

Lesson 17: Exodus 24; 31–34, “My Presence Shall Go With Thee”

Establishing the Fullness of the Gospel

The Israelites were at the foot of mount Sinai there Moses has received part of the law and hopes to receive the full law.

The Israelites covenant to obey the words of the Lord that they have and will receive

Exd 24:3-4,7-8

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 builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

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.

What ordinance does Moses perform to represent the covenant the people make?

(Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant)

Does this ordinance remind you of one we have the opportunity regularly participate in?

The sacrament

Richard Lloyd Anderson

"[There are] profound contacts between the divine covenant given at Sinai and the new covenant instituted in the Upper Room... The first is the powerful repetition of Moses' cry, 'Behold the blood of the covenant.'... [Then] we hear the Savior tersely telling the full meaning of Moses' words as he raised the cup: 'For this is my blood of the new [covenant], which is shed for many for the remission of sins' (Matt 26:28)." ("The Restoration of the Sacrament" Ensign, Feb. 1992)

With the people willing to make this covenant, Moses continues to try bring them the fullness of the gospel. Here seventy elders see the face of God

Exd 24:9-11

9 ¶ Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel:

10 And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.
11 And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink.

What does it tell us about the seventy elders that they were able to endure the presence of the Lord

John Taylor

"The Lord at that time desired to make of Israel a great nation, a kingdom of priests. They had the Gospel preached unto them in the wilderness.... It was the design of the Almighty to lead them into the presence of God, that they might see him as Moses did, and as the seventy Elders of Israel did, that they might converse with him and obtain intelligence from him, and be under his special guidance and direction; but they could not endure the Gospel." (JD, 14:356)

The Lord commands Moses to go back to mount Sinai to receive the fulness of the gospel to teach the people

Exd 24:12,18

12 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

18 And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

The Golden Calf

But the people grew impatient and thought that maybe Moses wasn't coming back

Exd 32:1-4

1 And when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down out of the mount, the people gathered themselves together unto Aaron, and said unto him, Up, make us gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him.

2 And Aaron said unto them, Break off the golden earrings, which are in the ears of your wives, of your sons, and of your daughters, and bring them unto me.

3 And all the people brake off the golden earrings which were in their ears, and brought them unto Aaron.

4 And he received them at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, after he had made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.

What did the Israelites do when Moses was gone from them for just 40 days?

(made it a molten calf: and they said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt)

John Taylor

“Moses succeeded in leading seventy of the elders of Israel to the presence of God; he would have led all Israel into his presence, but they would not be led; they turned to idolatry, to evil and corruption, and hence they became disobedient and unmanageable. And when the Lord spake to them they became terrified and said, ‘Let not God speak unto us, lest we die’ (Exd 20:19). God wants to bring us near to him, for this purpose he has introduced the Gospel with all its ordinances.” (JD, 21:53)

The Lord is so angry with the Israelites worshiping the golden calf that he considers destroying them and directing His covenant to just Moses and his descendants

Exd 32:7,10-14

7 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves:

10 Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

11 And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand?

12 Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people.

13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

14 And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people.

Moses comes to Israels defense

What arguments does Mose make to keep them from the Lord’s destruction?

(Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out)
(Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants)

Lorenzo Snow

“It will be remembered that the Lord became angry with the Israelites, and declared to Moses that he would destroy them, and he would take Moses and make of him a great people, and would bestow upon him and his posterity what he had promised to Israel. But this great leader and lawgiver, faithful to his trust, stood in the gap and there plead with the Lord on behalf of his people; by the power that he could exercise and did exercise, he was the means of saving the people from threatened destruction. How noble and

glorious Moses must have appeared in the eyes of the Lord, and what a source of satisfaction it must have been to him to know that his chosen people, in their obstinate and ignorant condition, had such a man at their head.” (JD, 23:189)

Fullness of the Gospel is Taken Away

When Moses sees the wickedness of the Israelites his anger also waxes hot

Exd 32:15-16,19

15 ¶ And Moses turned, and went down from the mount, and the two tables of the testimony were in his hand: the tables were written on both their sides; on the one side and on the other were they written.

