

Exegetical Notes, Exodus 24:9-25:9
“Reminders of His Presence”

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Exodus 24:9-25:9

Verse 24:9-10

Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself.

- Following the affirmation of Israel to accept the covenant offered by God and the specific instructions given by God in 24:1, Moses takes a delegation from among the leaders of Israel up onto the mountain and into the very presence of God.
- While this group was not permitted to approach close to God, see 24:2, they were allowed to see God.
- Apparently the leaders of Israel were afraid to look on the face of God so they saw only the pavement under his feet. This pavement resembled sapphire to them. Sapphire is a blue stone. The color of the stone resembled the brilliance of the sky on a clear day. Out of respect for his person, the leaders of Israel did not lift their eyes higher than God’s feet

Verse 11

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

- Israel believed that if a human being looked upon the face of God he/she would die. In this case, God was benevolent. He allowed this delegation to see him and did not kill them. He did not raise his hand against them but allowed them to live. They continued to eat and drink.

Verse 12

Then YHWH said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction.”

- Then God called Moses to leave the delegation and come to him on the mountain. God promised to give Moses stone tablets upon which God had written the law and the commandments. These tablets were for the peoples’ instruction. The words on these tablets would be the basis for Israel’s relationship with God. They would be a summary of the terms of the covenant God was offering Israel.

Verse 13-14

Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. He said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them.”

- Moses took Joshua, his helper, with him and went up on the mountain into the presence of the Lord as God had told him to do.
- Moses told the leaders he had taken up on the mountain with him to wait for him, and he put Aaron and Hur in charge of things during his absence.

Verse 15-18

When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of YHWH settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day YHWH called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of YHWH looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

- Moses went up on the mountain and into the presence of God as he had been commanded to do.
- The mountain was covered in a cloud to conceal the glory of God from the people. To the Israelites the glory of God on the mountain made it appear as if the mountaintop was on fire.
- Moses waited for six days before God called him to enter the cloud. On the seventh day God called Moses into the cloud. As the people watched Moses walked into the cloud and the fire on the top of the mountain.
- Moses was inside the cloud for 40 days and 40 nights.

Verse 25:1-7

YHWH said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites to bring me an offering. You are to receive the offering for me from each man whose heart prompts him to give. These are the offerings you are to receive from them: gold, silver and bronze; blue, purple and scarlet yarn and fine linen; goat hair; ram skins dyed red and hides of sea cows; acacia wood; olive oil for the light; spices for the anointing oil and for the fragrant incense; and onyx stones and other gems to be mounted on the ephod and breastplate.”

- The first issue that God wants to discuss with Moses is an offering that Moses is to take for God from the people. It is to be a free will offering. No one is compelled to contribute, but those whose hearts are touched to give are to give as they themselves determine.
- The offerings are to be of specific items as listed by God himself. Some of the items are quite specific. For instance, the ram skins are to be made into Moroccan leather before they are acceptable. Sea Cows are believed to be manatees. Where would a nomadic desert tribe find such things? Nothing other than the listed items are to be accepted.

Verse 8-9

“Then have them make a sanctuary for me, and I will dwell among them. Make this tabernacle and all its furnishings exactly like the pattern I will show you.”

- Moses must have been somewhat perplexed by God’s instructions to take such a specific offering of very particular, rare items. So God explains the purpose of the offering. The items collected are to be used to build a place for God. The words use to describe this place are “Sanctuary” and “Tabernacle.” The word translated “Sanctuary” means a place that has been set aside as holy or sacred. The word translated “Tabernacle” means a dwelling place. This place is to be set aside as holy or sacred, and it is to be regarded as the place where God can be found.
- This place is to be built according the pattern God will give without deviation as a reminder that God is present with his people.

(These exegetical notes are the foundational study for the sermon entitled *Reminders of His Presence*. They have been prepared by the Reverend Doctor Charles H. Jensen, Senior Pastor at Cornerstone Fellowship, Coatesville Pennsylvania. All rights are reserved by Dr. Jensen and *Cornerstone Fellowship*.)