

Exodus Chapter Twenty-Four

Read **Exodus 24:1-8** – Israel Promises Obedience

v.1 “NOW HE SAID TO MOSES, “COME UP TO THE **LORD**, YOU AND AARON, NADAB AND ABIHU, AND SEVENTY OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL, AND WORSHIP FROM AFAR.”

It would appear to some that the words that God spake beginning with chapter twenty were spoken to Moses on the mountain and what is recorded is actually Moses relaying God’s words to the people. Others place these two verses between verses eight and nine in this chapter so the chronology becomes somewhat less difficult but that is a small matter that doesn’t diminish the fact that this is scripture and the Word of God.

Now God is ready to give Moses more commandments and calls him to come up the mountain. Aaron and his sons Nadab and Abihu and the seventy elders of Israel were to accompany him part-way; they were to come near the mount but “WORSHIP FROM AFAR.”

v.2 “AND MOSES ALONE SHALL COME NEAR THE **LORD**, BUT THEY SHALL NOT COME NEAR; NOR SHALL THE PEOPLE GO UP WITH HIM.”

Moses was to come near to God alone. He alone was to be the mediator of God’s covenant with the Israelite nation just as Christ, son of God is the mediator of the new covenant.

v.3 “SO MOSES CAME AND TOLD THE PEOPLE ALL THE WORDS OF THE **LORD** AND ALL THE JUDGMENTS. AND ALL THE PEOPLE ANSWERED WITH ONE VOICE AND SAID, “ALL THE WORDS WHICH THE **LORD** HAS SAID WE WILL DO.”

This verse is the reason that some scholars will place verses one and two between verses eight and nine. Moses has visited with God on the mountain and has been given at least part of the Law that God desired Israel to follow. He then relays God’s commandments to the people.

Please observe as in the terms of any contract, covenant or agreement there must be at least two parties involved. One of the questions that many of the my internet students answer incorrectly deals with Israel agreeing to serve, obey God and live in accordance with God’s commandments found in the Mosaic Covenant. They do not understand that Israel accepted God’s law and agreed to obey His will. This is the second time that Israel has committed to obey God. The first was in

Exodus 19:8 “THEN ALL THE PEOPLE ANSWERED TOGETHER AND SAID, “ALL THAT THE **LORD** HAS SPOKEN WE WILL DO.” SO MOSES BROUGHT BACK THE WORDS OF THE PEOPLE TO THE **LORD**.”

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v.4 “AND MOSES WROTE ALL THE WORDS OF THE **LORD**. AND HE ROSE EARLY IN THE MORNING, AND BUILT AN ALTAR AT THE FOOT OF THE MOUNTAIN, AND TWELVE PILLARS ACCORDING TO THE TWELVE TRIBES OF ISRAEL.

First Moses recorded “ALL OF THE WORDS OF THE **LORD**”, acting as God’s scribe in this case, as well as the mediator of the covenant and a prophet of God.

Something as important as God’s covenant with his people must be celebrated with a solemn feast and period of worship. Moses prepares to do so by building an altar upon which sacrifices will be offered to seal this agreement or covenant. The altar represents the throne of God as the ruler or king of Israel and the twelve pillars the twelve tribes that resulted from the twelve sons of Jacob, called Israel. So all parties of the covenant are present or represented and it was sealed by a blood sacrifice. All things pertaining to God and God’s worship must be sealed with blood just as we are today.

Hebrews 9:21-22 “THEN LIKEWISE HE SPRINKLED WITH BLOOD BOTH THE TABERNACLE AND ALL THE VESSELS OF THE MINISTRY. AND ACCORDING TO THE LAW ALMOST ALL THINGS ARE PURIFIED WITH BLOOD, AND WITHOUT SHEDDING OF BLOOD THERE IS NO REMISSION.”

This was done not only to seal the covenant that was being made but also to purify, make atonement, for the people that God was accepting as his chosen nation.

Leviticus 17:11 “FOR THE LIFE OF THE FLESH *is* IN THE BLOOD, AND I HAVE GIVEN IT TO YOU UPON THE ALTAR TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR YOUR SOULS; FOR IT *is* THE BLOOD *that* MAKES ATONEMENT FOR THE SOUL.”

v.5 “THEN HE SENT YOUNG MEN OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, WHO OFFERED BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICED PEACE OFFERINGS OF OXEN TO THE **LORD**.”

Moses chooses helpers from the people and sends them to select and prepare the sacrifices that will be made. First they prepare burnt offerings, where the entire flesh of the animal being sacrificed was consumed by fire. What was the purpose of burnt offerings?

