

THE MOUNT OF GOD

"And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God." I Kings 19:8.

There is something of grandeur in a mountain. There is a thrill in a vision from the heights. Have you been to the home of George Washington at Mount Vernon and viewed from its heights the beautiful landscape and the Potomac River? Have you been to the home of Thomas Jefferson at Monticello and seen from its summit a school and campus and countryside? Have you been to the home of Robert E. Lee at Arlington and from its hilltop viewed the capitol and city and country? If so, you have been impressed with the high places which leaders chosen of men have had for human vision.

Our scriptures (Genesis 22:1-19; Exodus 3:1-6; I Kings 19:1-18) present the high places to which leaders chosen of God were called for more than human vision. Our text presents one of these high places--"Horeb the mount of God."

I. A Place Of Solitude.

Horeb the mount of God is a place of solitude. How lonely are the mountains. Memory recalls numerous and varied experiences in the beautiful and picturesque mountains which have made indelible impressions and taught invaluable lessons.

God called His chosen leaders to places of solitude in order that they might be alone with Him and get ready for the work He had for them.

God called Moses to the mount of God, even to Horeb. He called Abraham to the solitude of Moriah, the mount of the Lord. He called Elijah to the silence of Horeb the mount of God.

Present day life is long on rush and hurry and short on great-souled leaders. Crowds and confusion keep men's eyes on the ground. It is in the silence of solitude that men best see God and grow great souls.

Present day religious life is long on service and short on worship. In far too many cases, public service has replaced private devotion. Public programs cannot take the place of private devotions. The soul that would grow must have its trysting place of heavenly courtship and the divine blessing.

The 18th chapter of I Kings tells the story of God's sending fire from heaven to prove the worth of His claims as put forth in His defense by Elijah. The chapter ends by the sign seeking prayer of Elijah as he sought for a sign in the sky of the rain that God had promised. Then at the threat of a wicked woman the prophet forgot God's manifested power and ran for his life. Public demonstration of divine power was not enough for God's man. He needed a further message and into Horeb's silence, the solitude of the mount of God, he was carried. There wind and earthquake and fire passed, but God was not in them. Then in the silence of Horeb the prophet heard the still small voice whispering the presence of God.

II. A Place Of Sight.

Horeb the mount of God is a place of sight. Varied is the vision it gives and varying is its call to sight.

1. To Abraham--the vision of a saving Lord.

To Abraham, Moriah, the mount of God, gave a vision of a saving Lord. God the Son-sacrificing Father called Abraham the son-loving father to a sympathetic appreciation of the cost and power of salvation in asking for the surrender of Isaac, a type of the Son slain on Calvary's Cross.

Abraham accepted God's call and laid the wood upon Isaac his son, and together they went to the mount of God. There through obedience Abraham heard God's voice of approval, and through obedience Abraham gave the world a type of the Son upon Whom was laid the wood of Calvary's Cross that He might bear it to Golgotha's heights. There Abraham heard God's promise of blessing. "And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen" (Genesis 22:14). Abraham found that God was a saving Lord, able to provide for time and for eternity.

2. To Moses--the vision of a supernatural Lord.
To Moses, Horeb the mount of God gave the vision of a supernatural Lord. The sense-loving man beheld a burning bush that was not consumed. He would treat it as a natural phenomenon and seek its secret by opening a desert laboratory. But God stopped his scientific study of the natural and called for reverence to see a supernatural sight. The power by which the bush burned and was not consumed was not to be found in natural causes but in supernatural power. Through obedience Moses found that God was a supernatural Lord with supernatural power.
3. To Elijah--the vision of a spiritual Lord.
To Elijah, Horeb the mount of God gave the vision of a spiritual Lord. The marvel-loving prophet had asked for a sign to prove Jehovah's claim and had gotten it. The sign-seeking prophet had prayed for rain and searched the sky for sign of answer and had gotten it. Then in fear he had heard a wicked woman's threat and forgotten God's Word and power.

God called him into the mount to reveal to him nature's threat of wind, earthquake and fire, mightier than Ahab's power and Jezebel's threat, and to assure him of God's presence and protection revealed in His Word and heard in His still small voice.

God would have His prophet know that His Word is surer than signs and wonders, and mightier than word of evil king or wicked woman.

When God opened the prophet's ears to His Word, He opened his eyes to an invisible company of 7,000 who had not bowed to Baal nor surrendered to Jezebel. Thus He sent His despondent prophet back to work. There Elijah through obedience found that God was a spiritual Lord with more power than is manifested in marvels and signs.

III. A Place Of Speaking.

Horeb the mount of God is a place of speaking. It is the place where God spoke to Moses in the burning bush. It is the place where God spoke to Moses in Sinai's commandments for Israel. It is the place where God spoke to Abraham in words of assurance and approval. It is the place where God spoke to Elijah in a still small voice.

That God may speak to men in the mountain, He calls them to meet Him there.

1. A call to surrender.
His call to His mountain men is a call to surrender. He called Abraham to son-surrender, Moses to sense-surrender, Elijah to sign-surrender, all of them to self-surrender.
2. A call to faith.
God's call to His mountain men is a call to faith. He called Abraham to take Him at His word of command, Moses to accept His word of revelation and Elijah to trust His word of might in the wind, earthquake and fire.

3. A call to obedience.

God's call to His mountain men is a call to obedience. The men He called to the mount of God were ready for His Word. Abraham trusted God's Word as more than human and surrendered his son Isaac. Moses trusted God's Word as more than natural and surrendered his scientific sense. Elijah trusted God's Word as more than visible and surrendered his sign-seeking.

4. A call to blessing.

God's call to His mountain men is a call to blessing. Each man got what he surrendered and more. Abraham went down from the mountain twice blessed in Isaac. He had taken him there born by supernatural power and brought him back saved by supernatural provision. Moses went away from the mount to surpass Egypt's scientists in wisdom and power. When their power could no longer perform wonders and Moses continued to bring marvels from heaven the scientists acknowledged his supremacy and located his power when they said, "This is the finger of God." Elijah went away from the mount to do God's bidding and get ready for heaven's whirlwind and chariot of fire and translation without death into God's presence.

Centuries later Moses and Elijah, God's mountain men, came down from heaven to greet on a mount of God a greater than Moses and Elijah and talk with Him as His mountain men looked on and saw a vision of transfiguration experience and heavenly power.

The mount of God is God's place for chosen men who are ready to take Him at His Word. It rises above the business and wisdom and pleasure and sentiment and sins and signs of the world.

The men God calls to mountain experiences are the men who surrender human loves, man's wisdom and sensual signs. They hear God speak and standing on the heights see the light of heaven's sun that shines above the clouds of earth's lowlands.

Are we ready for the mount of God? Do we live as His Word commands? Do we trust His grace or our works for salvation? Do we render service in order to be saved or because we are saved? Do we have a faith apart from works or a faith unto works?

God calls men into the mount of blessing who are ready to hear and heed His Word and surrender self. May God give us hearts to long for "Horeb the mount of God."