

Exodus 24 - Covenant Sealing: a Marriage Ceremony

To read:

1. Ezekiel 1
2. II Corinthians 3

I. Introduction

A. For the last three weeks we have been studying the covenant that God made with Israel at Sinai

1. We started in Exodus 19 and saw that the Mosaic Covenant most closely matches a marriage covenant and the purpose of the covenant is to give Israel the rights and responsibilities of a wife to YHWH
2. We saw that God called them to be His treasured possession and a kingdom of priests - the roles of a wife - Israel was YHWH's beloved and Israel took YHWH's name and represents Him to the nations
3. In Exodus 20, we saw God work out His purpose in the Ten Words - God called Israel to represent Him as a kingdom of priests so God places His image upon them by powerfully speaking as He did in creation
4. The Ten Words describe who God is in relation to Israel and therefore describe how Israel will reflect God to the nations, by living in these Ten Words Israel will be the Kingdom of Priests called by God
5. In Exodus 21-23, we saw God work out the second purpose in the Judgments - God called Israel to be His treasured possession, His bride, so God gives instruction for what it means to live in His household
6. The Judgments describe what God's household looks like and how Israel will live with God in His land, therefore they are closely related to the Ten Words since the character of God underpins both

B. This morning we are going to finish the covenant by looking at Exodus 24 - the covenant ratification ceremony

1. As we finish our study of the covenant, we can start to see how the whole book of the covenant goes together
 - a. It starts in chapter 19 with the announcement of the covenant describing two purposes of the covenant
 - b. Then chapters 20-23 contain two sections of instructions related to the two purposes of the covenant, Exodus 20 relating to Kingdom of Priests and Exodus 21-23 relating to treasured possession - I like that word instruction because that is the term Scripture uses for God's law, instruction - God teaching His people how to enjoy covenant with Him
 - c. Chapter 24, then, is the consummation of the covenant and is therefore closely related to chapter 19, in chapter 19 God proposes a covenant with Israel, in chapters 20-23 He describes what it means to be in covenant with Him, and in chapter 24 God seals the covenant that He proposed in chapter 19
 - d. In fact, the text wants us to see the close tie between chapter 19 and chapter 24 - in chapter 19 the Hebrew word for descend is used seven times as God descends on the mountain, in chapter 24 the Hebrew word for ascend is used seven times as God calls Moses, Aaron and the elders to come up the mountain
 - e. Chapter 24 finishes what chapter 19 started, chapters 20-23 describe what this ceremony means for Israel and in chapter 24 the covenant is sealed as it was proposed in chapter 19
2. Since we have been using the picture of marriage to understand this covenant, we might think of chapter 24 as the wedding ceremony, God joins Himself to Israel and Israel joins herself to God - in fact, there is a great similarity to a wedding in chapters 19-24, think about a traditional wedding:
 - a. Often, a wedding starts with a declaration of intent - this is where the pastor ask the man and woman if they desire to be married, 'will you take this woman to be your lawfully wedded wife?', and the answer is, 'I do' - we see this in chapter 19 - God declares His intent and Israel responds in kind
 - b. Then a wedding often proceeds with a short charge or sermon, instruction on the meaning and duties of marriage - we see this in chapters 20-23 - what does it mean to be God's bride?
 - c. The wedding ends with an exchange of vows, the bride and groom pledge themselves to each other and they are declared to be husband and wife - this is the first half of chapter 24 with the sealing ceremony
 - d. Then, after the wedding, a meal is celebrated rejoicing in the new covenant and new relationship, which is the second half of chapter 24 as the elders of Israel eat a meal in God's presence
3. On a side note, if this is a grand marriage ceremony then this teaches us about marriage - this is something I wish I would have had more time to develop in each passage in the book of the covenant
 - a. In the purpose of the covenant in chapter 19 we can learn something about the purpose of marriage and how we should act in marriage because our marriages are meant to reflect the greater truths of Exodus 19
 - b. In the instruction of the covenant in chapters 20-23 we can learn how to live in marriage because our marriages are, again, meant to reflect the greater truths of this wedding ceremony
 - c. And in Chapter 24 this is one reason why a traditional wedding is a good thing because we reflect the covenant that God makes - in the midst of the gathered congregation a declaration of intent is made, instruction is given, vows are exchanged and a covenant meal is celebrated - this is how God takes His bride

C. Read Exodus 24:1-12

Then he said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. Moses alone shall come near to the LORD, but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him."

Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do." And Moses wrote down all the words of the LORD. He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. 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." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."

Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.

D. Proposition and Outline

1. Proposition: In Exodus 24, God seals His marriage to Israel calling her to live in covenant with Him and blessing her with His covenant presence. So Exodus 24 calls us to see a better marriage sealed in a better way that provides a more glorious covenant presence in Jesus Christ.
2. Outline:
 - a. God joins Himself to Israel and Israel to God
 - b. Christ joins Himself to His people and His people to Him
 - c. We live in covenant with our Husband, Lord and Master Jesus Christ

II. God joins Himself to Israel and Israel to God

A. As we look at our passage, I want to defend my premise that Exodus 24 is a wedding between God and Israel

1. As I said a moment ago, Exodus 24 picks up where Exodus 19 left off, and we see this because the theme of going up the mountain appears again in 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 worship from afar.*
 - a. After receiving God's call, but before going up the mountain, Moses speaks to Israel, and he does a few things which might seem a little odd and we might interpret them wrongly if we don't pay attention
 - b. First, Moses recites God's words from Exodus 20-23 to the people and the people respond by saying - *"All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do."* - Israel agrees to the terms of the marriage
2. Then here is the interesting part, Moses takes time to build an altar and 12 pillars in verse 4 - *He rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.*
 - a. Notice that the pillars represent the twelve tribes of Israel, and in contrast, though not explicitly stated, it is easy to see that the altar represents God - Moses builds a picture, as it were, of what is going on at the mountain, the people are standing before God, the pillars stand before the altar
 - b. Then two offerings are made, a burnt offering and a peace offering - as we look at these two offerings, although all offerings have to do with sinful men approaching a holy God, neither of these offerings are meant to cover sin - the guilt offering and the sin offering take that place as we see in Leviticus
 - c. Instead, these two offerings demonstrate two things, the burnt offering represents consecration or devotion while the peace offering represents fellowship or relationship - offerings are made that seal a new relationship that allows peaceful fellowship and causes total devotion to the relationship
3. The climax of the passage happens in verses 6-8 - *And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. 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." And Moses took the blood and threw it on the people and said, "Behold the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words*
 - a. After the burnt offering and the peace offering, Moses takes the blood and he does two things with it
 - b. First, he applies the blood to the altar representing God - God has a portion of the blood, He is identified with the blood, the blood belongs to Him
 - c. Second, after reading God's instruction once more, Israel agrees to honor and obey God and Moses applies the other half of the blood to Israel - actually if we pay close attention to the passage, Moses is probably throwing the blood on the pillars that were built to represent Israel
 - d. Moses takes the blood and applies it to God and to Israel - both of them are marked by the same blood, they are now in relationship with one another, although they had been unrelated now they are the closest relationship possible - the blood of the burnt offering and peace offering join God and Israel together
 - e. Now God and Israel can enjoy the blessings of their relationship, the peaceful fellowship that flows from the covenant, and God will be completely devoted to Israel and Israel will be completely devoted to God
4. And following the ratification, this new relationship is celebrated with a covenant meal, verses 9-11 - *Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness. And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.*
 - a. This continues what God called for in verse 1, God called the elders of Israel up the mountain and they go and celebrate a marriage banquet with God in His presence
 - b. The covenant relationship is real and glorious, the peace promised in covenant is realized on the mountain
5. So, Exodus 24 follows closely the pattern of a wedding initiating a marriage
 - a. God pledges Himself to Israel and enters into covenant with Israel by taking part in the common blood
 - b. Israel pledges herself to God and enters into covenant with God by taking part in the common blood
 - c. Now there is one blood that joins them closer than any other relationship, now God belongs to Israel and Israel belongs to God, the promise at the center of Exodus 6:6-7 is realized - *Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*
 - d. God has taken Israel to be His people, His bride and God has become their God, their bridegroom

B. As we look at Exodus 24, though, I want to emphasize two things that are central to this ceremony, we might consider them the two vows made, the vow made by Israel and the vow made by God

