

commands forbidding Israel to make any covenant with any other gods or men.<sup>14</sup>

---

THE TEXT OF EXODUS  
TRANSLATION

**24** And he said unto Mo-ses, Come up unto Je-ho-vah, thou, and Aar-on, Na-dab, and A-bi-hu, and seventy of the elders of Is-ra-el; and worship ye afar off: (2) and Mo-ses alone shall come near unto Je-ho-vah; but they shall not come near; neither shall the people go with him. (3) And Mo-ses came and told the people all the words of Je-ho-vah, and all the ordinances: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which Je-ho-vah hath spoken will we do. (4) And Mo-ses wrote all the words of Je-ho-vah, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the mount, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Is-ra-el. (5) And he sent young men of the children of Is-ra-el, who offered burnt-offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto Je-ho-vah. (6) And Mo-ses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. (7) And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that Je-ho-vah hath spoken will we do, and be obedient. (8) And Mo-ses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which Je-ho-vah hath made with you concerning all these words.

(9) Then went up Mo-ses, and Aar-on, Na-dab, and A-bi-hu, and seventy of the elders of Is-ra-el: (10) and they saw the God of Is-ra-el; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the very heaven for clearness. (11) And upon the nobles of the children of Is-ra-el he laid not

---

<sup>14</sup>Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

his hand: and they beheld God, and did eat and drink.

(12) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee the tables of stone, and the law and the commandment, which I have written, that thou mayest teach them. (13) And Mo-ses rose up, and Josh-u-a his minister: and Mo-ses went up into the mount of God. (14) And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and, behold, Aar-on and Hur are with you; whosoever hath a cause, let him come near unto them. (15) And Mo-ses went up into the mount, and the cloud covered the mount. (16) And the glory of Je-ho-vah abode upon mount Si-nai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Mo-ses out of the midst of the cloud. (17) And the appearance of the glory of Je-ho-vah was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Is-ra-el. (18) And Mo-ses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount: and Mo-ses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

---

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR  
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. Who was to come up with Moses into the mount? (24:1,9)
2. Who alone was to come near the Lord? (24:2)
3. What words did Moses tell the people? (24:3)
4. What did the people promise to do? (24:3)
5. What did Moses write down? (24:4)
6. What did Moses build? (24:4)
7. Who offered sacrifices unto the Lord? Of what types? (24:5)
8. How did Moses divide the blood? (24:6)
9. What did Moses sprinkle the blood upon? (24:6, 8; Heb. 9:19)
10. What did Moses read publicly? (24:7)
11. By what title did Moses refer to the blood? (24:8; Compare

Luke 22:20)

12. What did Moses and the others see in the mount? (24:10, 11)
13. What was under God's feet? (24:10; Ezek. 1:22, 26; Rev. 4:6)
14. What is meant by "upon the nobles . . . he laid not his hand"? (24:11)
15. What did the nobles eat and drink? (24:11, 5). Where did they eat and drink?
16. What did God promise to give to Moses (24:12)
17. Who went with Moses up into the mount? (24:13)
18. What was Moses to do with the tables of stone? (24:12)
19. What was Joshua's position, or office? (24:13)
20. Where did the elders wait? (24:14)
21. Who were appointed to settle legal disputes? (24:14)
22. What was the appearance of the mount as Moses entered it? (24:15)
23. How long did Moses wait before God called him? (24:16)
24. From where did God call Moses? (24:16)
25. What did the glory of the Lord look like? (24:17)
26. How long was Moses upon the mount? (24:18)
27. What did Moses eat during this stay on the mount? (Deut. 9:9)

---

#### EXODUS TWENTY-FOUR: RATIFICATION OF THE COVENANT

1. The call to ascend the mount; 24:1-2.
  2. The blood ratification; 24:3-8.
  3. The fellowship with God; 24:9-11.
  4. The ascent of Moses into the mount; 24:12-18.
-

---

**WORSHIP AFAR OFF! (24:1)**

1. Afar off because of past unbelief.
2. Afar off because of past disobedience.
3. Afar off because sacrifices had not yet been offered.  
(This separation was removed when sacrifices were made!  
24:5-6, 8-10.)