Leviticus 1:4 “THEN HE SHALL PUT HIS HAND ON THE HEAD OF THE BURNT OFFERING, AND IT WILL BE ACCEPTED ON HIS BEHALF TO MAKE ATONEMENT FOR HIM.”

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The burnt offering was for atonement of sin. What did the peace offering signify? The Jewish Encyclopedia of 1906 gives the reasons for a peace offering, first of all as thanksgiving unto God, second as a petition before God as we would offer a prayer today and thirdly simply as a free-will offering to honor God. The fat of the sacrifice was burnt but the flesh was used for a feast before the Lord.

v.6 “AND MOSES TOOK HALF THE BLOOD AND PUT *it* IN BASINS, AND HALF THE BLOOD HE SPRINKLED ON THE ALTAR.”

Moses first consecrates the altar preparing it to receive the offerings to God.

v.7 “THEN HE TOOK THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT AND READ IN THE HEARING OF THE PEOPLE. AND THEY SAID, “ALL THAT THE **LORD** HAS SAID WE WILL DO, AND BE OBEDIENT.”

We might note here that this is the first written record of God’s word that we find in scripture. Moses reads the Book of the Covenant in the presence of the people, much as we might read a covenant today; to make sure that the people knew and understood the agreement that they were making with God. For the third time the people of Israel commit to God that they will keep His covenant. Obedience to the Laws of God, regardless of which covenant is governing man is of paramount importance if man expects to keep his part of God’s covenant. Observe:

Deuteronomy 26:16 “THIS DAY THE **LORD** YOUR GOD COMMANDS YOU TO OBSERVE THESE STATUTES AND JUDGMENTS; THEREFORE YOU SHALL BE CAREFUL TO OBSERVE THEM WITH ALL YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL.”

Israel was tasked with whole-hearted, fully dedicated obedience to the will of God. King Saul learned this lesson the hard way:

I Samuel 15:22 “SO SAMUEL SAID: ‘HAS THE **LORD** *as great* DELIGHT IN BURNT OFFERINGS AND SACRIFICES, AS IN OBEYING THE VOICE OF THE **LORD**? BEHOLD, TO OBEY IS BETTER THAN SACRIFICE, **And** TO HEED THAN THE FAT OF RAMS.”

And lost his kingdom because of his disobedience of God’s commandment to utterly destroy the Amalekite people. Jesus warns us today that we can also lose our place in the kingdom of God by disobedience or the refusal to obey the Laws of God:

Matthew 7:21 “NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME, ‘LORD, LORD,’ SHALL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN, BUT HE WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER IN HEAVEN.”

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v.8 “AND MOSES TOOK THE BLOOD, SPRINKLED *it* ON THE PEOPLE, AND SAID, “THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH THE **LORD** HAS MADE WITH YOU ACCORDING TO ALL THESE WORDS.”

Now the blood is used to seal the covenant with God by being sprinkled on the people. Just as God sealed the everlasting covenant of Christ with the blood of His sacrifice:

Hebrews 13:20 “NOW MAY THE GOD OF PEACE WHO BROUGHT UP OUR LORD JESUS FROM THE DEAD, THAT GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP, THROUGH THE BLOOD OF THE EVERLASTING COVENANT,”

Read **Exodus 24:9-13** – The Glory of God

v.9 “THEN MOSES WENT UP, ALSO AARON, NADAB, AND ABIHU, AND SEVENTY OF THE ELDERS OF ISRAEL,”

Before only Moses and Aaron had gone up on the mountain, this time the seventy elders of Israel were present to represent the people on this solemn occasion.

v.10 “AND THEY SAW THE GOD OF ISRAEL. AND *there was* UNDER HIS FEET AS IT WERE A PAVED WORK OF SAPPHIRE STONE, AND IT WAS LIKE THE VERY HEAVENS IN *its* CLARITY.”

Did these men actually see God or did they see some manifestation of God? The Apostle John records the words of God in two places that:

“NO ONE HAS SEEN GOD AT ANY TIME. IF WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER, GOD ABIDES IN US, AND HIS LOVE HAS BEEN PERFECTED IN US.” **I John 4:12**; see also **John 1:18**

And we find in:

Exodus 33:20 “BUT HE SAID, “YOU CANNOT SEE MY FACE; FOR NO MAN SHALL SEE ME, AND LIVE.”

That they saw some manifestation of God is without doubt and as Cook records in his commentary on this verse to speculate about what they did see is idle time, time wasted.

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The glory and greatness of God is also manifested by the material that was under his feet described in this verse as "A SAPPHIRE STONE" or as Clarke contends in his commentary a mosaic of sapphire stone. As we read the description of heaven given us by the Apostle John in the Revelation we can but understand that wherever there is a manifestation of God of this nature then the glory of his surroundings could be described only by the purest and finest of earth's offerings of things bright and beautiful. That comparison is inadequate.

v.11 "BUT ON THE NOBLES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL HE DID NOT LAY HIS HAND. SO THEY SAW GOD, AND THEY ATE AND DRANK."

