

**Friday, October 7, 2022 ▫ Read Exodus 24:1–11**

*Questions from the Scripture text: Whom does Yahweh address in v1? To Whom does He say to come? What other three, specifically, does He say to bring with him? And how many from what other group? What are they to do? From where? Who shall come near (v2)? To Whom? Who shall not? Who else shall not do what? To whom does Moses come in v3? How many, of what two things, does he tell them? Who answer? How much of what do they say that they will do? Then what does Moses do (v4)? How many of Whose words? When does he rise? What two types of things does he build? How many of each? Whom does he send in v5? To do what? What two types of offerings? Unto Whom? What does Moses take in v6? How much? In what? And what does he do with the other half? What does he take in v7 (cf. v4)? What does he do with it? in whose hearing? What do they repeat (cf. v3)? What do they now add? Now what does Moses take in v8 (cf. v6)? What does he do with it? Onto whom? What does he call the blood? Who has made this covenant? According to what? Who go up in v9? Whom do they "see" (v10)? What appeared to be under His feet? What did it look like? What doesn't He do to whom in v11? With what three, quick, statements does the Spirit summarize this visit?*

**How can the new church/state survive the nearness of God?** Exodus 24:1–11 looks forward to the evening sermon on the coming Lord's Day. In these eleven verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **by God's binding Himself to them by blood, His people are able safely to dwell with Him.**

The command in v1 is surprising in light of 19:12. Anyone who touched the mountain was to be killed, and now a party of seventy-four are being commanded to go up and worship from a distance. Only Moses could go to the top, but the representatives of Israel as a church (Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu) and as a state (the seventy elders) could go up partway, while the people as a whole must not come up with their leaders (v2). It is perhaps not quite as surprising that they see some sort of display of God (theophany) in v10. For, the Lord has made other displays of Himself, and He has just finished describing how He will (continue to) appear as His Angel who goes before them through the wilderness (cf. 23:21, 13:21, 14:19).

The result in v11 is surprising. "so they saw God, and they ate and drank." They have not only safety but provision and fellowship. Even on the mountain of God. Even within "sight" of God. Even with display in v10 implying that heaven has invaded earth. How were they able safely to do this?

The book of the covenant. The first part of how they were able to approach the Lord safely, and experience the Lord safely, is that God Himself initiates by way of His Word. Moses tells the people "all the words of Yahweh" (v3). The people say "all the words Yahweh has said we will do" (v3). Moses writes down "all the words of Yahweh" (v4). He reads the book in v7, and the people say, "All that Yahweh has said we will do." Finally, Moses announces that Yahweh has made covenant with them "according to all these words."

The Lord alone is the Initiator of the covenant. It is formed according to His Words. Man cannot initiate. Man cannot come up with the way of coming to God. Indeed, Israel as a church and as a state would fail to do what they promise here. Only with Christ as Priest and Christ as King can such an arrangement hold up.

The blood of the covenant. Moses builds an altar in v5 for the Lord, and twelve pillars before it for the people who are represented in their seventy elders. The application of blood to two parties is a common feature of ancient near eastern treaties/covenants, and we see it here. Half of the blood from the offerings in v5 is poured onto the altar. Half of it is poured upon the people.

By this pouring ceremony, Yahweh and His people were identified with one another. The people were atoned for and consecrated by the shed blood from the sacrifice that bore the fire of the wrath. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. This of course looks forward to Christ and to Christian baptism, the sign by which the Lord identifies with Himself the members of the visible church under the administration of Christ. Christ's blood being shed once for all, He commands instead that water be poured, even as He pours His Spirit, Who applies His saving blood to us.

It is important that we remember that not every member of the visible church is safe. Of Aaron's sons, the Lord specifically selects Nadab and Abihu, who receive mention both in v1 and in v9. Nadab and Abihu will survive the visit to the mountain and the meal in v11, but not many days from now they will fail to survive their first day as ordained priest (cf. Lev 10:1–7). The outward sign may seal salvation unto faith, and the Lord thus blesses it to all whom He is bringing to faith. But without faith it remains merely outward, devoid of spiritual efficacy, and it will be found at last even to have testified against them.

Who can make the way for you to be safe in God's presence? What is the way that He has made? What are the two covenant signs by which He displays that way of being safe?

*Sample prayer: Lord, thank You for bringing us near to Yourself by Your covenant in our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has kept all of Your words in our behalf. For His sake, forgive us, and bring us at last into every blessing of Your everlasting covenant, which we ask in His Name, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP191 "I Love the Lord" or TPH434 "A Debtor to Mercy Alone"**

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Exodus 24 versus 1 through 11. These are the words of God. Now, he said to Moses come up to Yahweh you. And Aaron, they dabbings to buy who, and 70 of the elders of Israel and worship from afar and Moses alone. Shall come near Yahweh. That they shall not come near nor shall the people go up with him.

