Probably most of us have run across people who present the idea that they have their own ideas of God and their own ideas about worship. One time there was a man who told me that he worshipped God his own way. He felt he could go for a walk in the mountains or go for a boat ride on water and worship God his way.

Well, here is the problem with this—**God demands in any dispensation that you worship Him His way. We don’t set the terms and we don’t set the boundaries. God sets it all. Any relationship with God must be according to His terms, not ours.**

Never is that point more clear that when we come to the book of Exodus and a text like this. God demanded that Israel meet Him at a specific place and in conformity with His standards. No one knows for sure just where this place even is today. There is probably good reason for this. One commentator said if we actually knew the location of the spot where this happened, people would go there and worship the mountain and be guilty of “mountain-olatry.”

What we do know is that meeting God was in conformity with His prescribed mandates. What we certainly see here is this:

**MEETING GOD AND HAVING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS DETERMINED BY THE TIMING OF GOD AND THE TERMS OF GOD.**

I do not know what the most intimidating moment of your life has been, but I can guarantee all of us this, there will be no more intimidating moment in the world than when we learn it is time to meet God. This will be very serious and very sacred.

Now it is clear that meeting God is no light matter, even for God’s elect nation. If you were part of God’s elect family or nation and were involved in this moment, it certainly was very intimidating.

Now there are 15 facts we want to observe about this meeting:

**FACT #1- God met with His people in the morning on the third day.** 19:16a

The Hebrew literally reads “on the third day, when morning came.” Now God has His choice of all days of the week. As we mentioned last time, why do you suppose that He decided to meet with Israel in the morning on the third day?

Well the answer is obvious to any who know the Bible. It would be the morning of the third day when Jesus Christ would rise from the dead and Jesus Christ is the only Person and only Place where God will meet with man. He is the only Person who can put Israel into a right relationship with God. He is the only Person who can put any sinner into a right relationship with God.
It is interesting that when Paul refers to the gospel that he preached, he said that the gospel that he delivered was that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that He was buried and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” (I Cor.15:3-4).

Now we would do well to ask ourselves, from what Scripture did Paul get this third day data? Well one place would be Genesis 22:4 which says that Abraham looked up and saw the place where he was to sacrifice his son in the distance. But another place is right here in Exodus. Clearly we see that the day God meets with sinful Israel is the morning of the third day and that day is part of the gospel of Jesus Christ because that was the day He was raised from the dead.

**FACT #2-** God met with His people with the sound of thunder. **19:16b**

This roaring thunder became a solemn audible sound that revealed the presence and the power of God.

**FACT #3-** God met His people with the sight of lightening and a thick cloud. **19:16c**

Now the thick cloud here is God manifesting Himself, not God hiding Himself. This thick cloud along with the flashes of lightening showed the great presence of God.

One commentator said what we have here is a “storm theophany.”

**FACT #4-** God met His people with the sound of a very loud trumpet. **19:16d**

No man sounded this trumpet. This trumpet was heralded out of heaven. The trumpet of heaven often announces the presence of God and the context determines what the presence has come to do.

In this case the trumpet announced to Israel that God was come in Person. He had come to display Himself and give His law.

In the case of the trumpet announced to the church, it will announce that Jesus Christ has come to Rapture His church and take her to Heaven with Him (I Thess.4:16). This will be the last event of the Church age which is why Paul calls in the “last trumpet” (I Cor.15:52).

In the case of the Tribulation, the seven trumpet blasts will signal to the world the wrath of God is reaching its severest level (Rev.8:2;11:15).

In the case of the Second Coming of Jesus Christ after the Great Tribulation a great trumpet will sound announcing He is coming back to take over the world (Matt.24:29-31).

In each of these cases God is using a loud heavenly trumpet blast to announce something about Him and His presence. These trumpets occur at different times and are used for different things.
FACT #5- When God met with His people they trembled. 19:16e

One commentator said the “pyrotechnic, acoustical manifestations” of God’s presence left the people shaking and trembling. The presence of God not only caused the mountain to tremble (v.18), but also caused the people to tremble. We also learn from Hebrews 12:21 that Moses himself trembled. In fact we read, “And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I am full of fear and trembling.” This was God’s very special man and he was trembling in the presence of God.

Most people don’t realize the dangers associated with the actual presence of God.

FACT #6- God’s people went to the foot of the mountain to meet God. 19:17

It probably took some time to get all of the people to the base of this mountain. We are not certain whether they kind of circled the mountain or all gathered at the base of one side. Most believe they gathered at the base and were probably organized by tribes and families.

But we may be certain of this, the day you meet God is not your typical day.

FACT #7- God’s presence at Mount Sinai meant the mountain was in smoke. 19:18a

Now the language would indicate that the entire mountain was engulfed in smoke, not just the top. But it wasn’t like a volcano. The smoke ascended upward like that of a furnace. So what we have is an entire mountain in smoke that is billowing up into the sky and at the top, God descended “in the form of fire.” Fire surrounds God. Fire produces purity and punishes impurity.

