



# 2026 Weekly Devotions

Week of: February 16<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup>

Sermon: February 15<sup>th</sup>



SMYRNA BAPTIST CHURCH  
building community • equipping believers • serving Jesus



February 16

**Exodus 19:5; Deuteronomy 28:1-2**

A major shift takes place once the Israelites reach Mt. Sinai in the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of Exodus. Up until this moment, the people were operating under the Abrahamic covenant. That is the covenant that God made with Abraham beginning all the way back in Genesis 12 and enacted in Genesis 15. This covenant was unconditional in the sense that it was God who committed Himself to maintaining the covenant. You might recall that in Genesis 15, Abraham was actually asleep when God cut the sacrificial animals in half and passed through alone (Gen. 15:12-18).

God's faithfulness to Abraham and his descendants was not based on their faithfulness to Him. Often, they would prove faithless and people of unbelief. God restated the covenant with Isaac in Genesis 26:2-5 and then twice with Jacob in Genesis 28:12-22 and Genesis 34:6-15. It would not be hard for you to find instance after instance when God could have chosen to give up on the descendants of Abraham, but He did not solely because He promised in a covenant that He would make Abraham the father of His chosen people, would provide his descendants a land, and would grant them prosperity as the people who would bless the world.

Now, the first of those promises is actually fulfilled the night of the Passover when God sets His chosen people apart, under the blood of the sacrificial lamb. As they are called out of Egypt they are, from that point on, referred to as God's people or My people. From Genesis 50:20 throughout the rest of the Pentateuch (the first 5 books of the Bible), God calls them "My people." A couple of examples of this can be found in Deuteronomy 4:20 and 14:2. It was only because of the covenant with Abraham that God hears the cries of the slaves in Egypt (Ex. 2:24-25). Keep in mind that they are called out of Egypt and set apart as a chosen people with specific purposes.

As I began this point to ponder today, I stated that a major shift takes place in our chapter from Sunday (Ex. 19). That major shift that I refer to can be found in Exodus 19:5. There it is written, "***IF*** you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be...." The major shift from the Abrahamic covenant and the one established on Mt. Sinai, referred to as the Mosaic Covenant is the inclusion of conditions. I do not mean to say that God is no longer going to be faithful to His covenant with Abraham, but I am saying that His covenant with the chosen people will be contingent upon their faithfulness too. This opens the door for the inclusion of the Gentiles, the expulsion of the unfaithful and unbelieving Jews, and the ultimate establishment of the true "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16).

God is certainly going to be faithful to the three promises made to Abraham thousands of years ago. God is going to have a people who are His own. They will inherit not only a piece of land but far better - the entire world, and they will continue to be a blessed people who represent the Lord Jesus and serve to bless the nations. I close today reminding each of us that God is so very gracious and faithful to His children and still He has expectations for how we are to live as His ambassadors here on planet earth.

February 17

**Genesis 18:19; Titus 1:2**

One reason that I personally experience peace in my heart is because God is truly a promise keeping God. The writer of the book of Hebrews tells us that God cannot lie (Heb. 6:18). Truthfulness is central to His nature which makes falsehood impossible. His promises are reliable and sure and become the solid ground on which we stand to face uncertain periods in our lives.

I want to circle back around today to the promises of God made to Abraham. Again, we see the fulfillment of the first promise made to him in the exodus. God called a particular people unto Himself, called them out of bondage, and sent them into the world. Turn your attention for a moment to what God said to the angels whom He had sent to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 18. Moses recorded, "For I have chosen him, that he may command his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice, so that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has promised him" (Gen. 18:19). It was God's desire and plan all along to fulfill His promises to Abraham.

The fact that centuries passed does not nullify the truth that God will keep His promises. We see that He did to Abraham, and my hope for us is that we will not lose heart or grow weary in well doing and faithfulness because we can't see immediate results. God cannot lie! This matters dear ones when we face hardship, ridicule, sickness, and even death. We can rest assured that God will see us through, that He will never leave nor forsake us, that He has a place for us in heaven, and will receive us unto Himself at the appointed time.

It also means that I can rest knowing that my sins are truly and completely atoned for. I can rest knowing that even in my frailty and fight against the presence of sin in my life, I am forgiven and there is no condemnation for me or any of us who know Jesus as Lord and Savior. I don't have to fear death because He promised me that He won the victory over death and the grave and has qualified me to share in the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1:12). Paul's letter to Titus says as much too. He wrote, "For the sake of God's elect...in hope of eternal life, which God, who never lies, promised before the ages began" (Titus 1:1-2). Our eternal security is as solid as God's commitment to truth.

