third day. Abstain from sexual relations."

- Execution

<sup>16</sup> On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. <sup>17</sup> Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. <sup>18</sup> Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the LORD descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, the whole mountain trembled violently, <sup>19</sup> and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. Then Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.

<sup>20</sup> The LORD descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses went up <sup>21</sup> and the LORD said to him, “Go down and warn the people so they do not force their way through to see the LORD and many of them perish. <sup>22</sup> Even the priests, who approach the LORD, must consecrate themselves, or the LORD will break out against them.”

<sup>23</sup> Moses said to the LORD, “The people cannot come up Mount Sinai, because you yourself warned us, ‘Put limits around the mountain and set it apart as holy.’ ”

<sup>24</sup> The LORD replied, “Go down and bring Aaron up with you. But the priests and the people must not force their way through to come up to the LORD, or he will break out against them.”

<sup>25</sup> So Moses went down to the people and told them.

<sup>25</sup> See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven? <sup>26</sup> At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, “Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens.” <sup>27</sup> The words “once more” indicate the removing of what can be shaken—that is, created things—so that what cannot be shaken may remain.

<sup>28</sup> Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, <sup>29</sup> for our “God is a consuming fire.”

Hebrews 12

## Sinai VS Zion

- Fear and terror vs love and forgiveness
- Desert vs eternal city
- Moses alone vs an innumerable company
- Guilty men in fear vs. justified men made perfect

## Lessons to consider

1. We need to heed God's revelation
2. We need to be willing to be *set-apart*
3. We need to be cleansed
4. We need to respect God's boundaries
5. We need to restrain the flesh
6. We need to remember that we come to a Holy God and not trivialize the privileges that are ours

## Impact

<sup>18</sup> When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance <sup>19</sup> and said to Moses, “Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.”

<sup>20</sup> Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”

<sup>21</sup> The people remained at a distance, while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

## To Go . . .

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Who determines how you approach worship?

Does God have expectations that ought to moderate your views of what worship entails?

Do you welcome God's manifest presence or prefer that He remain distant and aloof?