



**BELIEVERS CHAPEL**

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Exodus 19: 1 – 24:18

“Israel at Mount Sinai”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Our Heavenly Father, we give Thee thanks for the word of God and we thank Thee for the privilege of following the children of Israel in their experiences so many hundreds of years ago. We thank Thee for the way in which Thou didst providentially arrange their history to be an example for us of the kinds of problems and trials that we face as believers on the way to the promise land as well. We remember the words of the New Testament author who said so beautifully, we have here no continuing city, and we look for one that is to come, and we therefore find ourselves in a position that is very analogous to the children of Israel as they made their way toward the promise land.

We know that the same kinds of difficulties and trials and problems face us individually and as a local church as well and we pray Lord that we may learn the lessons that we should learn and profit from all of them so that our lives may be more pleasing to Thee. We ask especially for Thy presence with us tonight as we study from Egypt to Canaan, and the children of Israel's experiences. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.

[Message] Well, tonight we are coming to a very important event in Israel's history and that is Israel at Mount Sinai. So, what we are doing in a fact is following the children

of Israel and their journeys on the way to the Promised Land. Israel now journeys from Rephidim to Mount Sinai and there at and before Mount Sinai is given the law by the Lord God.

Now it would be helpful for us to remember just a few things as we come to Mount Sinai and first of all, just by way of review remember in the Abrahamic covenant, God promised Abram a seed, he promised him a land, and he promised him a royal land, and there were some other aspects of the promises such as the words pertaining to a name for Abram but these are the important ones and these are the ones that are eluded too more than once as Israel makes it's journey.

These three things, the seed, the land, and the royal land are the basic biblical promises, and the Bible is the record of the path along which Israel treads toward their fulfillment and that we may skip forward a good bit for just a moment to Mary's Magnificat at the time of our Lord's first coming in Luke chapter 1 and verse 55, you will see that in this Magnificat she herself reflects upon these great promises. And as she is praising the Lord for that which has happened to her, and what is going to happen in verse 53 of Luke chapter 1, she says, in her song, "He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy as He spake to our fathers to Abraham and to his seed forever." And so Mary links the birth of the coming redeemer with the Abrahamic promises.

Four hundred years passed from the patriarchal times to the Mosaic era but theology hardly misses a beat. Those promises are still valid promises and the Book of Exodus reveals very plainly that these are the things that God still holds before the Nation Israel. The seed of Jacob has undergone a significant change, the seed of Jacob seventy five approximately strong when they went into the land of Egypt, now come out a vast multitude from say six hundred thousand to some people estimate as many as two million people. So the four hundred years spent in Egypt have been years of multiplication of

the children of Israel and it is time now for God to manifest himself to Israel as Yahweh. Remember in Exodus chapter 6 and verse 3, he mentions that he had not manifested Himself in that respect to them previously but now he has taken that step and Israel has to come to know him as the living God and especially the faithful promise keeping God.

Now it is clear from this that the Sinaitic covenant is an undergirding, a step along the way to the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant. Now the Abrahamic covenant was characterized by promises that were made in grace but if you read the Abrahamic promises through and carefully meditate upon them, you will notice that that covenant did not stress human sin and it did not stress human inability nor did it give a whole lot of instruction in grace. It was a covenant filled with promises given in grace, and God guaranteed the promises that he gave to Abraham and to Isaac and to Jacob. But so far as instructing them in what was necessary for moral preparation for the reception of the promises, that is not one of the emphases of the Abrahamic Covenant.

What the nation now needs is a tutor to instruct her and order her life as Paul will put it in Galatians 3:24. As he reflects upon this he will say, “Now the law was our slave guardian to bring us to Christ.” So, after the nation or after the people had grown into a nation of a vast multitude what they needed was to come to the conviction of their sin and thus be prepared to receive in grace the promises. Furthermore, they needed instruction by way of example of the things that the Redeemer would do, the one who would make possible the fulfillment of the covenant, so the law must be given, the moral law in order to instruct them, and teach them of their sin, and the ceremonial law given in order to illustrate for them the things that the Redeemer would do. So here at Mount Sinai there is a significant new beginning in the history of Israel, and Israel is to be given the Law of Moses.