---

**EXODUS TWENTY-FOUR:  
THE OLD TESTAMENT MOUNT OF TRANSFIGURATION!**

1. An ascent into the mount; Ex. 24:1,9; Matt. 17:1.
2. An emphasis on sacrifice; Ex. 24:5; Luke 9:31.
3. A vision of God and glory; Ex. 24:10; Luke 9:29.
4. A covering cloud; Ex. 24:15-16; Luke 9:34.
5. Moses only - Jesus only; Ex. 24:18; Luke 9:34.

---

**THE COVENANT! (Ex. 24:3-8)**

1. The covenant was divinely revealed; 24:3.
2. The covenant was willingly accepted; 24:3.
3. The covenant was permanently written; 24:4.
4. The covenant was impressively presented; 24:4-5.
5. The covenant was ratified with blood; 24:5-6, 8.

---

**HOW MEN MAKE COVENANT WITH GOD (24:3-8)**

1. By hearing God's words; 24:3.

2. By commitment to obey; 24:3.
  3. By writing God's words; 24:4.
  4. By sacrifices unto God; 24:4-5.
  5. By sprinkling the blood God-ward; 24:6.
  6. By promises to obey; 24:7.
  7. By sprinkling the blood man-ward; 24:8.
- 

### FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD! (Ex. 24:3-11)

- I. How fellowship with God was obtained (24:3-8)
    1. By accepting God's words; 24:3, 7.
    2. By offering sacrifices; 24:5.
    3. By sprinkling the blood; 24:5-6, 8.
      - a. Toward God; 24:5-6.
      - b. Toward the people; 24:8.
  - II. Blessings of fellowship with God (24:9-11)
    1. Access to God; 24:9.
    2. A view of God; 24:10.
    3. Security with God; 24:11.
    4. Nourishment in God's presence; 24:11
- 

### MOSES AND CHRIST: COVENANT-MAKERS! (Ex. 24:3-11)

1. Both declared God's words.  
Moses (Ex. 24:3); Christ (John 7:16; 8:26)
2. Both offered sacrifices.  
Moses (Ex. 24:4-5); Christ (Eph. 5:2; Heb. 9:13)
3. Both sprinkled the blood.  
Moses (Ex. 24:6, 8); Christ (Heb. 12:24; I Pet. 1:2)
4. Both brought men unto God.

Moses (Ex. 24:9); Christ (Eph. 2:18; II Cor. 3:18)

---

GOD'S MEDIATOR (Ex. 24:12-18)

1. Called up alone unto God; 24:12-14.
  2. Entered divine surroundings; 24:15-16, 17.
  3. Heard God's call; 24:16.
  4. Continued long with God; 24:18.  
(Both Moses and Jesus shared these experiences.)
- 

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

1. *What is in Exodus twenty-four?*

Exodus twenty-four is one of the most sublime and glorious chapters in the Old Testament. We agree with Arthur Pink that there is no subsequent passage in the Old Testament approaching a parallel to the glories revealed in this chapter. Not until we come to the New Testament account of God tabernacling among men through the presence of His son do we have anything equal to Exodus twenty-four (John 1:14). This chapter has been designated the Old Testament Mount of Transfiguration! It is the climactic point of the history in Exodus.

In Exodus twenty-four we have the *call* to Israel's representatives to come up to Jehovah (24:1-2). This indicates the achievement of direct fellowship with God.

The chapter continues by telling of Moses' reading the book of the covenant to the people, and the people's acceptance of it, and the ratifying of it by the sprinkling of blood (24:3-8). Thus Exodus twenty-four tells the fulfillment of the promise God made in 19:5-6 to take Israel as His special

people, a holy nation.

