

“The Mosaic Covenant”
Exodus 24
(Preached at Trinity, August 3, 2008)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Verses 1-8** we saw the ratification of God’s covenant. It was an affirmation of the covenant God made with Abraham. It was the grand climax of the Mount Sinai experience.
 - A. Moses and the elders are instructed to ascend the mountain to worship.
 1. Moses served in the roll of mediator going between God and His sinful people – a type of Christ
 2. There were three levels of ascent at Mount Sinai.
 - (1) The people of Israel were to remain at foot of the mountain
 - (2) The elders as representative leaders were permitted to approach part-way up the mountain.
 - (3) Moses alone was allowed at the summit, the point where God would be met.
Exodus 24:2 – “And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.”
 - B. **Verses 3, 7** – Moses reiterates God’s demands – They were to give full obedience to God.
After Moses finished reading the people swore obedience.
Exodus 24:3 – “. . . and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.”
 - C. Finally, Moses seals the covenant with the sprinkling of blood
Exodus 24:8 – “And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled *it* on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.”
2. We’ve looked at the importance of the blood in sealing the covenant. We’ve also looked at the significance of their coming into the presence of God. God was their God. He’d made a covenant with their father Abraham – a covenant that God continued to keep.
3. Tonight, before we leave **Chapter 26**, I think it would be of a great benefit to look at greater detail at the Mosaic Covenant. There is often much confusion here.
4. God’s covenants are the thread that binds the books of the Bible together. You cannot truly understand God apart from the covenantal framework. God is a God who has a covenant people whom He loves. He is a God who is carrying out His divine purpose in light of an agreement that He made between the Father and the Son in eternity past – the Covenant of Redemption. God is working out His redemptive purpose by way of a string of covenants.

5. But it is essential that we understand the nature of the covenants.
- A. The covenants are inseparably tied together. They are ultimately the fulfillment of God's eternal covenant. God has a purpose to redeem His people from their sins. **Matthew 1:21** - "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins."
- a. All of the covenants are tied to God's promise that He made in the Garden when God told the serpent,
Genesis 3:15 – "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
In other words, God was speaking of a Covenant of grace in which men might be redeemed through the seed of the woman.
- b. They are all tied to God's covenant that he made with Abraham when He said,
Genesis 22:17-18 – "That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which *is* upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; ¹⁸ And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."
- c. They are all tied to the fulfillment of God's promise to David
Isaiah 9:7 – "Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."
- B. There is unity with the covenants. They are all bound together, but the elements are distinct. This is an important hermeneutical principle when considering the covenants. This means that the elements of one covenant are not to be assumed upon the others. This is where the Paedobaptists err when they try to impose infant baptism as a substitute for circumcision in the New Covenant.
- C. There is one connecting thread with all of them, however. They are all linked to the Covenant of Grace. In other words, they are all inseparably linked to God's redemptive work in Christ. Jesus Christ is the focal figure in all of the covenants. All of Scripture points to Christ.
- I. The Covenant at Sinai is not separate from the Covenant that God made with Abraham, rather it fulfills it.
- A. God redeemed His people from Egypt as a fulfillment of His promise.
Exodus 3:6-7 – "Moreover he said, I *am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. **7** ¶ And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;"

Exodus 3:15-16 – “And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this *is* my name for ever, and this *is* my memorial unto all generations. ¹⁶ Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and *seen* that which is done to you in Egypt:”

1. God remembered them because they were the chosen seed of Abraham according to promise. God remembered them because they were the ones through whom the seed promised in **Genesis 3** would come.
2. God is faithful to His covenant promises.

Exodus 19:4-6 – “Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how* I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. ⁵ Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine: ⁶ And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These *are* the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”

Exodus 24:3 – “And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do.”

B. The Mosaic Covenant on Sinai was a covenant in which God called the people of Israel to promise to keep His words under the threat of punishment and then sealed it with the sacrifice of animals to prove that it was still a covenant of grace pointing forward to the ultimate fulfillment in Christ.

1. The Law was central to the covenant. It was conditional upon their obedience. There were promises of blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 – “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse; ²⁷ A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day: ²⁸ And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.”

