

Friday, July 15, 2022 • Read Exodus 20:18–26

Questions from the Scripture text: Who witnessed what four things (v18)? What two things do they finally, appropriately do? To whom do they speak in v19? What do they ask him to do? What do they promise that they will do? What do they ask that it would not happen? Why? What does Moses tell the people not to do (v20)? What had God come to do? For what two purposes? Where do the people now stand (v21)? Where does Moses now go? Who speaks to whom in v22? To whom does He say to speak? What should Moses tell them that they have seen? What must they not make (v23)? Of what must they make the altar (v24)? For what purposes? What will Yahweh be causing to be remembered in particular places? To whom will He come in those places? What will He do to them? What material may be used for an altar (v25)? But what must be done to it? Why not? How big shouldn't it be, and of what construction shouldn't it be (v26)? Why—what ends up happening on such altars (v26)?

What does the object of our worship determine about the manner of our worship? Exodus 20:18–26 looks forward to the evening sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these nine verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **God wants us to draw near to Him in reverence, repentance, and remembrance of Him.**

Draw near to God in reverence. The passage begins not with a response to the commandments that have been declared but to the sensory experiences that attended God's declaring of His law. The people no longer want to draw near. They no longer want to experience God. They just want instructions (v19).

Sadly, Yahweh agrees with their assessment of themselves (cf. Deut 5:28–31). They don't fear Him. They don't fear to sin. If they draw near, they will in fact be destroyed. But that wasn't the purpose of the display. The purpose of the display was, "that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin."

God is still a consuming fire, but we can draw near. Why? Because Christ has both atoned for our sin, as well as won us grace to produce in us appropriate reverence and awe. This is how we are able to draw near to God not only in actual safety but also in appropriate reverence and fear (cf. Heb 12:28–29). This is what Moses says in v20. God announced His law in this manner, so "that His fear may be before you." Draw near to God in reverence!

Draw near to God in repentance. Knowing God's law, we should be amazed whenever we draw near and are not destroyed. But not by lack of explanation. We know why: Christ has suffered the wrath in our place and wiped out our guilt. Rather, we should be amazed by the love and mercy that have been extended to us.

This rich goodness of God should lead us to repentance (cf. Rom 2:4). And it should lead us to hate sin all the more. The people who were still afraid of the penalty of their sin didn't want to draw near to God. But when we see how hateful our sin is unto God, our response should not be to try to be far from God, but rather far from sin. How hateful our sin ought to be unto us! This is what Moses says in v20. God announced His law in this manner "so that you may not sin." Draw near to God in repentance!

Draw near to God in remembrance. God has chosen how we may come near: a mediation that He alone has provided (the sacrifice of Christ) and a mechanism that He alone has prescribed (words). How did Yahweh bring them near? By talking (v22), not by images (v23)! By sacrifice where the main point was that He provided it: earth that He had made, and particular offerings that He would define (v24).

If they use stone (which He had made), they are not to add their own touches by their tools (v25). Creative embellishment of worship profanes it rather than improving it! v26 refers to the wicked self-indulgence that characterized the man-made worship of man-made deities in the surrounding society. But it is true in every society: trying to make worship "bigger and better" doesn't honor the immense (unmeasurable) God any more than little, simple worship. What it does is put us in the way of indulging ourselves rather than marveling at Him.

No, God gives us worship that is not an expression of ourselves but rather a remembrance of Him. "In every place where I cause My Name to be remembered" is what v24 literally says. He Himself will come. He Himself will bless. He is the great Actor in worship! He makes Himself known to us. He makes remembrance of Himself to us. The Spirit witnesses to us here that the creativity of man and the remembrance of God are at cross-purposes. Draw near to God in remembrance!

How does the way of drawing near to God remind you of what You deserve and what He has done for us instead? What does this make you think of your sin? Who is the great Actor when we come to worship God? What does this mean we must refrain from doing? What mustn't we aim at in worship?

Sample prayer: Lord, we bless Your Name for bringing us near to Yourself through the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ. Forgive us for coming lightly. Forgive us for treating our sin and guilt as if it were a small thing. Or for wishing that we could keep our sin and worship You anyway. Forgive us for thinking or acting as if our creativity could improve Your worship. But cleanse us in Christ, and make us to draw near in reverence, repentance, and remembrance we ask, in His Name, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP184 "Adoration and Submission" or TPH164 "God Himself Is with Us"

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(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Exodus 20 versus 18 through 26. These are God's words Now. All the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off.

