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**C0642 – November 8, 2006 – Ex 24:1-18 – The Ratification Of The Mosaic Covenant**

We are studying the Book of Exodus. This is the Greek title of the book from the Septuagint rendering of Exodus 19:1, “to go out, to depart”. The Hebrew title is *we’elleh shemot*, which are the first words of this book, “now these are the names of”. The majority of the book occurs in the years 1445-1444BC. The book has three major sections and three major teachings.

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|-----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. The Exodus from Egypt          | Salvation |
| 2. The Giving of the Law at Sinai | Obedience |
| 3. The Tabernacle and Priesthood  | Worship   |

We are in the second major section, “The Giving of the Law at Sinai” where we are discussing obedience to God’s revealed will. This section begins in Exodus 15:22-24:18. We’ve been through all the laws and we are in the epilogue of ‘the Book of the Covenant’ (20:22-23:33) which begins in 23:20 and ends in verse 33. Here we find God’s promised blessings for obedience. If Israel obeyed then God would bless them. This is a conditional covenant. Last time we stopped in verse 26 so let’s pick up with the promise of verse 27 for Israel’s obedience.

Verse 27, **I will send My terror ahead of you. My terror** is the angel of the Lord from verses 20-23 who we identified as the pre-incarnate Christ. He will go **ahead of** the Israelites when they advance in the land, **and throw into confusion all the people among whom you come**, so that they are easy to destroy, **and I will make all your enemies turn *their* backs to you**, they will run in fear because of **My terror** and you will strike them from the back and destroy them.

Verse 28, **I will send hornets ahead of you so that they will drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites, and the Hittites before you**, the same group mentioned in v 23 but in shortened form. The **hornets** are figurative of “terror and dread” parallel with **My terror** which is the angel of the Lord. “the Arabs to this day call panic resulting in mass flight by a word signifying ‘hornet’ (Cassuto, 308).

Verse 29, **I will not drive them out before you in a single year**, and he did not, it took seven years (1405-1398BC according to the figures revealed in 1 Kings 6:1 and Joshua 14:7, 10). The reason given is so **that the land may not become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you**. This would only endanger them but a slower conquest would be successful. Therefore, verse 30, **I will drive them out before you little by little**, allowing you time to **become fruitful and take possession of the land**. This word **possession** is very important. It is the Hebrew word *nachal* which means “inheritance, possession”. See, their inheritance of the land was conditioned on obedience to God. To inherit or possess the land is different than being a resident in the land. Abraham and Isaac and Jacob never inherited the land. Exodus 6:4 says they “sojourned in the land”, that is, they lived, they dwelled in the land but they never inherited the land. Even the Book of Hebrews says

**Hebrews 11:8-10** By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By faith he lived as an alien in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, fellow heirs of the same promise; <sup>10</sup> for he was looking for the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Verse 13 says that Abraham never received the promises (Heb 11:13). Yet he was faithful to God until death and as a result, Hebrews says he will have a place in the new Jerusalem along with all others who die in faith to the Lord. The main point is that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were *ger's*, sojourners in the land. They never inherited the land. They were living as alien's in a foreign land. God was promising Moses' generation that, if they were obedient then they would inherit the land, they would be the owners of the land. They would not merely live as aliens in a foreign land. They would be the landowners. However, in hindsight we discover that due to their

disobedience they did not possess the land, they did not receive their earthly inheritance despite the fact that that generation was, according to Paul, a type of believer (1 Cor 10:1-4ff). As a result of disobedience they wandered around in the wilderness for forty years and died without taking possession of the land. This is why we have said that this generation portrays the carnal Christian and is held out as an example not to be followed. So, that generation would not possess but the next generation under the leadership of Joshua and Caleb were characterized as strong, courageous and obedient to God (Josh 1:1-18). The partially inherited the land.