The chapter records the actual meeting with God by Israel's leaders. They saw God and ate and drank with Him in security. (24:9-11)

The chapter concludes with the call to Moses to come up into the mount again to receive the written law and the commandments. Moses ascended and was there forty days. (24:12-18)

This chapter has been a particular target of unbelieving critics, who have tried to dissect it and attribute various parts of it to different authors living centuries apart. It seems that those chapters in which believers perceive the deepest spiritual significance and meaning are often the very ones the critics concentrate their attacks upon. (Such chapters include II Samuel 7, Isaiah 53, Zechariah 6, Genesis 1-2.) We should not be surprised at this, because the Bible says that the god of this world (the devil) has blinded the minds of the unbelieving. (II Cor. 4:3-4)

2. *Who was called to come up into the mount?* (24:1-2)

Moses, Aaron, Aaron's two sons (Nadab and Abihu), and seventy men from the elders of Israel were summoned to come up and worship "afar off." Only Moses was to come near to Jehovah. The people were not to go up with him.

It appears that Moses had come down from the mountain after hearing the words in chapters twenty-one to twenty-three. Note 20:21. Either Moses was already down at the start of chapter twenty-four, or he was in the process of descent when God spoke the words of 24:1.

Twice in this chapter Nadab and Abihu, sons of Aaron, are named (24:1,9). They shared the rare honor of seeing God (24:9-10). They are referred to elsewhere in Num. 3:4; Lev. 10:1-2; Ex. 6:23. They are remembered chiefly because they died by fire from the Lord, sent upon them when they "offered strange fire." The repeated mention of them in Exodus twenty-four speaks of lost opportunities, of high privileges thrown away. Neither the dignity and righteousness of parents, nor our own special privileges from God

will save us, if we do not respond to God with a lowly, believing, obedient spirit.

The seventy elders seem to have been the accepted representatives of the entire nation. (Ex. 24:14; Compare Num. 11:16; Ex. 18:12; 3:16; 12:21; 17:5.) Though some disregard the number *seventy* as a "loose traditional number," we accept it as precisely correct.

The fact that Israel's representatives had to worship "afar off" shows that men cannot approach God on the basis of their own works and personal righteousness.<sup>1</sup> Even at our best we need a mediator.

The fact that Moses alone could come near to Jehovah indicates again his unique position as mediator and as a type of Christ, our mediator, who draws near unto the presence of God for us (Heb. 9:24).

The shifting of wording from second person ("thou") in 24:1 to third person ("him") in 24:2 surprises us a bit. We feel that Cassuto<sup>2</sup> is correct in suggesting that verse two was worded in third person because those who accompanied Moses were also enjoined to let Moses go up by himself. An abrupt change from second to third person occurs sometimes in Hebrew literature. See Ex. 23:25 and 20:5, 6, 7 for other examples.

Many critics of the Bible attribute 24:1-2, 9-11 to one author (Driver says J; Noth says E), and 24:3-8, 12-14 to some other source. Martin Noth says, "In 24:1-11 two different literary strata may easily be distinguished."<sup>3</sup> These critics do not agree among themselves as to the exact break-off point after verse fourteen. (Driver sets it after 14; Oesterly and Robinson after 15; Noth after 15a.) Noth feels

---

J. H. Hertz, *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, p. 322, quotes the Jewish authority Nachmanides: "They [the seventy elders] remained uninjured, because they were *worthy* to see the vision." This opinion surely conflicts with the scriptural view that "There is none that doeth good, no not one" (Pslam 14:3). Men are accepted by God solely because of God's graciousness and not because of their worthiness.

<sup>1</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>2</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 194.



that even 24:1-2 shows it has been worked over. The lack of agreement among those holding such views reveals the lack of real evidence to confirm them. The fact that these theories conflict so sharply with the scriptures' own statements of authorship reveals the presupposition of the critics that the Bible is not trustworthy.

3. *What did Moses tell to the people? (24:3)<sup>4</sup>*

He told them all the "words of Jehovah and all the ordinances." The people responded to Moses' words by unanimously declaring that they would do all the words which Jehovah had spoken.

We suppose that the "words" and "ordinances" which Moses told the people were all the words that he had heard from God after he left the people. See 20:21. This would include everything in 20:22—23:23. It seems unlikely to us that Moses repeated the words of the ten commandments, since all the Israelites had heard these for themselves from God's own voice. See Deut. 4:33, 36.

After hearing Moses, ALL the people answered with ONE voice, saying, "ALL which Jehovah has spoken we will do." (Compare Israel's earlier promises to obey in Ex. 19:8; 20:19; Deut. 5:27.) Their prompt and unanimous response makes us forget for a moment how short was the time they remained faithful. In less than forty days they made the golden calf (Ex. 32).

