**The Story of Salvation**

Exodus 24:1-18

**Good Morning Beloved,**

* Last weekend, a young man and a godly lady who grew up in this church were married on a sublime Saturday afternoon.
  + The little girl, who wore matched her sister in smocked outfits, was now a lovely bride and adorned for her wedding day in white.
  + The talkative boy, who threw crayons, was now pinned with a boutonniere as a his groomsmen stood in support.
    - There are many facets to the wedding service.
      * Giving of the Bride
      * Declaration of Vows
      * Exchanges of Rings
    - But there is one moment that almost always causes those gathered to cheer.
      * It is the statement…
        + “Davis, you may now kiss your bride.”
* There is the decisive moment as the Betrothed is NOW the Beloved.
  + The Fiancée is NOW the spouse.
    - The covenant of marriage is not primarily about a man and a woman.
      * The covenant of marriage has always been about depicting God’s relationship with His Bride (Isaiah 54:5).
* One of the clearest passages in all the Bible that shows how God relates to His Beloved and the song of Salvation that HE sings over them is in Exodus 24.

**The Reading of God’s Word** – Exodus 24:1-18 (Page 64 in Pew Bible)

*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. 2 Moses alone shall come near to the Lord, but the others shall not come near, and the people shall not come up with him.”*

*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.” 4 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. 5 And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. 6 And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar. 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.” 8 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.”*

*9 Then Moses and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up, 10 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. 11 And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.*

*12 The Lord said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and wait there, that I may give you the tablets of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction.” 13 So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. 14 And he said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we return to you. And behold, Aaron and Hur are with you. Whoever has a dispute, let him go to them.”*

*15 Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. 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. 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. 18 Moses entered the cloud and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.*

**The Preaching of God’s Word**

1. A Solemn Ceremony (vs. 1-8)
   1. Setting: It is not a tranquil in Auburn. We are at Mount Sinai (Ex. 19-24).
      1. There is no gentle Fall breeze… there is a feel that all creation itself is about to break apart with lightning, thunder, earthquakes, and clouds.
         1. Instead of chairs being arranged in a pleasing and symmetrical manner… there was to be a barrier that stopped men, women, children, and even animals from approaching (Ex. 19:12).
   2. The Creator of the Universe has appeared in his glorious awesome power… by smoke and fire (Ex. 19:18).
      1. There has been a clear call to the nation… “DO NOT APPROACH”!
         1. BUT NOW… there a change… “Come up to the Lord” (vs. 1)
            1. The congregation is to worship at the foot of the mountain…
            2. There are to be leaders who represent the people (vs. 1)
            3. And Moses alone is to draw nearest to the Lord (vs. 2)

In many ways, this manner of worship will be seen in the coming chapters as instructions for the Tabernacle are given.

The Outer Court – The nation may gather

The Holy Place – Priests offer sacrifices

The Holy of Holies – One mediator is permitted to enter.

* 1. The worshippers are not there because of routine… peer pressure… or even self-help.
     1. They are there because of ONE REASON… GOD CALLED THEM TO WORSHIP.
        1. God chose his people and has now established the terms of the relationship.
           1. This is not legal matter than both parties are to debate and discuss terms.

NO… The COVENANT GOD has revealed HIS COVENANT to His people and they have one response by faith…

*“All the words that the Lord has spoken we will do.” (vs. 3 and 7)*

* + 1. Illustration: Wedding Ceremonies sometimes have a declaration of intent from the groom and the Bride BEFORE the father gives his daughter away.
       1. The groom is asked, “Will you love, honor, and cherish this woman as your wife?”
       2. The bride is then asked, “Will you love, honor, and cherish this man as your husband?”
          1. Then… based on the responses… the ceremony moves forward as the Father… gives his daughter to the groom.

Similarly, God has declared his intent and vows to the people in the 10 Commandments (Ex. 20) and the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 21-23) … the people now declare their intent.

* + - * 1. And the ceremony moves forward… to address the BIGGEST problem for the song of salvation to be sung….

The BIGGEST obstacle was not Pharaoh and the Egyptian army…. The Biggest problem has always been SIN!

* 1. Verses 5-6 shows us why this ceremony was so solemn.
     1. *5 And he sent young men of the people of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. 6 And Moses took half of the blood and put it in basins, and half of the blood he threw against the altar.*
        1. What does the sacrifice show us?
           1. It shows us that this nation at the foot of Sinai are the inheritors of the Covenant with Abraham.

And this ceremony is a matter of life and death!

* + - 1. When God made his covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15, He had Abraham take several animals and cut them in half.
         1. In the ANE, both parties in a partnership would establish the terms of the contract and then they would sacrifice an animal and walk through the parts together.

The message was clear… if I break this contract may this be done to me.

If I break this contract… may I be ripped apart.

In Genesis, God alone went through the pieces showing that HE and He alone would fulfill the Covenant of Grace.

* + - 1. NOW we see that God will not only be faithful to fulfill his Covenant… he is also Merciful in cleansing those who are in covenant with him.
         1. In verse 6, half of the Blood from the sacrifice was sprinkled on the ALTAR to show the congregation that their sins were forgiven.
         2. Then, in verse 8, half the BLOOD from the sacrifice was on the people THEMSELVES to show that they were accepted… embraced… cherished… and reconciled with GOD.