2. It was not a promise of salvation but a promise that God would bless them as a covenant people. It promised earthly, temporal blessings.

Deuteronomy 5:32-33 – “Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left. ³³ Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and *that it may be* well with you, and *that ye may prolong your* days in the land which ye shall possess.”

3. God’s promises to Israel have always demanded obedience – in this sense they were conditional

Exodus 19:5 – “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth *is* mine:”

4. It was possible to be excluded from the covenant if they did not obey.
Deuteronomy 8:20 – “As the nations which the LORD destroyeth before your face, so shall ye perish; because ye would not be obedient unto the voice of the LORD your God.”
- a. In the end Israel rejected God’s Covenant and was rejected
 - b. Both the Northern and Southern tribes rebelled against God.
 - c. The Southern tribe of Judah was judged and carried off into the Babylonian captivity, but would later be restored.
 - d. The Northern tribes were judged, conquered by the Assyrians and forever scattered.
 - e. This was foretold in Hosea **Chapter 1** and demonstrated through the names of his three children
 - The first a son – Jezreel (sown or scattered of God). God declares through Hosea in **Verse 4** “and will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel.”
 - The second, a daughter – Loruhamah (no mercy) **Hosea 1:6** for I will no more have mercy upon the house of Israel; but I will utterly take them away.
 - The third, a son – Loammi (not my people) **Hosea 1:9** – “Then said God, Call his name Loammi: for ye are not my people, and I will not be your God.”
- C. This does not at all mean that God’s covenantal promises to Abraham were broken. They were fulfilled in Christ under the New Covenant.
 Nor does it mean that the Jews are cut off from salvation.
Romans 11:1 – “I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid.”
1. The promises of God are unshakable—but how were they fulfilled. The promises of God to Israel were ultimately fulfilled through the Messiah—Jesus Christ, the seed of Abraham, the true Israel.
 2. The great tragedy is Israel would not have God’s Anointed – they would not have Christ.
 3. Because of this the Kingdom was taken from them and given to another.
- D. This taking of the Kingdom from Israel is clearly taught in the Gospels
 Jesus foretold the taking of the Kingdom from Israel
1. Jesus warned the Pharisees that they would be excluded in His kingdom
Luke 13:28-29 – “There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and *from* the west, and from the north, and *from* the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.”
 2. Jesus taught this in the Parable of the Vineyard in Matthew 21
Matthew 21:43 – “Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”

3. Marveling at the faith of the Gentile centurion Jesus declared:
Matthew 8:11-12 – “And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. ¹² But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
 - D. This doesn’t mean that God is through with Israel. He has an elect remnant that are being brought into the Kingdom which **Romans 11** plainly teaches.
Romans 11:5 – “Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.”
 1. God is provoking them to jealousy through the Gentiles that they might be saved.
 2. But they will be saved like every other sinner – through the grace of election resulting in repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- II. What was the purpose of the Mosaic Covenant?
- A. The Mosaic Covenant is an addition to the Abrahamic Covenant for a specific reason for a specific period of time.
 1. It was an administration of the covenant of grace under Abraham. It established atonement for a sinful people through sacrifices. It established a Temple where God’s people who had gained atonement through the sacrifices could worship. And it maintained a people until the promised seed would come.
 2. It was added because of transgressions to convict them of sin and to bind them to obedience to God. God gave His law as a perfect standard – a rule of obedience. It taught them what sin is and show them there need of a Messiah.
 It was added to the Abrahamic Covenant to shut up all men under sin.
Galatians 3:23-24 – “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. ²⁴ Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”
 3. It served as a restrainer and corrector of sin. It suppresses sin.
 Samuel Bolton – “The law chains up the wickedness of the hearts of man, that they dare not fulfil those lustful inclinations which are found in their hearts. Blessed be God that there is this fear upon the spirits of wicked men; otherwise we could not well live in the world.”
 4. It was not a covenant of works whereby Israel could earn eternal salvation
 - a. Many of the old Dispensationalists believed this.
 - b. The Mosaic Covenant did not *replace* the Abrahamic Covenant of salvation by grace through faith. It was *added* to it for a season
Galatians 3:21-22 – “*Is* the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. ²² But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”

5. It was given for a time until Jesus Christ came and established the New Covenant with His blood. It served to hold God's people together in conformity to God's Word until the promised seed would come.