4. *What last-minute preparations did Moses make for the ratification of the covenant? (24:4-5)*

(1) He wrote the words of Jehovah.

(2) He built one altar and set up twelve stone pillars.

(3) He sent young men to offer burnt-offerings and peace-offerings.

---

<sup>4</sup>Martin Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 198, considers 24:3-8 an independent fragment attached to the "originally independent" book of the covenant (chapters 21-23), to connect that book with the covenant made at Sinai. He feels that chapter 34 is the J version of the making of the Sinai covenant, and that the story of the covenant making in chapter 24 was not originally by the same author as the one who wrote chapter 34. We feel that the story as given in Exodus is too harmonious with itself to permit us to accept such extreme ideas about its production.

The words which Moses had told the people orally (24:3), he then wrote upon papyrus or parchment. Surely both Moses' act of oral recitation and his written record of God's words required inspiration from God. Probably no one could have recalled all those details unless God aided him in recalling all that God had said. Compare John 14:26.

Numerous passages affirm that Moses *wrote* a great amount of material. See Deut. 31:9, 19, 24; Num. 33:2; Ex. 17:14. Certainly we believe these statements.

Regarding "under the mount" (or, "at the foot of the mountain"), see Ex. 19:17.

Moses' altar was made of earth or of uncut stones. See 20:25. The altar appears to have symbolized the Lord's presence among the Israelites. See Ex. 20:24.

The twelve pillars (presumably made of stone) symbolized the tribes of Israel. The act of setting up stones as memorials or symbols when a covenant was made is mentioned in other places in scripture. See Gen. 31:45; Joshua 24:25-26.

We appreciate the thought of R. Alan Cole,<sup>5</sup> that while the pillars represented Israel, the fact that this was only symbolism and not superstition is shown by the fact that in the blood ceremony, the blood was dashed over the people themselves (24:8), and not over the pillars that represented them.

We think that the "young men" who were sent to offer sacrifices were the firstborn sons. Ex. 13:2: "Sanctify unto me all the firstborn." This is the view expressed in the Jewish Talmud and the Targum of Onkelos. Keil and Delitzsch<sup>6</sup> deny that these young men were the firstborn sons, or some pre-Levitical priests. Positive proof of their identity is indeed not given, but we still think they were the firstborn.

Burnt-offerings and peace-offerings were Israel's most

---

<sup>5</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 184.

<sup>6</sup>*Op. cit.*, II, p. 157.

ancient types of offerings. See 20:24. God later revealed His will on more involved types of offerings, like sin-, trespass-, and meal-offerings (Lev. 1-7). Burnt-offerings indicated man's guilt and God's condemnation of this guilt. Peace-offerings indicated the state of harmony brought about by the offering of burnt-offerings. Only the peace-offerings were partly eaten by the offerer (Lev. 7:15-16). It seems probable that the food eaten in 24:11 was from the peace-offerings.

There is a special emphasis on the fact that the sacrifices of 24:5 were unto the LORD. See 22:20.

5. *What did Moses do with the blood of the offerings?* (24:6, 8)

He put half the blood in basins, and he sprinkled this part of the blood on the altar he had built (24:4). The sprinkling of the blood on the altar indicated the blood was sprinkled God-ward (toward God) to satisfy the requirements of divine justice. Similarly, Christ's blood was presented in heaven on our behalf (Heb. 9:11-12, 24-25).

After sprinkling blood on the altar (an act of reaching out for God's acceptance), Moses read to the people the entire book of the covenant which he had written. After reading, Moses sprinkled the blood upon the people (or in the direction of the people). He also sprinkled<sup>7</sup> the book itself. Seemingly, Moses used the remaining half of the blood for these acts. The blood was sprinkled man-ward, as well as God-ward. The blood was to change the lives of the people.

Hebrews 8:18-20: "Wherefore, even the first covenant hath not been dedicated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses unto all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the BOOK itself and all the PEOPLE, saying, This is the blood of the covenant which God

---

<sup>7</sup>The verb *zaraq*, translated *sprinkle* in 24:8, means to scatter, to sprinkle, to swing, to shake, to pour out a vessel.

commanded to you-ward.”

