

# Exodus 24 Commentary

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Summary Chart of The Book of Exodus									
<b>DELIVERANCE FROM OPPRESSION</b>						<b>PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP</b>			
Redemption from Egypt Ex 1:1-18:27						Revelation from God Ex 19:1-40:38			
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Narration						Legislation			
Birth of Moses Ex 1-2	Call of Moses Ex 3-6	Conflict with Pharaoh Ex 7-10	Exodus from Egypt Ex 11-12	Red Sea Crossed Ex 13-15	Journey To Sinai Ex 16-18	Law Given Ex 19-24	Tent Plan Ex 25-31	Idol Worship Ex 32-34	Tent Built Ex 35-40
Subjection			Redemption			Instruction			
Suffering and Liberation of People of God			Guidance of God			Worship of God			
Moses and Burdens of Israel		Pharaoh and Plagues Upon Egypt		Red Sea Deliverance	Wilderness Provision	Sinai Instructions			
Bondage and Oppression			Deliverance and Provision			Law Pattern and Construction			
Israel in Egypt Ex 1:1-13:16			Israel to Sinai Ex 13:17-18:27			Israel at Sinai Ex 19:1-40:38			

God's People Enduring Bondage			God's Grace Revealed in Redemption			God's Glory Manifested in Worship		
Egypt 430 Years (15% of Exodus)			Wilderness 2 Months (30% of Exodus)			Mt Sinai 10 Months (55% of Exodus)		
From Groaning								To Glory!

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[Click for Events during the Sojourn at Kadesh-Barnea](#)

GENESIS	EXODUS
human effort and failure	divine power and triumph
word of promise	work of fulfillment
a people chosen	a people called
God's electing mercy	God's electing manner
revelation of nationality	realization of nationality

SUMMARY OF THE PENTATEUCH  
(from Believer's Study Bible)

**Exodus 24:1** Then He said to Moses, "**Come up** to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel, and you shall worship at a distance.

- Come up: Ex 24:15 3:5 19:9,20,24 20:21 34:2
- Nadab: Ex 6:23 28:1 Lev 10:1,2 1Ch 6:3
- seventy: Ex 24:9 1:5 Nu 11:16,24,25 Eze 8:11 Lu 10:1,17
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD' INVITATION TO COME UP

This chapter is the climax of the covenant which is ratified between Yahweh and Israel. To ratify means to approve or give formal sanction to the stipulations of the covenant given in Exodus 20-23.

**Guzik** refers to this chapter as the "signing of the Mosaic Covenant." I would added, yes, signed in blood, not ink!

**Thompson** - We come now to a moment when it is time again for Moses to go up the mountain for the very special reason. God wanted to finalize the covenant that He had made with Israel. God had already saved Israel (HE IS SPEAKING OF PHYSICAL DELIVERANCE NOT NECESSARILY SPIRITUAL SALVATION!) and now He wanted to bring her into a close relationship with Himself. He wanted to take this relationship to a new level. ([Sermon](#))

**NET Note** - Exod 24 is the high point of the book in many ways, but most importantly, here Yahweh makes a covenant with the people – the Sinaitic Covenant. The unit not only serves to record the event in Israel's becoming a nation, but it provides a paradigm of the worship of God's covenant people – entering into the presence of the glory of Yahweh...The passage may be divided into four parts for exposition:

1. Exodus 24:1–2, the call for worship;
2. Exodus 24:3–8, the consecration of the worshipers;
3. Exodus 24:9–11, the confirmation of the covenant;
4. Exodus 24:12–18, the communication with Yahweh.

**Then He said to Moses** - Recall that in Ex 20:21 "**Moses approached the thick cloud where God was,**" and from that point on in Ex 20:22-Ex 23:33 God was speaking to Moses by himself. **Then** marks sequence or progression in the drama as Yahweh (**He** refers to the LORD) continues to speak to Moses from the mountain. Yahweh now extends His invitation to **come up** to the others noted in this passage. The first time Moses went up this mountain, no one went with him (Ex. 19:3, 20+)

**Come up to the LORD** - Their trip up the mountain would be after the preparations described in Exodus 24:3-8. It is interesting that the words "**come up**" were used in the plagues of frogs and locusts (Ex 8:3-7; Ex 10:12) In Ex 19:13 the people were invited to "come up" to the mountain but Moses said they could not "come up" lest they touch it and die (Ex 19:23). God had responded by telling Moses to "'Go down and come up again, you and Aaron with you; but do not let the priests and the people break through to come up to the LORD, or He will break forth upon them.'" (Ex 19:24). Now after speaking with Moses God invites Aaron again to "come up" but this time includes his sons and the elders.

Note that the verb **come up** ([alah](#)) is used seven times in Exodus 24 - Exod. 24:1; Exod. 24:2; Exod. 24:5; Exod. 24:9; Exod. 24:12; Exod. 24:13; Exod. 24:15; Exod. 24:18

**Come up** reminds me of another famous invitation by God in Revelation given to His two witnesses who have been slain on the streets of Jerusalem. While the witnesses are not identified, many commentators feel that one of these two men is Moses (See [discussion of two witnesses](#)). John records these amazing words...

And they heard a loud voice from heaven saying to them, "Come up here." Then they went up into heaven in the cloud, and their enemies watched them. (Rev. 11:12+)

**Come up** in the Bible - Exod. 24:1; Exod. 24:2; Exod. 24:12; Exod. 34:2; Exod. 34:3; Num. 16:12; Num. 16:14; Num. 20:5; Deut. 10:1; Jos. 4:16; Jos. 4:17; Jos. 4:18; Jos. 10:4; Jos. 10:6; Jdg. 1:3; Jdg. 6:3; Jdg. 6:5; Jdg. 12:3; Jdg. 15:10; Jdg. 16:18; Jdg. 21:5; Jdg. 21:8; 1 Sam. 2:19; 1 Sam. 14:10; 1 Sam. 14:12; 1 Ki. 1:35; 1 Ki. 1:45; 1 Ki. 20:22; 2 Ki. 3:21; 2 Ki. 16:7; 2 Ki. 18:25; 2 Ki. 19:28; 2 Chr. 20:16; Neh. 4:12; Neh. 12:31; Job 7:9; Prov. 25:7; Cant. 4:2; Cant. 6:6; Isa. 5:6; Isa. 32:13; Isa. 34:13; Isa. 36:10; Isa. 37:29; Isa. 55:13; Jer. 9:21; Jer. 48:18; Jer. 49:19; Jer. 50:3; Jer. 50:44; Jer. 51:42; Ezek. 24:8; Ezek. 37:12; Ezek. 37:13; Ezek. 38:16; Joel 2:20; Joel 3:9; Joel 3:12; Jon. 1:2; Nah. 2:1; Lk. 12:37; Jn. 19:3; Acts 8:31; Rev. 4:1; Rev. 11:12; Rev. 17:8

**You and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders of Israel- Nadab and Abihu** were first described in Ex 6:23. Note the first "**you**" is singular = Moses. The second "**you**" is plural = the others. The entourage who is invited to draw near to Yahweh. In Nu 11:25 we see the Spirit was placed on seventy elders but Nu 11:16 leaves a question whether these are the same seventy as here in Exodus 24. Some leaders could go higher up the mountain than the people, but only Moses alone was permitted to get real close to Him. We encountered **seventy** in Exodus 1:5 "All the persons who came from the loins of Jacob were **seventy** in number."

**Seventy** in Scripture - Gen. 5:12; Gen. 11:26; Gen. 46:27; Gen. 50:3; Exod. 1:5; Exod. 15:27; Exod. 24:1; Exod. 24:9; Num. 7:13; Num. 7:19; Num. 7:25; Num. 7:31; Num. 7:37; Num. 7:43; Num. 7:49; Num. 7:55; Num. 7:61; Num. 7:67; Num. 7:73; Num. 7:79; Num. 7:85; Num. 11:16; Num. 11:24; Num. 11:25; Num. 33:9; Deut. 10:22; Jdg. 1:7; Jdg. 8:30; Jdg. 9:2; Jdg. 9:4; Jdg. 9:5; Jdg. 9:18; Jdg. 9:24; Jdg. 9:56; Jdg. 12:14; 2 Sam. 24:15; 2 Ki. 10:1; 2 Ki. 10:6; 2 Ki. 10:7; 2 Chr. 36:21; Ps. 90:10; Isa. 23:15; Isa. 23:17; Jer. 25:11; Jer. 25:12; Jer. 29:10; Ezek. 8:11; Ezek. 41:12; Dan. 9:2; Dan. 9:24; Zech. 1:12; Zech. 7:5; Matt. 18:22; Lk. 10:1; Lk. 10:17; Acts 23:23

**NET Note** - These seventy-four people were to go up the mountain to a certain point. Then they were to prostrate themselves and worship Yahweh as Moses went further up into the presence of Yahweh. Moses occupies the lofty position of **mediator** (as Christ in the NT), for he alone ascends "to Yahweh" while everyone waits for his return. The emphasis of "bowing down" and that from "far off" stresses again the ominous presence that was on the mountain. This was the holy God—only the designated **mediator** could draw near to him.

**John Currid** - God directs three different groups to go up the mountain: Moses, as covenant mediator, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, as leaders of the future priesthood, and seventy ruling elders of Israel. They are representative of all Israel in their leadership positions. In fact, in Scripture the figure of 'seventy' is often symbolic of totality—i.e., the wholeness of Israel. This is an exceptional scene, considering the stricture of 19:12 that 'Anyone who touches the mountain shall certainly die.'

**And you shall worship at a distance** - Moses is told these 73 men would go up only so far (Ex 24:2) and prostrate themselves before the LORD, but Moses would go up further ("come near" - Ex 24:2) to the presence of the LORD. **Distance** (rachoq) is the same word used in Ex 2:4+ of Moses sister who "stood at a distance to find out what would happen to him." In Ex 20:18, 21+ when the people saw the supernatural aspects on Mt Sinai " they trembled and stood **at a distance.**"

**Worship** (see more below) is falling down, prostrating oneself before God. **Falling down** and **Bowing** gives a clear indication of Ruth's **humility** and **respect for authority**.

**THOUGHT** - Under the Law one must stay at a distance from Jehovah, but in the New Covenant of grace, every priest-believer can "draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb 4:16+) Paul adds that now in Christ "we have boldness and confident access through faith in Him." (Eph 3:12+) Beloved, do we really grasp the significance and privilege of the truth that we do not have to worship at a distance?

**Worship** (bow down, prostrate themselves) (07812)(**shachah**) means to bow down, to prostrate oneself, to crouch, to fall down, to humbly beseech, to do reverence, to worship. The idea is to assume a prostrate position as would in paying homage to royalty (Ge 43:28) or to God (Ge 24:26, Ps 95:6). The English word **prostrate** is defined as being stretched out with one's face on the ground in adoration or submission. It is not just that the person has fallen down but pictures them lying at length or with their body extended on the ground and so lying in a posture which is reflective of genuine humility and/or adoration. Shachah is translated in the **Septuagint (LXX)** in this passage (and most of the uses in Psalms and elsewhere) with the picturesque Greek verb **proskuneo** (from **pros** = toward or facing + **kuneo** = kiss, adore) which pictures the practice among the Orientals (especially the Persians) of falling upon their knees and touching the ground with their forehead as an expression of profound reverence. Uses of shachah in Exodus -Ex 4:31; Ex 11:8; Ex 12:27; Ex 18:7; Ex 20:5; Ex 23:24; Ex 24:1; Ex 32:8; Ex 33:10; Ex 34:8; Ex 34:14

**Distance** (07350)(**rachoq** from **rachaq** = to be distant) means distant, far, far off, at a distance. The idea of remoteness first relates to distance from a place, such as the actions of Joseph's brothers. Joseph was sent by his father, Jacob, to find his brothers. As Joseph approached them in Dothan, they thought of an evil plot to rid themselves of him: "When they saw him (JOSEPH) from a distance and before he came close to them, they plotted against him to put him to death." (Ge 37:18). Joshua commanded the people to keep a distance between the Ark of the Covenant and themselves of about 2000 cubits, as the nation of Israel followed God across the Jordan River into the Promised Land (Josh. 3:4), and the psalmist asks, "Why do You stand afar off, O LORD?" (Ps. 10:1). Abraham was taking Isaac to sacrifice his only son, the son he loved and "On the third day Abraham raised his eyes and saw the place **from a distance.**" (Ge 22:4) The term **rāchôq** also can mean distance in regard to time such as "a long time ago." Isaiah castigated the people of Jerusalem for many reasons, one of which was the desecration of personal property, without respect for "him who fashioned [a wall] long ago" (Isa. 22:11). The counsels of God, faithfulness and truth, exist from of old (Isa. 25:1). It describes "the **distant future**" in 2 Sa 7:19. In 2 Ki 19:25 "'Have you not heard? **Long ago** (rachoq repeated twice for emphasis) I did it; From ancient times I planned it." **Distance** can also signify "mystery," enigmatic situations because of depth, or height, or complexity: "What has been is **remote** and exceedingly mysterious. Who can discover it?" (Ecc. 7:24). In a prophecy of Israel's future destruction "'The LORD will bring a nation against you from **afar**, from the end of the earth" (Dt 28:49) In Dt 30:11 "For this commandment which I command you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it **out of reach.**" Rachoq is used in the deception of Israel by the Gibeonites (Josh 9:6, 9, 22). Ps 22:1 = "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? **Far** from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. THIS IS MY FAVORITE USED TWICE - Ps 103:12 = As **far** as the east is from the west, So **far** has He removed our transgressions from us." (AND ALL GOD'S PEOPLE SHOUTED "HALLELUJAH! AMEN!") Ps 119:155 "Salvation is **far** from the wicked, For they do not seek Your statutes." Ps 139:2 "You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought **from afar.**" Pr 15:29 = "The LORD is **far from** the wicked, But He hears the prayer of the righteous." Isa 25:1 "O LORD, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; For You have worked wonders, Plans formed **long ago**, with perfect faithfulness." Isa 37:26 = "Have you not heard? **Long ago** I did it, From ancient times I planned it. Now I have brought it to pass, That you should turn fortified cities into ruinous heaps." Jer 12:2 = "You are near to their lips But **far from** their mind" (WOE!) Jer 23:23 = "Am I a God who is near," declares the LORD, "And not a God **far off?**"

**Rachoq** - 84v - afar(19), afar\*(1), distance(11), distant(7), distant future(1), far(31), far away(1), far off(2), farthest(1), great while(1), great while to come(1), long ago(4), long\*(1), off\*(1), reach(1), remote(1), who are far(2), who are far away(1), who is far off(1). Gen. 22:4; Gen. 37:18; Exod. 2:4; Exod. 20:18; Exod.

20:21; Exod. 24:1; Num. 9:10; Deut. 13:7; Deut. 20:15; Deut. 28:49; Deut. 29:22; Deut. 30:11; Jos. 3:4; Jos. 9:6; Jos. 9:9; Jos. 9:22; Jdg. 18:7; Jdg. 18:28; 1 Sam. 26:13; 2 Sam. 7:19; 1 Ki. 8:41; 1 Ki. 8:46; 2 Ki. 2:7; 2 Ki. 19:25; 2 Ki. 20:14; 1 Chr. 17:17; 2 Chr. 6:32; 2 Chr. 6:36; 2 Chr. 26:15; Ezr. 3:13; Neh. 4:19; Neh. 12:43; Est. 9:20; Job 2:12; Job 36:3; Job 36:25; Job 39:25; Job 39:29; Ps. 10:1; Ps. 22:1; Ps. 38:11; Ps. 65:5; Ps. 119:155; Ps. 139:2; Prov. 7:19; Prov. 15:29; Prov. 27:10; Prov. 31:10; Eccl. 7:23; Eccl. 7:24; Isa. 5:26; Isa. 22:3; Isa. 22:11; Isa. 23:7; Isa. 25:1; Isa. 33:13; Isa. 37:26; Isa. 39:3; Isa. 43:6; Isa. 46:12; Isa. 49:1; Isa. 49:12; Isa. 57:9; Isa. 57:19; Isa. 59:14; Isa. 60:4; Isa. 60:9; Isa. 66:19; Jer. 12:2; Jer. 23:23; Jer. 25:26; Jer. 30:10; Jer. 31:3; Jer. 46:27; Jer. 48:24; Jer. 51:50; Ezek. 6:12; Ezek. 12:27; Ezek. 22:5; Dan. 9:7; Joel 3:8; Mic. 4:3; Hab. 1:8; Zech. 6:15

**Exodus 24:2 "Moses alone, however, shall come near to the LORD, but they shall not come near, nor shall the people come up with him."**

- Ex 24:13,15,18 20:21 Nu 16:5 Jer 30:21 49:19 Heb 9:24 Heb 10:21,22
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### ONLY MOSES TO COME NEAR

**Moses alone, however, shall come near to the LORD** - **Moses** has "special access." **Come near** ([nagash](#) both translated with [eggizo](#)) is used twice in this passage. And here we see Moses clearly in the role of **mediator** between God and the 73 men (and by extension between God and all the people of Israel), which foreshadows the role that Jesus Christ is fulfilling today in Heaven for us, Paul writing "there is one God, and one **Mediator** also between God and men, the (NOW GLORIFIED) man Christ Jesus." (1 Ti 2:5). As the chapter unfolds we see Moses functioning as the **mediator of the old covenant**, providing a striking contrast to Jesus the Mediator a new covenant. The writer of Hebrews records this role of Christ

(Hebrews 8:6+) But now He (CHRIST) has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the **Mediator** ([mesites](#)) of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

(Hebrews 9:15+) For this reason He (CHRIST) is the **Mediator** ([mesites](#)) of a new covenant, so that, since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant (OLD COVENANT INAUGURATED HERE IN EXODUS 24), those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. (cf parallel truth in Romans 3:24-25+)

(Hebrews 12:22-24+) But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, 23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, 24 and to Jesus, the **Mediator** ([mesites](#)) of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel.