It is interesting and hopefully encouraging as you consider another reality about Abraham's life and the promises God made to him. Did you know that when he died, he only owned a small field that he had bought from a Hittite in which to bury Sarah? Also, he was a long way from having descendants that outnumbered the stars in the sky. Isaac, the son of promise, had not yet fathered Esau and Jacob. My point is simply this, the promise surely didn't appear to be unfolding and yet we know that it did. It is written, "By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise" (Heb. 11:9). Just because it hasn't happened yet, doesn't mean it is going to happen. If God said it, it is as good as done.

February 18

**Deuteronomy 4:20; Exodus 19:12**

When the newly established people of God left Egypt, they were a redeemed people. They were redeemed by the sacrificial blood of a lamb and the power of Almighty God. We have witnessed God's covenantal faithfulness and now we are going to be further introduced to the covenant responsibilities of Israel – a redeemed people. I want you to see in our text that God does not force them into this covenant with Him. He clearly presents His expectations, and the people enter into the covenant relationship voluntarily (Ex. 19:8). In a very real sense, they are passing from a master-tyrant to a Master-Lord who calls them to be free servants.

Verse 4 of Exodus 19 is beautiful. It says, "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Myself." God did not just liberate the people from slavery. He also adopted them as His own. He brought them out and carried them through so many hard places. Moses wrote in Deuteronomy these precious words, "But the Lord has taken you and brought you out of the iron furnace, out of Egypt, to be a people of His own inheritance, as you are this day" (Deut. 4:20). They became people of His inheritance. In other words, they were His family and His desire was to give them what was His.

Of course we know that there was still so much to be learned and so much heart transformation that would take lifetimes to experience. The people were redeemed in the sense that they had been delivered from Egyptian slavery, but they were far from being a holy people unto the Lord at this point. For this reason, they did not have access to God as you and I think of it today. They stood in need of a mediator to go between God and themselves. This is one of the roles that Moses played for the people.

God told Moses to tell the people to get clean as they prepare to see evidence of the presence of a holy God on the top of Mt. Sinai. They would know that He is present in the thick cloud and the thunder and lightning. Even that level of nearness required that they cleanse themselves by outwardly washing their clothes and their bodies. This was symbolic of the need to be spiritually clean in order to enter into the presence of God.

Now, note that even after consecrating themselves, limits were set as to how close the people could get to God on the mountain. It says, "And you shall set limits for the people all around, saying 'Take care not to go up into the mountain or touch the edge of it. Whoever touches the mountain will be put to death'" (Ex. 19:12). Friends, this is why the entire sacrificial system was instituted. This points to the reality that their sin separated them from God and atonement had to be made. For us today, the reason that we can stand in the presence of God and speak to Him without a mediator is because we are covered by the righteousness of Christ, our sin debt has been paid in full, and we have been declared just because of the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

February 19

**Exodus 34:27-28**

When I consider the way God dealt with the Israelites prior to Mt. Sinai and after, I must draw one conclusion. God is the same yesterday, today, and forever so I know the difference is not that He changed (Heb. 13:8). Prior to Sinai, there were examples of discipline and punishment for disobedience (Ex. 16:28). God had given them commandments and laws before the official Mosaic covenant on Mt. Sinai. When I say commandments and laws, I think more about expectations. Prior to Mt. Sinai, God dealt with them with tremendous long-suffering in spite of their murmurings, complaints, and unbelief. After the encounter on Mt. Sinai, their sins were met with swifter and more serious chastisements. What can be the reason?

The obvious answer is that it was the covenant. The Abrahamic covenant was comprised of one party – God. The covenant was not conditional and based solely on God’s faithfulness. The people were not required to do much of anything. Honestly, there were no conditions attached to it that the people were expected to meet. Abraham was admonished to teach his offspring so that the truth of the promises would be passed down from generation to generation in hopes that obedience would be the result. So, God’s behavior towards the people prior to Sinai was a result of no conditions on the people and His commitment to His word.