Christ used similar words at the last supper: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you.” (Luke 22:20)

God’s covenants are solemn, sealed with blood! Blood speaks of sin, and of death, and of life.

6. *Why was blood used in ratifying the covenant? (24:8)*

No theological explanation is given in Exodus, but several reasons are suggested in other passages.

(1) The blood was a *means of enactment*. Heb. 9:15-17 tells us that for a will (or testament, or covenant) to be in force, a death must have occurred. The offering of blood is possible only when a death has occurred. Thus, the blood functioned as a means of ENACTMENT of the covenant. “Wherefore, not even the first covenant (that given by Moses) was dedicated without blood.” (Heb. 9:18)

(2) Furthermore, blood has always been connected with the *forgiveness of sins*. See Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:15, 22. The passage in Hebrews quite definitely links remission (release) of sins with the offering of blood, and specifically mentions Moses’ sprinkling the blood at the making of the covenant as one of the applications of blood offered for remission of sins. Without the shedding of blood, Israel could not have been accepted as a people.

(3) Also blood served as a visual *warning* to the people that they must keep the terms of the covenant or face death. Blood-covenants showed the deadly seriousness of the commitments being made. See Gen. 15:9-10, 17; Jer. 34:18-20.

(4) The blood functioned also as a means of bringing *unity* between God and Israel. There was blood sprinkled upon both the altar (symbolizing God) and the people. Thus the two contracting parties were by this means united by a solemn bond. The blood was for the people a transposition into the kingdom of God, a fulfillment of Ex. 19:5-6.

7. *What promise did the people make when they heard the law read? (24:7)*

They promised to obey all that Jehovah had spoken. God's covenants must be accepted voluntarily by His people. Regrettably, Israel did not keep to its promise.

Note that Moses twice declared the law to Israel, once extemporaneously and once by reading from the written word. Public reading of a book of covenant was a frequent practice in Bible times. It was done by Joshua and King Josiah, among others. (Joshua 24:1ff; II Kings 23:2, 21.)

If it be objected that Moses could not possibly have spoken so as have been heard by 600,000 men plus women and children, we can only reply that perhaps this was done by speaking to certain individuals who were representatives of all the people or tribes. Probably the same thing occurred in the sprinkling of the blood upon the people. Furthermore, we can not dismiss the possibility that God miraculously amplified Moses' voice so that all could hear it.

Israel's promise to obey in 24:7 was their third open promise to obey. See Ex. 19:8; 24:3. Compare 23:22.

We must remind ourselves at this point that the law of Moses was never given as a means for justifying men from sin. See Gal. 3:21. It only pointed out sins, with the goal of curbing the practice of sin. (Gal. 3:19; I Tim. 1:9-10; Rom. 3:20.) The law was (and is) an essential guide to those who would live Godly. But the attainment of righteousness in God's sight has always been possible only because God graciously accepts those who believe and seek Him through the sacrificial system He has provided, namely through the death of Jesus Christ. (Gal. 3:8-9, 22.)

8. *What marvelous demonstration of fellowship followed the making of the covenant? (24:9-11)*

Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy elders went up upon the mount and actually saw the God of Israel!<sup>8</sup> They met in harmony, and beheld God, and ate and

---

<sup>8</sup>The Greek LXX reads "They saw the *place* where the God of Israel stood." This appears to be a deliberate alteration of the text to avoid the possibility of describing God as having human or tangible form.

drank! However, even at this time it appears that Moses came much closer to God than the others. See 24:2.

Only a few days before it would have been DEATH for any Israelite to have broken through the fence-barrier and gazed at God (19:21, 24). Now after the blood has been sprinkled and the covenant accepted, they eat and drink with God in peace. Though the people had been rebels against God's holy nature and laws, He as the God of all grace meets with their representatives in gracious fellowship.

Moses had previously been commanded to ascend into the mount with the people's representatives (24:1). But they did not ascend till the blood was sprinkled and the covenant was ratified. This point cannot be stressed too strongly! Ponder the power of the blood to bring men into God's presence (Rev. 7:14-15). When we consider the rebelliousness and disobedience of Israel up to this point, and consider that God foresaw their soon-forthcoming disobedience, we are awed at the graciousness of God. We should also be awed that through the blood of Christ we have an access to the Father (Eph. 2:18).

