

EXODUS: A LOUD TRUMPET BLAST

Monday, May 13

Reading: Exodus 19:14-25

Exodus 19:16 *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. 17 Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.*

This passage expresses the awesomeness of our God. When the presence of God descended on Sinai it shook the whole mountain. Thunder and lightning accompanied God's presence and fire and smoke engulfed the mountain. The trumpet they heard was not from any earthly origin. It was the trumpet of God announcing His arrival. How loud it must have been to be heard over the thunder, fire, and earthquake! All this was to show the Israelites the power and the holiness of God. He again warns the people not to "force their way through to see the Lord." They would not survive a full encounter with the Almighty. At this time, only Moses and Aaron were allowed to come up the mountain.

Imagine you are an Israelite standing under the shadow of Mount Sinai trembling at the awesomeness of God. The fire and smoke only heightened their fear and separation from God. As one commentator put it:

"The instruction to the people to come up to the mount (v. 13) only allowed them to approach the bounds set around it. This was to show the people that although the Lord desired their presence they could not approach Him on the basis of Law. The bounds were to protect the people, not because the Lord desired to keep them at a distance, but because approach on the basis of Law resulted in death.¹

LESSON ONE: "Moses Led the People Out of the Camp to Meet with God." These people had experienced the care and protection of God. They had seen His presence in the pillar of cloud and fire leading them. But Mount Sinai was a different story! They were about to learn that they could not approach the holy God on the basis of their own merits. The Lord was about to give His law and the system of sacrifice that would make it possible for them to draw nearer to Him. Sometimes I think we take the holiness of God for granted. We focus on Him as a God of love (and He is!) but forget that He is also a God of justice, righteousness, and holiness. But Christians are no longer distanced from God. We have been "brought near by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13) When you read of the power and majesty of God displayed at Mount Sinai, how does it affect the way you meet with God personally today? How does your view of God affect the way you live your life?

LESSON TWO: "A Very Loud Trumpet Blast." This trumpet blast announced the presence of God. The New Testament tells us of another trumpet blast – the blast that announces the coming of Christ to take His Church to be with Him forever (1 Thess. 4:16-18; 1 Cor. 15:51-52). As the Israelites trembled at the sound of the trumpet blast, how much more will we rejoice when hear the trumpet that calls us home.

¹ John Grant. What the Bible Teaches: Exodus, p. 235