16 And the tables were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God, graven upon the tables.

19 ¶ And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp, that he saw the calf, and the dancing: and Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands, and brake them beneath the mount.

Why does Moses break the tablets that contain the fullness of the gospel

Israel had broken their covenant and were clearly not ready to enter into the rest of the Lord

John Taylor

"The Lord at that time desired to make of Israel a great nation, a kingdom of priests. They had the Gospel preached unto them in the wilderness.... It was the design of the Almighty to lead them into the presence of God, that they might see him as Moses did, and as the seventy Elders of Israel did, that they might converse with him and obtain intelligence from him, and be under his special guidance and direction; but they could not endure the Gospel." (JD, 14:356)

Exd 32:26

26 Then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, Who is on the LORD's side? let him come unto me. And all the sons of Levi gathered themselves together unto him.

George Albert Smith

“I have many times repeated what my grandfather said.... In advising his family he said, ‘There is a line of demarcation, well defined. On one side of the line is the Lord's territory. On the other side of the line is the devil's territory.’ And he said, ‘If you will stay on the Lord's side of the line, you are perfectly safe, because the adversary of all righteousness cannot cross that line.’

“What does that mean? It means to me that those who are living righteous lives, keeping all of the commandments of our Heavenly Father are perfectly safe, but not those who trifle with his advice and counsel.” (CR, Oct. 1949)

Moses again returns to Sinai. This time to plead for the Israelites

Exd 32:30-32

30 ¶ And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin.

31 And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold.

32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

What was Moses willing to put on the line for the sake of the Israelites?

(forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written)

Charles A. Callis

“Unparalleled love, the spirit of the holy Priesthood, humility, meekness with power, exemplifying the love of the Lord Jesus Christ! He didn't even want to survive the people. If they were eliminated, if the punishment of God destroyed them, he, too, was willing that his name, yea, his life, be blotted out with the people he loved and led.... As he stood upon the mount, pleading with God for the Israelites, he reached sublime heights; he touched divinity!

“That is the spirit that should characterize the holy Priesthood. If we work in humility, become little in our own sight, more than we are now, and seek the good of others I testify to you that there will be added power to our labors, and sinners will be brought unto Him.” (CR, April 1942)

The Lord didn't destroy the Israelites but He does threaten to send angels to guide them to the promised land instead of being with them Himself

Exd 33:2-3,15

2 And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite:

3 Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.

15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

Why does the Lord feel that He can no longer be with and guide the Israelites?

(for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way)

Why do you think that Moses ask that the Israelites not go to the promised land if the Lord will not go before them?

John Taylor

“It is not in the wisdom of this man or the intelligence of the other, but it is the wisdom and guidance of God, and by his sustaining hand, that this whole people are led forward, and that this kingdom has an existence upon the earth. For my part, I would say today as Moses did on a certain occasion, when God said he would not go up with the children of Israel because they were rebellious people, ‘If thy presence go not with us, carry us not up hence;’ or, in other words, I want nothing to do with so great an undertaking as the leading forth of this people without the Lord's assistance. I would say today, if God be not with us, if we are not sustained by the almighty power of Jehovah, if his guiding and protecting hand be not over us, I want nothing to do with it. But he is with us, and we know it.” (JD, 19:122)

Jeffrey R. Holland

“No eternal learning can take place without that quickening of the Spirit from heaven. So, parents, teachers, and leaders, we must face our tasks the way Moses faced the promised land. Knowing he could not succeed any other way, Moses said to Jehovah, ‘If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.’

“Our members really want... to be nourished by the good word of God to be strengthened by the powers of heaven. Those of us who are called upon to speak or teach or lead have an obligation to help provide that, as best we possibly can. We can only do that if we ourselves are striving to know God, if we ourselves are continually seeking the light of His Only Begotten Son.” (CR, April 1998)

Because of their wickedness Moses moved the tabernacle away from the camp of the people.

Exd 33:7-11

7 And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.

8 And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle.

9 And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar

descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.
10 And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door.
11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

Why do you think Moses moved the tabernacle out, away from the Israelite camp?