III. The Mosaic Covenant is not like the New Covenant.

- A. The New Covenant is entirely different
 1. It is the fulfillment of God's covenant with Abraham
 2. It is entirely different from the Mosaic Covenant
- B. To confuse the two is to bring great confusion in the Christian life and destroy the Gospel
 1. If you think God deals with us in the way He dealt with Israel under the Old Covenant then we will continually seek His approval through keeping the Law.
 2. If you think God deals with us in the way He dealt with Israel under the Old Covenant then you will believe that it is possible to be a Christian under the Covenant of grace and then be kicked out because of your disobedience.
 3. If you believe in blessing or cursing based upon the degree of your obedience you will find yourself brought back under the bondage of the Law and continually lack of assurance of your salvation.
 4. When you begin to base your relationship with God, whether He accepts you, loves you cherishes you, upon your faithfulness or your goodness or your righteousness you have lost the Gospel.
 5. This is why it is important to understand that the elements of one covenant do not necessarily extend to another covenant.
 - a. Under the Old Covenant God gave the demands of the Law but gave no ability to fulfill the demands.
 - b. Under the New Covenant God writes His Law upon our hearts through regeneration, gives us His Spirit who enables us to obey, and gives us the atonement through Christ's blood by which we are forgiven when we do sin – **See Jeremiah 31:31-34; 32:38-41 Hebrews 8:12** – “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.”
- C. How is the Mosaic Covenant different from the New Covenant?
 1. The Mosaic Covenant contained blessings and cursings that the grace of the New Covenant excludes
 2. Some falsely try to impose the OC upon the NC.
 - a. They use **John 15** as a proof text. That **John 15** is speaking of those in the New Covenant who then because of their disobedience are broken off and excluded. **See John 15:1-6**
 - b. This passage is telling us that those who are in Christ are kept by Christ. True disciples bear fruit and persevere until the end. No one in the NC is excluded due to unfaithfulness.
 - c. The unfaithful never were in the NC.
To believe that true disciples can be kicked out leaves us without any assurance that we will be found in Christ in the end.

- d. The NC cannot be broken because God will not break His covenant because it is the full expression of His eternal Covenant of Redemption in Christ.
The Mosaic Covenant is not identical with the Covenant of grace. It could be broken.

Conclusion:

1. The Mosaic Covenant was neither identical with the NC and salvation by grace alone nor of the Covenant of Works under Adam. It was a different covenant.
2. Under the New Covenant the Law is still present and still serves a purpose.
 - a. It still serves to convict men of sin and show them their need of God's salvation through Christ.
Galatians 3:23-24 – “But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. ²⁴ Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”
 - b. The Law serves to reveal and define God's moral Law. This Law is still in force in the NC as a perfect standard by which God's people strive to honor Christ in obedience.
 - c. This is the Law that Jeremiah prophesied that under the New Covenant would be written upon the hearts of God's people through the new birth.
3. The New Covenant is a different kind of covenant than any of the Old Testament Covenants – the covenant with Noah, with Abraham, with Moses, and with David. The NC is a fulfillment of all of these covenants which were administrations of God's eternal covenant between the Father and the Son.
4. The Mosaic Covenant was breakable and it was broken. The New Covenant cannot be broken because of God's faithfulness to His promise. Not a single one of God's New Covenant people will be lost.
 - a. The New Covenant cannot be broken because it is not based upon our righteousness. It is based upon the righteousness of Christ. We live by faith. We trust in His righteousness. Our own righteousness will never be sufficient.
 - b. God has set our hearts upon Christ in the New Covenant. Not only does Jesus redeem us from the curse of the Law. He has won our hearts. We love to obey Him. We love His law. We love to obey Him.
5. If you come to Christ you will be saved and you will enter into God's eternal covenant – His eternal promise. He will not cast you off.