**Come near** (approach, draw near, present)([05066](#))([nagash](#)) signifies coming into very near proximity to the object in this case the LORD. Ex. 19:15; Ex. 19:22; Ex. 20:21; Ex 21:6; Ex 24:2; Ex 24:14; Ex 28:43; Ex 30:20; Ex 32:6; Ex 34:30; Ex 34:32

**Kaiser** writes "Moses alone was to function as the mediator between God and the Israelites, just as Christ is designated the second Moses in Hebrews 3:1–6 and thus is the Mediator of the new covenant (Heb 12:24)."

Hebrews 3:1-6+ Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; 2 He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. 3 For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. 4 For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. 5 Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; 6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

**but they shall not come near, nor shall the people come up with him**- Note the stratification into 3 levels - Moses goes up to the summit, Aaron, sons and 70 elders next highest and **the people** down beneath at the foot of Mt Sinai. What is this about? For one thing it is a way of illustrating the awesome holiness of God and the impossibility of overcoming the moral distance that separates men from Him. Only via the old rugged Cross is that moral chasm crossable in Christ! Only Moses had special access to the presence of Yahweh. All others could come only so close and must not come any farther. The "special guest" were closer than the

lay Israelites, but they all had restricted access compared to Moses.

**THOUGHT**- This truth reminds me of the great privilege we now have as believers (do we truly understand this surpassing privilege, this so great a salvation - Heb 2:3+? I DO NOT! AND EVEN WHEN I GET A SMALL SENSE OF IT I AM SO QUICK TO LET IT SLIP FROM MY MIND AND HEART!) Paul speaks of this incomparable, almost incomprehensible (especially in the context of this teaching in Exodus 24 where even the elders had to remain at a distance) privilege we have now as those in the New Covenant, in oneness with Christ, in communion with Him. Ponder Paul's description of our amazing **entrée** (the main dish of the meal!) = "Therefore, having been justified by faith ([PAST TENSE SALVATION](#)), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, 2 through Whom also we have obtained our introduction (see great picture in the Greek word - [prosagoge](#)) by faith into this grace in which we stand ([PRESENT TENSE SALVATION](#)); and we exult in hope ([elpis](#) = absolute assurance God will do good to us in the [FUTURE](#)) of the glory of God [FUTURE TENSE SALVATION](#)- SEE 1 John 3:2-3+). 3 And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; 4 and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; 5 and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit Who was given to us ([PRESENT TENSE SALVATION](#)). " (Romans 5:1-5+)

**J Vernon McGee** - God told these men to come up into the mountain, but even these men who were in a very unique position at that time were told to worship afar off. How different things were under law than they are under grace. How different their situation was from when God was bringing them along the path from Egypt on eagle's wings of grace. Under law man must worship afar off but today Ephesians 2:13 tells us, "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." God saves us and leads us along life's pathway today by His grace.

**C H Spurgeon** on **shall come near to the LORD but they shall not come near**- Nearer to God than the people were allowed to come, but still at a distance from him. It was a covenant of distance, — bounds were set about the mount lest the people should come too near. Yet they were near unto God as compared with the heathen, but far off as compared with those who now, by the teaching of the Spirit of God, have been brought near to God through the precious blood of Jesus. Moses alone could come near to Jehovah on mount Sinai, the people could not go up with him, — nor even with the man who was their mediator with God, for such Moses was; but you and I, beloved, can go up with him who is far greater than Moses, —with him who is the one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ at Jesus, for God "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus."

**THOUGHT** - Utter reverence is due the Lord, so approach to Him is limited and access denied except to the few. This is in contrast to what believers enjoy today (cf. Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:16). Texts like this should make believers in Jesus Christ more appreciative of the warm invitation they have to come freely with their worship and to have their needs met by their merciful Father (Hebrews 2:17-18; 4:16). (Moody Bible Commentary)

**Exodus 24:3** Then Moses came and recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances; and all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!"

- **all the ordinance:** Ex 21:1-23:33 De 4:1,5,45 5:1,31 6:1 11:1
- **All the words:** Ex 24:7 Ex 19:8 De 5:27,28 Jos 24:22 Ga 3:19,20
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **A PROMISING PROMISE!** **"WE WILL DO"**

### **Related Passages:**

Deuteronomy 5:27; 28+ 'Go near and hear all that the LORD our God says; then speak to us all that the LORD our God speaks to you, and **we will hear and do it.**' "The LORD heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the LORD said to me, 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you. **They have done well in all that they have spoken**

Joshua 24:20-22 "If you forsake the LORD and serve foreign gods, then He will turn and do you harm and consume you after He has done good to you." The people said to Joshua, "**No, but we will serve the LORD.**" Joshua said to the people, "You are witnesses against yourselves that you have chosen for yourselves the LORD, to serve Him." And they said, "We are witnesses."

What do the bride and groom say to each other to "ratify" their marriage covenant? "I do." Here in effect Israel says to her Husband (Isa 54:5, Jer 31:32) "I DO!" (actually "we will do.") See related study - [Covenant: As It Relates to Marriage](#)

**Then Moses came** - He came from meeting with God on Mount Sinai. "Moses came from the mountain, upon which he was still standing after his ascent described in Ex 20:21, to the camp." (Cassuto)

**NET Note** - The general consensus among commentators is that this refers to Moses' coming from the mountain after he made the ascent in Ex 20:21.

**And recounted to the people all the words of the LORD and all the ordinances- Moses came and recounted** is showing that Moses has now become the mediator between God and the nation of Israel. **Recounted** (tell the details, the facts or particulars of - see also below on saphar/sapar) here refers to the communication of important truths (same word used in Ex 18:8), in this context new revelation from Jehovah of instructions and regulations regarding how Israel was to function as a holy nation, separate and distinct from the surrounding pagan peoples. The **Septuagint** translates **sapar/saphar** with the verb **diegeomai** meaning to give a detailed account. Moses was to function in essence as God's mouthpiece (aka, prophet - Dt 18:15, quoted in Acts 3:22+, Acts 7:37+, Dt 34:10) and was to speak only what God spoke to him, neither adding to it nor subtracting from it (Pr 30:6, Dt 4:2, Dt 12:32, Rev 22:18-19+). In short, Moses presents a detailed account of what he had heard from God.

The **words of the LORD** would be the "Ten Commandments" which He spoke to the people from Mount Sinai and the **ordinances** which refers to the words of LORD had spoken to Moses on the mountain beginning in Ex 21:1+ where God instructed Moses **"Now these are the ordinances which you are to set before them."** These **ordinances** continue through at least Exodus 23:19+ (some feel the words go through Ex 23:33+), when God begins to give instructions on going into the land. Some writers feel that all the words also includes the words in Ex 20:21-26+ (which includes instructions on making an altar).

**Recounted** (05608) (**saphar/sapar** from **sepher** = writing, book, document, scroll) means to number, recount, relate, declare (Ps 19:1 = "their expanse is **declaring**..."), proclaim, enumerate, tell, narrate, make known, speak ("if you were told" - Hab 1:5). As a participle = writer, scribe, secretary. To number = take account of = carefully observe & consider. **Saphar/sapar** basically speaks of mathematical activity as in Ge 15:5+ (Gen 32:12 - "too great to be **numbered**", cf Jer 33:22 = "cannot be **counted**", Hos 1:10 "**numbered**") "**count** the stars, if you are able to **count** them." (cf Lev 15:13). To "count up" or "take a census" ("**numbered** the people" = 2 Sa 24:10). Assigning people to particular jobs ("So Solomon **assigned**..." = 2 Chr 2:2) Count out according to a list ("he **counted** them out to Sheshbazzar," = Ezra 1:8). With the sense "**taken account of**" (Ps 56:8) Meaning to measure ("until he stopped **measuring**" = Ge 41:49). Fathers => teach children to **recount** God's miracles and mighty deeds (Ps 78:3)

**Every believer is to declare or tell of the miracles and mighty deeds of the delivering God** (1Chr 16:24; cf. Ps 9:1, 14 Ps 26:7 Ps 73:28 Ps 75:1 Ps 107:22 Jer 51:10) and to declare his name (Ps 102:21 Ps 22:22 etc.).

One can count - objects = Ezra 1:8; Isa 22:10); people = 2 Sa24:10; periods of time = Lev 23:15ff; Dt 16:9; Job 39:2; actions = Job 14:16; 31:4; Ps 56:8 thoughts = Ps 139:18

**Vine** adds "For the most part the verb in this form means "to recount," to orally list in detail. The one exception to this significance is Job 38:37: "Who can number the clouds in wisdom? Or who can stay the bottles of heaven...?" In every other instance the verb signifies a vocal statement (listing or enumeration) of a series of given facts ("servant **told** Isaac all the things that he had done" = Ge 24:66 where Eliezer gave a summary of all his activities which helped Isaac who Rebekah was and why she was there.) The emphasis is on accurate, detailed recounting as with the 12 spies sent into the promised land in Nu 13:27 ("Thus they **told** him," cf similar idea in Jos 2:23).

**Saphar/sapar** - 104v - assigned(1), count(17), counted(6), counts(2), declare(6), declared(2), elapse(1), measuring(1), number(3), numbered(5), proclaim(1), recount(1), recounted(3), relate(3), related(9), relating(2), speak(1), state(1), surely(1), taken(1), taken account(1), talk(1), tell(23), telling(1), told(15), utter(1).

**And all the people answered with one voice** - **All** means this was not just a majority but **all** without exception. **With one voice** emphasizes they were all in one accord! As we would say, their reply was unanimous. Their promise to obey was good, but that would not serve to truly ratify the Book of the Covenant, which would require the use of blood. Recall that Lev 17:11+ says 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.' So the blood was a serious symbol of life (and death) and thus was a fitting symbol to solemnly seal the Book of the Covenant. In a sense, it would also "seal" Israel's promise to keep it, that is, it would result in God holding them

responsible to keep their promise. Later especially in Deuteronomy, they were given with serious consequences if they broke their covenant promises.

## ISRAEL HEARD AND PROMISES TO HEED

**And said, "All the words which the LORD has spoken we will do- All...the people...all...the words** is a good start. This echoes their earlier affirmation "All the people answered together and said, **"All that the LORD has spoken we will do!"** **And Moses brought back the words of the people to the LORD.**" (Ex 19:8+) Note again **all...people...all...will do**. As Joshua's predecessor was dying, he spoke similar words to the people who gave a similar response (see above Josh 24:20-22). Good intentions must be followed by good actions based on those good intentions. Stated another way, only when one's actions are good do they validate one's good intentions. Or even another way, we must be doers of our words, not just speakers of those words. As we will soon see Israel's good intentions were followed by horrible actions (golden calf in Exodus 32).

**Thompson** quips "Here we go again. As one writer said, this is "*commendable enthusiasm*" but frankly it is delusional. Israel is in that self-trusting fog and she actually believes that she will obey all the Word of God. As we have said, she will not even make it past commandment number one. What really should have happened here and what should have happened in the Garden of Eden, where they had just one commandment, is that the people should have said—God, please help us to obey you because we can't do this ourselves and we won't do this ourselves. Had Adam and Eve or had Israel really drawn near to God, she would have seen God help her. But she was self sufficient and self-reliant and that is when we fall flat on our faces. But we do see something that is important. If we want fellowship with God, we should have a desire to obey the Word of God. It is true we will not ever totally measure up, but that should be our desire. We should want to know the Word of God so we may apply it to our lives." ([Sermon](#)) (**ED**: Thompson's comment reminds me of Major Ian Thomas saying "I can't. He never said I could. But He can and He always said He would." We must daily depend on the enabling power of the Spirit to obey, for there is no other way. There is no "Plan B." When we arise in the morning and say "Thanks, but I've got this one, Lord," we are setting ourselves for sure fire failure!)

Being fervent in spirit means one must have more than good intentions.

--George Brooks

**THOUGHT** - The problem with Israel's promise was while they were willing, they did not fully understand the weakness of their flesh. Jesus touched on this issue when He said to Peter and John ""Keep watching and praying that you may not enter into temptation; **the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.**" (Mt 26:41<sup>±</sup>) Paul alluded to this in Romans 8:3<sup>±</sup> explaining "(OLD COVENANT) what the Law could not do, **weak as it was through the flesh,** (NEW COVENANT) God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh." In short, while the Israelites were willing, they lacked the power. The Law could not change their hearts. They remind me of Wesley who joined the holy club and tried to keep the law to be holy but with great frustration. It was not until he was born again and given a new heart, that he had the new power [indwelling Spirit] Who enabled him to keep the law. Have you had a supernatural heart transplant (read Ezekiel 36:26-27+)? Or are you a believer who is frustrated because you are trying to keep the law and are failing? Paul would say to you "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ." (Gal 3:3+) His point is that now under the new covenant, you have a new heart and with God's Spirit, we are to learn to rely no longer on our fallen flesh, but to rely wholly on the Holy Spirit to put to death the deeds of the flesh (read Ro 8:13<sup>±</sup>).

**Vance Havner** - Good intentions. What God looks for is the intent of the heart and, when in our hearts we have already made the sacrifice required, God may sometimes not ask us to actually finish what we meant to do. Abraham put God first, not Isaac, and we read, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12). Our testimony is perpetuated by the Isaac we offer at God's command, whether consummated actually or intentionally.

**Exodus 24:4** **Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. Then he arose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel.**

- **Moses wrote down:** De 31:9 Jos 24:26
- **and built an altar:** Ex 20:24-26
- **twelve pillars:** Ge 28:18,22 Ge 31:45 Jos 24:27 Ga 2:9
- **for the twelve tribes of Israel:** Ex 28:21 Lev 24:5 Nu 17:2 Jos 4:2,3,8,9,20 1Ki 11:30 Eze 6:17 Lu 22:30 Rev 21:14
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## MOSES WRITES AND WORSHIPS

So after recounting the words, now Moses records the words. Moses is preparing to ratify the Book of the Covenant.

**Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD** - Ancient near east covenant documents typically had written copies that were then recited publicly. Later we read "So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests, the sons of Levi who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel." (Dt 31:9) What did he write on? Papyrus, parchment, stone? Recall that God had instructed Moses to write in Ex 17:14+ "Then the LORD said to Moses, **Write this in a book** as a memorial and recite it to Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven."

**Rayburn** on the ancient covenant agreements - The copies of the covenant were deposited in the respective sanctuaries of the two parties, but in Israel's case, the tabernacle and then the temple, were the sanctuaries of both Yahweh and Israel and thus both copies of the covenant were thus deposited there, in the ark of the covenant. The two parties are thus both represented: Israel by the twelve pillars, each representing one of the tribes, and Yahweh by the altar.

**Currid** - Part of the process of ratifying a covenant in the ancient Near East entailed putting the agreement in writing. The document served as a testimonial to the treaty and its various elements. In this case Moses was the author of the manuscript, which is called the Book of the Covenant in verse 7. No doubt this document included both the Decalogue and the laws of chapters 20–23, since the latter are an exposition of the former.

**Thompson**- From the earliest days, God wanted His Word in written form. Fellowship with God demands the written Word. Once you have the written Word, you have the **will of God** in written form. Having the Word of God in written form would mean that people could know God's will on every issue of life. People could go to corporate worship and hear leaders expound the Scriptures. Parents could teach children and newcomers the importance of the commandments of God. These commandments which were written down were literally critical to life because if you broke some of them, you could end up dead. This is a very important principle to see. The Word of God is always critical to our spiritual life. We need to read it and reread it because this is a key to having life in our relationship with God. ([Sermon](#))

**Then he arose early in the morning** - This emphasize the importance and priority of the meeting with God to ratify the covenant. Moses' morning worship. Four times Moses arises early in the morning in Exodus - Ex 8:20, Ex 9:13, Ex 24:4, Ex 34:4.