1. Israel's vow: As God's bride, Israel pledges to honor and obey God
 - a. Israel's vow to live in covenant with God, to live according to the instruction that God gave about His covenant, is emphasized strongly in this passage
 - b. First, we see it in verse 3 - *Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the rules. And all the people answered with one voice and said, "All the words that the LORD has spoken we will do."*
 - c. And again in verse 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."*
 - d. Israel's vow is to listen to the words of God and do them - they will honor God as their groom, they will obey Him as their Lord, they will seek to honor the purpose of the covenant by living as God's treasured possession and as God's kingdom of priests according to God's instruction
 - e. Now again I want to emphasize that this is not an extra burden that Israel takes upon herself, this is merely agreeing to be part of the covenant - If Israel wants to be God's treasured possession, if she wants to represent God as a kingdom of priests, then living according to God's instruction is absolutely necessary because that is the only way to be God's treasured possession, to be a kingdom of priests
 - f. The instruction from God is not meant to simply be an arbitrary law that God binds His people to, it is not meant to be restriction on Israel, it is literally instruction on how Israel will enjoy the benefits of covenant
 - g. So, to be part of the covenant, Israel's vow must be, "We will live in the covenant of God, we will live according to the instruction of God, we will obey God's words."
2. God's vow: As Israel's bridegroom, God welcomes Israel into His covenant presence
 - a. In many ways, God's vow is found in Exodus 19:5-6 - *Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*
 - b. Israel's vow is to live as God's treasured possession and God's kingdom of priests because it reflects God's vow to make Israel His treasured possession, His kingdom of priests
 - c. And we see both of these vows not only promised, but provided by God - as God's treasured possession, Israel is welcomed into God's presence so that she can enjoy God's glory, as God's kingdom of priests she is welcomed into God's presence and not destroyed for coming near
 - d. So, we see three things happen in Chapter 24
 - i. First, Israel sees God's glory, she gets to behold the glory of her bridegroom because she is His treasured possession, verses 9-10 - *Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, and they saw the God of Israel. There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness.*
 - ii. And as Israel approaches, she has peace because she is the kingdom of priests appointed by God to draw near, verse 11a - *And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel;*
 - iii. Finally, Israel fellowships in God's presence enjoying the benefits of this relationship, verse 11b - *they beheld God, and ate and drank.*
 - e. God kept His vow to Israel, He welcomed her into His glorious presence in order to enjoy Him, to rejoice in Him, to fellowship with Him, to act, as it were, as a bride with her husband

C. But before we turn to our next point, we must see that there are limits to this covenant

1. This covenant promises so many glorious things, it would be easy to get caught up in this covenant and not look for anything else - what could be better than dwelling in the presence of God, enjoying His beauty without fear
2. So God, in His infinite wisdom, set limits on this covenant, limits that call us still to long for something better, limits that show that this covenant can't be the final answer
3. We see this in the first two verses - *Then he said to Moses, "Come up to the LORD, you and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. Moses alone shall come near to the LORD, but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him."*
4. The blessings of this covenant were glorious, but the blessings of this covenant were limited - Moses and the elders got to enjoy God's presence, but they had to worship from afar, and as for the rest of the people, they were completely excluded - the people still could not come near
5. As we rejoice in this covenant, at the same time we should long for a better covenant, a covenant in which it could be said - *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. (II Corinthians 3:18)* - which brings us to our second point

