

# Exodus

## July 22, 2007

### Chapter 24

#### I. Background Comments

A liberal Bible source critic might start the analysis of this chapter with words like the following: "Chapter 24 is a jigsaw puzzle, constituted with narratives from various traditions lumped together poorly." He would then to proceed to speculate on how the text got the way it is. In the end, if it is an honest guy, he might add something along the lines that we cannot be sure of this reconstruction, but understanding it as a reconstruction provides much great understanding than trying to study this chapter as a totality without breaking it apart.

As we read this, we might find some points slightly difficult to understand, or we might not fully agree on tall details, but taking it as a whole will help us to learn more about God than we would ever learn if we try to place our intellects as judges of God's word.

#### II. Credentials

Ex 24:1-4a

**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. You are to worship at a distance, 2 but Moses alone is to approach the LORD; the others must not come near. And the people may not come up with him." 3 When Moses went and told the people all the LORD's words and laws, they responded with one voice, "Everything the LORD has said we will do." 4a Moses then wrote down everything the LORD had said.

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- Verse 1      The last part of this verse appears to be repeating the thoughts of 19:12-13, but now seventy elders are to come up the mountain as well. Yet, they are still to worship at a distance.
- Verse 1      Nadab and Abihu were the two older sons of Aaron who would be killed by the LORD when they offered unauthorized fire at the altar in Lev. 10.
- Verse 3      Where have we heard the people say this before? Once again, they agree to God's terms...at least, they listened to what He said this time before agreeing.
- Verse 4      Moses would have documented all the laws given to him in the last three chapters. He might also have written down the Ten

Commandments as well. What is the value of having all of this written down?

### III. The Covenant

**Ex 24:4b-7**

**He got up early the next morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain and set up twelve stone pillars representing the twelve tribes of Israel. 5 Then he sent young Israelite men, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed young bulls as fellowship offerings to the LORD. 6 Moses took half of the blood and put it in bowls, and the other half he sprinkled on the altar. 7 Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey." 8 Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words."**

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- Verse 4      The twelve stone pillars represented the twelve tribes. Basically, we are seeing a covenant being made.
- Verse 5      A covenant agreement was often marked with a meal. The burnt offering was completely burned up in the altar, but the fellowship offerings were only cooked and then eaten by the community.
- Verse 5      Since 74 named leaders had to be fed, plus direct sacrifices to God, young men were needed to bring the animals to the altar.
- Verse 6      Half was sprinkled on the altar, and half on the elders. This showed both sides agreeing to the covenant.
- Verse 7      Presumably the Book of the Covenant is what Moses wrote down in verse 4.
- Verse 8      Jesus alludes to this verse, but notice the difference (and similarity) in purpose:

**Matt 26:28**

**8 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.**

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### IV. Seeing God

**Ex 24:9-11**

**9 Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up 10 and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. 11 But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.**

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- Verse 9      After the sacrifices, worship and maybe part of the meal, the human participants, the 74, went up the mountain.

Verse 10 They see some kind of image representing God although only His feet are mentioned. Since only the pavement is described in any detail, presumably that is all they saw in detail. Since the people are primarily describing the feet of God, they probably did not lift their heads fully to see Him and probably would not have gotten a good look even if they tried.

Verse 10 If they did look up, they might have seen something like what Ezekiel saw:

**Ezek 1:26-28**

**26 Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. 27 I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him.**

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The pavement is described clearly and is consistent with:

**Isa 54:11**

**11 "O afflicted city, lashed by storms and not comforted, I will build you with stones of turquoise, your foundations with sapphires.**

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**Rev 21:18-20**

**18 The wall was made of jasper, and the city of pure gold, as pure as glass. 19 The foundations of the city walls were decorated with every kind of precious stone. The first foundation was jasper, the second sapphire, the third chalcedony, the fourth emerald, 20 the fifth sardonyx, the sixth carnelian, the seventh chrysolite, the eighth beryl, the ninth topaz, the tenth chrysoprase, the eleventh jacinth, and the twelfth amethyst.**

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Verse 11 Since "God did not raise his hand," He did not kill them. This might be only a figure of speech, not an actual description of what God did. Having sacrificed and worshipped the LORD, the leaders are now able to encompass a bit more of His nature and presence.

## V. Proceeding Ahead

**Ex 24:12-14**

**12 The LORD 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." 13 Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of God. 14 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."**

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Presumably everyone else went back down, and Moses proceeding alone with Joshua went up higher. It is not totally clear from where Joshua came. Was he one of the 70 leaders? Was he with them as Moses' assistance, and therefore would have been the 75<sup>th</sup> leader? Since Joshua goes further up the mountain with Moses, but not apparently to the top, Aaron and Hur are the logical candidates to be in charge.

## **VI. Moses Enters the Cloud!**

**Ex 24:15-18**

**15 When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, 16 and the glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the LORD called to Moses from within the cloud. 17 To the Israelites the glory of the LORD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. 18 Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights.**

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Verse 15 The cloud covered the mountain, representing God's glory.

Verse 16 Even though Moses climbed the mountain, he did not enter it until invited by the LORD.

Verse 17 Knowing that Moses had gone up to be with God, the Israelites could see the cloud. This probably got them to thinking about what was happening to Moses and what it meant to approach God. Eventually some will think that the "consuming fire" had consumed Moses.

Verse 18 40 has a literal meaning but also an idiomatical one. 40 might have meant dozens of days or a great many days. Deut 9:9 says:

**9 When I went up on the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant that the LORD had made with you, I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights; I ate no bread and drank no water**

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## **VII. The LORD Comes in Holiness**

Moses has been leading the Israelites almost single-handedly. Now, he is gone for an extended time. How will the Israelites react? We have all read ahead and will study the Golden Calf incident in detail. Why do they not do exactly what Moses has told them? They promised that they would. They promised in Chapters 19 and 20 and at the beginning of this chapter. In this chapter, the leaders agree and so do the people. It has all been written down. A covenant ceremony is held to ratify the agreement. So, why do they fail so miserably?