So Moses came and told the people, all the words of Yahweh and all the judgments and all the people answered with one voice and said all the words, which always said we will do. And Moses wrote all the words of Yahweh and he rows early in the morning and he built an altar at the foot of the mountain and 12 pillars.

According to the 12 tribes of Israel. And we sent young men of the children of Israel who offered burnt offerings and peace offerings of oxen toy. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins and half the blood. He sprinkled on the altar, Then he took the book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people.

And they said all that. Yahweh has said, we will do and be obedient and Moses took the blood sprinkled. It on the people and said, this is the blood of the Covenant, which you always has made with you. According to all these words than Moses went up. Also Aaron and Nadab and About You, and 70 of the elders of Israel.

And they saw God, They saw the God of Israel and there was under his feet as it were. Paved work of Sapphire stone. And it was like the very heavens in its clarity, but on the nobles of the children of Israel, he did not lay his hand. So they sell God and the eight and drink.

So far the reading of God's inspired and and tort

Well, this passage begins and ends with surprises that make us. Want to ask the question. How or why? The first surprise is when the Lord invites not just Moses up the mountain. But Aaron Nadab Abayu and 70 elders of Israel, because you'll recall that the instructions about this, this mountain where that, even if an animal touches it, they shall die.

And now not just Moses by himself which was the previous arrangement but a party of 74 are invited to come up the mountain and you think well this is not going to go. Well, we know it Israel's like we know what native I do end up being like and yet surprise number two at the end of our passage verse 11 on the nobles of Israel.

He did not lay his hand. So they saw God and they ate and drank. Remember the Lord had told or what will tell Moses and a few chapters a time. No one can see his face and live. And the people of Israel were quite certain that they would die, if they saw God when Gideon, there's not getting in, it's his father.

Not Manoah. There's a Manoah. Sampson's dad. Oh, Lord. Help me. I can't remember when Gideon's dad sees the Lord or realizes that it's an appearance of the Lord that he has seen, he thinks he will die. And yet these see God, and eat and drink. And so the big question is how, and the first answer is God's Word or the book of the Covenant Moses comes.

And he tells the people the words of y'all playing the judgments that is the portion that we have been calling the book of the Covenant because that's what the Holy Spirit calls it in our passage. That's before us today a sampling hmm. Especially of Israelite case law. And a reminder of what it is like to be the people of God who have in the midst of them, the presence of God and not only does he tell them but now he writes out the covenant document Lord willing will be

You know, when someone is going to enter into a covenant or a contract, they agree on the terms and they sit down. They write it out. That's what's going on and verse 4, Moses, wrote all the words of Yahweh. You notice the people say, in verse 3, all the words which you always said we will do and verse 7, all the war all that you always has said we will do and be obedient.

And so there's a covenant agreement, there's a covenant document. There are terms by which God's church on earth is invisibly established relationship with him. Thankfully for us, the Covenant of grace is one in which Jesus is the representative. And even in the New Covenant, which is an administration of the Covenant of grace, the terms that God sets for the church on earth are maintained from heaven by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Which is why if we depart from what Scripture says, is the worship of God and his church or the ordering that the New Testament gives us for the church. What we're doing is we're cutting ourselves off from Christ's headship and we become not just a less pure congregation of his church, but as we confess, we can even become a synagogue of Satan and no longer properly part of the visible church.

Well, they did not have Christ as their leader here. Moses is the Covenant mediator. So he goes up and Israel as we've been hearing and seeing throughout the book of the Covenant is being constituted as both a church and a nation. And so, representatives of both of those appear, Aaron Nadab and a boy, who three of the five in the high priestly family.

Aaron is a high priest. He has four sons native and a bayou. Are the ones who go up with him. Here. They represent Israel as a church and the 70 elders. Represent Israel as a state. Now, on the mountain, there are fixtures for two parties. The first party is God.

Who's altar? Moses builds and whose altar Aaron and Nadab and Abay who are to serve. And the other party is the nation of Israel as represented by the 12 pillars for the 12 tribes. So the book of the Covenant is establishing the terms of the relationship between the Lord and Israel as a church.

And as a state. Now as after the contract is written, there is the blood that seals the Covenant and identifies the parties verse 5. Then he sent young man of the children of Israel who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace, offerings of oxen to Yahweh. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins and half the bloody sprinkled or better translated in my opinion.

Poured on the altar, it's probably more than would be a sprinkling's worth. And the word can mean either. One of those things, half the blood he poured on the altar. That is he pours it as it were on the fixture? That is representing the Lord, He takes the book of the covenant, he reads it in the hearing of the people.

Again, they say all that. You always said we'll do and be obedient and then he takes the blood and this is the other half obviously, and pours it on the people and says, this is the blood of the covenant, which Yahweh has made with you according to all these words.

And so by these pourings upon them, you see the the Lord and the people identified with one another in covenant, the Lord Himself. Of course, the Lord. Jesus is baptized even though John thinks it beneath him to be baptized, but Jesus says his baptism that it is necessary to do that in order to fulfill all righteousness.