Meditate on the marvel of seeing God!<sup>9</sup> How unusual this is! Exodus 33:20: "Thou canst not see my face; for man shall not see me and live." John 1:18: "No man hath seen God at any time." Compare I John 4:12. God dwells in light unapproachable, whom no man hath seen, nor can see (I Tim. 6:16). When Isaiah saw the Lord, he felt that he was "undone" (or destroyed), "for mine eyes have seen the king. . . ." (Isa. 6:3) It was generally recognized among the Israelites that man could not see God and live. See Judges 6:22; 13:22. Ex. 24:11 itself hints that there was something very out of the ordinary in the fact that God did not lay His hand upon (or harm) the nobles.

---

<sup>9</sup>Moses and the others with him on the mount saw *elohim*, or God. The name *Yahweh* is not used here. Neither is it used in other accounts that tell of men seeing God. Compare Isa. 6:1; Judges 13:22.

Never again for 1500 years did a body of men see God again, not until they saw the Lord Jesus with "glory as of the only-begotten of the father." We think that the one whom Moses and the elders saw was God the Word, he who later came in the flesh as Jesus; and that they did not actually behold God the Father. If this be true, then both the statements that they saw God and that no man has beheld God at any time can be true. Compare Isa. 6:1 and John 12:41. But we claim no knowledge of the divine vision presented unto Moses other than the words of the scripture text itself.

Critical scholars who seek to connect 24:1-2 directly to 24:9-11, and attribute 24:3-8 to another author, saying it has been inserted into the story, miss a principal point of Exodus 24: the point that the ratification of the covenant in vss. 3-8 was followed by a glorious experience of fellowship with God upon the mount.

The "then" at the start of 24:9 could be (literally) translated simply as "and," although the "and" there does indicate the consecutive sequence of events which we express by "then."

9. *What was the appearance of God like? (24:10)*

The description of God's appearance is so brief that no image could possibly be made from the information given here. See Deut. 4:15. What is described is only that which lay "under his feet," which was like a work (or production of labor) made of brilliant, clear sapphire. The translation "pavement" seems to be a bit too specific, but probably represents the general idea correctly.

The area under God's feet is said to have been like the very essence (KJV, "body") of heaven for (or in) purity. The term translated "body" in KJV does indeed mean bone, body, or frame; but it also has the meanings of "essence, self, self-same, very." This seems to be its meaning in 24:10. This indicates that what Moses and the elders saw had in every way the appearance of heaven itself. They did not see some watered-down representation.

The word "saw" in 24:10 (Heb., *ra'ah*) is a common word for seeing with physical eyes. The word "saw" (or "beheld") in 24:11 (*chazah*) is the customary word for seeing a vision. The use of both of these words leads us to think that God had not actually transported His heavenly throne apparatus to Mt. Sinai but that the nobles saw it by a vision, but with a vision of such clarity that it was like the very essence of heaven, like being there on the spot.

Cassuto<sup>10</sup> says that the word translated "purity" is commonly used (in Ugaritic poetry) to signify the brightness of the sapphire.

The "paved work" under God's feet appears to be the same as that which is referred to in the description of God's throne in Ezekiel 1:26: "Above the firmament . . . was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a *sapphire* stone; and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man upon it." Ezekiel alone refers to the appearance of God as the appearance of a *man*. The sapphire is a sky-blue semi-precious stone. See Ex. 28:18. Rev. 4:6 says that before the throne of God was, as it were, "a sea of glass, like unto crystal." We suppose that this "crystal" refers to the same "pavement" as that described as sapphire in Exodus.

The liberal critic Noth tries to link the sapphire paved work of Ex. 24:10 with painted or glazed pavements of sapphire color, such as are known to have existed in ancient Mesopotamia.<sup>11</sup> This, of course, renders the Exodus account a fictitious description, written by some author who devised a description of heaven resembling a Mesopotamian temple, and then alleged that the summit of Mt. Sinai was in heaven and that the God of Israel was present there. We are frequently astounded to see how far unbelievers will go to avoid accepting scripture statements as simple truth.