And then they said to Moses You speak with us and we will hear but not God. Speak with us. Lest we die and Moses said, to the people do not fear for God, has come to test you. And that his fear may be before you so that you may not sin.

So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was and then you always said to Moses, thus you shall say to the children of Israel. You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. You shall not make anything to be with me gods of silver or gods of gold.

You shall not make for yourselves an altar of earth. You shall make for me and usual. Sacrifice on it to your burnt offerings and your peace. Offerings your sheep and your oxen, and every place where I record my name, I won't come to you. And I will bless you.

And if you make me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stone. For if you use your tool on it, you have profaned. Nor shall you go up by steps to my altar? That your nakedness may not be exposed on it.

So, pull the reading of God's inspired and Aaron wart

So they hear the words of God, and they see all the phenomenon on the mountain, but they respond to the wrong one. Verse 18, the people witness the thunderings and lightning flashes and sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking. And they see it and tremble. And stand the far off.

They are impressed by the other physical phenomena. But when we get the, then you always said to Moses in verse 22, he points out that physical phenomenon. Aren't what they are to be responding to primarily in the worship. He says, you have seen that. I have talked with you from heaven.

You shall not make anything to be with me Gods of silver Gods of gold. You shall not make for yourselves. Very similar to what he says in. Deuteronomy chapter 4 right? Before the giving or stating of the law in that place in Chapter 5 and Deuteronomy 5 and Deuteronomy for.

He says, remember when you were at the mountain, you did not see a form. You only heard a voice God wants to be worshiped, by way of, by means of his word. He is the one who chooses how to reveal himself to us the mechanism, by which he makes himself known to us and he's chosen, especially his word.

Jesus is given us two sacraments, which affirm the words to us and reinforce some things that are proclaimed by the word but God makes Himself known to us, particularly by his word. And if they had responded primarily to his word and heard over and over again in the first table of the law, the Lord thy God, Yahweh thy God, Yahweh thy God.

And if they had listened to how good his laws are and his commandments are, then they would have responded with worship and reverence blessing God's name that he had taken them to himself Blessing. God's name that he had spoken to them. But since they did not have reverence, they were afraid to draw near.

So they tell Moses or first verse 18, they trembled and stood off. And then they said to Moses in verse 19, you speak with us but not God speak with us last we die. In Deuteronomy 5 verses 28 through 31 which fills in a little bit, more of the detail of this event.

The Lord actually agrees. He says, they're right. If they draw near, I'm gonna destroy them. Oh, that they had a heart to fear me.

That was their lack of reverence for God. That made it dangerous for them to draw near but God wants us to draw near 10. And so we must have reverence for him. We must look to God the Holy Spirit to give us that heart that references him. So that what Jesus quotes from Isaiah wouldn't be true of us.

This people draws near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. No, we want to draw near to God. Hebrews 12 tells us to draw near to God. But in order to draw near to God, it tells us also let us have grace by which we may worship him with fear and all with reverence and godly fear for our God as a consuming fire.

God does not want us to stand, afar off from him. But we need grace, we need God's strength and goodness for us over ruling. Our weakness. Over ruling our wickedness so that we may draw near gym because he's still as holy as he demonstrated when he shuck and burned, and smoked, and trumpeted Mount Sinai, and such a way that the people were afraid.

So that's the first one draw near to God in. Reverence, Moses tells tells us that do not fear for God has come to test you and that his fear maybe before you. But not only draw near to God in Reverence draw near to God in repentance says so that you may not sin in verse 20 knowing God's law.

We are amazed that we can draw near But we're not amazed because we have no explanation for it. We know why we were able to draw near what makes a sinner able to come near the living. God, It is the blood and righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. It's not the blood of the bulls and goats it's the blood of Christ, which those bulls and goats looked forward.

And he talks about sacrifices here and surely, they feel the great need of their sacrifices after all of this. And so we are to draw near to God and repentance and faith. Moses tells us that we should draw near in opposition to us and not only that his fear may be before you verse 20 but also so that you may not sin verse 20.

So we're not amazed due to lack of explanation. We're amazed to due to greatness of love and mercy and greatness of the gift of Jesus Himself to be our sacrifice and the one through whom we can draw near to God. Every time we pray, every time we read our Bible, every time we do any act of worship.

Yes, we should draw near fearing God but we should also draw near hating our sin and trusting in Jesus and being amazed that we are able to call upon God's name, which is an act of worship. And we ought to be destroyed for doing it. Except Christ has been given Christ.