Philip Graham Ryken – “Sinners can only worship a holy God on the basis of sacrifice.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

And that sacrifice is THE basis for their relationship…

Alec Motyer – “The same blood which has made peace with God will keep peace with God. Ad they walk in the way of obedience; the blood is available for a people committed to obey. As they stumble and fall, so the same blood will be available for them.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

* + - * 1. Rich Mullins – If I stand

So if I stand let me stand on the promise  
That you will pull me through  
And if I can't let me fall on the grace  
That first brought me to You

* + 1. Theologians use terms like… propitiation, redemption, justification, and reconciliation to express the vividness of the story of salvation.[[3]](#footnote-3)
       1. Those wonderful words capture this truth…
          1. Hebrews 9:22 - *Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*
  1. Then the story of salvation… takes a remarkable twist.
     1. Will the people in a living relationship with God….
        1. Do they sing a song for a benediction…
        2. … maybe… prepare to go to the “land flowing with milk and honey” (Ex. 3:17).
        3. Or simply… Return to their tents and obediently await God’s provisions of manna and meat (Ex. 16-18).
  2. The next part is absolutely staggering…

1. A Celebration Sacrament (vs. 9-11)
   1. The King who created constellations (Ps. 147:4)…
      1. The Divine Warrior who has just obliterated the most powerful army on the planet in one swift move (Ex. 14-15)…
         1. Now bids the people to feast with him.
   2. Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up…
      1. And in a staggering and simple summary
         1. Verse 10 “they saw the God of Israel.”
            1. Commentators scratch their heads…

Theologians are baffled…

But children… children savor it.

* + 1. In the Bible there are fantastic descriptions of God manifesting his glory…
       1. Isaiah 6 – His glory fills the temple
       2. Ezekiel 1:22-26 – His glory thundering through creation like the sound of many water.
       3. Daniel 7 – the Ancient of Days on His Throne
  1. But here there is one thing that Moses captures for us to consider…
     1. Vs. 10 - *There was under his feet as it were a pavement of sapphire stone, like the very heaven for clearness.*
        1. In Exodus 19-20, the Awesome Darkness lead the people to prostration at the appearance of God.
           1. NOW there is “peaceful majesty and bright grandeur”.[[4]](#footnote-4)

CONTRAST: All your life you have live making mud bricks… for a cruel tyrant… to build his empire.

When you think about the Pyramids of Egypt… they are impressive… an impressive collection of mud.

Now the people are under a new ruler… and instead of the taskmaster’s whip… the covenant community sees the King in his glory.

Those who were bowed down to see mud… now look up to see flawless blue sapphires.

Those who labored under a kingdom that perishes now see the “flawless sheet of ice-blue glass” of the kingdom that is imperishable (Heb. 12:12ff).

* + - 1. THEN we read…
    1. 11 *And he did not lay his hand on the chief men of the people of Israel; they beheld God, and ate and drank.*
       1. God dwells with his people.
          1. He accepts… and enjoys them…. As they delight in His company.

Just like at a wedding… before the ceremony… NO one can just walk up to the Bridal Parlor and share stories with the Bride before the service…

But after the wedding… at the reception there is often cake!

There is often food.

And dare we say it… Many times there is dancing.

* + - 1. Those celebrating with the Bride and the Groom join in the FEAST… how much greater those who JOIN in the Covenant of Grace by FEASTING with GOD.
  1. The last part of this chapter shows one mediator being called into…

1. A Solitary Communion (vs. 12-18)
   1. Moses is summoned by God to go up the mountain.
      1. Verse 16 is crucial as we read…
         1. *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.*
            1. Many note that this language is recalling the creation of the universe in Genesis 1 and 2 as the Holy Spirit rested over creation.

Now the Lord is making a NEW CREATION… by establishing his servant as the law-giver, the chosen mediator, and the people’s representative to enter his presence.

1. Conclusion
   1. Beloved, this chapter is a summary of the entire Bible (from Ryken).
      1. Moses and the elders are separated from God by their sin.
      2. But then God invites them into his Presence .
      3. He gives them His word.
      4. He atoned for their sins through the blood of his covenant.
      5. Then he brought them into his presence, where they could gaze upon his glory.
      6. It was a foretaste of heaven.
   2. Saints, God has called us into his presence… he has made known to us the terms of the Covenant… and Christ has prayed for us to be set apart.
      1. John 17:17-19 - *Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. And for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.*
   3. Friends, we were a people separated from God by our sins, but the blood of Christ has secured the forgiveness of our sins.
      1. Heb. 9:11-12 declares… *But when Christ appeared as a high priest … he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.*
   4. Beloved, the prophet Isaiah told of a day when death would be swallowed up forever and the image that pairs with death being consumed is this…
      1. Isaiah 25:6 - *On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.*
         1. One commentator said… In the gospel of Luke… Jesus is always eating with people.
   5. So three questions…
      1. 1) Have you been baptized in obedience to Christ’s clear teachings as way of communicating the forgiveness of sins (Matt. 28:19)?
      2. 2) Have you fed on Christ in your heart by faith as we celebrate the new Covenant in the Lord’s Supper (Matt. 26:28)?
      3. 3) Are you married to Christ (Eph. 5:32)? Have you truly submitted to Christ as your Lord? Are you resting upon Him alone for your salvation?
         1. For those who belong to Christ (Rom. 14:7-9), we are bid to eagerly anticipate the great feast with our Heavenly Bridegroom (Rev. 19).
   6. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than at Communion.
      1. It is to that sacrament that we now come.

**Prayer**

**Benediction – 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.*

1. Philip Graham Ryken, *Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory, 737* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ryken, 739 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. John Stott in *The Cross of Christ* gives an extended treatment of each theme in Chapter 7, “The Salvation of Sinners”. Propitiation in Romans 3:24-25 refers to the wrath of God which was placated by the cross. Redemption in 1 Timothy 2:5-6 refers to the plight of sinners from which they were ransomed by the cross. Justification in Romans 5:18 and 8:34 refers to God declaring us righteous through the death of His son. Reconciliation in Romans 5:9-11 refers to the renewal of our personal relationship, which had been broken, to God by Christ. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. John L. Mackay, *Exodus: A Mentor Commentary*, 434 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)