**THOUGHT** - Is meeting with God a priority or do you place Him in the line to follow other things you think are more significant. Or do you not meet with Him at all. How foolish we are to go into our day without consulting the God of the day! Just because you cannot see Him, does not mean you are wasting your time. You can definitely HEAR Him, but that requires you open His Book and read it prayerfully. NOTHING is more significant than meeting with God at the beginning of each new day. See [Thoughts on the Quiet Time](#)

**And built an altar at the foot of the mountain**- The altar was not up the side of the mountain but at the base or **foot of the mountain**. At the end of the Ten Commandments Jehovah had said "You **shall make an altar of earth for Me**, and you shall sacrifice on it your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be remembered, I will come to you and bless you." (Ex 20:24) This offering of animals would provide the blood Moses would use to ratify the covenant with Israel.

**John Trapp** comments on the **altar** - Representing God on the one party, as the twelve pillars did the people (ISRAEL) on the other party. So here was a formal covenant.

**Cassuto** on **altar** - "In the ceremony to be performed, the **altar** will represent the glory of the Lord, whilst the pillars will represent the tribes of Israel; the two contrasting parties will stand facing each other."

**Kaiser** has a slightly different interpretation of the altar - It is probably not correct to speak, as some do, of the altar as representing the Lord on the basis of Genesis 15:9–10, 17. This is a rite of purification (not the water, scarlet wool, and hyssop of Lev 14:6–7 and Heb 9:19–20). The division of the blood points to the twofold aspect of the blood of the covenant: The blood on the altar symbolizes God's forgiveness and acceptance of the offering; the blood on the people points to a blood oath that binds them in obedience. In other words, the keeping of the words and laws was made possible by the sacrificial blood of the altar. (EBC-Ex)

**Thomas Davis** on **altar** - Altars were places where the divine and human worlds interacted. Altars were places of exchange, communication, and influence. God responded actively to altar activity. The contest between Elijah and the prophets of Baal involving an altar demonstrated interaction between Yahweh and Baal. Noah built an altar and offered a sacrifice to Yahweh. God smelled the aroma and found it pleasing. He responded to Noah's action by declaring that he would never again destroy all living things through a flood. In the patriarchal period, altars were markers of place, commemorating an encounter with God (Ge 12:7), or

physical signs of habitation. Abraham built an altar where he pitched his tent between Bethel and Ai. Presumably at that altar he "called on the name of the Lord" (Ge 12:8). Interestingly, we are not told if there was a response. In the next passage, however, Abraham went to Egypt and fell into sin, lying about Sarah out of fear of Pharaoh. Perhaps there was no true communication at the altar between Bethel and Ai. Sacrifices were the primary medium of exchange in altar interactions. The priestly code of Leviticus devotes a great deal of space to proper sacrificial procedure, and to what sacrifices are appropriate in various circumstances. Sacrifice was the essential act of external worship. Unlike the divinities of the nations surrounding ancient Israel, Yahweh did not need sacrifices to survive. The Israelites, however, needed to perform the act of sacrifice in order to survive (Ex 30:21). The act of sacrifice moved the offering from the profane to the sacred, from the visible to the invisible world. By this action the worshiper sealed a contract with God. Blood, believed to contain the "life" of an animal (or a human being), was particularly important in the sacrificial ritual. It was sprinkled against the altar (Leviticus 1); once a year, blood was smeared on the horns of the incense altar. ([Altar](#))

#### Related Resource:

- [What is an altar? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**With twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel** - NIV = "representing the twelve tribes of Israel." In Ex 23:24 Israel was instructed regarding the pagan pillars to "break their sacred pillars in pieces." The pagans used pillars to symbolize their false gods. These 12 pillars symbolized 12 tribes and their covenant with the true God. For **pillars** representing the tribes see Joshua 4:5, 20, 1 Kings 18:31.

**Currid - Pillars** often serve as testimonials of covenants in the Bible (see Ge 31:45–54; Josh 24:27). So both parties of the covenant were represented by physical signs—Yahweh by the altar and Israel by the pillars.

**NET Note on pillars** - The "standing-stone" could be a small piece about a foot high, or a huge column higher than men. They served to commemorate treaties (Gen 32), or visions (Gen 28) or boundaries, or graves. Here it will function with the altar as a place of worship.

We see the association of setting up pillars and sharing of meals as part of the cutting covenant in the OT....

(Genesis 26:26-31) Then Abimelech came to him from Gerar with his adviser Ahuzzath and Phicol the commander of his army. 27 Isaac said to them, "Why have you come to me, since you hate me and have sent me away from you?" 28 They said, "We see plainly that the LORD has been with you; so we said, 'Let there now be an oath between us, even between you and us, and let us **make a covenant** (CUT A COVENANT) with you, 29 that you will do us no harm, just as we have not touched you and have done to you nothing but good and have sent you away in peace. You are now the blessed of the LORD.'" 30 Then he made them a feast, and they ate and drank (MEAL TO CELEBRATE COVENANT). 31 In the morning they arose early and exchanged oaths; then Isaac sent them away and they departed from him in peace.

(Genesis 31:45-54) **Then Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar.** 46 Jacob said to his kinsmen, "Gather **stones.**" So they took **stones and made a heap, and they ate there by the heap.** 47 Now Laban called it Jegar-sahadutha, but Jacob called it Galeed. 48 Laban said, "This **heap is a witness between you and me this day.**" Therefore it was named Galeed, 49 and Mizpah, for he said, "May the LORD watch between you and me when we are absent one from the other. 50 "If you mistreat my daughters, or if you take wives besides my daughters, although no man is with us, see, God is witness between you and me." 51 Laban said to Jacob, "Behold this heap and behold the **pillar** which I have set between you and me. 52 "This heap is a witness, and the **pillar** is a witness, that I will not pass by this heap to you for harm, and you will not pass by this heap and this pillar to me, for harm. 53 "The God of Abraham and the God of Nahor, the God of their father, judge between us." (CALLING ON GOD TO JUDGE IF THEY BREAK COVENANT) So Jacob swore by the fear of his father Isaac. 54 Then Jacob **offered a sacrifice** on the mountain, and called his kinsmen **to the meal; and they ate the meal** and spent the night on the mountain.

**Pillars** (04676)([matstsebah](#) from **natsab** = to take a stand) means something set upright, most often "a standing, unhewn block of stone utilized for religious and memorial purposes. After a powerful experience of the Lord in a dream, Jacob set up as a pillar the stone on which he had laid his head, in commemoration of the event (Ge 28:18, 22; Ge 31:13 cf. Ge 31:45; 35:20).

**Exodus 24:5 he sent young men of the sons of Israel, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD.**

- **young men:** Ex 19:22
- **burnt offerings:** Ex 18:12 Lev 1:1-17
- **peace offerings:** Lev 3:1-17 7:11-21
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## BURNT OFFERINGS AND PEACE OFFERINGS

**He sent young men of the sons of Israel** - The reason Moses sent **young men** rather than the priests (Ex 19:22) which apparently did exist (although not yet the formal Levitical priesthood not established until after giving the Law) is not clear, but clearly they carried out the function of priests in this covenant ritual. The **young men** apparently represent the "**first born**," as determined by comparing Nu 3:41 "You shall take the Levites for Me, I am the LORD, **instead of all the firstborn among the sons of Israel**, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the cattle of the sons of Israel." So in this passage we see that Levites were appointed in their place.

**Rayburn** on why young men - There was a practical consideration, of course. This was heavy work; the sort of work most suited to young men.

**Thompson** - Now these **sacrifices** were extremely important because they illustrated the fact that in order for the people to have a peaceful relationship with God, **something must die as a substitute**. So in order to have peace with God, some sacrificial substitute must die to make that happen. ([Sermon](#))

**And they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as peace offerings to the LORD** - So clearly the sacrificial system had to some degree been implemented, but it will be refined in the book of Leviticus. The words in this passage are exactly as prescribed in Ex 20:24+ "'You shall make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice on it **your burnt offerings and your peace offerings**." Jethro, Moses' father-in-law had offered burnt offerings in Ex 18:12. The burnt offerings are described in much more detail in Leviticus 1:1-17+ and speak of atonement (see below). As alluded to, the animal sacrifices would provide blood Moses would then use to ratify the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. Note also that the **offerings** were to the LORD and not to any other god, against which they had been solemnly warned in Ex 22:20+.

**Atonement** - To make atonement is to give or do that whereby alienation ceases and reconciliation ensues. "Reconciliation" is the equivalent term given for the same Hebrew word, kopher (see [kippur/kippurim](#)). ([Multiple articles on atonement](#)) Burnt offering here in Ex 24:5 is translated in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) with [holokautoma](#) used only 3x in the NT (Mk 12:33, Heb 10:6-[note](#), Heb 10:8-[note](#)) **Holokautoma** refers to a wholly-consumed sacrifice, whole burnt offering, whole victim burned and gives us our English word "**holocaust**". **BDAG** summarize **holokautoma** as (1) a cultic sacrifice in which the animal was entirely consumed by fire - whole burnt offering, literally *holocaust* (See [Jewish Holocaust](#)) (2) a person punished with death by fire because of personal conviction, whole burnt offering, holocaust figurative extension of (1) - used of [Polycarp \(who was martyred by burning at the stake\)](#) **Holokautoma** is used 175x in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#)

**Currid** - The first was the whole burnt offering, so named because it was almost completely burned on the altar. It had an atoning efficacy—that is, it was an offering to Yahweh for sin and guilt (see Lev. 1)....These sacrifices demonstrated that, of the two parties to the treaty, God was the overlord / suzerain and Israel the vassal. In ancient Near-Eastern covenants, the vassal was required to pay homage and honour to the suzerain.

**Biblical Illustrator** -sacrifice on the altar--the burnt offering = life surrendered--and the peace offering = communion with God and one another.

**Burnt offerings** ([05930](#))('olah from 'alah = to ascend and thus the picture of *going up* in smoke) refers to a whole burnt offering (one which *goes up* in smoke), which was voluntary, was understood as a sacrificial gift to God, resulting in a pleasing aroma acceptable to Jehovah (Lev 1:9). The presenter laid hands on the sacrifice which many feel signifies they saw the animal sacrifice as their substitute. The blood was sprinkled on the altar (Lev 1:6) When this offering was properly carried out (including a right heart attitude not just a "going through the motions," [which was not pleasing to God - Jer 6:20, Jer 7:21, 23, 24, see David - Ps 51:16-17+] not just an external "work," but an internal submission and obedience to Jehovah), they made atonement and were acceptable before Jehovah. The total burning indicated (or should have indicated) total consecration of the presenter's heart and soul and life to Jehovah.

**Related Resources:**

- [What is a peace offering / fellowship offering? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is a burnt offering? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What were the various sacrifices in the Old Testament? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What was the brazen altar? | GotQuestions.org](#) (this was in the Tabernacle)

**Exodus 24:6 Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.**

- **the blood:** Ex 24:8 12:7,22 Col 1:20 Heb 9:18 12:24 1Pe 1:2,19
- **on the altar:** Ex 29:16,20 Lev 1:5,11 3:2,8 4:6
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SPRINKLING OF BLOOD ON ALTAR

Since there were two parties in the covenant, the blood was divided for each party.

**Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins** - This would be used for sprinkling the people. The important principle is that God relates to people through covenant and any covenant connection that God would have with humans was based on **blood**. The writer of Hebrews emphasizes this principle writing that "according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness." Stated another way, without the shedding of blood, there is no relationship with God.

**And the other half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar** - The altar was the place Jehovah was worshiped. To sprinkle **blood** on the **altar** was to identify the blood with the LORD, Who was the One Who initiated (cut) the covenant with Israel. The writer of Hebrews describes this event but in place of the altar, he mentions the book...

(Hebrews 9:18-19+) Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to 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,

**Currid on sprinkled on the altar** - Moses next took half the blood of the sacrifices and 'threw' it upon the **altar**, which symbolized the presence of Yahweh. Later, in verse 8, he would throw the other half on the people. Both parties of the covenant were thus doused with ceremonial blood, in a ritual that sealed the covenant in blood for both parties. **Blood** is an essential element of covenant-making in the Bible. Robertson properly defines a covenant as 'a bond in blood'. This is illustrated in Genesis 15:9-20+; Ge 17:9-14 and Jeremiah 34:18. To the Hebrew, **blood** was the life-force. And to have **blood** as the basic physical element of the ratification ceremony meant that the covenant was one that applied to the extremes of life and death. Keeping the covenant meant that life would ensue; breaking it led to the spilling of blood and to death.

We see the importance of blood in the cutting of covenants in the covenant God cut with Abraham.

Genesis 15:9-20+ So He said to him, "Bring Me a three year old heifer, and a three year old female goat, and a three year old ram, and a turtledove, and a young pigeon." 10 Then he brought all these to Him and cut them in two, and laid each half opposite the other; but he did not cut the birds. 11 The birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. 12 Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. 16 "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete." 17 It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces. 18 On that day **the LORD made a covenant (CUT A COVENANT) with Abram**, saying, "To your descendants I have given this land, From the river of Egypt as far as the great river, the river Euphrates: 19 the Kenite and the Kenizzite and the Kadmonite 20 and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Rephaim

**Related Resource:**

- [Covenant - A Walk of Death](#)

Jeremiah 34:18 'I will give the men who have transgressed My covenant, who have not fulfilled the words of **the covenant which they made** before Me, when **they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts**— (THE PENALTY FOR TRANSGRESSING THIS COVENANT WAS DEATH).

**NET Note** - The people and Yahweh through this will be **united by blood**, for half was spattered on the altar and the other half spattered on/toward the people (v. 8).

**Wiersbe** feels that "Some of the blood was sprinkled on the altar, signifying that God had forgiven His people of their sins." (ED: It certainly pointed toward that end, but ultimately we know "it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins." [Heb 10:4, cf Heb 10:1]. So while the blood of the animals may have "covered" their sins, it did not take them away, something only the blood of the blood of the Lamb of God [Jn 1:29] could accomplish. Indeed, every OT sacrifice pointed to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ.).

**Exodus 24:7 Then he took the book of the covenant and read it in the hearing of the people; and they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!"**

- **the book:** Ex 24:4 Heb 9:18-23
- **read:** De 31:11-13 Ac 13:15 Col 4:16 1Th 5:27
- **All that:** Ex 24:3 Jer 7:23,24
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BOOK OF THE COVENANT READ TO ISRAEL**

**Then he took the book of the covenant** - These were God's words "dictated" to and transcribed by Moses word for word (inspired, inerrant, infallible).

**NET Note** - The noun "book" would be the scroll just written containing the laws of chaps. 20–23. On the basis of this scroll the covenant would be concluded here. The reading of this book would assure the people that it was the same that they had agreed to earlier. But now their statement of willingness to obey would be more binding, because their promise would be confirmed by a covenant of blood.

**And read it in the hearing of the people** - Note the repeated emphasis on the Word which was central to the life of the nation (Exodus 24:3, 4, 7). And by the same token it is just as central to the life of every believer today! (Mt 4:4+, et al). This is the second time Israel had heard the words, the first being in Ex 24:3 when Moses "**recounted**" them and now as he **reads** them. Repetition was a common practice among ancient teachers. This is quite a feat as there are up to two million people. How all were able to hear is not clear. There are stories of some of the great evangelists like George Whitefield who preached in open fields to as many as 20,000 or more. However Moses' voice was "amplified" the point is that all Israel clearly heard these words.

This book of the covenant was to be read before the people every seven years...

(Deut 31:10-13) Then Moses commanded them, saying, "**At the end of every seven years**, at the time of the year of remission of debts, at the Feast of Booths, 11 when all Israel comes to appear before the LORD your God at the place which He will choose, **you shall read this law in front of all Israel in their hearing.** 12 "Assemble the people, the men and the women and children and the alien who is in your town, so that (TERM OF PURPOSE - FOR READING BOOK OF THE COVENANT) they may **hear** and **learn** and **fear** the LORD your God, and **be careful** to observe (NOTE THE PROGRESSION OF VERBS - HEAR, LEARN, FEAR, OBSERVE) all the words of this law. 13 "Their children, who have not known, will **hear** and **learn to fear** the LORD your God, as long as you live on the land which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess."