After the agreement by two parties concerning the Mosaic covenant, the expectations and thus the consequences changed. What we witness post-Sinai is God’s dealings with His people based on the Mosaic covenant and not the Abrahamic covenant. That can be important friends as you study the Bible. It is important and helpful to keep in mind which covenant God and His people are operating under. At Mt. Sinai, God’s relationship to Israel was placed upon a different basis.

In Exodus 19:5 we read that God said to Moses, “...and keep My covenant....” Again, it will become increasingly more important as you learn to study the Bible to ask yourself when you see the word *covenant*, to which covenant is the writer referring. Remember that the covenants include the Adamic, Noahic, Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and the New Covenant in the New Testament. In each of these covenants there is a progressive move from one to the other. Some of what was true in a previous covenant may no longer apply in the next as it would have been fulfilled or served its purpose.

For example, in the Abrahamic covenant the promise of land is given. That is indeed fulfilled but we understand through the progressive revelation of God’s Word that the New Covenant illuminates that promise and broadens it from a small piece of real estate in the Middle East to the promise of God’s people inheriting the earth (Matt. 5:5). In this Mosaic covenant given and entered into at Mt. Sinai, two parties are involved not one, God and Israel, and stipulations are given. We begin to see at this point that if they were to enjoy the conditional blessings of God’s favor, they would need to keep the covenant. See Deuteronomy 4:13. In other words, the blessings were attached to obedience. Now, as I wrap up today, you must keep in mind that the New Covenant will amend how blessings flow to followers of Christ.

February 20

**Exodus 19:6**

The Mosaic covenant is being instituted in Exodus 19. Moses goes alone up to the top of Mt. Sinai where God speaks to him. God gives the conditions of the covenant to be told to the people. He says, "If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5). This is the condition that the people must accept if they are to enter into this covenant with God.

As I mentioned earlier in the week, we learn that the people accepted the terms as they stated, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (v. 8). They repeat this commitment to the covenant in Exodus 24:3 as well. They do not enter into covenant blindly and appear to understand what God is requiring of them in obedience. As God tells Moses that the people will serve as a kingdom of priests, I was reminded that the night of the Passover, every head of each household was already being trained to serve in the role of priest for those whom he was responsible for. The head of each house was to make sure that the sacrificial animal had been obtained, properly sacrificed, the blood applied, and the remains eaten and handled properly. This was the duty of the "priest" in each home. I cannot help but think of the responsibility on the fathers in our homes who must learn to take this assignment seriously as we make sure our families are covered and growing in the Lord.

The chosen people of God, the redeemed from Egypt, the called out and the set apart were now to serve the nations as a kingdom of priest. When you consider the duties or function of a priest, you are likely to think of men who offer sacrifices to God on behalf of the people as well as who intercede before God on the behalf of another. The priest was to represent the people before God and it was understood that in so doing, the priest would need to be "right" before God himself. It would be important for the priest to pursue holiness, intimacy with God, and to maintain a proper relationship with Him.

The nation of Israel was to serve to make God known to the nations. They were to live in such a way that other nations and people groups would see the goodness of God, His glory manifested through them, and His trustworthiness, all leading to wisdom and willingness to bow to Him in humble adoration and worship. They were to lead the nations to know the one true God. This would mean they must be a holy nation and a people who reflect His true nature, character, and heart; a people who would live for His glory and not their own.

As a kingdom of priests and a holy nation, the people would serve as God's own treasured possession. Adam and Eve forfeited this privilege, responsibility, and status when they sinned in the Garden of Eden. Now it was God's chosen people who would step into this role. The one stipulation was that they obey His voice and keep His commandments. Being that the Mosaic covenant was conditional, everything rode on their willingness to be the people whom He had redeemed, called out, and set apart for the task of fulfilling the Great Commission.

February 21

**Exodus 19:8; 24:7-8; Matthew 26:41**

I choose for today a passage that I have already addressed some this week. I want us to think beyond this verse to other truths that will be added in this point to ponder. As you recall, God had communicated to the people all that God all the details of the covenant He was establishing with them. They knew this time there would be conditions they would have to adhere to in order to receive the benefit of the blessings within the relationship (Ex. 19:8).

As we journey through the rest of this chapter and the next 5, they will have experienced His terrifying presence demonstrated through the thick cloud and lightning and thunder (19:16). The story unfolds as the people back away from the mountain and Moses disappears into the cloud to receive the Ten Commandments and other sundry laws for the them to follow as His set apart and chosen.