III. Christ joins Himself to His people

A. To understand Exodus 24 this morning, we must see that Exodus 24 ultimately points forward to a greater wedding

1. I made such a point of emphasizing that Exodus 19-24 is a marriage covenant and that Exodus 24 can be thought of as a wedding because this helps us understand how we relate to this passage
 - a. As I've stated several times before, we aren't bound to this covenant, we weren't present at this sealing ceremony, nor are we the descendants of this covenant - we don't have anything to do with this covenant
 - b. And beyond that, we see that this covenant has been superseded, it isn't in force anymore, the promises and the responsibilities of this covenant don't bind anyone, Hebrews 8:13 - *In speaking of a new covenant, he makes the first one obsolete. And what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.*
 - c. So, we can't apply these things to ourselves directly - the laws and the promises in Exodus don't bind us, they aren't normative for us, they have nothing to do with us, unless they teach us in some other way
 - d. And they do teach us in a different way, they teach us as a picture not as a rule book, they paint a glorious picture of what will happen and now has happened between Christ and His church
 - e. To be clear, Exodus 19-24 was never meant to be eternal, it was never meant to be ultimate, it was never meant to save, it was always meant to be a picture - a picture that describes who Jesus Christ is
 - f. God entered into a cosmic marriage with Israel because Christ would enter into a cosmic marriage with His church - so we can learn from Exodus 19-24 as a picture without being bound by its law, we can learn what it means to be in a marriage covenant with God and what privileges and responsibilities it entails
2. So, as we turn from the picture to the reality, we see throughout the New Testament that a better marriage is taking place between Christ and His church, the reality to which Exodus 19-24 pointed
 - a. Christ Himself spoke of the work He was doing as a marriage, for example, Matthew 25:1 - *"Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.*
 - b. John the Baptist echoes Christ in John 3:29 - *The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice.*
 - c. So, Paul understood the law to be one marriage and salvation in Christ to be a greater marriage, Romans 7:1-4 - *Or do you not know, brothers---for I am speaking to those who know the law---that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress. Likewise, my brothers, you also have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to him who has been raised from the dead, in order that we may bear fruit for God.*
 - d. The church is the bride of Christ, and Christ her bridegroom, as Paul so beautifully says in Ephesians 5:23,25 - *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior... Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*
 - e. And, if Christ and the church are bridegroom and bride, then there is a greater marriage ceremony, a greater wedding that supersedes the type of Exodus 24, Revelation 19:6-9 - *Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, "Hallelujah! For the Lord our God the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Bride has made herself ready; it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"--- for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."*
 - f. And, in this wedding, the promise of Exodus 6 will be ultimately fulfilled, Revelation 21:2-3 - *And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*
 - g. This is the ultimate wedding ceremony, this is what Exodus 24 is merely a picture of, this is the ultimate purpose of the covenant of Exodus 19-24 and the ultimate purpose of all marriage - to point to the great marriage between Christ and His Church
3. Since Exodus 24 is merely a picture of the greater union between Christ and the church, as we go forward, I want to consider all of the ways in which Christ fulfills the pictures of Exodus 24, we'll look at four fulfillments:

B. In the New Testament the bridegroom of the covenant is identified as Jesus Christ

1. This is what we have just covered, so I'm not going to cover it again - God was the bridegroom of the covenant, because the Son of God, One with God Himself, would be the greater bridegroom of a greater marriage
2. Christ came to earth to win His bride, to rescue her from bondage, to bring her to Himself, to enter into covenant with her and to enjoy her as His bride
3. The covenant of Exodus 19-24 is ultimately about Christ because Christ is the better bridegroom

C. In the New Testament the blood of the covenant is provided by Jesus Christ

1. At the center of the wedding ceremony in Exodus 24, blood was applied to the altar and the pillars to symbolize that now God and Israel were joined as one blood, that the burnt offering and the peace offering joined them in the closest relationship possible
2. The blood of the covenant is obviously incredibly important to the Old Testament, but it isn't mentioned very often, it happens here in Exodus 24 and then the reality of it is played out in the Old Testament
3. But, the blood of the covenant is mentioned again in the prophets, Zechariah 9:11 - *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.*
4. The blood of the covenant promised that another salvation was going to happen, another salvation much like what happened in Exodus, another freeing of the prisoner from bondage, and this happened through the offering of another blood, another covenant sealed with the blood of the covenant, Luke 22:20 - *And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.*
5. A new covenant was sealed with the blood of Christ, a covenant like Exodus 19-24, but exceeding it in glory in every way, and, like the blood of the covenant in Exodus 24, this blood of the covenant dedicates us to God, or sanctifies us to God, it sets us apart to be God's people, Hebrews 10:29 - *How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?*
6. Through the blood of Christ, the blood of the burnt offering and peace offering, we have been set apart to God, and now God, in Christ, has become our closest relationship because of the one blood that we share, so Hebrews promises in Hebrews 13:20-21 - *Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.*
7. God is now our Kinsman-Redeemer and He will provide everything that is necessary for us to live in covenant with Him, for us to do His will and be pleasing in His sight
8. The covenant of Exodus 19-24 is ultimately about Christ, because Christ provides a better blood for the covenant