**Currid** - It is important to note that the Book of the Covenant (i.e., the law at Sinai) is the foundation of the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. **It is the tie that binds!**

**And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!"** - Again we see the adjective **all** used by Israel. Note that now they add the affirmation **we will be obedient**. And the way the Hebrew text reads is emphatic indicating that there was no doubt that the sons of Israel were agreeing to the covenant. **Be obedient** is the verb **shama** which is the same verb used in the **warning and promise** passages in Ex 23:21-22+ (SEE BELOW)

And so in contrast with the unconditional covenant of Jehovah with Abraham in Genesis 15:18-21+, here we have a conditional

covenant between Jehovah and Israel. The book of the covenant or the Mosaic Covenant as it is often called was based on obedience. IF Israel obeyed, they would be blessed (see above where God promised He would be the Enemy of their enemies!)

Centuries later another Jewish man wrote a **warning and a promise** about **hearing** God's Word and **doing** God's Word

But **prove** yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. 23 For (TERM OF EXPLANATION) if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; 24 for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was. 25 But one who **looks intently** at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and **abides by it**, not having become a **forgetful hearer** but an **effectual doer**, this man will be **blessed in what he does**. (James 1:22-25+)

## **DID ISRAEL KEEP HER "MARRIAGE VOWS"?**

It is interesting that in this ratification ceremony of the "Book of the Covenant" there are no warnings given to Israel regarding their need to obey the covenant. However we have previously seen Yahweh clearly warns Israel of her need to obey the stipulations of the covenant...

Exodus 15:26+ And He (JEHOVAH) said, "**IF** (IF = MARKS A CONDITIONAL STATEMENT) you will give earnest **HEED** (Hebrew = [shama](#) -- EVEN IN ENGLISH "**HEED**" MEANS TO PAY CLOSE AND CAREFUL ATTENTION) to the voice of the LORD your God, and **DO** what is right in His sight, and **GIVE EAR** to His commandments, and **KEEP** all His statutes, **I WILL** (GOD'S PROMISE IF THEY FULFILL THE BOOK OF THE COVENANT) put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer."

**Comment:** Recall that the Hebrew verb [shama](#) in many contexts conveys the basic idea of perceiving a message and by extension of hearing with reverence and obedient assent

Exodus 23:21-22+ **BE ON YOUR GUARD** ([shamar](#) - a command) before him and **OBEY** (Hebrew = [shama](#) - another command) his voice; **DO NOT BE REBELLIOUS** (Hebrew = [marah](#)) toward him, **FOR** (TERM OF EXPLANATION) he will not pardon your transgression, since My name is in him (SPEAKS OF IDENTITY, EVEN ONENESS - cf Jn 10:30. IT IS ALMOST CERTAINLY A REFERENCE TO THE [Angel of the LORD](#) - see Ex 23:20+). 22 "But **IF** (CONDITIONAL CLAUSE) you truly **OBEY** (Hebrew = [shama](#)) His voice and **DO** all that I say, **THEN I WILL** (YAHWEH'S PROMISE) be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.

So did Israel obey? Some 900 years later the prophet Jeremiah recorded Jehovah's words...

**Jeremiah 7:23,24** "But this is what I commanded them, saying, **OBEY** (Hebrew = [shama](#) - a command) My voice (A CONDITIONAL STATEMENT), and I will be your God, and you will be My people; and you will walk in all the way which I command you, that it may be well with you.' **Yet they did not OBEY** (Hebrew = [shama](#)) or **INCLINE THEIR EAR**, but walked in their own counsels and in the stubbornness of their evil heart, and went backward and not forward."

**Jeremiah 11:6-13** And the LORD said to me, "**PROCLAIM** (command to Jeremiah) all these words in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem, saying, '**HEAR** (command to Israel) the words of this **covenant** (FIRST THEY NEED TO HEAR - BUT WHAT COVENANT? THE "BOOK OF THE COVENANT" IN Ex 24:7!) and **DO** them. 7 'For (TERM OF EXPLANATION) **I solemnly warned** your fathers in the day that I brought them up from the land of Egypt (Ex 15:26+, Ex 23:21-22+), even to this day, **warning** persistently, saying, "**LISTEN** ([shama](#) - command - KJV = "OBEY") to My voice." 8' Yet (TERM OF CONTRAST) they **did not obey or incline their ear**, but walked, each one, in the stubbornness of his evil heart; therefore I brought on them all the words of this covenant (DESCRIBED MORE FULLY IN Dt 28:15-68 Dt 29:21-24 Dt 30:17-19 Dt 31:17,18 Dt 32:20-26), which I commanded them to do, but they did not." 9 Then the LORD said to me, "A conspiracy has been found among the men of Judah and among the inhabitants of Jerusalem. 10 "They have turned back to the iniquities of their ancestors who refused to hear My words, and they have gone after other gods to serve them; the **house of Israel** (NORTHERN KINGDOM OF 10 TRIBES) and the **house of Judah** (SOUTHERN KINGDOM) **have broken My covenant which I made with their fathers**" 11 Therefore thus says the LORD, "Behold I am bringing disaster on them which they will not be able to escape; though they will cry to Me, yet I will not listen to them. 12 "Then the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem will go and cry to the gods to whom they burn incense, but they surely will not save them in the time of their disaster. 13

"For your gods are as many as your cities, O Judah; and as many as the streets of Jerusalem are the altars you have set up to the shameful thing, altars to burn incense to Baal.

**Comment:** Israel was chosen by Jehovah to be a faithful "wife" (Isa 54:5, Jer 31:32), but she in essence "broke her marriage vows", rejecting the laws of the "book of the covenant" and went after other "lovers" (gods, idols). In Jeremiah 11:13 she went after **Baal**, a word which means master, owner, or husband. In effect faithless Israel rejected her Husband Jehovah and as the King James vividly puts it went "a whoring" (e.g., Ex 34:15-16KJV).

**Exodus 24:8 So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."**

- **sprinkled:** Ex 24:6 Lev 8:30 Isa 52:15 Eze 36:25 Heb 9:18-21
- **Behold:** Zec 9:11 Mt 26:28 Mk 14:24 Lu 22:20 1Co 11:25 Eph 1:7 Heb 9:20 10:4,5 13:20 1Pe 1:2
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SPRINKLING OF BLOOD ON PEOPLE

**So** - Term of conclusion. Based on Israel's verbal vow affirming they will obey and do.

**Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people** - This was a solemn service to remind the Israelites of their solemn oath! The throwing of blood on Israel bound them to keep the covenant! **Cassuto** has an interesting thought that perhaps Moses threw the blood "on the **pillars** that represented the 12 tribes of Israel." (Good thought). Others think it was sprinkled on the seventy elders as they were in a sense representatives of the entire nation.

**Walter Kaiser** - The **blood** by which the covenant was ratified and sealed was the basis for the union between Yahweh and the people. This phrase becomes most important in the NT in its reappearance in the Lord's Supper (Mt 26:28; Mk 14:24; Lk 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 9:20; Heb 10:29; also Heb 12:24; Heb 13:20; 1 Peter 1:2). (EBC-Ex)

**Currid** - In this ceremonial act, Moses throws the remaining blood on the people, binding them to a blood oath—it is a covenant to the extremes of life and death.

There is another picture in this scene. What Moses is doing in a sense is acting as a minister would today in marrying a man and a woman in the marriage covenant. Here Jehovah is the Husband and Israel is His bride as mentioned in other OT passages.

(Jeremiah 31:31-32) **Behold**, days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a **new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers (HERE IN EXODUS 24) in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they (ISRAEL) broke, although **I was a husband to them**," declares the LORD.

(Isaiah 54:5) "For **your (ISRAEL) husband is your Maker**, Whose name is the LORD of hosts; And your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel, Who is called the God of all the earth.

This sprinkling of blood on the Israelites under the Old Covenant was a shadow of the sprinkling of blood on believers in the New Covenant. Peter records the following regarding the blood of the New Covenant:

Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who reside as aliens, scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, who are chosen (ELECT) 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to obey Jesus Christ (NOTE TRINITY INVOLVED) and **be sprinkled with His blood**: May grace and peace be yours in the fullest measure. (1 Peter 1:1-2+)

Peter goes on to explain that the blood of the New Covenant was the blood of Christ...

If you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each one's work, **conduct** ([aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) yourselves in fear during the time of your stay on earth (NOW READ WHAT SHOULD MOTIVATE US TO HOLY CONDUCT!); 18 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with **precious blood**, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, **the blood of Christ**. (1 Peter 1:17-19+)

**Sprinkled** (scattered, threw) ([02236](#))([zaraq](#)) means to sprinkle, to toss, to throw, to scatter in abundance, to

be sprinkled and most of the OT uses (see below) refer to the priest's actions in carrying out the rituals of the sacrifices and offerings. The priests were to sprinkle blood on the altar in the burnt offering (Lev 1:5,11, Lev 9:12, 2Ki 16:15). So clearly in the context of the ratification of the Old Covenant, Moses is functioning as a priest.

Notice he has gone up to God for Israel (**mediator**), has spoken from God to Israel (**prophet**) and here functions as **priest** to Israel.

**NET Note on toward the people** - Given the size of the congregation, the preposition might be rendered here "toward the people" rather than on them (all).

While I am not sure I agree completely with the comments by **Keil and Delitzsch** they are interesting to consider - In the blood sprinkled on the altar [Ex 24:6], the natural life of the people was given up to God, as a life that had passed through death, to be pervaded by His grace; and then through the sprinkling upon the people [Ex 24:8] it was restored to them again, as a life renewed by the grace of God. In this way the blood not only became a bond of union between Jehovah and His people, but by the blood of the covenant, it became a vital power, holy and divine, uniting Israel and its God; and the sprinkling of the people with this blood was an actual renewal of life, a transposition of Israel into the kingdom of God, in which it was filled with the powers of God's spirit of grace, and sanctified into a kingdom of priests, a holy nation of Jehovah (Ex 19:6)."

**Cassuto** has a good explanation about the blood on the altar and the blood on the people - The throwing of half of the blood of the offerings against the altar, which represented the Lord, and half on the people, or that which represented them, signifies a joining together of the two contracting parties (communio), and symbolized the execution of the deed of covenant between them. Between one blood-throwing and the other, the content of the covenant was finally and solemnly ratified by Moses' reading from the Book of the Covenant and by the people's expression of consent." ([A Commentary on the Book of Exodus](#))

**And said "Behold** - The Hebrew word [hinneh](#) is used to call special attention to what follows as being of special importance. And what follows is the summary statement of the entire Old Testament or Old Covenant for it describes the grounds for Jehovah's relationship with Israel.

**The blood of the covenant - Blood** was necessary to seal the covenant. The covenant was the most solemn and binding agreement that could be made in ancient times and the solemnity was testified to by the use of **blood**, which in turn required an animal must die. It was as if Israel in agreeing to this covenant is identifying (by the sprinkling of the blood) was saying we are willing to die if we do not keep this covenant. Sadly, that is exactly what happened to many in Israel and will continue to happen until they receive the Messiah as their Redeemer.

**NET Note** - The construct relationship "the blood of the covenant" means "the blood by which the covenant is ratified" (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 254). The parallel with the inauguration of the new covenant in the blood of Christ is striking (see, e.g., Matt 26:28, 1 Cor 11:25). When Jesus was inaugurating the new covenant, he was bringing to an end the old.

This same phrase **the blood of the covenant** was also used in the ratification of the new covenant, but instead of the blood of bulls and goats, it was ratified with the blood of the **Lamb of God** (Jn 1:29+), "Who gave Himself for us (SUBSTITUTIONARY SACRIFICE) to redeem (JESUS [PAID IN FULL](#) THE PRICE TO SET SINNERS FREE FROM PENALTY AND POWER OF SIN, DEVIL, DEATH) us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His **own possession** (cf WHAT ISRAEL WAS TO HAVE BEEN TO YAHWEH - Ex 19:5+ = "My **own possession** among all the peoples"), zealous for good deeds." (Titus 2:14<sup>+</sup>)

Matthew 26:27-28 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; for this is My **blood of the covenant**, (cf Jn 6:53) which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

Mark 14:24 And He said to them, "This is My **blood of the covenant**, which is poured out for many.

**THOUGHT:** Not only did the blood of Christ set us free from sin and death, but it also provides the foundation for our growth and maturity (progressive sanctification) in Jesus Christ, the writer of Hebrews recording this truth in a great prayer (PRAY THIS FOR YOUR FAMILY, YOUR BRETHREN, YOU MISSIONARIES!) - Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the **blood** of the **eternal covenant**, even Jesus our Lord, **equip you in every good thing** (GOD'S PROVISION) to do His will (OUR RESPONSIBILITY), (GOD'S SPIRIT) working in us that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to Whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (Hebrews 13:20-21<sup>+</sup>)

**Which the LORD has made with you** - Note it is **the LORD** who initiated this **covenant**, not Israel. The verb **made** is the Hebrew verb [karath](#) which means to cut. It is very apropos for the sacrificial animals had to be cut (and die) in order to shed the blood of the covenant, the blood by which the covenant was finalized or ratified.



**In accordance with all these words** - NLT = "in giving you these instructions." What **words**? Moses is referring to the words of the covenant in the preceding chapters.

**Spurgeon** comments that "There is a **double power about the blood**; — towards God an atonement, that is the blood sprinkled on the altar, — and towards ourselves a sense of reconciliation, thus must the blood be sprinkled upon us that we may prove its cleansing power." (ED: While I agree in principle with Spurgeon, ultimately only the blood of Christ sprinkled on the "altar" of the Cross brought perfect atonement, and then "**sprinkled**" on believers (1 Pe 1:2+) for perfect reconciliation, so that now we can obey the exhortation "let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, **having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience** and our bodies washed with pure water. [Heb 10:22])

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## **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose BEHOLD THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT Exodus 24:1–8**

"Behold the blood of the covenant." These words, uttered by Moses as he sprinkled the people with the crimson life-stream, forcibly remind us of John's "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). A covenant is a bargain between two parties, something that comes in between as a ground of agreement and a bond of perpetual union. This thought is beautifully expressed in Exodus 12, "The blood shall be to you for a token." This was man's side. "When I see the blood." This was the divine side. It was covenant blood. Such is the Blood of His Cross. "Reconciled through the death of His Son." "This cup is the New Testament (covenant) in my blood, drink ye all of it" (Luke 22:20), and be one, even as "I and My Father are one." We shall now observe—

**I. When this Blood was Shed.** As with the death of Christ, so with the sacrifice here, there is much in the circumstances. It was—

**1. AFTER GOD WAS HONOURED.** "Come up unto the Lord and worship" (v. 1). Before the Cross was reached Christ had this testimony, that He pleased God (Matt. 3:15). Moses came near the Lord, while the others worshipped "afar off." Jesus worshipped in the Holy of Holies.

**2. AFTER THE WORD OF THE LORD WAS REVEALED.** "Moses told the people all the words of the Lord" (v. 4). Christ did not die until He had finished the work and declared the words the Father gave Him. "I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me" (John 17:8). The Way was made plain before the sun went down.

**3. AFTER AN ALTAR HAD BEEN BUILT.** And Moses built an altar. The Cross appeared before the sacrifice was made. "And He bearing His Cross." A fixed altar suggests the determinate counsel of God. There "they crucified Him" (John 19:18).

**II. What this Blood Signifies.** Sacrifice, and this—

**1. IMPLIES SIN.** Sin, like a man's shadow, is only seen in the light. Sin is the dominating element in the character of fallen human nature. Man is a sinner. "Without God" (Eph. 2:12).

**2. IMPLIES SUBSTITUTION.** The offerings and sacrifices were unto the Lord, and in behalf of the people. "He was wounded for our transgressions." "He suffered for us." The sacrifices were first the Lord's by right, then allowed for the people, and again accepted by Him on the altar. A perfect type of Him who was the Lamb of God, given for us and accepted again through death in our stead.

**3. IMPLIES SALVATION.** Isaac was saved when the ram took his place on the altar (Gen. 22:13). He "gave Himself for me." "All that believe are justified" (Acts 13:39).

**III. Where this Blood was Sprinkled.** It was—

**1. SPRINKLED ON THE ALTAR.** "Moses took half of the blood and sprinkled it on the altar" (v. 6). The altar represents the claims of God's holiness and justice. Before the people could be blessed His righteousness must be satisfied. Before the sinner can be saved Christ must offer Himself without spot unto God. The halving of the blood between the altar and the people indicate the double character of the sacrifice of Christ. He both fulfils the law and makes peace. In doing the Father's will He provides redemption for man. In Him every attribute of God is satisfied and every need of man fully met. "Oh, that men would praise the Lord for His goodness!" (Psa. 107:8).

