

EXODUS 24:1-8 (THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT)

Many times people have asked me, "Which book of the Bible should I start with." Others have asked me, "Which book of the Bible should I read next." Questions like that come up often. My friend Sergio asked me for advice in a Bible study he was doing with his friend in Israel.

He is a Jewish guy, living in the land, and Sergio was helping him through the book of Romans. After that he asked, "What next?" I told him "Galatians." The reason for this is that the guy was a young Jewish Christian and he was also in Israel. I can't think of a more difficult place to be in regards to encountering legalism and the reinsertion of the law. Galatians would see him through this.

Paul explains very clearly what reinserting the law, which has been fulfilled in Christ, means. One becomes a debtor to the whole law. It is setting aside the grace of Christ and saying, "I can do it better." After doing the study, Sergio agreed that it was the perfect book to go through.

For those who know the law, especially Jews, and even more especially observant Jews, my answer would be either "Read Matthew" or "Read Hebrews." Matthew shows Christ as the King of Israel and is written from a Jewish perspective.

Hebrews explains Christ as "Better Than." He is better than the angels, He is better than Moses, He is better than Aaron, He is better than the law, He is better than anything and everything that the Old Testament put forward.

All of the Old only pointed to our Better Than; our Jesus. In today's eight verses, we will see the cutting of the covenant between Lord and the people of Israel. It is a covenant which can only lead to failure. Not because the laws aren't holy, but because they *are* holy.

Man can never be obedient to such marvelous laws. And so it was a good thing that the Lord later gave them the Day of Atonement to keep them from disaster. And it is a marvelous thing that He later stepped out of His eternal realm and took that same holy law upon Himself.

Text Verse: "But Christ came *as* High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. ¹² Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. ¹³ For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, ¹⁴ how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? ¹⁵ And for this reason He is the Mediator of the new covenant, by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that those who are called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance." Hebrews 9:11-15

The words "the Lord" meaning the name Yehovah, are mentioned eight times in today's eight verses. The word *elohim*, or God, is never mentioned. It is abundantly clear that Yehovah is God, but it is how He reveals Himself, meaning as Yehovah, that he deals with Israel concerning this covenant.

Many look at this covenant as one of works, or at best "grace plus works." But there is no such thing as "grace plus works." It is either grace or it is works. The two are mutually exclusive. We'll see a picture of salvation by grace in today's verses.

It is the same picture we saw with Abraham and it is the same thing we find in Christ. God doesn't change how He saves. However, He does change how He deals with us through dispensations in order to show us our need for Christ in an incremental way.

On the trip to Chicago...

Exodus 24:1-9 The Cutting of the Covenant

Israel's Verbal Agreement to the Words of the Lord (2/9/2016)

a. 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..."

b. v.3 Moses submits the covenant for acceptance

c. v.3 "All the words which the Lord has said we will do."

d. v.4 Wrote out the words of the Lord.

e. v.4 Built an altar

f. v.4 The twelve tribes of Israel

f. v.5 The children of Israel

e. v.6 Sanctified the altar

d. v.7 Read the words of the Lord

c. v.8 "All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient."

b. v.8 Moses seals the covenant after acceptance

a. v.9 Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel

The law is a giant step in the dispensational model. We'll see the dispensation of the law further realized and refined in our verses today. It's all to be found in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. Who Shall Ascend the Hill of the Lord? (verses 1 & 2)

¹ Now He said to Moses,

Scholars are often perplexed at the sequence of what is going on and the seeming want of order in the surrounding verses. What we would normally expect at the beginning of a new passage are the words, "Now God said to Moses," or "Now the Lord said to Moses..." This is excluded and it gives us a clue as to the order of where we are.

The words "Now He said to Moses..." put the emphasis on Moses in what is a continued stream of thought from an earlier part of the Exodus narrative. This emphasis on him also implies that the Lord had been speaking to more than just Moses just before this verse.

At no place, however, is anyone else addressed and so some scholars think that a part of the narrative has been lost. That would be a rather incompetently compiled word of God, wouldn't it! Instead of taking such an easy-to-dismiss approach at the seeming confusion, we need to go back and look at what has just transpired.

