

Into the Promised Land
Joshua's Story
Lesson #2 – The Third Day & The Ascents
• H A N D O U T •

► Lesson #2 in the series continues to examine Moses' eight ascents, starting with Ascent #3. This Ascent will give us details about the “Third Day” – the dramatic Day the Presence of God settled at the very top of Mount Sinai. Based on the flow of the text, we are combining Ascents #3 and #4: First, Moses ascended; God sent him back down to the valley floor to warn the people NOT to try and force their way up the mountain. God then instructed Moses to return but, this time, with his brother Aaron.

Ascents #3 & #4 - The Third Day

Exodus 19:16-21; 24b • 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. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently. As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him. The Lord descended to the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain.

So Moses went up and the Lord said to him, *"Go down and warn the people so they do not force their way through to see the Lord and many of them perish. Go down and bring Aaron up with you."*

- Q: When we hear or think of the term, “The Third Day” what day do we usually associate with it?
- Q: Amazingly, God and Moses spoke audibly to each other. Why was an audible exchange important?
- Q: What was the purpose of God descending amid fire, thunder, lightning, and the sound of a trumpet along with a thick cloud and a quaking mountain?
- Q: Once Moses went up the Mountain, God sent him back down to warn the people before returning with Aaron. This warning had already been given by God. Why did God want Moses to give the warning a second time?

Scripture does not give us any details about Moses returning with Aaron. We only know that Moses gave the warning and then took Aaron back with him. That is why some think Ascent #3 & #4 should be considered one combined Ascent. They are considered as separate Ascents in this series.

Exodus 20:1-17 • And God spoke all these words: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

1. "You shall have no other gods before me.
2. "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.
3. "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name.
4. "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
5. "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.
6. "You shall not murder.
7. "You shall not commit adultery.
8. "You shall not steal.
9. "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
10. "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Q: What is significant about God speaking these commandments to Israel verbally?

In the scripture that follows, we see the people's initial reaction to the dramatics of the Third Day and hearing God's voice address them directly ...

Exodus 20:18-21 [NLT] • When the people heard the thunder and the loud blast of the ram's horn, and when they saw the flashes of lightning and the smoke billowing from the mountain, they stood at a distance, trembling with fear.

And they said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen. But don't let God speak directly to us, or we will die!"

"Don't be afraid," Moses answered them, "for God has come in this way to test you, and so that your fear of Him will keep you from sinning!" As the people stood in the distance, Moses approached the dark cloud where God was.

Q: Why would the people react this way? Why weren't they honored to hear God's voice and excited that He was showing them His power?

Ascent #5

The people's fear and trembling at the Presence of God drove Moses up the Mount a fifth time.

Exodus 20:21-26 · As the people stood in the distance, Moses approached the dark cloud where God was. And the Lord said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel:

"You saw for yourselves that I spoke to you from heaven. Remember, you must not make any idols of silver or gold to rival me. Build for me an altar made of earth, and offer your sacrifices to me -- your burnt offerings and peace offerings, your sheep and goats, and your cattle. Build my altar wherever I cause my name to be remembered, and I will come to you and bless you. If you use stones to build my altar, use only natural, uncut stones. Do not shape the stones with a tool, for that would make the altar unfit for holy use. And do not approach my altar by going up steps. If you do, someone might look up under your clothing and see your nakedness."

Q: When God speaks about the Altar he instructed Moses to make, why was it to be constructed with only natural stone?

Q: Why were there to be no steps leading to the Altar?

Ascent #6

This is the Ascent most people think of when they think of Mt. Sinai and the giving of the Law ...

Exodus 24:1-8 · Then the Lord instructed Moses: "Come up here to me, and bring along Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of Israel's elders. All of you must worship from a distance. Only Moses is allowed to come near to the Lord . The others must not come near, and none of the other people are allowed to climb up the mountain with him."

Then Moses went down to the people and repeated all the instructions and regulations the Lord had given him. All the people answered with one voice, "We will do everything the Lord has commanded." Then Moses carefully wrote down all the Lord 's instructions.

Early the next morning Moses got up and built an altar at the foot of the mountain. He also set up twelve pillars, one for each of the twelve tribes of Israel. Then he sent some of the young Israelite men to present burnt offerings and to sacrifice bulls as peace offerings to the Lord. Moses drained half the blood from these animals into basins. The other half he splattered against the altar. Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it aloud to the people.

Again they all responded, "We will do everything the Lord has commanded. We will obey." Then Moses took the blood from the basins and splattered it over the people, declaring, "Look, this blood confirms the covenant the Lord has made with you in giving you these instructions."

Q: What is the significance of the persons the Lord instructed Moses to bring with him?

Q: What is the significance of the building of the Altar, the twelve pillars and the animal sacrifices with the sprinkling of the blood on the Altar and on the people?

Q: What was the “Book of the Covenant” that Moses read aloud to the people?

Exodus 24:9-11 [NLT] • Then Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel climbed up the mountain. There they saw the God of Israel. Under his feet there seemed to be a surface of brilliant blue lapis lazuli, as clear as the sky itself. And though these nobles of Israel gazed upon God, he did not destroy them. In fact, they ate a covenant meal, eating and drinking in his presence!

Q: Since God is “Spirit” and scriptures are clear that no man can see God and live, what is it that these men saw when the text says “they saw the God of Israel; they gazed upon God?”

Exodus 24:12-18 • Then the Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain. Continue there, and I will give you the tablets of stone on which I have inscribed the instructions and commands so you can teach the people.”

So Moses and his assistant, Joshua, set out and Moses climbed up the mountain of God. [Moses told the elders: “Stay here and wait for us until we come back. Aaron and Hur are here with you. If anyone has a dispute while I am gone, consult with them.”]

Then Moses climbed up the mountain, and the cloud covered it. And the glory of the Lord settled down on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day the Lord called to Moses from inside the cloud. [To the Israelites at the foot of the mountain, the glory of the Lord appeared at the summit like a consuming fire.] Then Moses disappeared into the cloud as he climbed higher up the mountain. He remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Q: Why does the Lord tell to Moses to “Come up to me on the mountain. Continue there ...” Wasn't Moses, along with Joshua, already there?

Q: What did the Presence of God on the Mountain look like to those on the valley floor?

Q: After waiting at the edge of the cloud covered top for six days, then, on the seventh day, the Lord invited Moses to come into the cloud. He remained inside the cloud for 40 days and 40 nights. What about Joshua?

►NOTE: During the 40 days and 40 nights, Moses was given much more than the Decalogue written on the Stone Tablets. Moses was given the exact pattern for constructing the Tabernacle, the covering for it, the kind of framing system to construct down to the bars and rings, what specific materials to use, and how to make the veil and screen. God gave Moses instructions for building the Ark of the Covenant, what was to reside inside the Ark, and the Mercy Seat that was to reside on the top. God gave Moses dimensions and material list for everything that was to reside inside the Tabernacle: the table of Showbread, the Lampstand, the Altar of Incense, along with the recipes for the oil and incense mixture. Moses also received exact instructions for constructing the courtyard of the Tabernacle, the fencing around it, and everything in it, including the Altar of Burnt Offering, the utensils, the Laver and the Gate. God gave Moses instructions for making the priestly garments and who was to wear what item. Absolutely nothing was left to man's decision and every minute detail was covered. Everything had to accurately represent what was already a heavenly reality. God revealed His purpose: *"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them."*

Q: What is significant about the revealed purpose for the Tabernacle?

**► Ascent #6 did not end here.
We need to look at what happened next before we also look
at the last two Ascents.**



Next Time • Lesson #3
"Finishing the Ascents "