**2. SPRINKLED ON THE PEOPLE.** "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." The blood on the people signified—

**1. REDEMPTION.** They had come into personal contact with the life ("the life is in the blood") that had been offered to God for them. All the value of the sacrifice, as in His sight, is now imputed to them. "We have redemption through His Blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1:7). It signifies also—

**2. RECONCILIATION.** It was the blood of the covenant. “How much more shall the Blood of Christ” (Heb. 9:14). We are “made nigh by the Blood” (Eph. 2:13). It implies—

**3. OBLIGATION.** “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient” (v. 7). Be faithful unto death. This covenant, like the way of salvation, is all of grace and cannot fail. Through these immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie, we have a strong consolation who have laid hold on this hope set before us. “The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect to DO HIS WILL” (Heb. 13:20, 21).

## Exodus 24:9 Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,

- Ex 24:1
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### ISRAEL'S SPIRITUAL LEADERS DRAW NEAR TO GOD

**Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel** - This is the response to the invitation (**command**) Yahweh given in Exodus 24:1 "**Come up**." This is the second mention of Aaron's two sons, **Nadab and Abihu**, who are given the opportunity of a lifetime to experience close proximity to the awesome presence of the Almighty God. One would have thought this experience would have been forever engraven like with a diamond stylus in their mind, and yet they clearly forgot (and/or despised) the holiness of Jehovah and offered "strange fire" in Leviticus 10:1+ for which God struck them dead! (Read Lev 10:1-7+, Nu 3:4)

**THOUGHT** - "Mountain top" (recall they had been invited to "come up" the mountain!) experiences are great, but we must all live most of our life in the valley and so we must daily put to death the deeds of the body, so that we can really live (Ro 8:13+). When (not "if") we are tempted, we so quickly forget about our "mountain top" experiences, which is why we must daily imbibe His Word (Col 3:16+, Mt 4:4+) and present ourselves as living sacrifices (Ro 12:1+), so that our mind and heart might be continually renewed (Eph 4:23+, cf 2 Cor 3:18+).

**Cassuto** - they came to a given place on the slope of the mountain, in order to prostrate themselves there from afar, and there they were vouchsafed a vision of God.

#### Related Resources:

- [Who were Nadab and Abihu? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the meaning of the strange fire in Leviticus 10:1? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why was it bad that Aaron and his sons burned the sin offering in Leviticus 10:16–20? | GotQuestions.org](#)

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## EXODUS 24:9–11—How could these people see God when God said in Exodus 33:20, “no man shall see me and live”?

**PROBLEM:** Exodus 24:9–11 records that Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel ascended the mountain of God and “saw the God of Israel.” However, Exodus 19:12–13 says that the people could not even touch the base of the mountain without being put to death. And in Exodus 33:20 God says that no one can see Him and live. How could these people go up the mountain and see God and yet live?

**SOLUTION:** First, it should be noted that God invited them to see Him. In Exodus 19:12–13 God told Moses to set the boundaries around the mountain so that no one should even touch its base without the punishment of death. However, God specifically invited these people to ascend the mountain in order to consecrate them for the service to which they had been appointed, and to seal the covenant which had been established between God and the nation of Israel.

Second, it is clear from the description and from other passages of Scripture (Ex. 33:19–20; Num. 12:8; John 1:18), that what these people saw was not the essence of God, but rather a visual representation of the glory of God. Even when Moses asked to see God’s glory (Ex. 33:18–23), it was only a likeness of God which Moses saw (cf. Num. 12:8 where the Hebrew word *temunah*—“form,” “likeness”—is used), and not the very essence of God. (When Critics Ask - Normal Geisler)

**Exodus 24:10 and they saw the God of Israel; and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself.**

- **saw the God of Israel:** Ex 3:6 Ex 33:20,23 Ge 32:30 Jdg 13:21,22 1Ki 22:19 Isa 6:1-5 Eze 1:28 Joh 1:18 14:9 1Ti 6:16 1Jn 4:12
- **sapphire:** Eze 1:26,27 Ezekiel 10:1 Rev 4:3 Rev 21:19-23
- **as clear as the sky itself:** Song 6:10 Mt 17:2 Rev 1:16 Rev 21:11,18
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Lapis Lazuli

#### Related Passages:

Exodus 33:18-23 Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" 19 And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion." 20 But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!" 21 Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; 22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. 23 "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."

**And they saw the God of Israel** - Centuries later John wrote that "**No one has seen God at any time**; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." (John 1:18+, cf 1 Jn 4:12+, 1 Ti 6:16+) And Yet Moses records that they **saw the God of Israel**. Is there a discrepancy? Of course not, So what did they see? While we cannot know with absolute certainty, they saw some manifestation of God. Moses had seen a manifestation of Yahweh in the burning bush (Ex 3:6). Jacob "named the place Peniel, for he said, "**I have seen God face to face**, yet my life has been preserved." Samson's father Manoah declared to his wife "We will surely die, for **we have seen God**." (Jdg 13:21,22+) The prophet Isaiah testified "In the year of King Uzziah's death **I saw the Lord** sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple." (Isaiah 6:1+)

**Rayburn** - That they saw the God of Israel seems to contradict Ex 33:20+ – where God says to Moses, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live" – but even Moses saw something of God's glory, his back or its aftereffects (Ex 33:28+ = " I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.") – and that seems to be the case here. The fact that the only thing described is the pavement under God's feet – obviously a dramatic anthropomorphism – suggests that these men were unable to lift their eyes above the Lord's footstool. They could see only what could be seen from a prostrate position. There are deep and vital truths couched in all of these anthropomorphic descriptions of the sight of God: the transcendent glory of God, the distance that separates creature from creator, and the humility and fear that ought to mark man's approach to the living God. That is why, we read in the next verse, almost in a tone of surprise, that these men did not perish for having seen the glory of God.

**Cassuto** - The sentence **and they saw the God of Israel** is at first surprising, for expressions so corporeal are uncommon in the Torah.

**Walter Kaiser** - That Moses and his company "saw the God of Israel" at first appears to contradict Ex 33:20; John 1:18; and 1 Timothy 6:16; but what they saw was a "form ['similitude'] of the LORD" (Nu 12:8 - see **below**), just as Ezekiel (Ezek 1:26) and Isaiah (Isa 6:1) saw an approximation, a faint resemblance and a sensible adumbration of the incarnate Christ who was to come. There is a deliberate obscurity in the form and details of the one who produced such a splendid, dazzling effect on these observers of God's presence. (EBC-Ex)

Numbers 12:8 With him I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings, And **he beholds the form of the LORD**. Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant, against Moses?"

**NET Notes** - The emphasis of the line is clear enough—it begins literally "mouth to mouth" I will speak with him. In human communication this would mean equality of rank, but Moses is certainly not equal in rank with the LORD. And yet God is here stating that Moses has an immediacy and directness with communication with God. It goes beyond the idea of friendship, almost to that of a king's confidant. In The word "**form**" (תְּמוּנָה, *témunah*) means "shape, image, form." The Greek text took it metaphorically and rendered it "the glory (*doxa*) of the LORD." This line expresses even more the uniqueness of Moses. The elders saw God on one special occasion (Ex 24:10), and the people never (Dt 4:12, Dt 4:15), but Moses has direct and familiar contact with God.

**Hard Sayings of the Bible** - Even what little they saw of the setting of God's presence so humbled and awed them that they

apparently flung themselves down in an act of obeisance. Hence, what they saw and reported was no higher than the level of the pavement.

**J Vernon McGee** - What they saw was a representation of God. I sincerely doubt that we shall see God the Father throughout eternity. Jesus Christ is probably the closest view we will have of the Father.

**Moody Bible Commentary** - There are two different terms translated "saw"; [ra'a](#), "see" (Ex 24:10a), has the idea more of a glance, and [haza](#), "behold" (Ex 24:11b), has the idea more of a sustained gaze. In some fashion (again, not altogether clear) the men both "saw" and "beheld" Him in a time of fellowship.

**NET Note** - S. R. Driver suggests that they saw the divine Glory, not directly, but as they looked up from below, through what appeared to be a transparent blue sapphire pavement

**And under His feet** - This implies that they saw God in some way manifest with human features (**feet**) and [anthropomorphism](#).

**Walter Kaiser** - Under God's feet was a "pavement made of sapphire," a deep blue or, more accurately, lapis lazuli of Mesopotamia, an opaque blue precious stone speckled with a golden yellow-colored pyrite (see [above](#)). True sapphire, the transparent crystalline of corundum, was unknown in Egypt around 1400 B.C. It symbolizes the heavens (cf. Ezek 1:22). (EBC-Ex)

**NET Note** is interesting on **His feet** - What is described amounts to what a person could see when prostrate.

**Currid** - The leaders saw a 'pavement'; the word is related to that for 'brick / tile'. The picture, then, is of a tiled floor consisting of [lapis lazuli](#), a beautiful blue stone. The entire construction was as bright and clear as heaven itself—it was as if heaven had partially descended to earth.

**There appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself** - **Appeared** suggests a term of comparison, that in other words it was "like a **pavement of sapphire**." **As the sky** suggests the color was blue and **clear** suggests a sky without clouds.

Clearly human interpretation of the transcendent, incomprehensible God is at best difficult and recalls a description by the prophet Ezekiel

Then I looked, and behold, in the expanse that was over the heads of the cherubim **something like a sapphire stone**, in appearance resembling a throne, appeared above them.(Ezekiel 10:1<sup>+</sup>)

**Sapphire** (05601)(**sappir**) denotes the clear blue [lapis lazuli](#) rather than the very hard modern sapphire (cf. KJV). The stone seems to owe its name to the Sanskrit word sanipriya, meaning "slowly moving Saturn." It is used figuratively in the Shulamite bride's description of her beloved (Song 5:14). Jeremiah's lamentation of the Nazirites' changed appearance (cf La 4:7 with La 4:8). Job indicates that these stones are found in mines (Job 28:6), and though costly, cannot equal the value of true wisdom (Job 28:16). The lapis lazuli also was desired by royalty (Ezek. 28:13)—it was even used in the breastplate of the high priest of Israel (Exo. 28:18; 39:11). Further, the throne of God in Ezekiel's visions appeared as lapis lazuli (Ezek. 1:26; 10:1), and this stone was seen as the pavement beneath God's feet at Mount Sinai (Exo. 24:10). These stones had been in the Garden of Eden (Ezek. 28:13). It is also one of the twelve stones found in the foundation of the New Jerusalem (Isa. 54:11; cf. Rev. 21:19).

**Sappir** - 11x in 11v - lapis lazuli(2), lapis lazuli\*(1), sapphire(5), sapphires(3). Exod. 24:10; Exod. 28:18; Exod. 39:11; Job 28:6; Job 28:16; Cant. 5:14; Isa. 54:11; Lam. 4:7; Ezek. 1:26; Ezek. 10:1; Ezek. 28:13

The phrase as **clear as the sky** itself reminds one of the vision recorded by John

Around the throne were twenty-four thrones; and upon the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white garments, and golden crowns on their heads. 5 Out from the throne come flashes of lightning and sounds and peals of thunder. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; 6 and **before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal**; and in the center and around the throne, four living creatures full of eyes in front and behind. (Revelation 4:4-6<sup>+</sup>).

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**Question:** [Has anyone ever seen God?](#)

**Answer:** The Bible tells us that no one has ever seen God (John 1:18) except the Lord Jesus Christ. In Exodus 33:20, God declares, "You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live." These Scriptures seem to contradict other Scriptures which describe various people "seeing" God. For example, Exodus 33:11 describes Moses speaking to God "face to face." How could

Moses speak with God “face to face” if no one can see God’s face and live? In this instance, the phrase “face to face” is a figure of speech indicating they were in very close communion. God and Moses were speaking to each other as if they were two human beings having a close conversation.

In Genesis 32:30, Jacob saw God appearing as a man; he did not truly see God. Samson’s parents were terrified when they realized they had seen God (Judges 13:22), but they had only seen Him appearing as an angel. Jesus was God in the flesh (John 1:1, 14) so when people saw Him, they were seeing God. So, yes, God can be “seen” and many people have “seen” God. At the same time, no one has ever seen God revealed in all His glory. In our fallen human condition, if God were to fully reveal Himself to us, we would be consumed and destroyed. Therefore, God veils Himself and appears in forms in which we can “see” Him. However, this is different than seeing God with all His glory and holiness displayed. People have seen visions of God, images of God, and appearances of God, but no one has ever seen God in all His fullness (Exodus 33:20). ([GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

**Related - [Did Moses see God?](#)**

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**Mormons Answered Verse by Verse** - Does God actually have hands and feet, a human body? Mormonism teaches that he does, and Mormons turn to passages such as this to support that belief. But when Moses and his associates “saw God,” was it in a literal sense, or in the visionary sense in which prophets were allowed to “see” future events? God later told Moses that “there shall no man see me, and live” (Exod. 33:20). And the New Testament asserts that “no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him” (John 1:18).

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## Seeing God

He who has seen Me has seen the Father. — John 14:9

Today's Scripture: Exodus 24:1-8

Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (Matthew 5:8). Yet the apostle Paul spoke of God as One “whom no man has seen or can see” (1 Timothy 6:15-16). I have often thought about this seeming contradiction. How can we reconcile our Lord’s statement with the words of Paul?

I believe we must first recognize that God in His essential being is pure Spirit (John 4:24), and therefore is invisibly present everywhere in His vast creation (Psalm 139:7-12). But we read in the Bible that on various occasions God appeared to people in a visible way (Genesis 18:1-3). He created a burning bush from which to challenge Moses (Exodus 3:2). And in today’s Scripture reading, the glory of His presence was revealed, and “there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone” (Exodus 24:9-10). God can appear in any form He desires, even while He Himself remains invisibly present throughout the universe.

One day in heaven the unseen, infinite God will graciously make Himself visible to us. But even then we’ll be unable to look upon His full glory. Instead, we will see Jesus and live in His light (Revelation 21:23). But seeing Him will be seeing God, for He is God. What a blessed prospect! — Herbert Vander Lugt ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

No mortal can see God and live,  
His brilliance would destroy all sight,  
But Jesus' glory we shall see  
For He as God is truth and light.  
—D. De Haan

To see God, look to Jesus.

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**Alexander Maclaren - EXODUS 24:9-11 They saw God, and did eat and drink.**

### The vision of God, and the feast before Him

These are strangely bold words, both for the assertion with which they begin, and for the juxtaposition of the two things which they declare. They come at the close of the solemn ceremonial by which God and Israel entered into covenant. Lightly-uttered vows of obedience to all that God could speak had echoed among the rocks. On the basis of that promise a covenant was formed and ratified by sacrifice. They pass within the fence, they witness that access to God is possible on the footing of covenant and sacrifice. They behold, as I suppose, unclouded, the material and fiery symbol of His presence: witness that men through sacrifice and covenant can see God. But our eyes are stayed on the pavement beneath His feet. No form is described. Enough for us that there is spread beneath Him that which is blue and gleaming as the cloudless heaven above Sinai. “They eat and drink”—witness that men

who draw nigh to God, on the footing of sacrifice and covenant, and thereby behold His face, have therein festal abundance for all their need. So this incident, in its form adapted to the infantile development of the people that first received it, carries in its symbols the deepest truths of the best communion of the Christian life, and may lend itself to the foreshadowing of the unspoken glories of the heavens. From that point of view I want to look at it.

I. I ask you to consider THE VISION OF GOD POSSIBLE FOR US. Jesus Christ is the Revealer. This generation is very fond of saying, "No man hath seen God at any time, nor can see Him." It is a pity, but they would go on with the quotation and say, "the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." The radiation of His brightness, "and the express image of His person," is that Divine man, God manifest in the flesh. The knowledge of God which we have in Jesus Christ is real, as sight is real. It is not complete, but it is genuine knowledge. We know the best of God, if I may use such a phrase, when we know what we knew in Christ, that He is a loving and a righteous will; when we can say of Him "He is love," in no metaphor but in simple reality, and His will is a will towards all righteousness, and towards all blessing, anything that heaven has to teach us about God afterwards is less than that. We see Him in the reality of a genuine, central, though by no means complete, knowledge. Our knowledge of God in Christ is as sight, in reference to certitude. People say, "Seeing is believing." I should turn it the other way about, and say, "Believing is seeing." For we may be a great deal surer of God than ever we can be of this outer world. And the witness which is borne to us in Christ of the Divine nature is far more reliable than even the evidence that is borne to us by sense of an external universe. Then remember, too, that where we have learned to know, and absolutely to rely upon, and vividly to realize our Father's presence through Jesus Christ, there we shall see Him in all things and everywhere. Then, remember, further, that the degree of this vision depends upon ourselves, and is a matter of cultivation. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." There are three things wanted for sight--something to see; something to see by; something to see with. God has given us the two first, and He will help us to the last if we like. But we have to bring the eye, without which the sunbeam is vain, and that which it reveals also. Christ stands before us, at once the Master-Light of our seeing, and the Object that we are to behold. But for us there is needed that the eye shall be pure; that the heart shall turn towards Him. Faith is the eye of the soul. Meditation and habitual occupation of mind and heart with Jesus Christ, the Revealer of God, are needed if we are to "see God."