The Book of the Covenant was just given to Moses. This included everything from verse 20:22 until 23:19 for the giving of the rules which regulate judicial conduct. Then from verse 23:20 until 23:33 came the promises associated with obedience to those rules. Thus all of Exodus 20:21 until 23:33 merely insert of the Book of the Covenant. The account now picks up where it left off in Exodus 20:21. Therefore, let's read that verse -

"So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God *was*." Exodus 20:21

From there, the words of Exodus 24:1 can be seamlessly added onto that verse - So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God *was*. Now He said to Moses..."

In other words, and as I've already said, the account encompasses the giving of the Book of the Covenant. This is actually logical and orderly. One thing is given at a time and in a way which is intended to reveal to us the mind of God in written form. The importance of recording the Book of the Covenant in the middle of these verses is to show what is preeminently on His mind.

As we saw in those many verses, Christ was meticulously recorded time and time again in them. The earthen altar! The Hebrew slave! And so on. Each portion of the Book was revealing to us our need for Christ. That is why the order is as it is. We now return to just before the giving of the book. This will continue until verse 3.

¹ (con't) **"Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu,**

It is implied that the Lord spoke these words to a group of people *before* Moses received the Book of the Covenant. It explains the emphasis on Moses in the first part of verse 1 which those thoughtless scholars ascribed to a missing portion of God's word.

Instead of God sloppily and carelessly losing a portion of His word, or even laying that at the careless feet of Moses, it shows us that nothing is missing and that God's word is complete. It may be confusing until you search out what is going on, but it is not a book of missing information or sloppy preparation.

In this clause, Moses is told to ascend to Yehovah and bring along with him Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu. Aaron is Moses' older brother by three years, and Nadab and

Abihu are Aaron's two oldest sons. These three, along with Aaron's two younger sons, Eleazar and Ithamar, will be set apart as priests to the Lord in Exodus 28.

Unfortunately for Nadab and Abihu, they will be destroyed by fire when they present unauthorized incense before the Lord in Leviticus 10:1. For now though, they are given the honor of ascending the mountain with Moses as well as some others...

1 (con't) and seventy of the elders of Israel,

The total number to ascend the mountain will be 74 - Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders. These 70 elders, along with Nadab and Abihu, would then make 72 people to represent the 12 tribes of Israel. This logically divides into six people from each tribe, but this is unstated and only speculation.

The seventy elders would be those who were first mentioned in Exodus 3 when Moses stood at the burning bush and heard this -

"Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and *seen* what is done to you in Egypt; ¹⁷ and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" Exodus 3:16, 17

It is not stated why all of these people were to ascend with Moses, but it is probably for at least three reasons. The first is that they could then prove to the people that Moses actually received the words from the Lord and made nothing

up on his own. In essence, they would be witnesses to the matter, just as the disciples were witnesses of the ministry of the Lord.

The second reason is tied into this. When the words were presented to the people, it would add in a greater weight to the ratification process. It would be much easier to dismiss the words if Moses stood there alone and told them what was expected. But with these witnesses, they would more readily accept what was received and honor it for what it was - the word of God revealed to them.

The third gives a picture for us. God is their King - it is a theocratic rule. Moses is the prophet, Aaron is to be the priest, and the 72 represent Israel; the kingdom. It is a picture of Christ and His church - the Prophet, Priest, and King among his people.

1 (con't) and worship from afar.

In Exodus 20, the people said to Moses "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." After that, it said, "So the people stood afar off, but Moses drew near the thick darkness where God *was*."

From this verse now, we can see that there are three different classifications and groupings. The first is the people of Israel who are at the base of the mountain, and in fact they are on their way back to their own tents.

Next, there are Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders who have ascended the mountain but remain somewhere on its declivity. They will maintain a middle position between the people below and Moses and the Lord who will be above them.

Finally, there is Moses the prophet who alone will ascend to where Yehovah is. He has been set apart as most holy in this awesome matter of receiving the Book of the Covenant. It should be a sufficient warning to the people, especially the elders, that they are not set apart in the same way as those the Lord chooses to designate for whatever reason.

