

Lesson 33 - CHRIST IN THE OLD COVENANT *Exodus 24*

(Exod. 24:1-8) - From *Exodus 21–23* we see various laws and precepts, partly of a moral, and partly of a religious, but chiefly of a civil nature, respecting the state of Israel and its political and civil good. Here, we see where the Lord God called Moses, along with Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel, to come up to Mount Sinai. Moses alone was to come “*near the Lord.*” The others were to worship from afar or else die under the just wrath of God (*Heb. 12:18-21*). Here, we see Moses as the one mediator between the Lord and the people of Israel and as a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, the one Mediator between God and His elect. Sinners cannot come near to God or approach Him and live apart from His appointed, qualified, and willing mediator. This is Christ the Lord (*1 Tim. 2:5*)!

One of the keys to understanding the whole Bible, especially the Old Testament, is to understand the terms and conditions of the Old Covenant law given by the Lord to Israel through Moses, the mediator, and the terms and conditions of the New Covenant (i.e. everlasting covenant of grace accomplished in time) given by the Lord to spiritual Israel through Christ, the Mediator. The Old Covenant placed conditions on the people whereupon they would be blessed and prosper physically and temporally based on their obedience to the law (*ex. Exod. 15:26*). Like all people by nature, they had every intention of keeping the law (*ex. Exod. 19:8; 24:3*), like all people by nature, they continually failed to keep that law (*Deut. 9:7,24; Jer. 31:32*).

After Moses told them of what God commands, knowing that they would fail to keep the law, he “*builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.*” The altar was the place upon which the burnt offerings (which typified God’s wrath and judgment against sin), and peace offerings (which typified peace made between God and sinners by justice satisfied) were slain and burnt up. This altar was built for a specific people, “*the twelve tribes of Israel.*” The “*twelve pillars*” is a type of the complete company of God’s chosen people (spiritual Israel) given to Christ before the foundation of the world. Not one of them will perish because God has imputed their sins to Christ and His righteousness to them. They are all redeemed by the blood of Christ, and all will be regenerated and converted by the Holy Spirit in the new birth and brought to faith in Christ (*John 6:37-45*)

“*Half of the blood*” set aside in basins was to sprinkle on the people. “*Half of the blood sprinkled on the altar*” showed that it was offered unto God. All of this symbolized Christ dying for His people as their Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer, fulfilling all the requirements of the law on their behalf and offering Himself without spot unto God. It typified peace between God and His chosen people by the blood of the cross. It showed that God could only be reconciled to sinners and sinners reconciled to God based on a propitiation, justice satisfied by a God-appointed substitute and sacrifice, which is the very righteousness of God (Christ’s righteousness imputed to His people) revealed in the Gospel (*Rom. 1:16-17; 2 Cor. 5:10-21*).

In all this we see that the Old Covenant was never intended by God to be a way of salvation for sinners. It was “*added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to Whom the promise was made*” (*Gal. 3:19*). The law was given to expose the sinfulness and depravity of the people, and to show them the impossibility of salvation and righteousness being attained by their best efforts to obey the law (*Rom. 3:10-20*). The “*SEED*” that would come is Christ to Whom (as Surety, Substitute, and Redeemer of God’s elect - spiritual Israel) the promise of salvation was made by God before the foundation of the world (*Gal. 3:16*). The terms and conditions of the New Covenant were all upon Christ and based on HIS obedience unto death for the sins of God’s elect (*2 Cor. 1:20; Gal. 3:13-14*). The Gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation, is the preaching of the terms and conditions of the

New Covenant as fulfilled by Christ Who is the righteousness of God for His people (*Rom. 1:16-17; 3:21-26; 2 Cor. 5:19-21*).

Galatians 3:21-22 states that the law was never in opposition to the promise because the law was never a way of salvation and righteousness for sinners. The way of salvation has always been by the promise of God conditioned on the faithfulness of Christ to fulfill the law (*Rom. 3:21-26; Php. 3:8-9*). *Galatians 3:23* shows how that before Christ came into the world according to God's promise, the nation Israel was "kept" (as persons surrounded in a garrison) under the law and "shut up" (enclosed together) until the time when Christ would come. "Faith" in this verse does not refer to the grace of faith which God gives to His people whereby they believe on Christ. The Old Testament believers had this kind of faith. "Faith" here is the body of truth of God's promise to send Christ into the world to fulfill all righteousness. *Galatians 3:24* shows us that the law was their overseer (tutor) up until the time of Christ by whom all of God's people are justified based on His righteousness imputed. Justification before God is by Christ Who is the object of faith, by His righteousness which God-given faith in believing looks unto and receives, and not by the law and the works of it. *Galatians 3:24* shows that after Christ has come, there is no more need for the schoolmaster of the law. *Galatians 3:26* shows that all who are true spiritual children of God are made so by the faithfulness of Christ to fulfill all righteousness for them. They were adopted by God before the world began, and they are brought to faith IN Christ by the Holy Spirit in the new birth (*Gal. 4:4-6*). *Galatians 3:27-30* summarizes the spiritual and eternal relationship of God's people, not according to the law, but according to God's grace.

(Exod. 24:9-10) - They saw the Son of God, the God of Israel, before His incarnation appearing in human form, as a pledge and prophecy of His future incarnation. Christ is the Angel that spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, as Stephen said, "This is He, that was in the church in the wilderness with the Angel which spake to him in the mount Sina, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us" (*Acts 7:38*). The "paved work of a sapphire stone" symbolizes the way to God worked out by the Lord Jesus Christ alone without any help or contribution from sinful men. Salvation is by God's free and sovereign grace, based on the righteousness that Christ worked out in His obedience unto death for His people (*Heb. 1:3; 10:14*). The way of salvation is paved and cleared for us by Christ.

(Exod. 24:11) - These men saw God and lived. This is all with respect to the sacrifice on the altar, and to the fact that God Himself called them and Moses up to see Him. This is another clear testimony that without Christ, without His blood to cover our sins, without His righteousness to justify us, and without God-given eyes to see Him in His glory, we who are so sinful could not look upon God and live. Without Christ, God is a God of strict justice without mercy towards all sinners to whom sin is imputed. But with Christ, we who are still so sinful can and will see God and live.

(Exod. 24:12-18) - These last words show how Moses ALONE was called up to the mount by God to receive the law. Here, Moses is a type of Christ Who went unto God on behalf of God's elect to appear before God and honor the law by His obedience unto death for His people. In the Bible, "forty" represents times of trial and suffering, such as Israel's forty-year wandering in the wilderness. Christ spent a time of trial and suffering unto death for His people as He was made under the law to redeem those who were under the law. Just as Moses would bring the law to the people (the law that they broke), Christ would bring the law to His people (the law which He had kept and fulfilled perfectly) (*John 1:17; Rom. 10:4*).