II. Secondly, notice THE FEAST IN THE DIVINE PRESENCE. "They did eat and drink." That suggests in the singular juxtaposition of the two things, that the vision of God is consistent with, and consecrates, common enjoyment and everyday life. Even before that awful blaze these men sat down and fed, "eating their meal with gladness and singleness of heart," and finding no contradiction nor any profanity in the close juxtaposition of the meal and the vision. There is no false asceticism as the result of the Christian sight of God. It takes nothing out of life that ought to be in it. If we see God there is only one thing that we shall be ashamed to do in His presence, and that is to sin. For all the rest the vision of God blends sweetly and lovingly with common service and homely joys. It will interpret life. Nothing is small with such a background; nothing common-place when looked at in connection with Him. It will ennoble life; it will gladden life. But there is another thought here to which I must refer for a moment. That strange meal on the mountain was no doubt made on the sacrifices that had preceded, of which a part were peace-offerings. The ritual of that species of sacrifice partly consisted in a portion of the sacrifice being partaken of by the offerers. The same meaning lies in this meal on the mountain that lay in the sacrificial feast of the peace-offering, the same meaning that lies in the great feast of the new covenant, "This is My body; this is My blood." God spreads in His presence a table, and the food on that table is the "Bread which came down from heaven that it might give life to the world." The vision of God and the feast on the mountain are equally provided and made possible by Christ our Passover, who was sacrificed for us.

III. And so, lastly, we may gather out of this incident A GLIMPSE OF A PROPHETIC CHARACTER, AND SEE IN IT THE PERFECTING OF THE VISION AND OF THE FEAST. We know the apostle's wonderful statement of the difference between the beatific knowledge of heaven and the indirect and partial knowledge of earth. Here we "see in a glass darkly; there face to face." It is not for us to try before the time to interpret the latter of these statements; only this, let us remember that whatever may be the change in manner of knowledge, and in measure of apprehension, and in proximity of presence, there is no change in heaven in the medium of revelation. For heaven as for earth God is the King invisible; for heaven as for earth no man can see Him, the only begotten Son declares Him. Christ is for ever the Manifester of God, and the glorified saints see God as we see Him in the face of Jesus Christ, though they see that Face as we do not. Yonder there are new capacities indeed. When there are more windows in the house there will be more sunshine in the rooms. When there is a new speculum in the telescope galaxies will be resolved that are now nebulous, and new brightnesses will be visible that are now veiled. But with all the new powers and the extension of present vision, there will be no corrections in the present vision. We shall see Him as He is, and learn that what we knew of Him in Christ here is true for ever. And on that perfect vision will follow the perfect meal, which will still be the feeding on the sacrifice. For there were no heaven except "He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever," and there is no spiritual life above except a life derived from Him. The feast means perfect satisfaction, perfect repose, perfect gladness, perfect companionship. (A. Maclaren, D. D.)

**Exodus 24:11 Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they saw God, and they ate and drank.**

NET Exodus 24:11 But he did not lay a hand on the leaders of the Israelites, so they saw God, and they ate and they drank.

NLT Exodus 24:11 And though these nobles of Israel gazed upon God, he did not destroy them. In fact, they ate a covenant meal, eating and drinking in his presence!

ESV Exodus 24:11 And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

NIV Exodus 24:11 But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.

KJV Exodus 24:11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

ASV Exodus 24:11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: and they beheld God, and did eat and drink.

CSB Exodus 24:11 God did not harm the Israelite nobles; they saw Him, and they ate and drank.

- **nobles:** Ex 24:1,9 Nu 21:18 Jdg 5:13 1Ki 21:8 2Ch 23:20 Ne 2:16 Jer 14:3
- **He did not stretch out His hand** Ex 19:21 33:20-23 Ge 32:24-32 De 4:33 Jud 13:22
- **they saw God:** Ex 24:10 Ge 16:13
- **they ate and drank.:** Ex 18:12 Ge 18:18 31:54 De 12:7 Ec 9:7 Lu 15:23,24 1Co 10:16-18
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **FINITE MAN GRANTED MERCY TO "SEE" THE INFINITE GOD**

**Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel**(cf Ex 9:15+ = " had put forth My hand and struck you") - Or to paraphrase it "God did not kill them," implying that He should have for they were on "holy ground!" Why didn't He kill them? Divine mercy and by divine grace He actually gave them a glimpse of a theophany of some sort. Earlier in Exodus we see that even the lay people recognized that there was something awesome and terrifying about what they were experiencing at Mount Sinai and "they said to Moses, "Speak to us yourself and we will listen; but let not God speak to us, or **we will die.**" (Ex 20:19+) Later God says to Moses "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!." (Ex 33:20+)

**NET Note** - The fact that God did not lay a hand on them—to kill them—shows that they saw something that they never expected to see and live. Some Christian interpreters have taken this to refer to a glorious appearance of the preincarnate Christ, the second person of the Trinity. They saw the brilliance of this manifestation—but not the detail. Later, Moses will still ask to see God's glory—the real presence behind the phenomena.

**And they saw God** - This is repeated, but again with no description of what they **saw**. In the Ex 33:20 passage quoted above clearly they did not see God's face or they would have died.

**Currid on saw** - The verb translated 'beheld' is not the normal Hebrew word meaning 'to see'. It is a stronger, more intense term that is commonly used of prophetic visions. Its use here underscores the uniqueness of this event.

**David Guzik** says "After this experience (SEEING GOD) they would be more likely to trust God when He spoke through Moses."

**THOUGHT** - To some degree what Guzke says above may be true because Ro 10:17<sup>+</sup> says "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ (or "of God" - KJV - HIS WORD IS THE PRIMARY WAY WE "SEE GOD" TODAY). And yet faith has to be fertilized and nurtured lest it dissipate (like a slow seepage of air from even a normal tire - I have to pump my bicycle tires up about every 5 days and am amazed how intact tires still lose 10 pounds or more of pressure!). Aaron saw this sight and look what he did some 40 days later in Exodus 32:1-6+!

**NET Note** has an interesting comment - The fact that God did not lay a hand on them – to kill them – shows that they saw something that they never expected to see and live. Some Christian interpreters have taken this to refer to a glorious appearance of the preincarnate Christ, the second person of the Trinity. They saw the brilliance of this manifestation – but not the detail. Later, Moses will still ask to see God's glory – the real presence behind the phenomena.

**Rayburn** has an interesting note - According to one scholar, "This is the real end of Exodus. The remaining chapters, with one

major exception, belong to Leviticus.” The one exception is, of course, the narrative of the golden calf and its aftermath in Exodus 32-34. The rest is all liturgical regulations such as we have in Leviticus. Remember, the division of the Pentateuch into five books is artificial, having as much to do with the amount of material that could be put on a scroll as any obvious or implicit division of the material by subject or theme.

## A COVENANT MEAL

**ESV Study Bible** - Christians enjoy fellowship with God in Christ, who is the food of eternal life (John 6:53–58), symbolized in the Lord’s Supper and consummated in the final feast (Rev. 19:9; 22:4).

**And they ate and drank** - Sharing a meal was an integral part of ancient covenants. Presumably they had this mean in some way in the presence of God. Today we would call this "communion" an act of sharing in fellowship. **Did God actually eat with them** in this Old Covenant meal as Jesus did with the disciples in the New Covenant meal? The text does not say. Covenants were often celebrated with meals of fellowship and communion.

**What did they eat?** They could not have eaten the **burnt offering** (which symbolized making atonement) for it was wholly consumed by the fire. What they would have eaten was the leftover from the peace offering, which was apropos as it spoke of fellowship after atonement.

**NET Note on ate and drank** - This is the covenant meal, the peace offering, that they are eating there on the mountain. To eat from the sacrifice meant that they were at peace with God, in covenant with him (ED: THIS RECALLS JESUS' WORDS "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves." -Jn 6:53 = SUGGESTS JESUS WAS SPEAKING OF ENTERING COVENANT WITH HIM - THE NEW COVENANT WHICH GIVES ONE SPIRITUAL LIFE!). Likewise, in the new covenant believers draw near to God on the basis of sacrifice, and eat of the sacrifice because they are at peace with him, and in Christ they see the Godhead revealed.

I am reminded of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb marking the relationship between Christ the Bridegroom and the Church His Bride...

(Rev 19:7-9+) “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.” 8It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. 9 Then he \*said to me, “Write, ‘Blessed are those who are invited to the **marriage supper of the Lamb.**’” And he \*said to me, “These are true words of God.”

**COMMENT** - There is a passage in the NT in Luke 12:37+ from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in which it seems to indicate that the Bridegroom will Himself serve the Bride! This is almost too much to even imagine!

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### **F B Meyer - Our Daily Homily - They beheld God, and did eat and drink.**

It is a beautiful combination, which we should do well to emulate.

**Some eat and drink, and do not behold God.** — They are taken up with the delights of sense. Their one cry, as the children of this world, is, What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed? But the God in whose hand their breath is and whose are all their ways, they do not glorify. Let us beware; it was of Christian professors that the Apostle said, Their god is their belly.

**Some behold God, and do not eat and drink.** — They look on God with such awful fear that they isolate Him from the common duties of life. They draw a strict line between the sacred and secular, between Sunday and weekday, between God’s and their own. This divorce between religion and daily life is fatal to true religion, which was meant to be the bond between the commonest details of life and the service of God.

**Some behold God, and eat and drink.** — They turn from the commonest avocations to look up into his face. They glorify God in their body as well as in their spirit. They obey the apostle’s injunction, “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” Oh for the grace to be able to combine the vision of God with every common incident — to live always beneath his eye in the unrestrained gladness of little children in their Father’s presence!

Never a trial that He to not there,  
Never a burden that He doth not bear;  
Never a sorrow that He doth not share—



Moment by moment I'm under his care.

**Exodus 24:12 Now the LORD said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there, and I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction."**

- **Come up:** Ex 24:2,15,18
- **tablets:** Ex 31:18 32:15,16 De 5:22 Ne 9:13 Jer 31:33 2Co 3:3,7 Heb 9:4
- **which I have written:** De 4:14 Ezr 7:10 Mt 5:19
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES CALLED TO COME UP TO RECEIVE THE TABLETS

### Related Passage:

Deut 4:13 "So He declared to you His covenant which He commanded you to perform, that is, the Ten Commandments; and He wrote them on two **tablets of stone**.

Exodus 34:28 So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the **tablets** the words of the covenant, the **Ten Commandments**.

Exodus 31:18 When He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, **tablets of stone**, written by the finger of God.

**Now the LORD said to Moses** - This divine directive occurred while they were communing in Ex 24:11. Did the others hear the LORD? Again the text does not say. Moses is being separated out.

**Come up to Me on the mountain and remain there** - Two commands that Moses might receive the ten commands on stone. Moses is described below as going into the cloud, where the "glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days." (Ex 24:16).

**And I will give you the stone tablets with the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction**- Don't miss what this passage is saying - God has **written** these words! The Bible is written by God regardless of what skeptics say! This is the first mention of the **stone tablets**. So in addition to what Moses had written down, now they would have God's Own inscribed text on the tablets. **Law** is [torah](#) and **commandment** is [mitsvah](#). Exodus 31:18 tells us these tablets were "written by the finger of God." Thompson adds that "the emphasis of the word "**law**" is more general in that it refers to the inspired instruction God gives that was to be followed. The emphasis of the word "**commandments**" is more specific in that it gives the specific precepts of God that showed what God wanted done and what God did not want done."

**Instructions** is [yarah](#) "a word that carries with it the idea of casting or shooting or communicating God's Word little by little in sprinkling fashion as the foundation of faith. So God's Word is to be carefully communicated and shot forth because this is the foundation that God wants people built on. By the way, the word was used for an archer who shot an arrow. So teaching is not to be some open forum relativity group discussion, it was to be one person shooting straight truth." ([Thompson](#))

**Rayburn** comments that beginning in Ex 24:12 we have "what is officially known in the Christian church as "the boring part of the Bible." That's how unnumbered generations of Christians have thought of these chapters and it is here that they are so often bogged down when trying to read through the Bible. It is not only that we have chapter after chapter devoted to the precise details of the plan for the construction of the tabernacle and its furniture, but then, these chapters are then repeated again later when the account of the actual building of the tabernacle and its furniture is given."

**NET Note** - These are the stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments would be written. This is the first time they are mentioned. The commandments were apparently proclaimed by God first and then proclaimed to the people by Moses. Now that they have been formally agreed on and ratified, they will be written by God on stone for a perpetual covenant..."I am giving you this Law and these commands in order that you may teach them." This duty to teach the Law will be passed especially to parents (Deut 6:6-9, 20-25) and to the tribe of Levi as a whole (Deut 33:9-10; Mal 2:1-9).

**Instruction** (03384)([yarah](#)) means to "teach, instruct" but is related to another root sharing the same spelling "to shoot an arrow". The word "teaching, instruction" (torah [08451]) is derived from this same verb cluster. The instruction of Yahweh may be compared to archery in the sense that the "arrow" of God's teaching (laws, commandments, statutes) was aimed at our heart with the goal of pursuing God's holiness. The Septuagint

translates with [nomotheteo](#) which means to function as a lawgiver.

#### Related Resources:

- [Do I have to believe the Bible is inerrant to be saved? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why is it important to believe in Biblical inerrancy?](#)
- [Is the Bible truly God's Word?](#)
- [Can the infallibility of the Bible be proven?](#)
- [Is questioning the Bible wrong?](#)
- [Does the inerrancy of the Bible only apply to the original manuscripts? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What does it mean that the Bible is infallible? What is biblical infallibility? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Has the Bible been corrupted, altered, edited, revised, or tampered with?](#)
- [What is Verbal Plenary Preservation? | GotQuestions.org](#)

#### Exodus 24:13 So Moses arose with Joshua his servant, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.

- **his servant** : Ex 17:9-14 Ex 32:17 Ex 33:11 Nu 11:28
- **went up**: Ex 24:2
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### MOSES AND JOSHUA ASCEND THE MOUNTAIN

**So Moses arose with Joshua his servant** - This is the first mention of Joshua as the servant of Moses. Moses was training the next leader Joshua. Note God's pattern here - Joshua began as a servant of one called "the servant of God (1 Chr 6:49, 2 Chr 24:9, Da 9:11, Rev 15:3)." Both of these great men take after the greatest Man Who Himself declared "even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mk 10:45) The word for servant is not [abad](#), a more menial service, but **sharath** which is more of an assistant and is translated in the Septuagint with a verb [paristemi](#) which means to place beside or to present as a religious technical term in relation to sacrifice (Ro 12:1). The Greek word gives quite a picture of Joshua's relationship to Moses as one who was placed beside him (learning from him, assisting him, etc). Interesting!

**THOUGHT**- It follows that if you seek to be "great," in God's Kingdom, you will seek to be a servant ([Listen to the words of this old chorus](#)). Joshua had been "the attendant of Moses from his youth" (Nu 11:28, cf Ex 33:11). How are you doing? Is servant too low of a designation in your mind? If so, then rest assured, you will not likely be used significantly in the Kingdom of God and the glorification of the King.

**Servant** (08334)(**sharath**) is a verb which means to minister, assist, attend, serve, take care. The first time it is used in the Hebrew Bible is in the story of Joseph as he becomes the slave of Potiphar: "Joseph found favor in his sight and **became his personal servant**;" (Ge 39:4). As a term for serving or ministering, *shārat* is to be distinguished from the term for more menial serving, [abad](#), from which the word meaning "slave" or "servant" is derived.