God’s very presence had descended from Heaven in the form of fire and was sitting on top of this mountain that was all in smoke. Frankly, this is intimidating and scary. Now this fact has not changed about God. We know that the writer of Hebrews said “our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb.12:29)

FACT #8- God’s presence at Mount Sinai included a violent shaking of the mountain. 19:18b

Now it is no coincidence that this violent shaking will occur again when Jesus Christ actually dies (Mt.27:51) and when Jesus Christ is raised from the dead (Mt.28:2). When God violently shakes things, His presence is very near. The earth will shake again when Jesus Christ returns to it (Zech.14:3-5). All of these things prove that Jesus Christ is God because God is the one who takes full credit for earthquakes that shake the world.

It is predicted that during the Tribulation God will use an earthquake greater than has ever been seen before in history. That earthquake will be accompanied by flashes of lightening and roaring thunder and the result of this earthquake will be not only the destruction of cities, but islands and mountains (Rev.16:18-21). Interestingly this also turns out to be the last trumpet of the trumpet judgments.
FACT #9- God’s presence produced intensity in the sound of the trumpet. 19:19a

The trumpet people were hearing was growing louder and louder. Now imagine you are standing at this mountain and this blast coming from the mountain is growing louder and louder and you don’t even see any one blowing a trumpet. This would be scary.

FACT #10- When God was present Moses spoke to God and God answered Moses with thunder. 19:19b

Now the people could hear that Moses was speaking with God and God was speaking with Moses in a thunderous way. Now we gather from this that Moses had not learned a new “thunder language.” In fact, we know that from Exodus 20:1, God spoke in “words” not some special Morse code thunder language. We may assume that when Moses was speaking with God, God was speaking back to Moses in a way he could understand and the people heard an intense roaring thunder.

FACT #11- God came down and called Moses to come to the top of the mountain. 19:20

Moses was summoned by God to go to the top of the mountain. No one but Moses was authorized to do this at this point. So we have in this the picture of God meeting with Israel via a mediatorial representative, who in this case was Moses.

The top of that mountain became a type of sanctuary and it was considered to be a very holy place. People who think right about God realize God does make elective distinctions. He does choose some to serve Him in a unique way and He does not do that with every one.

FACT #12- God instructs Moses to warn the people. 19:21

Now some of the people who saw Moses go up the mountain probably were thinking, it would be good for us to go up too and get a glimpse of God. Some of the people must have been thinking this way. Apparently there were some barricades put up for crowd control and some of the people were contemplating breaking through them to follow Moses up the mountain. But God would not lower His standards and if they tried going up they would instantly die.

So in pure grace, God sent Moses back down the mountain to warn the people not to try to follow Moses up that mountain, because if they did they would die. There is a huge distance between sinful man and Holy God.

Dr. Warren Wiersbe said something that I think is so true, even though through Christ in the N.T. we can draw near to God, it does not mean we can be real “chummy” with God.

Now you would naturally think in view of all that Israel had seen God do- plagues, part sea and provide, they would realize this point. But some people just can’t seem to take a hint, so God had to specifically warn them.
FACT #13 - God instructs Moses concerning the priests. 19:22

Now the actual selection of the priests will not occur until after this event, but God wants to make a point to Moses about them here. He informs Moses that there will need to be a special consecration of themselves to God or God will turn against them.

God tells Moses that even the priests who represent Him needed to be consecrated. So not only did God set boundaries for who went up the mountain, He also set them for those who would be His O.T. priests. In fact, if any priest tried to go into the Holy of Holies on his own, he would die.

FACT #14 - Moses responds to God that the people cannot come up to Mt. Sinai. 19:23

Moses responded by saying, he is well aware of the mandate of this warning. Moses was well aware that this was a very special and sacred place and it needed to be viewed that way.

FACT #15 - God told Moses to go down and come back up with Aaron. 19:24

God said make sure that you do not let the priests or the people come, but bring Aaron back.

According to verse 25, Moses went back down to the people and told them every thing.

Now can you imagine the presence of God actually existing in some light atmosphere? Can you imagine God actually being present in a place where there is no reverence? I do not think so.

But I want to take us to Hebrews again tonight. Hebrews 12:25-29 is a powerful and very applicable text to this very part of Exodus. We have a relationship with God, based on our faith in Jesus Christ. In view of the amazing grace that has been given to us in Jesus Christ, there are three ways we should live our lives:

WAY #1 - We should always accept the Word of God, when it is accurately taught. 12:25-27

WAY #2 - We should always show gratitude to God for the grace relationship we have. 12:28a

We are not heading to a kingdom that will be shaken in the Tribulation, we are heading to the Rapture. We will never be shaken. The text says, let us show gratitude, which literally reads in Greek, “let us have grace” (εχωμεν χαριν). Part of showing gratitude is to thank God we are in grace and not under the O.T. legal law.

WAY #3 - We should always offer acceptable service to God. 12:28b

Part of how we offer acceptable service to God is to gather with a reverence and awe of God. People can go to church and serve in all kinds of things, but if God is not reverenced it is not acceptable service to God. Three things to offer God: 1) Our person (Rom.12:1-2); 2) Our praise (Heb.12:28;13:15); 3) Our prosperity (Heb.13:16).