Exodus 24 contains the part of the story where Moses repeats the words of the Lord and the expectations that He is placing on His people. Again, they respond with affirmation that they will obey. He reads the Book of the Covenant in the hearing of all the people (24:7). They respond once again with these words, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient." At that moment, Moses took some of the blood from the sacrificial animal and sprinkled half of it on the people. He calls it the blood of the covenant.

I focus on this today dear ones because I am reminded of how willing is the Spirit but how weak is the flesh. Jesus told Peter, James, and John in the Garden of Gethsemane these very words (Matt. 26:41). He had asked them to stay with Him and watch as He prayed and agonized over God's will (Matt. 26:38). They had every intention of rising to the occasion, but we know they could not (Matt. 26:40). All the good intentions in the world were not enough to get the job done. I so appreciate the fact that Jesus didn't give up on them. He addressed their weakness and admonished them to pray because their flesh is weak, but He did not cast them away. He gave them another chance and continued His faithfulness to them even as they waivered in their faith to Him.

Joshua once made a vow to obedience to the Lord too. In Joshua 24:15, in response to a covenant renewal opportunity, Joshua stated emphatically that he and his household would serve the Lord. Like the Israelites at the foot of Sinai, Joshua meant wholeheartedly that he would fully yield in obedience to the Lord. The disciples made the same determined declaration, as I have at times in my own life. The reality is that we really do mean well and we intend to serve faithfully, but the flesh is weak and prone to sin. This is why in Exodus 24 the blood of the sacrificial oxen is sprinkled on the people and the altar. This signifies that this covenant is going to be one of grace, mercy, atonement, forgiveness, and restoration.

My point is that although the Mosaic covenant was one of conditions, God in His omniscience and grace already made provision for the sins that He knew the people would commit – even after their vows. Dear ones, I am grateful that God holds us to holiness but also makes a way for our unholiness to be covered, atoned for, and forgiven. They could not measure up and that is why as the covenants progressed, we end up with Jesus.

February 22

**Exodus 19:8**

Today we will wrap up focusing on the majesty of God expressed in fear in the Israelites standing at the base of Mt. Sinai, in hopes that you and I will stand in awe of Him and be stirred to greater surrender, sacrifice, and service. We must always maintain a balance between His transcendence and His immanence. Allow me a moment to define these words.

The fact that God is transcendent means that He is far and away, above us. It means that in one sense He is untouchable. That is balanced with the beautiful reality that He has chosen to also be immanent in relation to us. The immanence of God means that He is present, active, and intimately involved with His creation and especially His people. It reminds us that He is close to us. The transcendence of God is meant to cause us to be in awe of Him and the immanence of God is meant to cause us to sense His love and concern for us and to return our worship and adoration for both of these attributes of His.

He is present dear family, but He is also distinct from His creation. We should never allow ourselves to lose our reverential fear of His majesty. Jeremiah says that God is both a God who is at hand and a God who is far away. He says that He is God on earth and in heaven (Jer. 23:23). I am so thankful as I know you are that the very name of Jesus, Emmanuel, means God with us; and yet, He is the God who shook the mountain and terrified the people in Exodus 19 and beyond. He wants us to see Him as our "Abba, Father," but also as the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity whose name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit..." (Isa. 57:15). He is both transcendent and immanent.

The smoke and lightning that the people saw and the thunder that they heard was described in Exodus 24:17 as a devouring fire which explains why they were terrified in Exodus 20:18. Moses recorded these words, "Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off...Moses said to the people, 'Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of Him may be before you, that you may not sin'" (Ex. 20:18-20). Friend, Solomon wrote in the book of Proverbs, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." In other words, a healthy respect and understanding that He can smite you in a heartbeat should cause us to want to live so as not to offend Him in any way.

The idea behind Solomon's proverb is that we should begin our journey understanding the transcendence of God and the power that He has. He is God and we are not! Fortunately, that is not the end of the story. As we grow in wisdom from obeying God through simple fear and awe at first, we will grow to realize how good He is, and our fear will turn to reverential awe, genuine love, and willful adoration and worship all demonstrated through joyful obedience. Sometimes God brings a little shock and awe to get our attention. Once He has it, His desire is for you and me to come to see and experience His gentle, patient, loving care for His children. James tells us that the demons tremble because they know who He is and the power that He has (James 2:19). Do you?