This word "describe various activities, including that of a domestic servant serving a ranking official (Ge 39:4; 2 Sa 13:17, 18); a chief assistant to an authority figure, such as Joshua was to Moses (Ex. 24:13); the angelic host to God (Ps. 103:21); and assistants to kings (Isa. 60:10). More particularly, the word is used in the context of religious service before the Lord, such as that required of the priests (Ex. 28:35; 1 Ki. 8:11); or Levites (Num. 3:6)." (Baker)

**Gilbrant** - Twenty times **shārath** takes the form of a participle and functions essentially as a noun: "And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua" (Exo. 24:13). In her visit to Jerusalem, the queen of Sheba was greatly impressed at the number and competence of Solomon's servants (1 Ki. 10:5; 2 Chr. 9:4). Jehoshaphat's military commanders and soldiers stood ready at his disposal: "These waited on the king" (2 Chr 17:19). Ahaziah's attendants were killed in the intrigue which led to his downfall (2 Chr 22:8). Often, the participle is used of the priests serving the sanctuary: "which minister unto the Lord" (2 Chr 13:10). As such, **shārath** comprises nearly a technical term indicating those enlisted in service to the Tabernacle or Temple. Hannah dedicated her son Samuel to this ministry (1 Sam. 2:11, 18; 3:1). At the age of fifty, Levites were exempted from menial tasks and ordinary labor at the Tabernacle. They were free, however, to assist with the ritual (Num. 8:26). (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Sharath** - 92v - assist(1), attendant(4), attended(2), became his personal servant(1), minister(26), ministered(4), ministering(15), ministers(17), personal servant(1), servant(1), servant(2), serve(11), served(6), service(1), serving(1), take care(1), took care(1), used in temple service(2), waiters(1). Gen. 39:4; Gen. 40:4; Exod. 24:13; Exod. 28:35; Exod. 28:43; Exod. 29:30; Exod. 30:20; Exod. 33:11; Exod. 35:19; Exod. 39:1; Exod. 39:26; Exod. 39:41; Num. 1:50; Num. 3:6; Num. 3:31; Num. 4:9; Num. 4:12; Num. 4:14; Num. 8:26; Num. 11:28; Num. 16:9; Num. 18:2; Deut. 10:8; Deut. 17:12; Deut. 18:5; Deut. 18:7; Deut. 21:5; Jos. 1:1; 1 Sam. 2:11; 1 Sam. 2:18; 1 Sam. 3:1; 2 Sam. 13:17; 2 Sam. 13:18; 1 Ki. 1:4; 1 Ki. 1:15; 1 Ki. 8:11; 1 Ki. 10:5; 1 Ki. 19:21; 2 Ki. 4:43; 2 Ki. 6:15; 2 Ki. 25:14; 1 Chr. 6:32; 1 Chr. 15:2; 1 Chr. 16:4; 1 Chr. 16:37; 1 Chr. 23:13; 1 Chr. 26:12; 1 Chr. 27:1; 1 Chr. 28:1; 2 Chr. 5:14; 2 Chr. 8:14; 2 Chr. 9:4; 2 Chr. 13:10; 2 Chr. 17:19; 2 Chr. 22:8; 2 Chr. 23:6; 2 Chr. 29:11; 2 Chr. 31:2; Ezr. 8:17; Neh. 10:36; Neh. 10:39; Est. 1:10; Est. 2:2; Est. 6:3; Ps. 101:6; Ps. 103:21; Ps. 104:4; Prov. 29:12; Isa. 56:6; Isa. 60:7; Isa. 60:10; Isa. 61:6; Jer. 33:21; Jer. 33:22; Jer. 52:18; Ezek. 20:32; Ezek. 40:46; Ezek. 42:14; Ezek. 43:19; Ezek. 44:11; Ezek. 44:12; Ezek. 44:15; Ezek. 44:16; Ezek. 44:17; Ezek. 44:19; Ezek. 44:27; Ezek. 45:4; Ezek. 45:5; Ezek. 46:24; Joel 1:9; Joel 1:13; Joel 2:17

**And Moses went up to the mountain of God**- **Moses** not Moses and Joshua. How far up did Joshua go? The text does not elucidate, but he ascending closer to God's presence that Aaron, his sons and the seventy.**The mountain of God** is also called Horeb (Ex 3:1+) and is where Yahweh revealed Himself to Moses in the burning bush and now He will reveal Himself in a "burning mountain!"

**Exodus 24:14 But to the elders he said, 'Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a legal matter, let him approach them.'**

- **Wait here:** Ex 32:1 Ge 22:5 1Sa 10:8 13:8-13
- **Hur:** Ex 17:10,12
- **whoever has a legal matter:** Ex 18:25,26
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## WAITING ON GOD'S MEDIATOR

**But to the elders he said, 'Wait here for us until we return to you** - **Wait** ([yashab](#)) is a command that means to sit, to dwell, to stay in place and is translated in the Septuagint with [hesuchazo](#) in the [present imperative](#) calling for them to (continually) be quiet, calm, keep still and peaceful, refraining from any disturbing activity. As we learn in Ex 32:1ff, these spiritual leaders did not obey this command.

**And behold** ([hinneh](#)), **Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a legal matter, let him approach them**- **Aaron and Hur** were left in charge of two million Israelites, presumably to function as described in Ex 18:22+ "let them judge the people." Of course the implication of this need to put someone in charge is that Moses and Joshua would be gone for some time and in Exodus 24:18 we learn they were gone for 40 days and 40 nights. This also indicates that in some way, this was not to be like doing a day hike in the Rockies, but was going to last some time. Did God tell him it would be 40+ days? We simply do not know, but clearly Moses had some inkling of an extended period of time. While they did an excellent job holding up Moses' hands in Ex 17:10-13, Aaron failed miserably in guarding the camp when Moses was not present (cf Exodus 32:1-6+). It is interesting to note that there is no mention of Hur having a role in production of a golden calf (cf mentions of Hur - Ex 31:2-3, Ex 35:30-31, Ex 38:22 all references to the sons of Hur who interesting turned out "better" than the sons of Aaron! Interesting! Is this a fulfillment of the words in Ex 20:5 regarding the warning against worshiping and serving idols and how this iniquity would pass on potentially to the next generation - cf Nadab and Abihu in Lev 10:1-7+, Nu 3:4! Interesting thought. Fathers, guard your hearts from idols that would love to set up residence there! )

**Exodus 24:15 Then Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain.**

- **cloud:** Ex 19:9,16 2Ch 6:1 Mt 17:5
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES' VISION

## IS "CLOUDY"

### Related Passages:

Exodus 19:9 The LORD said to Moses, "Behold, I will come to you in a thick cloud, so that the people may hear when I speak with you and may also believe in you forever." Then Moses told the words of the people to the LORD.

Exodus 19:16-18 So it came about on the third day, when it was morning, that there were thunder and lightning flashes and a thick cloud upon the mountain and a very loud trumpet sound, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. 17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently.

**Then** - When is **then** (which usually marks progression in a narrative or argument)? After Moses had given instructions to Aaron and Hur.

**Moses went up to the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain** - The **cloud** heralds the coming of God. And as explained in the next verse this **cloud** would then be associated with **the glory of the LORD**. We see the same association of the **cloud** with God's glory in the Temple in 1 Ki 8:10-11.

**Cloud** (06051) (**anan**) means cloud, cloud mass. About 75% of the 87 uses in the OT refer to the pillar of cloud that directed Israel through the desert (Ex 13:21, etc) and which represented Yahweh's presence over the tabernacle, the cloud over the tabernacle serving also as a guide to Israel as to when to depart and when to stay put (Ex 40:34; Ex 40:35; Ex 40:36; Ex 40:37; Ex 40:38). A "cloud" was present in or over the Temple (1 Ki 8:10-11; 2 Chr 5:13-14). God's presence was accompanied by "clouds" when he met with Moses on Mt Sinai (Ex 19:9, 16; Ex 24:15-16, 18; Dt. 4:11; Dt. 5:22; Ps 97:2). In prophetic passages, clouds accompany God's presence in judgment (Ezek 30:3; Ezek 32:7; Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15).

**Alden** adds "Although most references to "cloud" aside from the "pillar of cloud" pertain to the ordinary kind made of water vapor, Nahum 1:3 mentions dust "clouds" and Leviticus 16:13 and Ezekiel 8:11 refer to a "cloud" of smoke from burning incense (cf. also Isaiah 4:5 and Ezekiel 1:4). Several times 'ānān is used to illustrate something by its characteristics or functions. Job 7:9 refers to the way "clouds" can disappear and illustrates the way people disappear at death (cf. Hosea 13:3). Isaiah also speaks of the way "clouds disappear, but is referring to the blotting out of sin (Isaiah 44:22). Hosea illustrates transitory goodness to a fast-disappearing morning "cloud" (Hosea 6:4). When God answered Job, he alluded to the "clouds" clothing the sea (Job 38:9). According to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 4:13), judgment will rise like "clouds" (of dust?). Ezekiel refers to the shadow a "cloud" casts and compares it to a military horde invading the land (Ezekiel 38:9, 16). It is of interest to note that the Hebrews, far from thinking that rain actually poured through celestial windows, knew very well that rain came from clouds (Isaiah 5:6; 1 Kings 18:44, etc.). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

**Baker** has an interesting note that "In the ancient world, clouds were often seen as the pedestal or shroud of the divine presence. This imagery is also present in the Hebrew Bible. God preceded the Israelites through the wilderness in a pillar of cloud (Ex. 13:21, 22); and the same cloud rested over the Tabernacle (Ex. 33:10). The cloud was over Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:9); and entered the Temple in Jerusalem (1 Ki. 8:10, 11). Clouds are typical of the apocalyptic language of the Day of God (Ezek. 30:3; Joel 2:2; Zeph. 1:15). Other poetic uses of cloud describe God's shelter (Isa. 4:5); Israel's evaporating love (Hos. 6:4); the transient nature of life (Job 7:9); and the breadth of a great army (Ezek. 38:9). (Complete Word Study Dictionary – Old Testament)

**Anan** - 87x in 80v - cloud(78), clouds(7), cloudy(1), heavy mist(1). Gen. 9:13; Gen. 9:14; Gen. 9:16; Exod. 13:21; Exod. 13:22; Exod. 14:19; Exod. 14:20; Exod. 14:24; Exod. 16:10; Exod. 19:9; Exod. 19:16; Exod. 24:15; Exod. 24:16; Exod. 24:18; Exod. 33:9; Exod. 33:10; Exod. 34:5; Exod. 40:34; Exod. 40:35; Exod. 40:36; Exod. 40:37; Exod. 40:38; Lev. 16:2; Lev. 16:13; Num. 9:15; Num. 9:16; Num. 9:17; Num. 9:18; Num. 9:19; Num. 9:20; Num. 9:21; Num. 9:22; Num. 10:11; Num. 10:12; Num. 10:34; Num. 11:25; Num. 12:5; Num. 12:10; Num. 14:14; Num. 16:42; Deut. 1:33; Deut. 4:11; Deut. 5:22; Deut. 31:15; 1 Ki. 8:10; 1 Ki. 8:11; 2 Chr. 5:13; 2 Chr. 5:14; Neh. 9:12; Neh. 9:19; Job 7:9; Job 26:8; Job 26:9; Job 37:11; Job 37:15; Job 38:9; Ps. 78:14; Ps. 97:2; Ps. 99:7; Ps. 105:39; Isa. 4:5; Isa. 44:22; Jer. 4:13; Lam. 3:44; Ezek. 1:4; Ezek. 1:28; Ezek. 8:11; Ezek. 10:3; Ezek. 10:4; Ezek. 30:3; Ezek. 30:18; Ezek. 32:7; Ezek. 34:12; Ezek. 38:9; Ezek. 38:16; Hos. 6:4; Hos. 13:3; Joel 2:2; Nah. 1:3; Zeph. 1:15

**Exodus 24:16 The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud.**

NET Exodus 24:16 The glory of the LORD resided on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day he called to Moses from within the cloud.

NLT Exodus 24:16 And the glory of the LORD settled down on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from inside the cloud.

ESV Exodus 24:16 The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

NIV Exodus 24:16 and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud.

KJV Exodus 24:16 And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

LXE Exodus 24:16 And the glory of God came down upon the mount Sina, and the cloud covered it six days; and the Lord called Moses on the seventh day out of the midst of the cloud.

ASV Exodus 24:16 And the glory of Jehovah abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

CSB Exodus 24:16 The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days. On the seventh day He called to Moses from the cloud.

NKJ Exodus 24:16 Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

NRS Exodus 24:16 The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the cloud.

YLT Exodus 24:16 and the honour of Jehovah doth tabernacle on mount Sinai, and the cloud covereth it six days, and He calleth unto Moses on the seventh day from the midst of the cloud.

- **the glory:** Ex 24:17 16:10 Lev 9:23 Nu 14:10 16:42 Eze 1:28 2Co 4:6
- **seventh day:** Ex 19:11 20:10 Rev 1:10
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Mt Sinai by Eizen

## THE GLORIOUS THEOPHANY

**The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai** (aka Mount Horeb) - In context the cloud in Ex 24:15 seems to clearly be intimately associated with the appearance of **the glory of the LORD**. **Glory** is [kabod](#) (Lxx = [doxa](#)) which means to be heavy, like a "weighty" person in society who noteworthy, impressive or worthy of respect, and here of course speaks of the "weightiest" One in the universe, the LORD God Almighty Himself. The verb **rested** is **shakan** is and is translated here with [katabaino](#) meaning come down. **Shakan** is also used in Ex 40:35 "Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had **settled (shakan)** on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle."

**Glory** ([kabod](#) Lxx = [doxa](#)) is a "[key word](#)" in Exodus occurring 11x, far more than in any book of the Pentateuch and every use refers to **the glory of the LORD** - Ex 16:7; Ex 16:10; Ex 24:16; Ex 24:17; Ex 28:2; Ex 28:40; Ex 29:43; Ex 33:18; Ex 33:22; Ex 40:34; Ex 40:35

**Currid** - The verb translated 'dwelt' (rested) is the Hebrew *shākēn*. Its use anticipates the next chapter, which describes the commands for building the *mishekān*, that is, the tabernacle, or dwelling-place of God. At Sinai, Yahweh was separated from his people, but he directed them to build a tabernacle so that he might be with them, in their very midst. This is a major theme of the book of Exodus: God dwelling with his people!

The literal version, Young's Literal Translation (YLT) renders Ex 24:16<sup>YLT</sup> as "the honour of Jehovah doth **tabernacle** on mount Sinai." This reminds me of John 1:1 where the Word is identified as God and then the Word came down and "became flesh and did **tabernacle** among us and we held His glory (cf GLORY here on Mt Sinai), glory as of an only begotten of a Father." (Jn 1:14<sup>YLT</sup>). So even as **Jehovah tabernacled** among Israel on Mt Sinai, we see this foreshadowing the **Son of God tabernacle** among men on earth.

**THOUGHT - Shekinah** is a transliteration of a Hebrew word meaning "the one who dwells" or "that which dwells". This specific word is not used in Scripture but the root word **shakan** (to dwell) and the related word **mishkan** (tabernacle which will be discussed in Exodus 25) are both frequently used and both are associated with the presence of God (and His glory) dwelling with man. The meaning of the word **Shekinah** (the One Who dwells) reminds us that we did not seek to dwell with God but He with us and this truth should evoke continual thanksgiving in those who have been brought into covenant with Him under the shelter of His wings. And so in Exodus, we see that it was God Who first expressed His desire to dwell among men, (Ex 25:8-9)

**Rested** ([07931](#))(**shakan**) means to settle down, to dwell, inhabit, abide.

**Gilbant** - The basic idea of *shākhan* is "to stay" or "to dwell" some place, "to occupy" a physical location, often in a temporary rather than a permanent way. First, it can designate where someone or something is located, such as Abram's camp being located at Mamre (Gen. 14:13). Next, it can emphasize the "occupation" or "dwelling in" of a place by someone or something, such as when God judged Babylon, predicting that ostriches would occupy the area (Isa. 13:21). The Lord promised his people that they would live in the Promised Land, occupying and possessing it forever (2 Sam. 7:10; Pss. 37:29; 69:36). Thus, the occupation or dwelling in a place can emphasize the benefits involved. Those who walk in a relationship with the Lord are allowed to live in the place of his presence, his holy hill or sanctuary, and thus experience intimate fellowship with God and its benefits, such as security (Ps. 15:1). Then the verb can have the idea of "continuing occupation," "remaining" or "staying" in a place (cf. Judg. 5:17). According to Ps. 102:28, God's people will continue in his presence, living with Him always.

Another idea of location is the reference to living or "dwelling among" or with certain people (Ps. 120:6; Prov. 8:12). This leads to the most frequent use of *shākhan*: God dwelling among his people. The Lord who lives forever declares that He "lives in or occupies" a high and holy place as well as "dwelling" with the lowly and contrite to revive them (Isa. 57:15). The Lord chose to establish the nation of Israel for a place through which He would come into the world and offer a relationship with people. He established his tabernacle or "dwelling place," (from this same verb root; see HED #5088; also read there about "shekinah") as the place where people could come to meet with Him. He declared He would live there among his people (Exo. 25:8; 29:42-46; 1 Ki. 6:13) and allow them to experience his presence there, which was said to be in the cloud. That cloud "dwelt" or "settled" (another common use of this verb) on Sinai and the Tabernacle (Exo. 24:16; 40:35; 1 Ki. 8:12). John picked up this idea when he said that Jesus was the Word of God becoming a man and "tabernacling" or "dwelling" among people (John 1:14). The Lord promises to dwell on his mountain forever (Ps. 68:16), and in the end, his final judgments on unbelievers and total restoration of the creation will testify to the truth that "the Lord dwells in Zion" (his chosen place among his covenant people; Joel 3:21; cf. v. 17). His glory will dwell in the land of his people (Ps. 85:9). In summary, those who trust in the Lord will experience his presence and loving fellowship forever.