10. *What was the significance of eating and drinking before*

<sup>10</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 314.

<sup>11</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 195.



*God?* (24:11)

The exact significance of this act is not stated. We suppose that it was mainly an act of fellowship with God, celebrating the ratification of the covenant. It is noteworthy that Jesus also instituted the new covenant with a meal, the last supper. See Luke 22:19.

We suppose also that what they ate were portions of the peace-offerings brought with them upon the mount.<sup>12</sup> See 24:5. The burnt-offerings would have been completely burned, but not the peace-offerings (Lev. 1:9; 7:11, 14). The peace-offerings were the only sacrifice of which the worshippers ate part. See notes on 20:24. The peaceful eating and drinking in God's presence indicates the harmony existing at that moment between God and Israel. It may be even a type of the blessedness of our presence with God in eternity, and of the marriage supper of the Lamb (Rev. 19:7-9; 21:3).

Was the *eating* in God's presence part of the process of ratifying God's covenant with Israel? We feel that it was. Jacob and Laban sealed the covenant between them by a meal together (Gen. 31:46, 54). BUT - and this is important - it was NOT the complete process of ratifying the covenant. Nor was it even the major part. That had taken place a day (or more) before when Moses sprinkled the people and the altar and the book with blood (24:6-8). The eating seems to us to have been more a celebration of the previous ratification of the covenant than a substantial part in the act of ratifying it.

We stress this, because the liberal critical view is that Exodus twenty-four contains *two* accounts of ratifying the covenant woven together. Supposedly the account in 24:1-2, 9-11 tells of ratifying the covenant by eating the meal with God up on Mt. Sinai. Then 24:3-8 gives another author's version of the covenant ratification by sprinkling blood at

---

<sup>12</sup>Keil and Delitzsch, *op. cit.*, p. 315, feels that they ate and drank *after* they descended and returned to camp. We certainly do not get that impression from the Biblical text.

the foot of the mountain.<sup>13</sup> It is much better to understand the sprinkling of the blood and the eating as being two acts in the one story.

11. *For what purpose was Moses called up into the mount?* (24:12)

He was called up to receive tablets of stone, and the law (*torah*) and commandment, which God had written.

We assume that the call of verse twelve came AFTER Moses had returned to the foot of the mountain with Aaron and his other companions. This surely seems to be implied by verse fourteen.

The giving of the tablets written by God would be a further and final confirmation of the covenant with God.

When Moses was told to come up into the mount and "Be there," he probably never imagined that he would be there forty days. See 24:18.

The section 24:12-18 looks ahead to 32:1, where Moses was sent down off the mount after the people built the golden calf.

The text surely declares that God himself wrote on the tablets of stone which He gave to Moses. See 31:18. We accept this as true.

It seems to us that the "tablets of stone" and the "law" spoken of are one and the same thing, namely the ten commandments on stone. The text could be translated (and probably should be), "I will give thee the tables of stone, *even* the law. . . ." (The "and" merely introduces another word by way of explanation, and stands between words in apposition.)

Jewish interpreters believe that the "law" spoken of in verse twelve was an oral law (or tradition) given to Moses in addition to the written law. This oral law is supposedly now preserved in written form in the Jewish *Talmud*. The *Talmud* has volumes of material telling how the laws of

---

<sup>13</sup>Noth, *op. cit.*, p. 194.

Moses are to be interpreted and how they are to be carried out in all of life's activities. To many Jews every interpretation of the law given by a universally recognized authority (or rabbi) is regarded as having been given on Mt. Sinai.

Jesus rejected these traditions which were added to the law as being without authority from God. See Mark 7:5, 8-9. Moses himself declared that men were NOT to add to nor take away anything from the word which had been commanded to them (Deut. 4:2), referring to their written statutes and ordinances (Deut. 4:1).

12. *Who went with Moses up into the mount? (24:13-14).*

Joshua, Moses' servant, went up with him. Regarding Joshua, see 17:9 and 32:17. Not even Aaron went up.

Aaron and Hur are mentioned together in 24:14, as they were in 17:10, 12. See notes on those verses.