D. In the New Testament the presence of the covenant is enjoyed in Jesus Christ

1. The glorious climax of the covenant in chapter 24 is Israel, through the elders, enjoying the presence of God
2. And, so the ultimate goal of an Israelite from that point forward was to see God, as we see Job rest his hope in Job 19:25-27 - *For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last he will stand upon the earth. And after my skin has been thus destroyed, yet in my flesh I shall see God, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. My heart faints within me!*
3. This is the hope expressed in Job, yet through much of this covenant, God was hidden and far away, at the best of times He was shrouded in the Tabernacle or Temple, and at the worst of times, He seemed completely absent
4. But a new promise was made to the prophets, both Isaiah and Ezekiel, while prophesying of a day to come when a better covenant would be made were given a vision of the coming glory of God
5. So, we see Isaiah in Isaiah 6:1-4 - *In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke.*
6. And Ezekiel sees even more, Ezekiel 1:22-28 - *Over the heads of the living creatures there was the likeness of an expanse, shining like awe-inspiring crystal, spread out above their heads. And under the expanse their wings were stretched out straight, one toward another. And each creature had two wings covering its body. And when they went, I heard the sound of their wings like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty, a sound of tumult like the sound of an army. When they stood still, they let down their wings. And there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads. When they stood still, they let down their wings. And above the expanse over their heads there was the likeness of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness with a human appearance. And upward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were gleaming metal, like the appearance of fire enclosed all around. And downward from what had the appearance of his waist I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and there was brightness around him. Like the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud on the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness all around. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD.*
7. In both of these passages we can hear the echo of Exodus 24, in the promise of a New Covenant the hope of seeing the glory of the Lord is held out again, so it is no accident when Philip ask Jesus in the upper room in John 14:8 - *Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us."* - Philip wanted to see the fulfillment of the promise, the glory of God revealed to His people, Philip wanted to experience Exodus 24
8. And Jesus gives a glorious answer in the next verse, John 14:9 - *Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*
9. Jesus claimed that He was the fulfillment of the covenant presence of God promised, and we see the truth of this throughout the rest of the New Testament, Paul tells us in Colossians 2:9-10 - *For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority.*
10. In Christ dwelt all the fullness and the glory of God, and we are near Him, we have been filled with Him, we are in Him, so in Christ we experience the glory of God in a greater way than Exodus 24, so Paul says in II Corinthians 3:18 - *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*
11. In Christ we see God's glory, and this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit, which points us to how we experience this now as Christ's people - we enjoy the covenant presence of God through the indwelling ministry of the Spirit of Christ - as Christ's people we are always in the covenant presence of God in a greater way than the elders on the mountain were, for God dwells with us, even in us and walks with us
12. The covenant of Exodus 19-24 is ultimately about Christ because Christ is the presence of God for us to enjoy

E. In the New Testament, the fellowship meal of the covenant is found in Christ

1. In Exodus 24, the covenant was celebrated by eating a meal in the presence of God, and we see clearly that this is fulfilled in Christ
2. I'm actually not going to say anything about the covenant meal this morning because we are going to celebrate the covenant meal in a few minutes - maybe Dan will say something more, but clearly Christ fulfills this as well
3. The covenant of Exodus 19-24 is ultimately about Christ because we get to celebrate the covenant meal with Him