Another use of *shākhan* is in the Piel stem for "causing to dwell," often of the Lord causing his name to dwell in the chosen capital city (Deut. 12:11; Neh. 1:9). That referred to the Temple being the place of his personal presence and a testimony of Who He is and what his purposes are. The idea of "causing to dwell" in other places simply means "to place" or, when used of the Tabernacle, "to set up" (Ps. 78:60). The Hiphil stem is used in the same ways as the Piel ("to cause to dwell," v. 55; "placing or setting up," Gen. 3:24; Josh. 18:1).

The participle often focuses on the mode of living, such as in Jdg. 8:11, "them that dwelt in tents." This includes: living "alone" (Num. 23:9), living "as a lion" (Deut. 33:20), dwelling "in silence" of death (Ps. 94:17),

dwelling "in dust," meaning the grave (Isa. 26:19) and "dwell safely" (Jer. 23:6). Jacob prophesied that Japheth would "dwell in the tents of Shem" (Gen. 9:27), which is metaphorical for sharing in the promised blessings of Shem. One other figurative or metaphorical use is in Isa. 32:16 where the Lord promises to establish his kingdom on earth and restore his people in the land so that "judgment will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness [live] in the fruitful field." (Complete Biblical Library Hebrew-English Dictionary)

**Baker** mentions 3 variations "First, its most simple form, three slight variations of meaning are found for this verb. First, it simply means to settle down (Ex. 24:16; Num. 24:2; Ps. 102:28). Second, it can mean to lie down or rest. When used this way, it can refer to objects (Nu 9:17; Job 3:5); animals (Isa. 13:21); and people (Jer. 23:6; 33:16). When people are the object of the verb, it means that they are resting in peace and security. Third, it may mean to dwell or abide. Again, this can have several referents such as people (Ps. 37:27; Pr. 2:21); the dead (Job 26:5); God (1 Ki. 8:12; Isa. 8:18); or objects such as the Tabernacle (Josh. 22:19). In the intensive form, it means to establish. The word is used in this way in Deut 12:11 and Psalm 78:60 to describe how God set up a dwelling place for His name, establishing Himself in Israel. Finally, the causative form means to lay, to place, to set (Gen. 3:24; Josh. 18:1); or to cause to dwell (Job 11:14; Ps. 78:55). (Baker - Complete Word Study Dictionary)

**Victor Hamilton** - God is the designated subject of the verb 43 times. He may dwell on Mount Zion (Psalm 74:2). He dwells among his people (Exodus 25:8). He will dwell in Jerusalem (Zech. 8:3). It is Jerusalem in which God has chosen to cause his "name" to dwell (Deut. 12:11, etc.). On several occasions some symbolic representation of the divine presence dwells among the people: the glory (of God) is to dwell in the land: Exodus 24:16; Psalm 85:9 [H 10]. More often, the subject of the dwelling is the cloud: Numbers 9:17, 18, 22; Numbers 10:12; Job 3:5 in a different sense. The verb is translated most often in the LXX by *kataskēnoō* rather than simply *skēnoō* "to tent" on approximately a two-to-one ratio. (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

**Shakan** - 124v - Gen. 3:24; Gen. 9:27; Gen. 14:13; Gen. 16:12; Gen. 25:18; Gen. 26:2; Gen. 35:22; Gen. 49:13; Exod. 24:16; Exod. 25:8; Exod. 29:45; Exod. 29:46; Exod. 40:35; Lev. 16:16; Num. 5:3; Num. 9:17; Num. 9:18; Num. 9:22; Num. 10:12; Num. 14:30; Num. 23:9; Num. 24:2; Num. 35:34; Deut. 12:5; Deut. 12:11; Deut. 14:23; Deut. 16:2; Deut. 16:6; Deut. 16:11; Deut. 26:2; Deut. 33:12; Deut. 33:16; Deut. 33:20; Deut. 33:28; Jos. 18:1; Jos. 22:19; Jdg. 5:17; Jdg. 8:11; 2 Sam. 7:10; 1 Ki. 6:13; 1 Ki. 8:12; 1 Chr. 17:9; 1 Chr. 23:25; 2 Chr. 6:1; Neh. 1:9; Job 3:5; Job 4:19; Job 11:14; Job 15:28; Job 18:15; Job 26:5; Job 29:25; Job 30:6; Job 37:8; Job 38:19; Job 39:28; Ps. 7:5; Ps. 15:1; Ps. 16:9; Ps. 37:3; Ps. 37:27; Ps. 37:29; Ps. 55:6; Ps. 65:4; Ps. 68:6; Ps. 68:16; Ps. 68:18; Ps. 69:36; Ps. 74:2; Ps. 78:55; Ps. 78:60; Ps. 85:9; Ps. 94:17; Ps. 102:28; Ps. 104:12; Ps. 120:5; Ps. 120:6; Ps. 135:21; Ps. 139:9; Prov. 1:33; Prov. 2:21; Prov. 7:11; Prov. 8:12; Prov. 10:30; Isa. 8:18; Isa. 13:20; Isa. 13:21; Isa. 18:3; Isa. 26:19; Isa. 32:16; Isa. 33:5; Isa. 33:16; Isa. 34:11; Isa. 34:17; Isa. 57:15; Isa. 65:9; Jer. 7:3; Jer. 7:7; Jer. 7:12; Jer. 17:6; Jer. 23:6; Jer. 25:24; Jer. 33:16; Jer. 46:26; Jer. 48:28; Jer. 49:16; Jer. 49:31; Jer. 50:39; Jer. 51:13; Ezek. 17:23; Ezek. 31:13; Ezek. 32:4; Ezek. 43:7; Ezek. 43:9; Joel 3:17; Joel 3:21; Obad. 1:3; Mic. 4:10; Mic. 7:14; Nah. 3:18; Zech. 2:10; Zech. 2:11; Zech. 8:3; Zech. 8:8

**And the cloud covered it for six days and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud-** In Ex 24:12 Moses was told to remain on the mountain and here we see he had to wait 6 days until the LORD called him.

#### Related Resources:

- [Glory of God](#)
- [Shekinah glory cloud](#) - see Garland's [The Abiding Presence of God](#)
- [How many times did Moses ascend Mount Sinai? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is the significance of Mount Horeb in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Exodus 24:17 And to the eyes of the sons of Israel the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the mountain top.**

NET Exodus 24:17 Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in plain view of the people.

NLT Exodus 24:17 To the Israelites at the foot of the mountain, the glory of the LORD appeared at the summit

like a consuming fire.

ESV Exodus 24:17 Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.

NIV Exodus 24:17 To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain.

KJV Exodus 24:17 And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

LXE Exodus 24:17 And the appearance of the glory of the Lord was as burning fire on the top of the mountain, before the children of Israel.

ASV Exodus 24:17 And the appearance of the glory of Jehovah was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

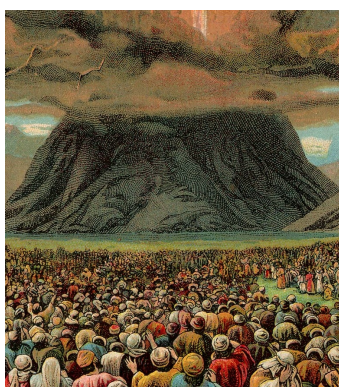
CSB Exodus 24:17 The appearance of the LORD's glory to the Israelites was like a consuming fire on the mountaintop.

NKJ Exodus 24:17 The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.

NRS Exodus 24:17 Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.

YLT Exodus 24:17 And the appearance of the honour of Jehovah is as a consuming fire on the top of the mount, before the eyes of the sons of Israel;

- **like a consuming fire:** Ex 3:2 19:18 De 4:24,36 Eze 1:27 Na 1:6 Hab 3:4,5 Heb 12:18,29
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



Mt Sinai - Yahweh Like a Consuming Fire

## JEHOVAH IS A CONSUMING FIRE

### Related Passages:

Deuteronomy 4:24+ "For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Deuteronomy 9:3+ "Know therefore today that it is the LORD your God who is crossing over before you as a consuming fire. He will destroy them and He will subdue them before you, so that you may drive them out and destroy them quickly, just as the LORD has spoken to you.

**And to the eyes of the sons of Israel-** The writer of Hebrews alludes to this sight in his exhortation to the first century Jews who were being drawn toward the Messiah and the New Covenant declaring "you have not come to a mountain that can be touched and to a blazing fire, and to darkness and gloom and whirlwind...for our God is a **consuming fire.**" (Heb 12:18+, Heb 12:29+)

**The appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming (devouring) fire on the mountain top-** It is notable that God's presence was often associated with **fire** (Ex 3:2+ = burning bush; Ex 13:21–22+ = pillar of fire by night; Ex 19:18+ = "Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire." Ex 40:38 = " throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel."). **Consuming** is the Hebrew verb **akal** (used >700x most often literal eating - so of the 44 uses in Exodus only 3 do not refer to literal eating) and is used figuratively in Ex 3:2+ to describe God in the burning bush which was **not consumed**. In Ex 15:7 **akal** is used figuratively = "You



send forth Your burning anger, and it **consumes** ([akal](#)) them as chaff (cf Ex 22:6)." It is also interesting that while the appearance of God's glory was **like a fire** that would consume or devour, the man Moses was *not consumed* or *devoured*, a reflection of God's great mercy and amazing grace. Also the fact that Moses was not "*consumed*" should have served as a powerful testimony to the sons of Israel that he was God's chosen leader (sadly the people often forgot this image and as a result questioned and challenged his leadership!) And so this **mountain top** was on one hand a glorious sight, but on the other it was meant to be a fearful sight (cf even to Moses - Heb 12:21+ = "*And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, "I AM FULL OF FEAR and trembling."*"), instilling an awe into the hearts of those who saw it that they might understand Yahweh was an Awesome God, a God to be feared, adored and obeyed.

**THOUGHT** - Think about this for a moment -- the Israelites are witnessing the unspeakable glory of Jehovah for 40 days, glory that even looks like a consuming fire and yet at the end of that 40 days they seek to make a golden calf! This is mind boggling beloved! What would we have done in their place? We like to think we would have done better, but beloved as Jeremiah makes crystal clear "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?" (Jer 17:9). There is the answer - our hearts are deceived and they are depraved. We can have an incredible spiritual experience with God one day and the next day go out and make our own variant of a "golden calf!" So what is the solution? We must daily be filled with the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:16+) Who Alone can in effect "neutralize" unholy thoughts, words and actions (cf Ro 8:13+)

**Consuming fire** - 8x in 8v - Ex 24:17; Dt. 4:24; Deut. 9:3; Isa. 29:6; Isa. 30:27; Isa. 30:30; Isa. 33:14; Heb. 12:29.

**Kaiser** - The three symbols of God's glory, i.e., of his presence, are (1) the cloud, (2) the fire, and (3) the voice of God. The radiance of his presence is like a fiery furnace (cf. Heb 12:18+, Heb 12:29+)

Forty years later Moses addressing the generation preparing to enter the Promised Land would remind them of the sight of Yahweh as **like a consuming fire** so that this image would invoke in them a fear of Him, a holy, reverential fear so that they would turn away from evil, for "the fear of the LORD is to hate evil," (Pr 8:13) and "by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil." (Pr 16:6). Pr 3:7 adds "Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil."

Deut 4:23-24+ So **watch** yourselves, that you do not forget (THERE'S THE PROBLEM - RAPID ONSET SPIRITUAL AMNESIA!) the covenant of the LORD your God which He made with you (THE COVENANT AT MOUNT SINAI), and (WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE FORGET?) make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the LORD your God has commanded you. For (EXPLAINING WHY THEY NEED TO CONTINUALLY WATCH THEMSELVES!) the LORD your God is a **consuming fire**, a jealous God.

**THOUGHT** - This principle is true today of the beneficial effect of the fear of the LORD. If you have *little* fear of the LORD, you are much *less likely* to turn away from evil.

#### Related Resources:

- [Glory of God](#)
- [Shekinah glory cloud](#) - see Garland's [The Abiding Presence of God](#)

**Exodus 24:18 Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain; and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.**

NET Exodus 24:18 Moses went into the cloud when he went up the mountain, and Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

NLT Exodus 24:18 Then Moses disappeared into the cloud as he climbed higher up the mountain. He remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

ESV Exodus 24:18 Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

NIV Exodus 24:18 Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

KJV Exodus 24:18 And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

LXE Exodus 24:18 And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and went up to the mountain, and was there in

the mountain forty days and forty nights.

ASV Exodus 24:18 And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud, and went up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

CSB Exodus 24:18 Moses entered the cloud as he went up the mountain, and he remained on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights.

NKJ Exodus 24:18 So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

NRS Exodus 24:18 Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. Moses was on the mountain for forty days and forty nights.

YLT Exodus 24:18 and Moses goeth into the midst of the cloud, and goeth up unto the mount, and Moses is on the mount forty days and forty nights.

- **went:** Ex 24:17 9:29,33 19:20 Pr 28:1
- **forty days:** Ex 34:28 De 9:9,18,25 10:10 1Ki 19:8 Mt 4:2 Mk 1:13 Lu 4:2
- [Exodus 24 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MOSES DISAPPEARS INTO THE CLOUD

### Related Passages:

Exodus 34:28 So he was there with the LORD **forty days and forty nights**; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

Deuteronomy 9:9; 11; 18+ "When I went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the LORD had made with you, then I remained on the mountain **forty days and nights**; I neither ate bread nor drank water. 11 "It came about at the end of forty days and nights that the LORD gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant. 18 "I fell down before the LORD, as at the first, **forty days and nights**; I neither ate bread nor drank water, because of all your sin which you had committed in doing what was evil in the sight of the LORD to provoke Him to anger.

Deuteronomy 10:10+ "I, moreover, stayed on the mountain **forty days and forty nights** like the first time, and the LORD listened to me that time also; the LORD was not willing to destroy you.

**Moses entered the midst of the cloud as he went up to the mountain-** Moses is not at the periphery of the cloud but in the midst, in Moses is by himself. Joshua had gone up the mountain with Moses, but did not enter into **the cloud** manifesting the presence of Jehovah. "So what this means is that Moses was given permission by God to enter into this cloud because if anyone tried it without invitation, they would be burned up." ([Thompson](#))

**And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights-** Moses and Joshua will not return down until Exodus 32. It was during this 40 days that Moses received the instructions regarding the Tabernacle (see Heb 8:5+, Ex 25:40+) as well as the priesthood and Israel's worship (described in Exodus 25-31). We assume this is not counting the 6 days mentioned in his time is mentioned 5 times (see related passages above) and twice it is mentioned that he had intake of neither bread or water, indicating supernatural intervention for a man cannot live without water for 40 days. Of course the NT parallel is seen when Jesus "fasted forty days and forty nights." (Mt 4:2+) **Forty days** is a time repeated in several passages (cf Ge 50:3, Nu 13:25), but the exact reason is not explained in this context. It certainly proved long enough for Israel to forget their covenant vows and commit spiritual harlotry against their Husband (Isa 54:5, Jer 31:32).

**Kaiser** - During this time Moses received all the instructions on the tabernacle and its furnishings in chapters 25–31. Not until chapter 32 do Moses and Joshua come down to face Israel's apostasy. (EBC-Ex)

There is another parallel in the transfiguration

(Mt 17:1-9) Six days later Jesus \*took with Him Peter and James and John his brother, and **led them up on a high mountain** by themselves. 2 And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light (THE GLORY OF GOD SURELY SIMILAR TO WHAT MOSES SAW). 3 And behold, **Moses and Elijah** appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, I will make three tabernacles here, one for You, and one for Moses, and one for

Elijah.” 5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, “This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” 6 When the disciples heard this, they fell face down to the ground and were terrified. 7 And Jesus came to them and touched them and said, “Get up, and do not be afraid.” 8 And lifting up their eyes, they saw no one except Jesus Himself alone. 9 As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead.”

**McGee** - It was during this time on Mount Sinai that Moses received the instructions presented in the rest of this book.

**F B Meyer** devotional thought on **40 days and 40 nights** - The life of fellowship with God cannot be built up in a day. It begins with the habitual reference of all to Him, hour by hour, as Moses did in Egypt. But it moves on to more and longer periods of communion; and it finds its consummation and bliss in days and nights of intercession and waiting and holy intercourse.

**Related Resource:**

- [What is the significance of 40 days in the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)