But it quickly became, and continued to be, a constant problem among the people of Israel to blur these lines of distinction which were set by the Lord. In a short time from now, a man named Korah will rebel and assume that he and the whole congregation of the Lord are holy. The penalties for this rebellion will be memorable. First, for Korah we will see this -

"Now it came to pass, as he finished speaking all these words, that the ground split apart under them, ³² and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households and all the men with Korah, with all *their* goods. ³³ So they and all those with them went down alive into the pit; the earth closed over them, and they perished from among the assembly." Numbers 16:31-33

For the two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation who rebelled with him, we read of their demise -

"And a fire came out from the LORD and consumed the two hundred and fifty men who were offering incense." Numbers 16:35

Even as late as the time of King Uzziah, the Lord still demanded a distinction between his people for set purposes. The priest's job was not to be accomplished by the king. However, King Uzziah rejected this notion and went to offer incense to the Lord on his own. The penalty for his arrogance was swift -

"Then Uzziah became furious; and he *had* a censer in his hand to burn incense. And while he was angry with the priests, leprosy broke out on his forehead, before the priests in the house of the LORD, beside the incense altar. ²⁰ And Azariah the chief priest and all the priests looked at him, and there, on his forehead, he *was* leprous; so they thrust him out of that place. Indeed he also hurried to get out, because the LORD had struck him." 2 Chronicles 26:19, 20

Because of his disobedience, the Bible goes on to say that he remained a leper until the day of his death, that he lived in an isolated house, and that he remained cut off from the house of the Lord. The Lord hasn't changed today.

Though we are brought near to God because of Christ, we still need to remember that He is God and we are His creatures. The judgment seat of Christ will reveal much about how we conducted ourselves in this life in regards to this matter.

² And Moses alone shall come near the LORD,

Some scholars go in the opposite direction with what they believe is going on and they insert these verses between 24:8 & 9. This is also incorrect as those verses carry us into new and uncharted waters. But on the surface they seem to fit there, unless you are looking at the natural progression of what is occurring.

As you can see, there is nothing really easy about discerning what is going on. Each section requires real consideration to grasp. Even some of the finest biblical scholars of all time get confused here. Because of this, there is no shame in any of us being confused.

However, to study them and then misrepresent the progression of what is going on can only lead to incorrect conclusions about later concepts which arise in the

Bible. It is for this reason that instead of telling you about how good next week will be for you, I want to explain to you the details of this magnificent word.

It opens up treasures of wisdom and knowledge if you are willing to mentally challenge yourself to explore not just the surface, but the reasons behind the difficult finer points. It is so easy to simply read over them and say, "I'll look at this more closely... next time." Maybe next time won't come.

For now, and still prior to the giving of the Book of the Covenant, Moses leaves behind the rest. He is told that he alone would come to the peak where the Lord was.

² (con't) **but they shall not come near;**

This is speaking of Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy. They have been given a high honor in being allowed to come to the mountain and to partially ascend it, but their honor has a point of termination. The psalms speak of ascending to the Lord in several places. One of the notable passages is found in the 24th Psalm -

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD?

Or who may stand in His holy place?

⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
Who has not lifted up his soul to an idol,
Nor sworn deceitfully.

⁵ He shall receive blessing from the LORD,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.

⁶ This *is* Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him,
Who seek Your face. Selah Psalm 24:3-6

In the case of receiving the Book of the Covenant, the question is, "Who may stand in His holy place?" The answer is "Moses alone may ascend. Even the elders of Israel may not."

² (con't) **nor shall the people go up with him."**

Again we have words which confirm that this was spoken just before Exodus 20:21. This is referring to the rest of the people of Israel who had asked that the Lord not speak to them any longer. When the Lord called Moses up, he designated a certain group of people to come and no others. It is here that we can insert the words of Deuteronomy 5 where the Lord said this to Moses -

Go and say to them, "Return to your tents." Deuteronomy 5:30

To ensure that the people would not attempt to follow Moses and the elders up the mountain, they were told to return to their tents.

Who may ascend the hill of the Lord?

Who may stand in His holy place?