IV. We join ourselves to Christ

A. As those in covenant with Christ, we are called to enjoy His covenant presence

1. If all of this is true of Christ, then we are those who get to experience the glory of God in a better way than the elders in Exodus 24 - and this is both a declarative and an imperative
 - a. It is a declarative in that those in Christ do see the glory of God, it is a statement of fact, a statement of fulfilled promise, a statement of glory
 - b. But it is also an imperative because those in Christ ought to desire and strive to see the glory of God reflected in the face of Christ - this is our longing and our joy, this is our devotion and our dedication, this is the purpose of our lives and the purpose of every part of our life
 - c. So, we can go back to Exodus 24 and see that everything that was true of the Israel is true of us in a greater sense - Israel got to see the glory of God, but we see the glory of Christ; Israel appeared before God and was not destroyed, but we have a greater peace through Christ; Israel fellowshiped in the presence of God, but we have a greater fellowship in Christ through His Spirit
2. We get to see the glory of Christ
 - a. I'm going to go to II Corinthians 3:18 again, I know I've used it three times this morning, but this is one of those verses I could just say over and over again because of how good and how glorious it is
 - b. II Corinthians 3:18 - *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*
 - c. We get to see the glory of the Lord with unveiled face, what a great glory and what a great joy, and this promise calls us to run after it, to look for the glory of Christ, to love the glory of Christ, to live in the glory of Christ - how could we do anything else when something so good is laid before us?
3. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ
 - a. Romans 5:1 - *Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*
 - b. The elders of Israel were not destroyed, but Israel was eventually rejected, but we have a greater peace provided by a greater sacrifice in Christ and we will never be cast off
 - c. What a great joy it is that we have peace with God, but again, it calls us to live in that peace - if we have peace with God then we ought to rest in what God has done for us and we ought to seek His presence often and eagerly - Christ has made it so that we can approach, shall we not approach and find mercy and grace in our time of need?
4. We get to fellowship in the Holy Spirit sent by Christ
 - a. The elders of Israel fellowshiped with God in His presence, but we have a greater presence of God with us all of the time, we are always fellowshiping with God in His presence through Christ
 - b. So, Paul says in II Corinthians 13:14 - *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*
 - c. What a joy, we get to be in God's presence at all times, not once like the elders, not held back like the people, but welcomed in Christ
 - d. But again, if we are welcomed into God's presence this calls us to live in that presence, so Paul warns us in Ephesians 4:30 - *And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*
 - e. If we get to be in God's presence eternally, then we should live as though we are in His presence eternally, if we live by the Spirit then we should keep in step with the Spirit, how could we forget that we are before the face of God?

B. As those in covenant with Christ, we are called to honor and obey our Lord Jesus Christ

1. As we finish this morning, I want to think about the right way to apply the covenant of Exodus 19-24

- a. I've said that we aren't bound to this covenant, but we learn from it like a picture
- b. If this is true, then we don't need to worry about enforcing the law codes embodied in this covenant, whether in government, in our church, etc. , but we still learn from it
- c. We learn what it means to be in covenant with God, and one thing we see here in Exodus 24 is that being in covenant with God means agreeing to be in covenant with God
- d. God bound Himself to Israel, promising that she would be His treasured possession, His kingdom of priest, but Israel bound herself back to God, saying she would be His treasured possession, His kingdom of priests
- e. And here this morning, we find ourselves in a similar situation, we are a new treasured possession belonging to Christ, a new kingdom of priests representing Christ
- f. So, we must agree to be these things, to be Christ's treasured possession and His kingdom of priests, we must agree to live in Christ's instruction, just as the Israelites lived in the instruction of the Old Covenant

2. And, like the Israelites of old, we have received instruction from Christ as to how to live in covenant with Him

- a. So, Paul tells the Ephesians in Ephesians 4:20-24 - *You, however, did not come to know Christ that way. Surely you heard of him and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.*
- b. In Christ, we were taught, we were given instruction, we're instructed in how we will be Christ's treasured possession, His kingdom of priests, and we find this instruction throughout the New Testament
- c. We find it in the negative sense, sometimes, like Colossians 3:5-11 - *Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming. In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.*
- d. Or we find it in the positive sense, like Colossians 3:12-17 - *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*
- e. And this is only the smallest sample of the instruction given in Christ, but as those in covenant with Christ, we must vow to live according to these instructions - these guide us in how to enjoy our relationship with Christ, so we must obey these teachings, we must live according to instruction in Christ

3. And we are clearly called to live in obedience to our bridegroom

- a. Romans 1:1, 5-6 - *Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God... to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,*
- b. I Peter 1:2 - *To those who are elect exiles of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in the sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and for sprinkling with his blood:*
- c. II Corinthians 10:5 - *We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,*
- d. Ephesians 6:5 - *Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ.*
- e. Just as the Israelites stood before God and promised to do the instruction of God, to obey the Words of God, we stand before Christ and are called to make the same declaration, we will obey His instruction, we will live as His people, we will honor our husband, we will be a treasured possession, we will be His kingdom of priests, we will be completely devoted to Him