

Sent: Wednesday, March 3, 2021 3:38 PM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Exodus 24

"Therefore, the Law has become our tutor (schoolmaster) to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith." (Galatians 3:24)

Last week's lesson, on Exodus 22-23, gave us more examples of ordinances, statutes, and stipulations (the "law") given to Moses by God for His people to live by, beginning with ordinances dealing with "property rights," and the call for "restitution" whenever someone's rights were violated! Then a variety of laws involving sexual conduct, sorcery, the treatment of widows and orphans, the poor, and strangers in the land, and about bearing false witness, perverting justice, and keeping the Sabbath, among other things! We also learned, by going to Leviticus and related passages, that when these laws were broken, and when someone sinned against his neighbor, he also sinned against God--and that on the same day when he made "restitution" with his neighbor, the guilty party also needed to bring a "guilt-offering" before a priest who would offer a sacrifice and make "atonement" for him before God.

But our lesson did not stop there but came back to a major theme we have been seeing throughout our study of Exodus--God's desire, and command, for worship and obedience! Three times a year every male was required to celebrate a feast before the LORD--to commemorate the exodus from Egypt, then to express gratitude for the "first fruits" of the season, then again for the final "gatherings" of the fields. And God promised that, if they would obey His voice and His commands, He would send "His angel" to guard them along the way to the place that He was preparing for them (the "promised land").

And so, in tonight's lesson, the scene is set for the children of Israel to assemble at the base of Mt. Sinai, and for Moses to represent them before God, at the top of the mountain, and for them to meet together--with Moses as the "mediator"--to ratify the covenant with Him, so they could officially become "His people"!

In Exodus 24:1-2, God told Moses and Aaron, and Nadab and Abihu (Aaron's sons), and seventy of the elders of Israel, to "come up" on Mt. Sinai to "worship Him, at a distance," with only Moses allowed to approach Him "closely" to receive the words of the LORD. Moses then returned and "recounted all the words of the LORD" to the people--to which the people responded: "All the words which the LORD has spoken, we will do!"

Moses then "wrote down" all the words of the LORD and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel--in preparation for the "covenant ceremony." Burnt offerings were then offered and young bulls were sacrificed (with their blood "shed") as "peace offerings to the LORD". Then Moses "sprinkled half the blood on the altar and took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of all the people"--and the people again committed to being obedient to "all that the LORD had spoken"! So, Moses sprinkled the other half of the blood on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words!"!

Then Moses and Aaron, and Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders went back up the mountain and, verse 11 says, "saw the God of Israel...and under His feet a pavement of sapphire as clear as the sky," and participated in a "covenant meal," sealing the covenant agreement (and lived through it!).

They "saw" God? Constable notes that this statement needs to be seen in light of other Scripture, which says that no man can "see" God and live (at least not in this life)! Exodus 33:11 says, "the LORD used to speak to Moses "face to face," just as a man speaks to his friend"! And yet, in 33:18-23, after asking God to "show him His glory," God said that "no man could see His face and live"! Although Moses did get to see the "back of God," after God "put him in the cleft of a rock and covered him with His hand until He passed by"! Moses obviously experienced a "very close, and special, communion" with God!

Yet, Jesus would later confirm in John 1:18 that "No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God (speaking of Himself) who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him!" And later, in John 14:8, Philip asked Jesus to "show us the Father" (after Jesus had said, "No one comes to the Father, but through Me!")--and Jesus answered, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father...Do you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me?"

Well, there is more in Scripture that adds to our fascination with "seeing" God! Isaiah, when called as a prophet (in the year that King Uzziah died), claimed that He "saw the LORD sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, with the train of His robe filling the temple..." And so, various people in the Bible have seen images, and visions, and "theophanies," and "personifications" of God--like Isaiah, as we just "saw," and like the children of Israel "seeing" Him in the "midst of thunder and lightning flashes (in Exodus 19:16-19), and "as a consuming fire"--and a "shekinah" glory in the "cloud"--over Mt. Sinai (in Exodus 24:17). John Neal pointed out an intriguing verse in I Timothy 6:16-17, speaking of "the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see" (at least in this life)! And that should settle it!

But the good news is that we, as believers, will "see" Him some day! I John 3:2-3 says, "Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be, (but) we know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is! Everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure!" Psalm 11:7 promises that, one day, "We shall behold Him!" (Sandi Patty has written a song about it: "The sky shall unfold, preparing His entrance; the stars shall applaud Him, with thunders of praise! We shall behold Him, yes, we shall behold Him. Face to face in all of His glory! O we shall behold Him, we shall behold Him, face to face, our Savior and Lord!") What a day that will be!

Well--going back to our text in Exodus 24--it was the "blood of the covenant"--blood shed by bulls and goats--that provided the way for the children of Israel to become the "people of God"! Foreshadowing the celebration of the Passover, in the upper room, in Matthew 26:27-28, when Jesus would one day "take the cup, and after He had given thanks, give it His disciples and say, 'Drink from it...for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins'!" (Hebrews 8:6 says Jesus would become the "mediator of a better covenant,

which has been enacted on better promises!") And the "Lord's Supper" was "instituted in I Corinthians 11:23-26, to celebrate the "new covenant in His blood...and His death until He comes..." and doing it "in remembrance of Him"! (And so, the memory for us, last night, in seeing how it is all connected with the Mt. Sinai account, and with God's great plan of redemption for man from all eternity!)

"O the wonder of it all! The wonder of it all! Just to think that God loves me!" And just to "see," from our study in Exodus, the length to which God went to establish a covenant and have it "ratified" with His people! And, even better, making a way for us to be "reconciled" with Him, through His sacrificial death on the cross--and thus the hope we have to "see" Him someday, just as He is!

Until we meet "Y'all" again!

Lowell