The answer is slowly revealed in His precious word

Those who will someday gaze upon His face

It is those who have been cleansed by the blood

It is those who have called out to receive Jesus

Purified by Him, under the cleansing flood

This is what God has through Him done for us

*Those who have from Him received such favor
Will surely receive an eternal blessing from the Lord
In His marvelous paradise each moment we shall savor
This is the promise found in His holy word*

II. We will Obey, and We will Hear (verses 3-8)

³ So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments.

From this point on the narrative now starts anew. Moses and those with him had ascended the mountain. At a set point, Moses alone went up to the Lord the rest of the way. There he received the words of the Book of the Covenant. And now it will be presented to the people.

What is implied, but unstated, is that Moses heard the words, descended to those awaiting him on the mountainside, and then they together went down to present the words to the people. However, the word used to describe his transmitting the covenant to the people is *saphar*. It means "to recount."

Although it is not an unusual word in and of itself, it is a word which is rather special. Instead of simply saying that "He told them what the Lord said," or "He gave them the gist of what was spoken," it says that he "recounted" the words of the Lord to them.

This word, *saphar*, is used just four times in Exodus and this is the last of those four times. In *recounting*, Moses is carefully speaking out the words to the people. It is as if he counted each word and carefully catalogued it in order to recount what he had counted.

In essence, "I heard these words and I am now *recounting* them to you as I heard them." He is speaking the very words of God to them in a faithful manner. "These are all the words of the Lord and all the judgments as I received them." Why is this important to understand?

The answer is that we cannot add something to the word of God, or fail to include something in the word of God, and still have the word of God. Either it is His word, or it is His word twisted with man's word, or it is man's word alone.

This is especially important for us because these words, which form the covenant made between God and the people, make a foreshadowing of the future covenant of grace which God made with us through the blood of Christ.

In Chapter 20, they said, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die." Well, God *is* still speaking to them, just through a mediator. Proof that it is God's word and not his is that Aaron, his sons, and the elders went with him. They can substantiate the truth of the matter. And so the words are *recounted* and an answer to them is expected...

³ (con't) **And all the people answered with one voice and said,**

v'yaan qal ha'am qol echad - "And answered all the people voice one." The word *echad*, or one, is used because although there were many voices, there was one unified message in the voices. A cluster of grapes is one, but it is made of many grapes. *Echad* allows a plurality within the singular.

³ (con't) **"All the words which the LORD has said we will do."**

This is now the third time that the people have voluntarily committed themselves to the words they are given. The first was in verse 19:8. They did it again in 20:19. Now they say, "All the words which the Lord has said we will do."

They have faithfully confirmed what they had committed to. The words were spoken and the words were accepted. However, there is the truth that a crowd will often agree to something in an animated fashion which the individuals in the crowd may either later shun, or that they may disagree upon concerning what was said. And so Moses will now go one step further...

⁴ And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD.

Again, this clause confirms the order of sequence as I laid it out. The words were received from the Lord on Mount Sinai, but only *now*, after speaking them to the people, are they written down. Each step is logical and orderly. And all of it fits together harmoniously when looked at properly. This is all confirmed by the chiasm we looked at when we started. (chiasm importance)

Note the order: The glory of the Lord was seen coming down on Sinai in chapter 19. In Chapter 20, the Ten Commandments were given. After that, the people were so overwhelmed that they asked for Moses to speak to them and they would agree to hear.

Moses went up the mountain with a selected contingent of people. He left them and continued up to the Lord where he received the Book of the Covenant. After that, he came back down and *recounted* what he was told. The people agreed to do what they have heard. Only now are the words written down.

Concerning the writing down of the words, it again points to the importance of the word *saphar*, or "recount." The words that are written are the words which were spoken. If they were just the substance of what the Lord said, then they

weren't what the Lord actually said. However, the importance of the words is entirely tied up in the coming covenant with the people.

Now that the words are written down, they cannot be contested any longer. Instead, they are the *written* word of God based on the *spoken* word of God. They are the continued recording of the Holy Bible which began in earnest in Exodus 17:14 when Moses was first told to write something as a record for future generations.

It is this set of words known as the Book of the Covenant, which will now be the basis of the most remarkable of dealings of God with man since time had begun.

⁴ (con't) **And he rose early in the morning,**

Nothing is without significance in the Bible, even a clause such as this. To rise early signifies diligence and preparedness. It signifies a willingness on the Lord's behalf to impart His graces upon us. The Lord didn't rise late on Resurrection Day, as if He needed the rest. Instead He rose early.

