



Representing God to the World

Exodus 19:1-6

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Exodus 19:1-6

1 On the first day of the third month after the Israelites left Egypt—on that very day—they came to the Desert of Sinai.

2 After they set out from Rephidim, they entered the Desert of Sinai, and Israel camped there in the desert in front of the mountain.

3 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 descendants of Jacob and what you are to tell the

people of Israel: 4 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. 5 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, 6 you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

"America's problem isn't too much religion, or too little of it. It's bad religion: the slow-motion collapse of traditional Christianity and the rise of a variety of destructive pseudo-Christianities in its place."

- Ross Douthat, *Bad Religion*

How do we recover the intent and meaning of being a people who represent God to the world?

Why did God deliver Israel?

Exodus 4:22-23

"This is what the Lord says: 'Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you, "Let my son go, so he may worship me."'

Exodus 6:7

"I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God."

Language of Orientation: Identity / Meaning / Purpose

- Kingdom of Priests
- A Holy Nation

1 Peter 2:9

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

God delivers and makes His people priests.

The Responsibilities of Priests:

- Bring the knowledge of God to the people
- Bring the prayers/sacrifices of people to God

Our Dual Role as Priests:

- To bring the light of the Gospel to the City
- To bring the City to God in intercession and ministry

God delivers and requires holiness.

Holiness is intrinsic to priesthood.

Exodus 19:5

"Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession."

Leviticus 19:2

“Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.”

Holiness in Leviticus 19 Involves:

- Respect within the family and community (3, 32)
- Exclusive loyalty to YHWH as God (4, 5-8)
- Economic generosity in agriculture (9-10)
- Observing the commandments regarding social relationships (11-12)
- Economic justice in employment rights (13)
- Social compassion to the disabled (14)
- Judicial integrity in the legal system (12,15)
- Neighborly attitudes and behavior; loving one's neighbor as oneself (16-18)
- Preserving the symbolic tokens of religious distinctiveness (19)
- Sexual integrity (20-22, 29)
- Rejection of practices connected with idolatrous or occult religion (26-31)
- No ill-treatment of ethnic minorities, but rather racial equality before the law and practical love for the alien as for oneself (33-34)
- Commercial honesty in all trading transactions (35-36)

- From Christopher J.H. Wright, *The Mission of God*