

Becoming God's People

Exodus 24:1-8

Thank you for joining us this week as we continue our study through Exodus. We are now about halfway through the book of Exodus. The rest of Exodus tells us what happened at Mt Sinai. God reveals Himself to the children of Israel in ways they have never seen. They learn more about Him and experience Him at a whole new level. As we study this part of Exodus, we hope you will also learn more about Him and experience Him at a level that you have not known Him before.

As we are going through this section of Exodus, don't lose sight of the big picture. Some of these chapters are filled with lots of small details, and sometimes we wonder why all this information is in the Bible. If you start to feel that way, remember where this fits in God's story. God is building a kingdom, and He will redeem what was lost to sin; He will restore His kingdom in the whole world. We know the children of Israel go on and fall away from the true God, but from the children of Israel comes one called Jesus. Through Jesus, God will get it all back! God's plan will not be thwarted.

I give you this short introduction to remind you of the big picture. God's plan will be accomplished, He was working then, and He still is at work despite how things appear. I thank you again for joining us on Hope for Today; let's go with Bible teacher, J. Mark, for a closer look at today's lesson.

Moses held a prominent place in God's plan to make Israel His special people. We remember how Moses' mother saved her baby by the little boat she made for him; how she placed that little boat in the reeds by the bank of the river expecting Pharaoh's daughter to find her baby boy. We remember how the princess found him and how the baby's sister got Moses' own mother to nurse him. We remember how Pharaoh's daughter adopted Moses, so he grew up in Pharaoh's palace. As the son of the princess, he was in line for the throne of Egypt.

We remember how at 40 years of age, Moses was forced to flee to Midian when Pharaoh learned that he had killed an Egyptian who was beating an Israelite. We remember how after 40 years in the desert, God called Moses to lead His people out of Egypt to the Promised Land. We remember how Moses argued with God and finally yielded to God's call.

Little did Moses know how demanding God's call would be or how the LORD would be with him day after day, more intimately than any other man. The road to the Promised Land, Canaan, was known only to God. It was a road with very few travelers.

In this text, we find Moses and Israel at Mt. Sinai, waiting for God's directions to go on to Canaan. It was a sacred time. Promises God made to Abraham were about to be fulfilled.

When God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldeans, He said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse them that curse thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed," Genesis 12:1-3.

Moses became the one to carry God's promise farther toward fulfillment. Only Moses was to draw near to God. He was to take Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu along but not all the way. The 70 elders were also to accompany Moses.

Let's be sure to get the setting. Moses held a central place in God's plan. In this, God was carrying out what He had spoken in Exodus 19:5,6. Israel had traveled three months, beyond the Red Sea through the wilderness to Mt. Sinai.

Here God told them who they were to be, a position no other people have occupied. Listen to Exodus 19:5,6, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."

The word "peculiar" does not mean odd. Rather it means special, unique, different from all other nations. There was to be a difference between Moses and the rest of the people. And there was to be a difference between Israel and the other nations. Israel was to worship the true God. The other nations worshipped the works of their own hands, or they worshipped nature. Only Israel worshipped the true God. So, God chose them to receive the revelation of Himself, to hear His words, to obey His commandments.

All people owe a great debt to Israel. God revealed Himself to them along with His plan for pardon from sin, our sins and the sins of all people who confess and believe in what God has done. With Israel, it was temporary, what we may call a half-way. When God's Son, Jesus, came, He was born of the virgin. He lived a sinless life; He died on the cross, He shed His blood, He arose from the dead, and ascended to God's right hand. From there, He will come back to earth at the time God the Father has appointed. That's the completed work.

All of this is a part of the meeting of Moses and God to make Israel God's people. Exodus 24:1-8 gives the scene when Israel was initiated into BECOMING GOD'S PEOPLE.

1. And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off.

2. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.

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

4. And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and built an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the LORD.

6. And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basons; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

7. And he took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people: and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.

8. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

Here are the several ACTS which resulted in Israel becoming God's people.

Act one was,

The Invitation from God.

This was an outstanding invitation. And the LORD said, "Come up unto the LORD." Up is a word of call. Can we say God is always up? It is always come up, up to meet God. With Moses, it was not only up in a symbolic sense but in the literal sense because God was up on Mt. Sinai, and that's where Moses was to go. "Come up unto the LORD" was an outstanding invitation.

It was also an exclusive invitation because God chose only certain ones: Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and 70 elders of the people. Not all the people. That teaches us the necessity of being in a proper relationship. God did not meet with all the people; He met only with this exclusive group.

It was an informing invitation, for Moses told the people what God said. Then the people said, "All the words which the LORD hath said will we do." This was the way in which God communicated with His people. This was one of the great acts to make the Israelites His people.

We, too, have an invitation. Jesus gave it to us, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Matthew 11:28.

Act two was,

The Mediation of the Sacrifice.

There were selected people to offer the sacrifice. The Bible says young men. Most likely they were Levite young men, because not everybody was qualified to offer sacrifices. The descendants of Aaron called Levities were qualified to offer sacrifices. So, no doubt these young men were from the tribe of Levi, related in some way to Aaron and his sons.

There were the designated offerings, burnt offerings. We learn from the discussion in Leviticus 1 that the burnt offering was a whole burnt offering. No part of the offered animal was saved. It was totally, entirely consumed for the glory of God. Nothing was saved. The whole burnt offering was especially dedicated to God.

There were also peace offerings of oxen. The peace offerings were roasted and eaten in the presence of the altar or in the presence of God. They showed fellowship; they showed relationship; they showed intimacy. Peace offerings.

Finally, the blood of the sacrifices Moses separated. Half of it he sprinkled on the altar to atone for the sins of the people. God told Adam in the garden that day that if he sinned, he would die. God showed him that in order to be saved from death, some warm-blooded animal must die. That was fully exemplified when God clothed the sinning pair with the skins of animals. Now Moses took the blood and sprinkled half of it on the altar to meditate the sins of the people.

Today the blood of Jesus is our appeal. I John 1:7 says, "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." As I said, sin requires a blood sacrifice.

The third Act was,

The Confirmation of the Covenant.

The word covenant is especially interesting and informative. The covenants God made with the people of Israel were designed by His own wise mind. Covenants in the Bible which were God-made were not negotiated. They were stated.

Here this confirmation of the covenant was consummated by the reading of the book. Moses read all that the LORD had spoken. He had it written down. All heard the words. This was especially important because they would not agree to something they did not know. And so, Moses read the book of the covenant to the people. And they responded. The people responded, "All that the LORD hath said will we

do and be obedient." That was a worthy response. That's the way everybody ought to respond to the words of the LORD. It was a necessary response.

Then we have the surety of the covenant, the blood sprinkled on the people. Moses sprinkled half of the blood on the altar, and then he sprinkled the other half of the blood on the people. That was a direct participation.

So, Moses said, "Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you concerning all these words," Exodus 24:8b. In a similar way, the blood of the cross must be applied to our hearts. Then we can say that we have made a covenant with the LORD.

By these acts, God set apart Israel as His special people. It was and is a very sober relationship. They are the only people with whom God made such a covenant. Those acts are easily traced.

First, the invitation to Moses to come up. Second, the mediation by the burnt offerings and peace offerings. Third, the confirmation of the covenant by the sprinkling of the blood.

Thanks, J. Mark, for this teaching from Exodus. If you have any questions or if you'd like a copy of today's teaching, here are a few ways you can contact us. The best way is via email. Our email is hope@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, no problem; you could write to us; Our address is: Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Or you can connect with us on our website. Our website is heraldsofhope.org.

Thank you so much for being with us. Please join us again next week. Until next week, walk with the King and build His kingdom.