

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

10-28-20

Exodus 24

God calls a meeting between Him and Moses - Verses 1-2

¹Then the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel. You are to worship at a distance, ² but Moses alone is to approach the LORD; the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him."

24:1-2 Moses was God's representative to the people. In a way, he was a type of Christ because he acted like a kind of mediator to go between God and man. These special privileges showed God's appointment of Moses as leader to all the people. It helped to ensure that the people would respect and obey his leadership. God gave Moses frequent divine revelation to lead the people.

The people agree to obey the words of the Lord - Verse 3

³ When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the LORD has said we will do."

24:3 This was Moses' job. He took God's message to the people. Remember that the people were too scared (probably because of their own sin combined with God's awesome power) to listen to God's voice themselves. They wanted Moses to be the messenger.

24:3 To their credit, the people agreed whole heartedly to do what God said. This was likely partly because of positive "peer pressure." You wouldn't want to be the only one refusing to obey God. But it is also because generally speaking it is easy to say that you will obey God. The Israelites twice in this chapter affirmed their commitment to obey, yet only weeks later were committing horrific idolatry and revelry.

The people sacrifice to the Lord and agree again to obey the covenant - Verses 4-8

⁴ Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said. He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵ Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD. ⁶ Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he splashed against the altar. ⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey." ⁸ Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

24:4-8 To understand this unusual covenant ratification ceremony, we need to understand the Bible's view of sin and forgiveness. God is the sovereign Judge of the universe. He is also absolutely holy. As the holy Judge of all, he condemns sin and judges it worthy of death. In the Old Testament God accepted the death of an animal as a substitute for the sinner. The animal's shed blood was proof that one life had been given for another. So on the one hand, blood symbolized the death of the animal, but it also symbolized the life that was spared as a result. Of course the death of the animal that brought forgiveness in the Old Testament was only a temporary provision, looking forward to the death of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:9-10:28).

24:6-8 In the ceremony described here, Moses sprinkled half the blood from the sacrificed animals on the altar to show that the sinner could once again approach God because something had died in his place. He sprinkled the other half of the blood on the people to show that the penalty for their sin had been paid and they could be reunited with God. Through this symbolic act God's promises to Israel were reaffirmed, and lessons are taught to us about the future sacrificial death (or atonement) of Jesus Christ.

Moses and the elders see God - Verses 9-11

⁹ Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up ¹⁰ and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as bright blue as the sky. ¹¹ But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.

24:9 Exodus 33:20 makes it clear that no one can see God's face and live. Yet we do see some examples in Scripture where people see God, such as Moses in that very chapter, the elders and Moses here, and the three disciples at the Transfiguration. The most likely explanation as to how this can be is that they only saw a partial manifestation. God's glory was veiled. Seeing His face likely would mean seeing the most intense aspect of His glory. The comment about what He was standing on may imply that they only saw this part or that they were afraid to raise their eyes higher than His feet. Either way, this was a great honor and reminded them of God's holiness and their own sinfulness.

24:11 God did not stretch out His hand against them (kill them immediately). God would be perfectly just to do this since they were sinners in His presence. However, He mercifully and patiently restrains Himself. The sacrifices and cleansing taking place in the preceding verses prepared them spiritually for this great encounter.

24:11 This was like the banquet meal to affirm the covenant between the two parties. The elders and Moses took this meal as representatives for the people. Do believers do anything similar? The Lord's Supper and especially the Marriage Supper of the Lamb seem to be similar. This meal, kind of like a wedding feast, celebrated a new unity, agreement, and covenant between the two sides. In Revelation 19:7-10, John saw and heard the multitudes in heaven praising the Lord God at the wedding feast of the Lamb. The marriage supper of the Lamb takes place in heaven between the rapture and the second coming (during the tribulation on earth). Attending the wedding feast will be not only the Church as the Bride of Christ, but others as well.

Moses Goes up the Mountain to Receive God's Words Written on Stone - Verses 12-18

¹² The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone with the law and commandments I have written for their instruction." ¹³ Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. ¹⁴ He said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them." ¹⁵ When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, ¹⁶ and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. ¹⁷ To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. ¹⁸ Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

24:12-13 The ten commandments were to be written on stone, likely to show their permanent and unchanging nature. Joshua went with Moses onto the mountain, a preview that he would be Moses' successor.

24:14 Moses left Aaron and Hur in charge. These leaders would later turn in a very disappointing substitute performance. They ended up giving in to pressure, which is perhaps one reason why God didn't choose them for the head leadership role. They seem to do well when Moses is there, but clearly didn't when he wasn't.

24:15-16 The Shekinah glory descended on the mountain. This denotes God's presence and His holiness. It is clearly an impressive site and contains a holy fire, further demonstrating God's glory and holiness. It shows that God is present with His people. But even when He is present He must come in a cloud to shroud His own intense glory.

24:18 Moses likely spent the first 6 days preparing his heart spiritually for this 40 day long encounter.