

Exodus 19:9-25

Trembling at Sinai

From the thick cloud ...

- I. When YHWH Speaks
 - A. Hear
 - B. Believe
 - C. React
- II. When the Lord Comes Down
 - A. Be Prepared for the Trumpet Blast
 - B. Consecrate Yourselves
 - C. Keep the Limits or Die
- III. An Awe-Inspiring Experience
 - A. An Overwhelming Presence
 - B. An Awesome Visitation
 - C. A Life Changing Encounter

... on top of the mountain.

Children, Listen ...

1. God has spoken to us in His Word. What should we do when we hear it?
2. How would you describe the scene at Sinai in just a few words?
3. Who were the only ones allowed to go up the mountain to meet with God close up?
4. God is the same awesome God today as He was then. He does not change. Since that is true, how can anyone actually look forward to being in His presence?

A Familiarity that Breeds Awe

The very idea of approaching YHWH without mediation should terrify sinners. God is mighty and Holy, and no corruption can survive in His awesome presence. This is driven home powerfully in the account of the people gathering at Sinai immediately prior to the giving of the Law. God loved His people and is drawing near to them to reveal His will for them in His commandments beginning with the summary of moral standards codified in the Ten Words, or the Decalogue. While Israel was the subject of the Lord's favor, they constantly needed to be reminded of just how awesome their God was. He was not their pal, nor a doting grandfatherly figure, He is Lord of all. As Moses asked rhetorically in his song: "Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders?" (Exodus 15:11). Passages describing His power and purity are manifold. God is merciful and gracious, forgiving sin, but not without mediation, and not without repentance. Tragically the people of Israel would prove over and over again their disregard for the Lord's Commands, almost as if the awestruck fear they experience at the mountain was a flash in the pan. We can be thankful that we live in a different era in which the Mediator Jesus Christ has atoned for the sins of His people and has welcomed believers to approach God as "Father." But make no mistake, God has not changed, and we would be foolish to downgrade in our minds His power and holiness, and we are not at liberty to eschew His Commands. In Christ we know YHWH, we might say we are familiar with Him. But God Himself forbid, that we would allow the gracious condescension and kindness we are familiar with devolve into some form of contempt. Our familiarity with Him should instead breed reverent awe and the desire to walk in His ways. Remember what the Apostle Paul wrote with reference to the consequences of Israel's disobedience. "Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come. Therefore, let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall. 1Corinthians 10:11-12