

A Description of Sinai

A Hiding Place From The World

A place that is isolated, and likely to remain so, is required to permit the secret and uninterrupted communion of Christ with his brethren, following the Judgment (see Isa. 26:20-21).

Sinai is adequately situated for the purpose. It is also rich in historical background so as to provide the solemn significance for such an occasion. It was at Sinai that Moses received his call, and witnessed the miracle of the burning bush. There, also, Yahweh announced His name which is expressive of His covenant with Abraham. At the Mount, Israel was given the law and was constituted the Kingdom of God. To it, Elijah fled from the fury of Jezebel after his dramatic destruction of the priests of Baal and in the storm of hurricane and earthquake, and then in the "still, small voice," he was provided with an outstanding apocalypse of divine power and wisdom. At Sinai, most likely, Paul received the revelations that were so awe-inspiring and wonderful, that he was not then permitted to reveal them unto others.

The Sinaitic Peninsula is in the form of a triangle bordered on the one side by the Red Sea, and on the other by the Gulf of Akaba. It is recognised as one of the most mountainous regions of the earth's surface. It was a most awe-inspiring sight for us to look down from aloft at the mount and its environs in a chartered plane which flew low down around it several times, during a recent tour of the Middle East. Towering, rugged mountains of red granite are intersected by narrow valleys and desolate plans. Before Horeb is a vast plain at the head of valleys that lead to it, and in which the Israelites camped when they were led there by Moses.

Moses describes the area as "a great and terrible wilderness of fiery serpents, scorpions and drought" (Deut. 8:15). Jeremiah declares that it is "a land of deserts and of pits, a land of drought and of the shadow of death, a land that no man passeth through, and where no man dwelleth" (Jer. 2:6).

The Mount itself is approached through a valley some 200 feet wide, with huge masses of perpendicular granite rocks on either side, which appear as though shattered and split by earthquake. The valley has a gentle, but constant ascent; the scenery is stern as is appropriate to the use of the site. It proclaims the land of miracles, and its awful isolation and split, eroded rocks seem to suggest the terrors of Yahweh. The scenes are suited to the sounds of the fearful trumpet that was once heard there, and the equally anxious feelings that will be induced by the setting up there of the Judgment Seat of Christ.

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The giving of the Law is associated with two peaks: Horeb and Sinai. They form two eminences on the extremes of a plateau some three miles long. It was before Horeb that the people gathered and heard the voice of Yahweh; it was to Sinai that Moses ascended when he spake face to face" with the angel name-bearer. Horeb is some 6,500 feet above sea level (Sinai about 7,500 feet), and about 1,000 feet above the plain. It has a cliff-like appearance, rising precipitously, like a huge altar set in a sanctuary, and is faced by a large plain capable of containing an immense concourse of people. In Sinai and Palestine, Dr. Stanley comments:

..."That such a plain should exist at all in front of such a cliff is so remarkable a coincidence with the sacred narrative as to furnish a strong internal argument, not merely of its identity with the scene, but of the scene itself having been described by an eyewitness. The awful and lengthened approach, as to some natural sanctuary, would have been the fittest preparation for the coming scene. The low line of alluvial mounds at the foot of the cliff exactly answers to the 'bounds' which were to keep the people off from 'touching the Mount.' The Plain itself is not broken and uneven and narrowly shut in like almost all others in the range, but presents a long retiring sweep, against which the people could 'remove and stand afar off.' The cliff rising like a huge altar in front of the whole congregation, and visible against the sky in lonely splendour from end to end of the whole plain is the very image of the 'mount that might be touched,' and from which the 'voice' of God might be heard far and wide over the stillness of the plain below, widened at that point to its utmost extent by the confluence of all the continuous valleys."

The experience had a profound effect upon the people of Israel when they gathered there under Moses, so that they entreated with him to intercede for them whilst they retired afar off. How much more awe-inspiring will be our visit to that Mount. Already the power of Yahweh will be visibly manifested in that the majority of the innumerable host then assembled will have been raised from the dead. We will be re-united with loved ones who have died but then will live again. Each one there assembled will doubtless be impressed by his or her unworthiness for eternal life, and yet buoyed up in the confidence that God is love, and that He has provided an Advocate who knows and understands our feelings, and whose sympathetic consideration will extend the mercy of forgiveness wherever possible consistent with the justness and righteousness of his Father. Thus the principles of holiness and reverence to the Name of Yahweh will be elevated by all to the glory of the One who proclaimed it.

Is It Isolated Enough?

In this age of universal warfare, and of aerial battles, is it possible for Sinai to remain isolated for the purpose in view? After all, in the six day war, the Sinaitic Peninsula was subjected to attack and counter-attack, and this could well be the case at Armageddon.

We do not believe so for several reasons.

Firstly, if Yahweh desires a part to be isolated for His use, He will see to it. In that regard, Russia will attack Egypt down through the coastal plains of Palestine, some hundreds of miles distant from Mount Sinai, which thus would not be in the line of battle.

But would not the assembling of such a large company of people, as the resurrected and living responsible will constitute, be known to the world at large? Would it be possible to keep such a gathering of people hidden for the period of the Judgment Seat?

This would present no problem to Yahweh. It must be conceded that in whatever part of the world the Judgment Seat is set up, it must be hidden from the prying eyes of man. How might it be done? Yahweh might use the means that he has done in the past. When Israel left Egypt, they were led by a cloud which sometimes spread over the camp to give shelter from the heat of the sun: spread a cloud for a covering" (Ps. 105:39).

Such could provide an effective cover at Sinai, hiding the significant proceedings from the searching eyes of any reconnaissance plane above. Further, He who controls the elements could so arrange conditions as to make safe flying impossible over the area, for even under good conditions, this mountainous area is avoided as much as possible.

Let us accept the Scriptural testimony, and ignore the problems. They will be solved as effectively as was Israel's problem when it seemed to the people that they were hemmed in by the Red Sea. Moses left it to Yahweh to smooth out the difficulties, and reveal a way of escape. We can leave it to Him to arrange matters in regard to the Judgment Seat of Christ. Nevertheless, it is a subject we should ponder over in an attempt to transfer it from mere doctrine to impending reality. To have some conception of the locality as to where it will be held can assist to that end. Let us examine the evidence, and try and picture the scene. We will attempt to provide further information to that end in our next prophetic Supplement (God willing).

-H.P.M.