L. Tom Perry

"Because of the disobedience of the children of Israel, 'Moses took the tabernacle [out of their midst], and pitched it without the camp.'

"Now their centerpiece, the tabernacle, was away from them. They could no longer be guided and protected by its presence. Now only the faithful were allowed to come to the tabernacle. One thing the Lord would not tolerate was the worship of other gods. Because of their many years of captivity in Egypt, this was challenging to the children of Israel." (CR, Oct. 2003)

In verses 11 we read the Lord spoke to Moses face to face but later this verse seems to be contradicted

Exd 33:18-20

18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

But this is clarified in the Joseph Smith Translation

JST Exd 33:20

20 And he said unto Moses, Thou canst not see my face at this time, lest mine anger be kindled against thee also and I destroy thee and thy people; for there shall no man among them see me at this time and live, for they are exceeding sinful. And no sinful man hath at any time, neither shall there be any sinful man at any time, that shall see my face and live.

Mark E. Petersen

"The Lord desires that mankind should worship him intelligently, not as some incomprehensible being, but as their loving Father in heaven.

"To accomplish this, God revealed himself to men from time to time so that they could see him and hear him and know him. He revealed himself personally, actually appearing to his prophets, and he talked with them face to face, even as a man 'speaketh to his friend'." (CR, Oct. 1962)

The Law of Moses

The Lord command Moses to return to mount Sinai with two tablets on which he will record the lesser law for the Israelites

In the JST makes it clear that the Lord had hoped to give the Israelites the fullness of His gospel and priesthood.

(on page 800, or click on “And” in verse 1 if you are reading from your device)
JST Exd 34:1

1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two other tables of stone like unto the first, and I will write upon them also the words of the law, according as they were written at the first on the tables which thou brakest; but it shall not be according to the first, for I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore, my holy order and the ordinances thereof shall not go before them; for my presence shall not go up in their midst, lest I destroy them.

What does He mean by, "my holy order... shall not go before them"?

(I will take away the priesthood out of their midst)

JST Exd 34:2

2 But I will give unto them the law as at the first, but it shall be after the law of a carnal commandment; for I have sworn in my wrath that they shall not enter into my presence, into my rest, in the days of their pilgrimage. Therefore do as I have commanded thee; and be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount.

What is the consequences of only being giving the basic, carnal commandments in the law?

(I have sworn in my wrath that they shall not enter into my presence, into my rest, in the days of their pilgrimage)

It was the Lord’s intention to bring Israel into His presence (His rest) but now, with only the carnal commandments, they would not be able to prepare themselves to do so.

Abinadi tells us more about the this lesser law

Mosiah 13:29-31

29 And now I say unto you that it was expedient that there should be a law given to the children of Israel, yea, even a very strict law; for they were a stiffnecked people, quick to do iniquity, and slow to remember the Lord their God;

30 Therefore there was a law given them, yea, a law of performances and of ordinances, a law which they were to observe strictly from day to day, to keep them

in remembrance of God and their duty towards him.

31 But behold, I say unto you, that all these things were types of things to come.

Why did the Israelites need to be given a “very strict” law?

(they were a stiffnecked people
from day to day, to keep them in remembrance of God)

The Lord makes it very clear that He is still anxious to extend His mercy to the Israelites and that they will continue to witness His good works

Exd 34:4-10

4 ¶ And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped.

9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

10 ¶ And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

Keith B. McMullin

"The lesser portion of the gospel encompasses vital, saving truths and rests on the cornerstones of obedience and sacrifice. These truths school men and women, boys and girls in the fundamentals of righteousness. They consist of repentance, baptism, and observance of the law of carnal commandments unto the remission of sins. Carnal commandments are those that enable us to overcome the lusts, passions, and desires of our natural, or mortal, bodies and minds. Principal among these are the Ten Commandments. This lesser portion of the gospel will nourish those who are new in the Church, lead back those who have strayed, help young people recognize and overcome the temptations and deceptions of the world. Without this preparation, the fulness of gospel blessings cannot be realized or enjoyed.

"The responsibility for administering this preparatory portion of the gospel is entrusted to the Aaronic Priesthood." (CR, Oct. 1997)