

Exodus 24 • Consecration of the Word

Introduction

It is important to note the sequence of the historical context in which the events of Exodus 24 are taking place. Through Moses, Israel is about to receive from God for the first time His divine pattern for the tabernacle, priesthood and everything associated with them. God is giving His people the plans for their calling and expects them to carry it out according to His will. But before they enter into that ministry and produce all the “things” by which it will be identified in the form of the tabernacle and priesthood, God establishes the ultimate prerequisite for anyone who wants to serve Him: obedience to His Word and ways. The things of God can never overshadow or take precedence in our ministry, but always **follow** in a direct correlation to our commitment and obedience to His Word. Without the Word there is no light of revelation for understanding the proper use of the things of God which have been entrusted to us.

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because they have no dawn.

— Isaiah 8:20

¹Then He said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you shall worship at a distance. ²Moses alone, however, shall come near to the LORD, but they shall not come near, nor shall the people come up with him.”

³Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, “All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!”

[Read v.1-3]

Q: What had to take place before Moses and the leaders of Israel could ascend the mountain and meet with God?

A: The people of Israel had to enter into a covenant relationship with God.

Q: How do these verses describe the first step that must be taken before any other step in a covenant relationship?

A: They not only had to first hear the Word, but agree to obey it.

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

— Romans 10:17

Q: Why does the text make the distinction that Moses did not just recount “the words of the LORD”, but also specifies, “and all the ordinances” in v.3?

A: The Hebrew term “*mishpat*” throughout Scripture is translated as both “ordinances” and “judgments”. In our own judicial system we might call this “case law”, the practical application of the Law in everyday life. It is describing not simply knowing the basic rules provided in the Law, but the right principles of applying them to every situation and shows that there really are no “loopholes” or exemptions.

Q: How do the people confirm that they will follow through their knowledge of the Law by putting it into practice?

A: They promise, “All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!” (v.3)

But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.

— James 1:22–25

Application: A right biblical spiritual relationship begins with a commitment to God’s Word and ways, to put His Word into practice continually from that point on for the rest of one’s life.

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⁴Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. ⁵He sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD. ⁶Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. ⁷Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!"

⁸So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

⁹Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, ¹⁰and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. ¹¹Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they saw God, and they ate and drank.

[Read v.4-8]

Q: After initially committing to God's Word, what is the next action taken and what does it mean?

A: An altar is built, which means that something has to be sacrificed.

Point: A covenant relationship with God must be confirmed by blood.

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

— Ephesians 2:13

Q: Why does Moses first sprinkle the blood on the altar and then on the people?

A: The twelve pillars of the altar represented the twelve tribes of Israel and their commitment to obey the Word of God. The blood on the altar illustrated God's forgiveness of sin while the blood sprinkled on the people confirmed the people's commitment to a life of obedience. A true "hearer" of the Word commits, by their own word, to live forever changed going forward by God's Word.

Q: What did the people add in their follow-up commitment as compared to their initial commitment?

A: In v.3 they said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do", but in v.7 they add, "and we will be obedient".

"...To those...who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood..."

— 1 Peter 1:1-2

Q: How does Moses describe what is taking place?

A: "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words". (v.8) On one side of the covenant is God with His Word, and on the other side is His people who by their own word promise to be obedient to "all that the LORD has spoken". (v.7)

Application: The visible proof of the working of the blood of salvation in our life is our visible obedience to His Word.

[Read v.9-11]

Q: What is remarkably different about this personal encounter with God from nearly every other recorded in Scripture?

A: If this were like most other encounters, it would read something like, "And they saw the God of Israel and fell on their faces in fear". Instead, it states, "...and they saw God, and they ate and drank". (v.11)

Q: Why are they able to come into the presence of God this way?

A: Because of the blood and the Word, they were able to have fellowship both with God and one another. They were in a right relationship to be able to come into the very presence of God.

Q: How do we know for sure that this was not God the Father but God the Son, an Old Testament incarnation of Christ?

A: Stephen before the Sanhedrin testifies of this fact. This third person of the Trinity is called the "Metatrone" by ancient Hebrew scholars

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recognizing this fact.

*“This is the one who was in the congregation in the wilderness together with **the angel** who was speaking to him on Mount Sinai, and who was with our fathers; and he received living oracles to pass on to you.*

— Acts 7:38

Q: What might be the greater meaning of seeing under His feet “a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself”?

A: It is the throne of God (See also Eze. 1:22-28 & Rev. 4:6). The message of this repeated image in Scripture is that the Lord is a God of holiness who demands righteous living from His people. The working of the blood and the Word produce people who would otherwise never be able to attain to the holiness and righteousness necessary to come into the presence of God.

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

— Jude 24

Application: *Those obedient to His Word through the blood are living not only in a right relationship in the presence of Christ, but with each other.*

[Read v.12-18]

¹²Now the LORD said to Moses, “Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction.”

¹³So Moses arose with Joshua his servant, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. ¹⁴But to the elders he said, “Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a legal matter, let him approach them.”

¹⁵Then Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain.

¹⁶The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud. ¹⁷And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the mountain top. ¹⁸Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

Q: Where is everyone ultimately located? Where is each person or group in relation to the other?

A: The nation is at the base of the mountain, the seventy elders along with Aaron, Hur, Nadab and Abihu are further up the mountain, Moses went higher still with Joshua (a fact we’ll discover in events to come), and finally Moses left Joshua behind as he entered the cloud and went to the top into the presence of the Lord.

Q: How is this a picture of the difference between the Old Covenant based on the Law and the New Covenant based on grace?

A: Under the Law, God determined how near someone could be to Him, but under grace each person determines how near they will come to Him. The elders worshiped “*at a distance*” (v.1), but today believers are invited to “*draw near*”. This pattern repeats in that the deeper one entered the Tabernacle, the fewer were allowed to enter versus the work of Christ to remove all obstacles to the Holy of Holies itself.

let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

— Hebrews 10:22

Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

— James 4:8

Q: What was the first thing God gave His people before all the other physical things to come such as the Tabernacle and priesthood?

A: “*I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment*”. (v.12)

Application: *Obedience to God's Word takes priority over every other "thing" or service to God.*

Q: Knowing what is about to come when Moses returns and sees them worshipping the golden calf, how might this relate to his instructions in v.14 for handling matters in the mean time?

A: It is a way of stating that they were to put into practice the Word of God revealed to them to that point, that there was no excuse to not begin their obedience to the Word immediately. They already knew enough to no longer live according to their own ways but according to God's Word and ways, even without Moses being present, and even without the stone tablets or plans for the Tabernacle. The precedent being established is that of obedience.

Q: Why might this experience of Moses sound familiar?

A: Moses has come full circle. This is the place where he first encountered the Lord in the form of the burning bush, and now having come full circle by the working of the blood and the Word, does not merely interact with God's presence from the outside looking in as at the bush, but now comes into that very presence and is in a spiritual condition so as to not be consumed himself. It is a picture of the working of God's holiness and righteousness.

Application: *Our commitment to God's Word is the foundation from which everything else proceeds.*

Overall Application

So often in the Western world, the planning of a ministry or personal service is undertaken with an extreme focus on the logistics—those things and resources which we believe are necessary to accomplish the task at hand. They can become a fixation to the point that we make them the central issue to the exclusion of the greater requirement of a repentant and obedient heart. If we are truly carrying out God's will in the course of our service to Him, our first and foremost concern would be the priority of the blood and the Word producing in us the kind of servant spiritually suitable for serving in the very presence of the Lord. The reversal of this situation is what results in individuals and groups who over-realize a thing or practice to the exclusion of obedience to the whole Word of God.