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Go to the People and Consecrate Them

19: 10-15

Go to the people and consecrate them DIG: How do God's people become a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (19:6, 10-15)? Why do you think so much emphasis is placed on barring people from the mountain? On washing their clothes? On abstaining from sexual relations?

REFLECT: How do believers today wash or abstain to get ready for an encounter with the living God? What do you do to prepare to worship God? How else can you set yourself apart for Him?

To properly worship **God** both inward and outward preparations were necessary. My mother was raised in the Quaker Church. When she grew up, she said her parents called Saturday, "Preparation day," because it was a day to prepare both physically, mentally and spiritually to meet with **God** on Sunday.



ADONAI said to Moses, "Go to the people and consecrate them today and tomorrow." The verbal root of the word **consecrate** is *qadash*, which literally means *to set apart, to make unique or to make distinct*. The prophet was to prepare **the people** to be pure and sanctified because on **the third day**, **ADONAI** would descend on **the mountain** to meet with **them**. He commanded: **Have them wash their clothes for two days and be ready by the third day, because on that day ADONAI will come down on Mount Sinai**

in the sight of all the people (19:10-11). The Bible often depicts **God** as dwelling in the heavens above (**First Kings 8:30 and 49; John 8:23**); therefore, any appearance on earth requires that **He** should **come down (Genesis 11:5-7, 18:21; Exodus 3:8).**

YHVH would come down on the third day. Three days is a significant time period in the Scriptures. For instance, in the story of the offering of Isaac and his father Abraham, the two of them traveled for **three days** after **God's** command for Abraham to sacrifice him. On the third day they came to Moriah, the place of the sacrifice (**Genesis 22:4**). The reason for the **three days'** delay was so that Abraham could not act spontaneously, or impulsively, in obeying **God's** Word. **He** had to prepare and ponder. The same is true of **the people of Isra'el** at the foot of **Mount Sinai.** **They** could not act impulsively, but **they** had to wait and seriously consider the meaning of **God's** meeting with **them.**³⁵¹ Today, many Jews observe **three days** of consecration in order to make themselves worthy of celebrating the Shavu'ot.

Just as **Moshe** was earlier commanded to remove **his** sandals on the holy ground where **God** met **him (3:5)**, so now **the people** were to keep their distance from the holy **mountain. Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, "Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.** The same result was echoed in the Garden of Eden if Adam or Eve failed to obey **God's** similar warning (**Genesis 2:17**). **He shall surely be stoned or shot with arrows, not a hand is to be laid on him. Whether man or animal, he shall not be permitted to live. The mountain** was off limits, and so would be the body of any transgressor. **Only when the ram's horn sounds a long blast may they go up to the mountain (19:12-13).** Because the mountain would be holy, a boundary was set. **Mount Sinai** became off limits for both man and beast.

The wedding itself: the mikveh. After **Moses** had gone down the mountain to the people, he consecrated them, and they washed their clothes. Then he said to the people, "Prepare yourselves for the third day. Abstain from sexual relations" (**19:14-15**). After **the engagement (6:7a)**, **the separation of the bride (5:1)**, and **the segulah (19:5)**, we now come to the actual wedding ceremony of **ADONAI** and the nation of **Isra'el.** Before a traditional Jewish wedding, it is customary for the bride to go into **the mikveh.**

In many ways, immersion in a **mikveh** is even more important than the wedding itself. A woman is required by Torah to **immerse** herself in a **mikveh** (a pool of gathered fresh waters) following her monthly menstrual cycle. During this cycle, the couple is to **abstain from sexual relations** until after seven days, and following her **immersion.** During this

time the woman has the status called, *niddah*. The word *niddah* has no implication of dirtiness or uncleanness. Rather, it comes from the root meaning *removed* or *separated*.

Before the separation can end, she must be **immersed**. However, **the mikveh** is much more than the usual “purification.” **It** also carries with it the idea of rebirth. Thus, in many ways, **the mikveh** represents the womb. When a person **immerses**, **it** is as if he or she momentarily returned to the womb. When they emerge, it’s almost as if they were reborn . . . a completely new person. This is why new converts to Judaism are **immersed**.

So, here, **Isra’el** stood before **YHVH** at **Mount Sinai**. But before **the Torah** was given, all **the Israelites** had to **immerse (19:10 and 14)**. We know this because how much more should ritual **immersion** be required where the mere **washing of clothes** is also required! When **the Holy One** instructed **Isra’el** to **immerse** in **the mikveh**, it was as if the bride had to end her period of separation before being intimate with **the LORD**. Speaking of **His** marriage to **Isra’el** at **Sinai**, **God** said: **I swore to you, and entered into a covenant with you - and you became Mine. Then I immersed you in water (Ezeki’el 16:8-9)**. **The immersion** refers to that of **the Israelites** before receiving the Torah. In the metaphor of the bride, however, it also refers to **the immersion** of a bride before marriage.³⁵²

Such careful preparation underscored the significance of the event that was about to transpire. The **God** of the heavens was about to make a covenant with **His people**. Unlike pagan deities who supposedly lived on the mountains, the **God of Isra’el** descended from heaven to **the mountain** to speak with **His people (First Kings 8:30 and 49)**.³⁵³ This must have been a terrifying experience for **the people** of **Isra’el**. **They** were not permitted to go up **the mountain**, or even touch it, or **they** would die. Even their animals were not allowed to cross the boundary of the sacred area. **They** had agreed to a Covenant that **they** didn’t even know. **They** had to wash **their** clothes. **They** were afraid.

The writer to the **Hebrews** contrasts the anxious, frightening and apprehensive scene with the way the New Covenant believer comes before **ADONAI**. **He** says: **You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded, “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.” The sight was so terrifying that Moshe said, “I am trembling with fear.”**

But you have come to Mount Zion - to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, a joyous gathering, and to the assembly of the firstborn who are written in a scroll in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to

the spirits of the righteous ones made perfect, and to Yeshua, the Mediator of a New Covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks of something better than the blood of Abel (see the commentary on **Hebrews**, **to see link click [Dc](#) - The Earthy Mount Sinai and the Heavenly Mount Tziyon**).

The **fear** of those on the verge of accepting **Jesus**, or **Yeshua**, should not be of persecution they might receive for believing in **Him**, but the judgment they will inevitably receive for rejecting **Him**. Their **fear** should not be of coming to **Mount Zion** but of turning back to **Mount Sinai**. The contrast is clear.³⁵⁴

What is your choice? **Mount Zion** or **Mount Sinai**? Or that of no choice? Some believe that they are not choosing. But in fact, by seemingly not choosing, they have turned their back on **Yeshua**. **Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God (James 4:4)**. There are only two kinds of spiritual food, “devils food” or “angels food,” and if you aren’t eating one - you’re eating the other!