This then is a pictorial idiom as much as anything else. And it will be used exactly as an idiom later in Scripture. In fact, numerous times in Jeremiah alone, it is used to show the Lord's diligence and willingness to instruct the people. One example is -

"And they have turned to Me the back, and not the face; though I taught them, rising up early and teaching *them*, yet they have not listened to receive instruction." Jeremiah 32:33

⁴ (con't) **and built an altar at the foot of the mountain,**

This would have been the very first earthen altar ever constructed according to the Book of the Covenant. The instructions for it were given in verses 20:23-26. In verse 24, we read this -

"An altar of earth you shall make for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen. In every place where I record My name I will come to you, and I will bless you."

Thus this altar is where the Lord would come to bless His people. If you didn't sleep through those verses, you know that this altar forms a picture of Christ. Thus, it signifies the first party in the covenant - God in Christ.

^{4 (con't)} **and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.**

These twelve *matstsebah*, or pillars, are explicitly stated to represent the twelve tribes of Israel. They would have been stone which was stood up in an erect manner. These would have been more than just memorial stones. Each would indicate the placement of the tribe in relation to the covenant. Thus they represent the second party in the covenant.

Moses would have walked between the altar and the stones as a mediator between the two. The standing up of the stones would be a picture of the permanence of these twelve tribes. For as long as the covenant remained, so each tribe of Israel would remain standing.

Eventually a New Covenant would be made and it would *again* be with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. The implication is that Israel will stand forever. God would forever remain faithful to them based on His covenants with them.

⁵Then he sent young men of the children of Israel,

There is much speculation as to why young men are specifically mentioned here. It is not the elders, nor is it any other specific group who is selected. Instead, it only says that "he sent young men of the children of Israel."

No priesthood had yet been established and thus the priestly duties fall on Moses alone for the ritual. These young men have been selected to be servants of Moses. It is possible, though unstated, that they were selected from each tribe to represent their tribe, but even this only speculation.

All that we are given is that young men were selected. The word to describe them is *na'ar* and in this context, it generally denotes a person from a very small child to one around the age of puberty. It has other significations, but in this context, it seems to imply children of a youthful age, not yet adults.

The reason why this is important is that in just about a year from this point, the people will leave Sinai on their way to Canaan. On the way, spies will be sent to search out the land. When they return, a bad report will be spread throughout the community and the people will complain against the Lord. In their complaining, the judgment against them will be severe. Numbers 14 says this -

"The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above." Numbers 14:29

What this verse now seems to imply is that these young men will not be punished in the wilderness. The Lord, knowing what will occur, has selected youth from Israel for this task who will be young enough at that time to be exempt from the curse, and who will thus be allowed to enter the Land of Promise.

What is surprising in this is that even Moses himself will be barred from entering Canaan because of his own misdeeds. If these young men are allowed to pass over Jordan and into Canaan, it is for a good reason. *They* will be able to recount the day that they stood at the base of Sinai and participated in the reception and confirmation of this sacred covenant.

In this verse is a foreshadowing of Christ's selection of the twelve apostles on another mountain 1500 years later.

^{5 (con't)} **who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD.**

The burnt offering, or *olah*, is given in gratitude to the Lord, and as a means of seeking his favor and receiving propitiation from Him. Noah made an *olah* after coming out of the ark. He sought the favor of the Lord and he sought a restored relationship with mankind through it as well. These burnt offerings would normally be completely burned up on the altar as an offering to God.

The *shelem*, or "peace offerings" comes from the word *shalam*, which means "to make amends." The peace offering then is one intended to satisfy the Lord and to bring about a sense of alliance or friendship. For this reason, some translations call them "fellowship offerings."

Unlike the burnt offerings, these peace offerings would normally have a portion burnt up on the altar. At the same time, the portion which was not burnt up would be eaten by the participants. Thus the idea of a "fellowship" offering conveys the thought quite well.

The young men of Israel are those who were chosen for this task. In looking at their age based on what I mentioned concerning the punishment on those twenty

and above, we can see that the Lord regards them as in more of a state of innocence than those who are older, and thus another possible reason for their selection.