He identifies himself with us as His people even more, you probably thought and heard the similarity in verse 8, between what Moses says as God's prophet here. And what the Lord Jesus says at the last supper when he's instituting the Lord's Supper, this is the blood of the covenant, but we don't get blood to poured out on us and at the Lord's Supper you don't drink blood.

You drink wine because Jesus's blood has been shed. Once for all and yet, there is the same covenant identification between God and heaven. And a people on earth except this time. Jesus is both the priesthood and the kingship he is. And, of course, the prophet and so profit priests and King being represented here at the mountain.

And, of course, profit priests and king being represented here at the mountain, with Moses, and Aaron and native, and Abayu, and the 70 Elders. Jesus is all of it. The new covenant is extremely simple because so much has had looked forward to Christ from the Covenant. That was established or the administration if you will of the Covenant of grace.

That was established at Sinai so much of that had looked forward to Christ. And now it having been fulfilled. There's much less outwardly in the administration of the New Covenant. Although it's of course, fuller and richer because it's Jesus himself, not just the shadows and figures that pointed forward to them.

And of course the sacrifices and the blood of the covenant. They look forward to Christ's blood. That's how we can come safely near to God. In fact, it is a prefiguring of Christ that the Lord is in the presence of his people at all. We are prepared to have an appearance of the Lord, a some sort of manifestation.

Not of course how he himself is in himself because that's invisible. But we just heard, didn't we? At the end of chapter 23, about the angel that would go before them. And we we thought about how this is something that is consistent with what the Lord has been telling us about how he appeared to and led and had fellowship with Israel throughout the book of Exodus.

And even We remembered back into some of how he appeared to and dealt with Abraham, for instance, in the book of Genesis. And so we are in the in the habit. Now of thinking about these pre-incarnation appearances of God, the second person, a Theophony or even more specifically a Christophony before, the Lord, Jesus takes upon himself.

Our nature. In fact, the display that is made of him. Verse 10. They saw the god of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a paved work of Sapphire stone. Like the very heavens in its clarity does remind us of the appearance that the Lord makes of himself, for instance, in the opening chapters of the book of Ezekiel heaven,

intersects with earth in the second person of the Godhead.

And especially when the Lord Jesus actually enters creation and walks on the earth that he might obey and live and die and rise again for us and for our redemption. And so he appears before them and the nobles of the children of Israel saw God and rather not being destroyed.

They ate and they drink. And so that's the how because the Lord establishes covenantal terms with his church. Now this church and this kingdom did not meet the terms. They had merely human priesthood and merely human kingship. And even a merely human prophet who wasn't even allowed to enter the promised land because of his disobedience later.

And so it reminds us that Christ alone is our safety forever. And that the great strength of the New Testament church is that it's profit is Christ who sits on the throne of heaven and that's priestess Christ who has offered himself up once and for all and he has consecrated by his blood.

Those particular worship assemblies that we have Lord's Day by Lord's Day. He is consecrated by his blood that was shed, once for all our ability to be baptized and identified with him, and to come to the table. And to drink the cup of the New Covenant, the cup that he calls the new covenant that is in his blood or in another place.

The blood of the New Covenant. And so, we have ministered to us in the New Testament, sacraments the reality that how our church connects with heaven. How our congregation connects with heaven is even stronger and more special than what happens in the first half of Exodus chapter 24. But we are so dull that we need the spirit to stir up our faith so that we can see and appreciate the glory of what happens in those assemblies.

And the more that he does, the more that the spirit does that for us, the less we will be willing to adulterate anything that the Lord has given us by which to worship him in, which we come to him led by Christ from heaven. Why would we add or change or doctor or try to embellish, make more beautiful or whatever?

You cannot the simplicity implies that there is a heavenly beauty and a heavenly glory. That earthly eyes cannot see. And it is even better than this. We come to God and we perceive him and we perceive him in Christ by faith week by week in the Word and the sacrament and prayer.

We come to him and we don't die. He doesn't smite us. We live we eat and we drink. We fellowship within in Jesus Christ. How by the book. Well, this whole thing from Genesis to Revelation really, as our book of the Covenant, He's given his word to teach us so that we may know that the safe path on earth.

But not just the book of the Covenant, but especially the blunt of the covenant, We're safe with him in and through and because of Jesus. Amen, let's pray. Thank you, Lord, for this portion of your word. Thank you for You're great Mercy to Israel for the surprise that they could be invited onto the mountain and then they could see you and that they could live and eat and drink.

So we thank you Lord, for your greater grace, even to us that you have granted to us to be the ones upon him. The ends of the ages have come with our Lord. Jesus sitting on your throne and the heavenly Zion and our joining him there. In the weekly assemblies, having been seated with him through that union, that we have through him with him through faith.

And so we pray. Lord, that you would minister to us, the greatness of what you have given us in Christ. And we pray that your spirit would stir up in us thankfulness and love and devotion that we would cling to him and desire. Nothing. Apart from him and the church or in our life granted, we ask in his name, amen.