

Exodus 20:18-21 **Israel's response to the appearance of Yehowah**

18 Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. 19 Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." 20 And Moses said to the people, "Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin." 21 So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God was. NKJV

Facts Revealed:

- ✧ The awesome appearance of the visible presence of Yehowah in a spectacular display of power on the mountain sent fear to the heart of the people as it would today.
- ✧ God had a purpose in doing it and that purpose was to put fear in their hearts **so they would not sin** by disobedience to His commandments.
- ✧ However like today, when they became accustomed to the visible evidence of the presence of God they turned to their own ways and ignored God which resulted in wrath and judgment. [\[Exodus 32:1-10\]](#)
- ✧ People today look at the awesome evidence of God's presence in nature around them and refuse to acknowledge God and His commandments, obedience to which would result in world peace and blessings of abundance.
- ✧ But instead they turn to their own ways and deny the evidence of God, and they do what is right in their own eyes [\[Deuteronomy 12:8, Judges 17:6, 21:25\]](#) with their own humanistic mind set, and receive the result which is violence, war, sickness, stormy weather and death from a multitude of causes.
- ✧ So when the people saw the thunderings and lightnings and smoke, heard the sound of the trumpet of God, and heard the voice of God as He gave the first ten commandments [\[Exodus 19:9, 19:19\]](#) they ran away from the mountain and stood afar off, and Moses went with them.
- ✧ In the fear of the moment they said, "**You speak with us, and we will hear**; but let not Elohiym (God) speak with us, lest we die." [\[Exodus 20:19, Deuteronomy 5:27\]](#)
- ✧ This is a revelation of human nature, that in the heat of a crisis, we make all sorts of rash promises to God out of fear, but when there seems to be a deliverance from the crisis or we adjust and become accustomed to it, we soon ignore the thing and go on about our own ways as though God doesn't know anything about what we are doing.
- ✧ Scripture says it is better not to vow at all, than to vow and not to do what we have vowed. [\[Ecclesiastes 5:2-5\]](#)
- ✧ Moses said that "God has come to test you." This is quite common today as God tests our strength of character by allowing various situations to occur in our lives that prove whether we will stand fast in obedience to His commandments and hold fast to our faith in Him, or if we will crumble and curse Him or fail in any other way.
- ✧ This is the second time the Children of Israel have promised to do whatever God says. [\[Exodus 19:8, 20:19\]](#)
- ✧ So the people are standing far back from the mountain where they can still hear the voice of God, and Moses returns near the mountain to receive the commandments of God.