Gave himself Christ died. He's our mediator, He puts away the sin so you can draw near to God, You can call up on his name. You can read his word. You can sing his praise and you're not destroyed for doing. So because Jesus was born the wrath of God on the cross.

So you draw an ear and repentance and faith, repentance and faith. Always got together. Of course, our sin ought to be hateful to us and Christ ought to be precious to us. And when we draw near in worship, it should underline emphasize. Those things to us. I should be destroyed as a sinner coming this way.

I hate my sin but I am not because Christ has given himself. I trust in Christ. I love Christ. So draw near to God in reverence draw near to God and repentance and then draw near to God in Remembrance. He tells them to remember that he's the one who draws near to them says, you have seen, okay?

What have we seen that? I have talked. It's a visual verb with auditory subordinate, verb, and underlines the message, right? You want to see something? See that. You're not supposed to see things. See that the point is what you hear. When he talks about recording his name in various places, remembering reminding them of himself, making remembrance of himself to us.

God wants us to have the worship that He gives us. He's the one who created earth. He says, you can make an altar of earth. It's my earth and if you make an altar of stone, I made that tube but don't you make it? Don't touch it with a tool, anything.

You add creatively to the worship. Of God does not improve it. What happens when we add creatively to the worship of God and verse 25? For, if you use your tool on it, you you, you you you're all that right, have profaned. So man thinks he can make it better and men thinks he can make it bigger, nor shall you go up by steps to my altar.

So make an altar so big that you go you yourself. Go up and are on the altar platform. First of all, You can't make an altar that is commensurate with the size of God. He doesn't need bigger grander, buildings and grander soundings. And grander adornments inside you know, build back better isn't just a political lie that

some presidents tell it is a way to make worship idolatrous and you know what happened when they made altars like that where you go up and you get into a religious frenzy and the ancient religions, we got some modern ones too.

They actually did expose nakedness upon it. In fact at temples where they had alters like that, they would hire people to expose nakedness with the people who came to worship up on those altar platforms. I hope the same is not done to that extent today, but we make platforms and we have grandness and we stir people up into frenzies and people get up there and they shake themselves and they wear a modest clothing.

And even those who don't shake themselves, or wear the immodest clothing exposed themselves, instead of praising, God making great display of what is inside them doing spiritually. What is forbidden here in the exposing of nakedness? Our worship is not an expression of ourselves Worship is, first of all, God's expression of himself.

And second of all His spirit, expressing the new nature of Christ from within us by his word.

And so that, which is expressed, as not frenzy. But faith, froth and worship are opposites, not different levels of the same thing. And so we're to draw near to God. And remembrance remembering that he is the creator that he is the Redeemer. He is the one who has made the way that we come near and not just earth and bulls and goats which he sorry, sheep and oxen.

He says here, in verse 24, he's provided all of this stuff. He's the one who has taken them to himself. He's the one who records his name in places as he makes them to worship. His name in those places. He's the one who is making us to remember all that he is and all that he has done for us.

And so we draw near to God and remembrance God. Given worship not a man-made worship. Oh, I know that There are lots of things that we do that incorporate these ideas. But these are all things really that belong to the heart, aren't they? You can have the most biblical Westminster Confession, 21 Westminster directory of Public Worship, plain biblical worship that there is and yet still come to God with an even reverent heart or a non-repenting heart or a non-remembering heart.

So let us come away from this passage. Not only affirmed in the wisdom of biblical worship. But instructed and corrected by God, the Holy Spirit that we would come with Reverend Harts and repentant hearts trusting in Christ hating sin and remembering hearts rejoicing that God himself has made the way to come to him.

And that way isn't earth stone sheep and oxen that stuff's been wiped out. The way is Christ himself. Praise God. Let's pray.

Lord, thank you for this passage. Thank you for helping us the opening of it together in the family. Pray for when we come to open it together the Evening, Sermon on the Lord's Day, that you would come and help us by your spirit, that you would help me. And that time and indeed.

Lord. As we look forward to that worship service and the morning we're service to all of the private and family and public worship that you will give us to have and to offer During our remaining time. In this world, we consider what you have told us in this passage.

And we ask that you would give us to do so, with Reverence with repentance and faith and with Remembrance that you have given yourself to us ultimately in Christ and brought ourselves near you ultimately in Christ. And so it is even in his name that we ask for these.

Things regarding our worship, Amen.