Verse 31, **I will fix your boundary from the Red Sea to the sea of the Philistines, and from the wilderness to the River *Euphrates***; Another promise of military victory and final rest, a **fixed boundary** around their inheritance. You know, the US is trying to build a fence between us and Mexico and this is a great controversy yet it provides protection and God was promising to **fix** Israel's **boundaries**. All this blessing is conditioned on obedience. **for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you will drive them out before you.** God will do the **delivering of the inhabitants of the land, and** Israel will do the **driving them out**. It is a promise that God will go before them. God always does His part. It is a command that they should drive them out. Man does not always do his part. Joshua and his generation obeyed partially and enjoyed partial victory and partial rest. They did not receive the entire inheritance described by these borders. As Tom Constable says, "Israel was less successful than she might have been due to incomplete obedience."

Verse 32, **You shall make no covenant with them or with their gods.** If they were to **make covenants with them** then this would, sooner or later, lead to, the adoption of a similar attitude **to their gods**. They were entering a covenant with YHWH. If they were to make a covenant with another nation or their gods then what would this say about YHWH? That He was not sufficient for all their needs! Often believers have the attitude that they need God + something else, yet that is the attitude of an idolater. God is sufficient for all our needs.

Verse 33, **They shall not live in your land**, the word for **live** is *yashab* and means "remain" or "stay". In other words you should drive them out of the fixed boundaries completely. You are not to make a deal with them so they

can “stay”. Why? **because they will make you sin against Me;** The nation of Israel was to be separate from the surrounding nations. Pagans merely living in the land will lead to sin against God. You can never mix pagan culture in with biblical culture and expect to maintain the biblical culture. You will compromise and you will sin more. The fixed boundaries of Israel were the dividing line between where the pagans could live and where Israel could live. The boundaries could not be compromised without sinful consequences which would eventually lead to forfeiture of their inheritance.

PRINCIPLE: You cannot bring the world into that which God has separated from the world. You are living in a fantasy if you think you can dress the world up in Christian clothing.

Finally, **for if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.** Remember, God knows what He’s talking about. He tells us right here that if they serve other gods they will be caught in a trap. It would be stupid to test this to see if it were true. One of the things about wisdom is that you don’t have to make a mistake to gain wisdom. You avoid the mistake by heeding divine wisdom. God has given us His wisdom in Scripture so we will avoid the pitfalls of human wisdom. Joshua and his generation did a lot to drive these pagans out of the land but they did not remove them completely. And what happened? Eventually the nation fell into what? Idolatry. They served **their gods** and this led to the exile of both the northern and southern kingdoms. God knows what He’s talking about and true wisdom is living according to His instruction.

The bottom line of this section is that Israel would enjoy military victory and full inheritance of the land if they obeyed their KING. Their salvation was by faith alone (section 1) but the reward of inheriting the land was conditioned on obedience (section 2).

### **THE INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN TO MOSES (24:1-2)**

**Exodus 24:1 Then he said to Moses, “Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, <sup>u</sup>Nadab, and Abihu, and <sup>v</sup>seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar.**

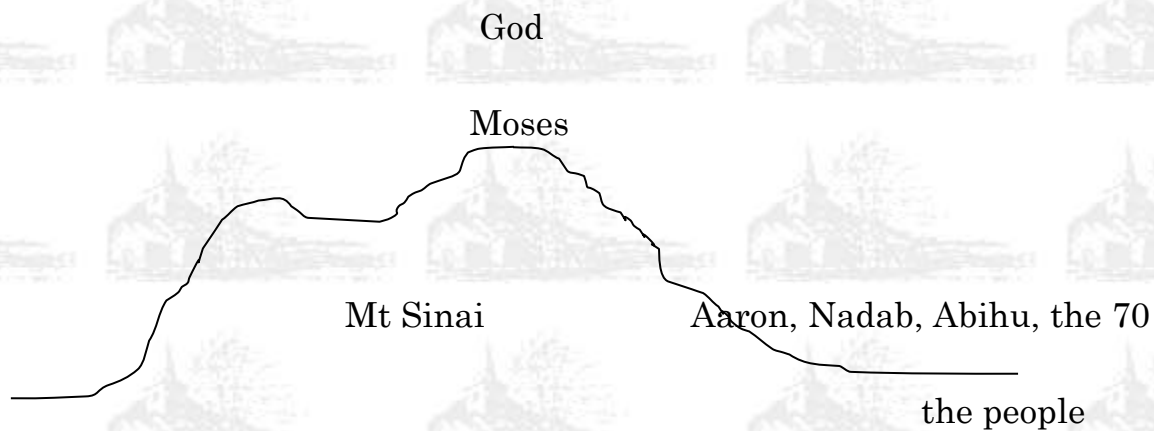
**<sup>2</sup> Moses <sup>w</sup>alone shall come near to the LORD, but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him.”**

