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**The Encampment at Mount Sinai**

**Preparation for God's Laws**

***Exodus 19***

**Purpose:** To consider refreshing ways to hear God's voice.

Do you tune in or tune out when the pastor stands to read the Scripture? You've heard it before? Probably. How then can Christians who have heard the Bible so often recapture the expectancy of hearing for the first time? A very practical problem indeed. When God spoke to his people the first time, a thunderstorm erupted. We can't expect that every Sunday, so perhaps we have to look within. How eager are we to hear God speak? To listen and obey? In this study we find not only thunder and lightning but a prepared, excited—even fearful—people. The New Testament reminds us that God is still a consuming fire.

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**1.** In what practical ways can we prepare for Sunday-morning worship?

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**2.** Read Exodus 19:1–9. After three months on the road, what prospect did God hold out for his people (vv. 1–6)?

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***Question 2.*** *We stand on the threshold of a new stage in God's relationship with Israel. He was their King and they were his people, chosen to keep his law, live for him, and be a witness to his truth before the surrounding nations. Their encampment at Mt. Sinai was the fulfillment of God's promise (see 3:12). The Israelites stayed there for nearly a year. The “Desert of Sinai” would be the open land before the mountain. “A holy nation” (19:5) is one separated from other nations and devoted to God.*

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**3.** Why would the Israelites be inclined to believe God's promise and obey his commands (vv. 7–8)?

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**4.** What evidence do you have to trust and obey him?

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***Question 4.*** *Seek specific answers that people can relate to, not vague, pious generalities.*

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**5.** Read Exodus 19:10–15. What preparations did the people have to make for God's appearance, and why?

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***Question 5.*** *The abstinence from sexual intercourse stands in sharp contrast to other ancient religions in which sensuous orgies were incorporated into the rituals. God did not give this requirement because sex was considered sinful, but because the people might have become ceremonially unclean (Lev 15:18–19).*

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**6.** What message was God conveying about himself and about his words (vv. 6, 23)?

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**7.** Moses “consecrated” the people so they could meet God (v. 14). What is required of you to meet him? Why?

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**8.**  Read Exodus 19:16–25. How and why did the people react to the signs of God's presence on the mountain (vv. 16–19)?

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**9.** Why would the Israelites be tempted to “force their way through to see the Lord” (v. 21)?

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**10.** Moses acts as mediator between God and his people. In what sense is Jesus our mediator now (1 Tim 2:5–6)?

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**11.** What impressions do you have of Moses, of God and of the Israelites in this scene?

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**12.** Why would the events of the three days predispose people to hear and obey God's words?

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**13.** How can we hold God's Word in holy awe?

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***Question 13.*** *This is the key point in personal application. Gauge discussion time, and encourage personal reflection before verbalizing.*

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**14.** Read Hebrews 12:18–28. In light of Christians' far greater spiritual privileges, what warnings and encouragements does the writer give?

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***Question 14.*** *Take time for careful reading of this passage. Know what facts you want the group to find.*

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**15.** How can you be sure to “refuse not him that speaketh” (v. 25)?