⁶And Moses took half the blood and put *it* in basins,

It is of singular note that Moses takes half of the blood and uses it for one purpose and the other half for another. It is all the same blood, but the division has purpose and intent. He takes one half of it and put it in basins.

This basin is a new and unusual word found in the Bible. It is *aggan*, and it is only seen three times - once here, once in the Song of Solomon, and finally once in Isaiah. It is not a priestly word that is later used for such things. Rather it is a common type of basin. It would have had handles as we see from this verse in Isaiah -

"They will hang on him all the glory of his father's house, the offspring and the posterity, all vessels of small quantity, from the **cups** to all the pitchers." Isaiah 22:24

As Isaiah notes, they can be hung, thus implying handles. Surprisingly, the only other time this word is used, which is in the Song of Solomon, it is speaking of the navel of Solomon's beautiful bride -

Your navel *is* a rounded **goblet**;

It lacks no blended beverage.

Your waist *is* a heap of wheat. Song of Solomon 7:2

Are we to learn from Isaiah's explanation of this verse that Solomon's beauty had love handles? All fun aside, one half of the blood is set aside for one purpose; the other half is now explained.

⁶ (con't) **and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.**

The word here for "sprinkle" is *zaraq*. It means "to scatter." The only other two times it was used was during the plague of boils when Moses scattered the dust of the furnace towards the sky. Now it is first used in connection with sacrifices. However, in this verse, it is more appropriately translated as "splashed."

The amount of blood would be considerable and it would be poured out or splashed on the altar. According to the Bible, the life is in the blood. The blood being poured out signifies the death of the innocent animals in place of sinful man. They died in order to confirm the covenant.

The blood of the sacrificial animals, standing in place of the people, is symbolic of a complete surrender of the people to God. It is as if it is *they* have died and *their life* was being poured out in acceptance of what would then be read. And yes, the words have not yet been read to the people.

In this, John Lange most wisely notes, "...surrender in general, in accordance with the conditions of grace, must precede obedience in particular, according to the law." In other words, *yielding* comes before obedience. It is a picture realized in Ephesians 2:8, 9 -

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; *it is* the gift of God, ⁹ not of works, lest anyone should boast."

Even the Old Testament shows that one comes to God with empty hands. It is not by deeds that one is saved. Rather, it is by grace and through faith. The people have done nothing yet to merit God's grace except to assume that the blood of the covenant is sufficient to enact the covenant. Abraham discovered this -

"And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness." Genesis 15:6

It is the seal of his righteousness. It is also the evangelical seal of our righteousness. And guess what, it is also sealed upon the Law of Moses itself. Even the Ten Commandments are introduced with this language - "I *am* the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Exodus 20:1

God redeems. We have no part in our salvation except to believe and receive. This is what Paul precisely states in Ephesians 1 -

"In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."

Moses, acting as their mediator, splashes the blood of the animal on the earthen altar, thus signifying their yielding to God. All of it is picturing the future work of Christ for us - the altar, the blood, the grace through faith. Only after the blood is splashed on the altar are the words of the covenant read aloud...

⁷ Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people.

Only after yielding to God through the sacrifice does Moses now read the written word to the people. It says, *v'yiqra b'azene ha'am* - "And proclaimed in the ears of the people." It is more graphic in the Hebrew than when translated. It is the very words that they had heard and agreed to, but now they are set in writing. He is repeating the Book to them now so that they know that it is what the Lord is also agreeing to with this covenant.

^{7 (con't)} **And they said, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient."**

These words *qol asher dibber Yehovah na'aseh v'nishma*, are almost exclusively translated in this way. "We will do and be obedient." In fact, only one of the twenty Bibles I read, the Jubilee Bible, says, "All that the LORD has said we will do, and we will hear." This.is.correct.

The word *shema* means to hear, but hearing is often associated with obedience, such as "I want you to hear me," which means "I want you to do as I say." However, one cannot be obedient unless they first hear. In the final portion of the Book of the Covenant, which is the section concerning the promises, it says -

"Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. ²¹ Beware of Him **and obey His voice**; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name *is* in Him. ²² But if you indeed **obey His voice** and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries."