**Then he said to Moses**, that is, while Moses was still on Mt Sinai receiving the Book of the Covenant, **“Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, “Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar.** So, Moses will walk down the mountain and get these people who God sovereignly chose for the following task. Who are these people? **Aaron** was the brother of Moses and Miriam (Numb 26:59). Apparently Miriam was the oldest (Exod 2:4ff), then Aaron (Exod 7:7), and lastly Moses. So, Aaron was the middle child, but at this time he was 83-84 years old (Exod 7:7). This family was of the tribe of Levi and later this tribe was designated as the priestly tribe (Exod 6:19). Aaron was designated by God to be the mouthpiece of Moses (Exod 4:14; 7:2) and he went before Pharaoh in Egypt (Exod 5:1; 6:13). He was to accompany Moses to **up to the Lord** on Mt Sinai. Also, God chose **Nadab and Abihu**. These were two of Aaron’s sons. **Nadab** was the firstborn son of Aaron (Numb 3:2). These two sons were first introduced into the story in Exod 6:23 when the Family Tree of Moses and Aaron was revealed. The Torah has a way of gradually introducing people into the story because later on their lives become a central focus.

Here, **Nadab and Abihu** are introduced. In Chapter 28:1 they are designated as priests. They become central in the OT when they commit the sin unto death in Leviticus 10:1-2 by offering strange fire before the Lord. As a result God consumed them with fire. Lastly, in addition to these four, God chose **seventy of the elders of Israel**. The purpose of these 74 was to **worship God from afar**. The word **worship** means to “bow down or prostrate” oneself before a superior, a monarch. They are to bow down on the slope of the mountain to the King of the universe; they shall **worship Him from afar**. They shall not go to the peak of the mountain where God is. Here God is outlining how to approach Him safely. In all such cases the thing of greatest importance is the holiness of God, completely set apart from all sin. God cannot be approached by men in any old way. God is holy and He instructs us how to approach Him.

Verse 2, **Moses “alone shall come near to the LORD**, that is, only Moses is permitted to go to the peak of Mt Sinai **near to the Lord. but the others shall not come near**, that is, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu and the seventy elders of Israel. **and the people shall not come up with him**, that is, the rest of the congregation of Israel which number ~2 million should not even touch the

mountain (cf Exod 19:12, 21, 23). These constitute the basic boundaries God gave Moses in order to respect His holiness.



### THE RATIFICATION OF THE COVENANT (24:3-8)

**Exodus 24:3 Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and <sup>x</sup>all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, <sup>y</sup>“All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do.”**

**<sup>4</sup>And <sup>z</sup>Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD.**

So, **Moses** descended Mt Sinai **and told the people** everything from Exodus 20:22-23:33. Remember, all the people heard the Decalogue, the Ten Commandments of Exodus 20:3-17, but they feared YHWH and wished Moses to receive the rest of the commandments and then tell them what YHWH said. So, this is what happened. Moses received the commandments in Exodus 20:22-23:33 and now he descends to tell the people. So, for the last several chapters Moses alone has been on top of Mt Sinai. And then he came down and **told the people all the words of the Lord and all the rules**. And how did the people respond? **with one voice they said, “All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.”** “How little they understood their own hearts! They should have said, “With the Lord’s help, we will obey His Law.” Within a few weeks, the nation would be worshiping an idol and violating the very Law they agreed to obey.”<sup>i</sup>

At this point there is only a verbal agreement between God and the people with Moses mediating the negotiations. We have not entered into a covenant

proper. What is a covenant? A covenant is a legal contract between two parties. Of all the so-called gods of the ancient world, the famed biblical archaeologist, William F. Albright said, only YHWH, the god of Israel, entered into contractual agreements with His people. What we have here is a landmark event. It is the second contract that YHWH came into with His people Israel. The first was the Abrahamic Covenant which is an unconditional contract. Unconditional contracts are couched in “I will” language. The second was the Mosaic Covenant which was a conditional contract. Conditional contracts are couched in “If...then” language which is precisely what we have here (cf Exod 23:20-33). If Israel would obey YHWH then YHWH would bless Israel. The blessings outlined in Exod 23:20-33 center on Israel’s inheritance (*nachal* –possession) of the land. They will not be mere strangers in the land but the owners of the land.