Moses had served as the judge in disputes too difficult for the other judges of Israel (18:26). In Moses' absence, the people were to bring such cases to Aaron and Hur.

The last clause of verse thirteen seems out of order with what follows it in verses fourteen and fifteen. That does not prove that the text is a jumble of contradictory statements copied clumsily from several sources. It merely reflects the Hebrew style of writing, which is not as concerned with strict chronological order as modern writers generally are. We saw another example of this back in 10:28—11:4.

13. *What covered the mount when Moses ascended into it? (24:15-17)*

The cloud covered it. The text suggests that the cloud returned, a cloud similar to which appeared previously, when the ten commandments were proclaimed (19:16).

The "glory of Jehovah" was seen there with the cloud. This glory is described as "like a devouring fire on the top of the mount," and it was visible even down below to the eyes of the children of Israel (24:17). Compare Ex. 16:10.

The glory of Jehovah "abode" upon Mt. Sinai. The word *abode* is a translation of the verb *shakan*, from which later developed a non-Biblical term *shekinah* (meaning dwelling,

or presence, of God), that referred to the glory cloud within the tabernacle and above it.

Moses was in the cloud on the mount six days, and on the seventh day God called him from the midst of the cloud. We suppose that these six days were days of spiritual preparation. In the Bible we have several instances where the events of six days reached a culmination on the seventh day. Examples could include creation, the weekly sabbath, the manna, etc. Perhaps the six-days' delay caused Moses to associate this experience with other great doings of God.

God's men need patience! Moses waited six days before God's voice came to him.

Many critics separate the story in Exodus into "sources" at 24:15 or near there. (See notes on 24:1-2). They allege that beginning at 24:15 we have a resumption of the Priestly narrative (P), which was interrupted after 19:20. This Priestly section is said to include 24:15—31:18, and to have been written centuries later, probably during Babylonian captivity (about 550 B.C.), and set into the older story by editors of the literary material. There is certainly no ancient manuscript evidence that the story has such sources. We have observed repeatedly how the text tells a continuous, harmonious story. We should not be intimidated by the critics's confident but unverified declarations. Their views deny the unity, truthfulness, and spiritual significance of the Exodus story.

#### 14. *How long was Moses in the mount?* (24:18)

He was there forty days and forty nights. Moses did not come down until the making of the golden calf (Ex. 32:15). In those forty days he received all the information in chapters 25-31 about the tabernacle, the priesthood, etc. Moses was gone so long that the people thought he had perished or otherwise left the scene (32:1).

We do not know whether Joshua was with Moses at any time in these forty days or not. Perhaps they tented together some of the time, or stayed together in some cave.

During these forty days Moses neither ate nor drank. See

Deut. 9:9. Moses also fasted during his second stay on the mount (Deut. 9:18; Ex. 34:28). Elijah fasted forty days at this same place (I Kings 19:8). And Christ fasted forty days in the desert (Matt. 4:2). Assuredly Moses could not have survived forty days without water if he had not been miraculously sustained.

The spectacle of Moses amidst the cloud and the fire of God's glory is awesome. But it is typical of the events connected with the giving of the law. "Thou heardest his words out of the midst of the *fire*" (Deut. 4:36). The Israelites came to a mount that "burned with *fire*, and unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest" (Heb. 12:18).

As Christians, we have come to a very different spiritual starting place. We have come, not to Sinai, but to Mt. Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. We have come to "Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant" (Heb. 12:18, 24).

Israel's representatives briefly came into the presence of God after the covenant was ratified. As Christians we have a constant and eternal access to the father through the new covenant ratified by Christ through His death upon the cross.

---

### THE TEXT OF EXODUS TRANSLATION

**25** And Je-ho-vah spake unto Mo-ses, saying, (2) Speak unto the children of Is-ra-el, that they take for me an offering: of every man whose heart maketh him willing ye shall take my offering. (3) And this is the offering which ye shall take of them: gold, and silver, and brass, (4) and blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine linen, and goats' *hair*, (5) and rams' skins dyed red, and sealskins, and acacia wood, (6) oil for the light, spices for the anointing oil, and for the sweet incense, (7) onyx