In other words, more words of instruction are coming from the Lord to which the people must be attentive. This is why they have added on to their statement of verse 3 the words, "...and we will hear." They have committed to doing even before hearing.

Note: it doesn't say that we will hear and then we will obey. It says that we will do, and we will hear. The Book of the Covenant is not the entire body of the Law. It is what the entire body of the law is based on. And so, only after this commitment does the Lord accept the people's offerings through Moses' mediation...

***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."**

If the splashing of the blood on the altar denoted the surrender of the people to the will of God, then the sprinkling of the people with the blood is the acceptance of the people by God who proposed the covenant to them. The same word *zaraq*, is used, but Keil notes that the form it is in indicates sprinkling rather than splashing.

The poured out blood symbolized their *death*; the sprinkled blood denotes the *renewal of life* and thus the people's transposition into the kingdom of God. The sins of the people are symbolically carried away and they are sanctified as the people of God.

All of this only looks forward to the greater work of Christ. The half of the blood splashed on the altar looked forward to the satisfaction of God's *anger* at our sin through the shed blood of Christ. The half sprinkled on the people looked forward to the *purification of us* through His blood (Hebrews 10:22) and the sanctification of the Spirit (1 Peter 1:2).

Today's eight verses have been literally filled with information; certainly more than we will be able to remember. But remembering the details isn't the point. Understanding the overall premises is. If you can remember that you are saved by

grace through faith apart from works, then you have understood the overall message.

As we continue through the law, you'll also learn that good works aren't going to keep you saved. This is why God gave Israel a Day of Atonement. If you trust in your good works, then you're probably not a saved person. What you need to do is to trust in God's continued mercy, despite your many failings.

If you have good works for the Lord, that's a good thing, but they can never replace your wholehearted dependence on Christ. As the Bible says, "Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord." And if you have never trusted in the grace of Christ to save you from the pit of hell, today would be a good day to get that settled. Here's what you need to know...

Closing Verse: "For where there *is* a testament, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. ¹⁷ For a testament *is* in force after men are dead, since it has no power at all while the testator lives. ¹⁸ Therefore not even the first *covenant* was dedicated without blood. ¹⁹ For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and goats, with water, scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, ²⁰ saying, 'This *is* the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you.'" Hebrews 9:17-20

Next Week: Exodus 24:9-18 *What will Moses find there? A bubbling fountain?*
(Come up to Me on the Mountain) (65th Exodus Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if a deep ocean lies ahead of You, He can part the waters and lead you through it on dry ground. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

The Blood of the Covenant

Now He said to Moses, He did tell

“Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu

And seventy of the elders of Israel

And worship from afar, as I am instructing you

And Moses alone shall come near the Lord

But they shall not come near

Nor shall the people go up with him, hear my word

Only Moses shall come up here

So Moses came and told the people

All the words of the Lord; the judgments through and through

And all the people answered with one voice and said

“All the words which the Lord has said we will do

And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord

And he rose early in the morning as well

And built an altar at the foot of the mountain

And twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel

Then he sent young men of the children of Israel

Who offered burnt offerings
And sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord
These were the people's profferings

And Moses took half the blood
And put it in basins, for the covenant rite
And half the blood he sprinkled on the altar
The sacrificial blood, crimson and bright

Then he took the Book of the Covenant
And read in the hearing of the people too
And they said, "All that the Lord has said
We will do, and be obedient; this our word to you

And Moses took the blood
Sprinkled it on the people, and said to them too
"This is the blood of the covenant
Which the Lord has made according to all these words with you

The covenant was sealed in blood before the Lord
The people agreed to its words as one
And it came into effect that day
With the sprinkling of the blood the sealing was done

A New Covenant came many years later
Christ offered to the house of Israel and the house of Judah too
And it was sealed in His blood for them
But the Gentiles have been offered it too

All who come to Christ through faith
Will be received as children of God
It is a promise for all times, thus the Lord saith
That through Christ for eternity heavenly streets we will trod

What a marvelous thing to understand
To know what God has done for the world in Christ Jesus
Thank You, O God, for promises so grand
Thank You for all You have done for us

Hallelujah and Amen...