Verse 4, **And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord.** After verbally agreeing to the terms of the contract Moses makes it more permanent by putting it in a written contract which can be passed down from generation to generation. Critical scholars of the Bible who operate on evolutionary assumptions do not believe Moses could write. However, it is the unabashed teaching of Scripture that he was able to write. At the time Moses wrote in a pictorial Hebrew and what he wrote was **all the words of the Lord.** Those who reject the inerrancy of Scripture do not reject inerrancy altogether. The issue is not whether people believe in inerrancy or not, everyone believes in inerrancy. The issue is where they locate it. Is inerrancy located in the word of God or in the word of man expressed in modern theory? People want to bash the Christian right for believing in an inerrant Bible but we have equal right, even a responsibility to point out to them that they are setting up the human mind as inerrant! Everyone has inerrancy; it’s a matter of where it is located. You can’t function without inerrancy. So, it’s not naïve to believe the Bible is inerrant. It’s naïve to think that the human mind even collectively is inerrant. So, I accept the inerrancy of Scripture and believe **Moses wrote** in language.

That **Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord** is very important for the Doctrine of Revelation, God’s self-revelation of His nature, His plan and His will. Within this doctrine there are two modes of revelation. The first mode is called general revelation (“revelation available to all men through things”; nature, providence, preservation and conscience). Here there is more

than God's revelation through things. Here we have God's revelation through words. And that is the second mode of revelation, special revelation ("revelation available to some men through words"). God revealed words to Moses on Mt Sinai. Whenever God reveals words to someone it comes by one of six means: 1) By Theophanies, 2) By Miracles, 3) By Direct Communication, 4) By Angels, 5) By the Incarnation and 6) By the Scriptures. The means of revelation God used at Mt Sinai to communicate to Moses was a combination of the first category, Theophany, and the fourth category, Angels. A Theophany is a visible appearance of God and clearly there was a visible manifestation of God at Sinai. Probably this visible appearance was a combination of the Shechinah Glory (Exod 19:16; 20:18) and the angel of the Lord, the pre-incarnate Christ (Acts 7:38). We also learn from the NT that angels somehow ordained the giving of the Law (Acts 7:53; Gal 3:19). So, this incident is very important for the Doctrine of Revelation, particularly special revelation, the revelation of God to Moses ordained by angels in the midst of a Theophany.

Second, this verse is important for the Doctrine of Inspiration. Notice **Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord**. The orthodox view of inspiration states that God superintended the human authors so that they wrote down everything God wanted and only what God wanted. In most cases there is a dual authorship to Scripture, the divine side and the human side. Only in rare cases is Scripture dictated or written solely by the hand of God. In all cases inspiration extends to the very words and not merely to the concepts or ideas. So, there is a dual authorship to Scripture. In the case of 'the Book of the Covenant' which we are studying, God is the primary author and Moses is the secondary author. God superintended the process so as to ensure that what Moses **wrote down** was **all the words of the Lord**. He did not add words nor did he take words away. When we talk about inspiration at this church we are talking about verbal plenary inspiration, the very words and all the words in the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek contained in the original writings, these are inspired. It is the words and not just the concepts that are inspired. This is why a study of the original languages, including tense, mood, voice and syntax in the overall context is very important to arriving at the intended meaning. Even a slight change in a word conveys a different meaning. So, God superintended the process so that **Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord**.



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<sup>u</sup> ch. 28:1; See ch. 6:23

<sup>v</sup> Num. 11:16

<sup>w</sup> ver. 13, 15, 18

<sup>w</sup> ver. 13, 15, 18

<sup>x</sup> ch. 21:1

<sup>y</sup> ch. 19:8; Deut. 5:27

<sup>z</sup> Deut. 31:9

<sup>i</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W.: *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*. Wheaton, IL : Victor Books, 1993, S. Ex 24:1

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