God did not lay his hand upon them, there was no physical contact between them and God and as the other scriptures tell us they did not see God directly. They saw the manifestation of God; they knew and felt the presence of his being and they enjoyed the feast normally associated with peace offerings sealing the covenant between them and God.

v.12 "THEN THE **LORD** SAID TO MOSES, "COME UP TO ME ON THE MOUNTAIN AND BE THERE; AND I WILL GIVE YOU TABLETS OF STONE, AND THE LAW AND COMMANDMENTS WHICH I HAVE WRITTEN, THAT YOU MAY TEACH THEM."?"

God now tells Moses to come up to Him on the mountain. The feast of the peace offerings was apparently held somewhere between the valley floor and the height to which Moses later climbed to be with God.

God now has prepared tables of stone for Moses to bring back down and use to teach the people; and when Moses came back down the mountain he carried these tables with him:

Exodus 32:15 "AND MOSES TURNED AND WENT DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN, AND THE TWO TABLETS OF THE TESTIMONY **were** IN HIS HAND. THE TABLETS **were** WRITTEN ON BOTH SIDES; ON THE ONE **side** AND ON THE OTHER THEY WERE WRITTEN."

v.13 "SO MOSES AROSE WITH HIS ASSISTANT JOSHUA, AND MOSES WENT UP TO THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD."

So Joshua went, at least, part way up the mountain with Moses though we have no record of Joshua actually being with Moses as he received instruction from God. And when Moses came back down again we find that Joshua was with him.

Exodus 32:17 "AND WHEN JOSHUA HEARD THE NOISE OF THE PEOPLE AS THEY SHOUTED, HE SAID TO MOSES, "**There is** A NOISE OF WAR IN THE CAMP."

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Read **Exodus 24:14-18** – Moses On the Mountain

v.14 “AND HE SAID TO THE ELDERS, “WAIT HERE FOR US UNTIL WE COME BACK TO YOU. INDEED, AARON AND HUR **are** WITH YOU. IF ANY MAN HAS A DIFFICULTY, LET HIM GO TO THEM.”

Moses gave instructions to the elders to wait at that place for him and Joshua as the ascended further up the mountain. He places Aaron and Hur in charge of Israel and gives them authority to solve problems and judge God’s people in his place.

v.15-16 “THEN MOSES WENT UP INTO THE MOUNTAIN, AND A CLOUD COVERED THE MOUNTAIN. NOW THE GLORY OF THE **LORD** RESTED ON MOUNT SINAI, AND THE CLOUD COVERED IT SIX DAYS. AND ON THE SEVENTH DAY HE CALLED TO MOSES OUT OF THE MIDST OF THE CLOUD.”

God does things in his own good time and in his own way. After Moses is commanded to go up the mountain, God waits six days, covers the mountain with a cloud and doesn’t not speak to Moses until the seventh day.

v.17 “THE SIGHT OF THE GLORY OF THE **LORD was** LIKE A CONSUMING FIRE ON THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN IN THE EYES OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL.”

In the minds eye we see a mountain, a covering of cloud or fog on the lower slopes reaching very near the top but the glory of God blazing from the summit like a fiery volcano. The spectacle was designed to impress and strengthen the Israelite people with the glory of God. This is the same reason for the glory of God being made manifest in the New Testament when the birth of the Son of God was announced to the shepherds:

Luke 2:9 “AND BEHOLD, AN ANGEL OF THE LORD STOOD BEFORE THEM, AND THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHONE AROUND THEM, AND THEY WERE GREATLY AFRAID.”

v.18 “SO MOSES WENT INTO THE MIDST OF THE CLOUD AND WENT UP INTO THE MOUNTAIN. AND MOSES WAS ON THE MOUNTAIN FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS.”

Moses stays on the mountain forty days and forty nights and during this time he fasted just as Jesus did in Matthew 4:

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Deuteronomy 9:9 "WHEN I WENT UP INTO THE MOUNTAIN TO RECEIVE THE TABLETS OF STONE, THE TABLETS OF THE COVENANT WHICH THE **LORD** MADE WITH YOU, THEN I STAYED ON THE MOUNTAIN FORTY DAYS AND FORTY NIGHTS. I NEITHER ATE BREAD NOR DRANK WATER."

In this reference in Deuteronomy Moses is talking about the first time that he went up the mountain. In **Exodus 34:28** we're told that the second time that he went up the mountain after destroying the golden calf that he fasted for forty days and forty nights as well.