If you want to call this the beginning of the legal age, that would be true. It would be true to Scripture to say the legal age began here, and of course is one very important thing that we need to remember and that is that the legal age is a temporary

age. The legal age began at Mount Sinai and the legal age concludes with Mount Golgotha when the veil of the temple is rent in twain from top to bottom and the children of God are delivered from the bondage of submission to the law into the freedom of the presence of the Holy Spirit and the redemption accomplished through the Lord Jesus Christ. So now with that in mind let us think for a moment about the legal age and the children of Israel at Mount Sinai.

There is one other thing I think I should mention because it is not in my notes and I might forget it and go on to say nothing about it. When I grew up in the study of the word of God I was often told that the Bible should be arranged in certain ages or dispensations. There is a lot of truth in that and I don't want to attack that kind of construction of the Bible in its overall purpose and plan because a great deal of it is true.

But there was one thing that was fault, and as a matter of fact it has been recognized in the New Scofield Bible too, but in the Scofield Bible, the Old Scofield Bible, it was stated in connection with Exodus chapter 19 that the age of the promise came to an end with the giving of the law and then in the New Scofield Bible a significant change is made in that. I have that in the notes somewhere. I am not sure I can find it immediately because this is a different lecture, but you can find it if you will just take the two copies of the Scofield Bible, the Old Scofield Bible and then compare the notes with the new one and you will see for yourself the change that is made. The New Scofield Bible does not say that the age of promise came to an end with the giving of the law. So evidently then the editors of the Scofield Bible have had a change of heart.

They don't have too many changes of heart because editors are like anyone else; there are like theologians, once they decide a certain thing is scriptural teaching it is very difficult for them to ever admit that they are wrong. The editors, however, did at least admit that, because you see it is a very fatal error for the understanding of the biblical flow of history to fail to see that the legal age is a parenthesis or an intercalation in the

dealings of God with men and that the age of the promise given beginning with the promises made to Abraham is a permanent age and in which age we live today.

That is, I say when I first begin to study the Bible and things were arranged dispensationally or according to the ages, I was taught that the age of the law superseded the age of promise, but it doesn’t take long if you just read the New Testament and you read in Galatians for example that believers now are children of Abraham, it is quite obvious that the Abrahamic covenant is still in force so really the age that is the temporary age is not the age of promise but the age of the law. It began on Mount Sinai, it ends on Mount Golgotha, and it had a certain limited purpose, and the limited purpose included those purposes that I just mentioned a minute ago.

Well that as a little bit of a lengthy introduction, let’s turn to Exodus chapter 19 and we will read a few of the verses here, particularly the opening verses of chapter 19, in which we have preparation for the legal covenant. In verse 1 of Exodus chapter 19, Moses writes,

“In the third month when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai for they were departed from Rephidim, and were come to the desert of Sinai, and had pitched in the wilderness; and there Israel camped before the mount. And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel.”

Now you can see from this that as Moses describes, the condition set out by God, I think highlighted by that word in verse 5, Now therefore, if you will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then you shall be a peculiar treasure that we have words in which God takes the initiative in order to prepare Israel for the legal covenant.

Now he takes the initiative and he reminds them of grace. He says, you remember the things that happened to you, you have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings and brought you unto myself. That is a marvelous expression to bring on eagle's wings because if you know about eagles and I do not know whole lot about eagles, what I know about eagles, I read in books, but I am told that eagles are one of the highest flying of all birds and because they are one of the highest flying of all birds, the dangers that they feel are not dangers that come from above but dangers that come from below and so they didn't tend to take their young and put their young on the back of their bodies and fly with them because they do not feel any danger from above, but danger from below. So this is a marvelous figure describing the lofty work of God and his work in grace and then he goes on having said this about how he has marvelously dealt them bearing them on eagle's wings and bringing them to himself, now he offers them some further privileges.

He says if you obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. So in other words, Israel is to have a special relationship to him. Now that is what is called distinguishing grace. That is what is called divine election. That is what is called God having mercy to whom he will have mercy and on the other side, God hardening whom he will harden. He says if you will obey my voice, then you will be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. We do have to reckon with the fact that God does operate in distinguishing grace. He makes distinctions between individuals so he offers Israel the marvelous privilege of being a peculiar treasure unto him. That's not all. He says and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests.

Now that of course signified the fact that they would have a special right of access to him. Now this of course is what he does give them but he is going to in the Scriptures as they unfold speak even further about the special relationship that they will have in the ages to come, for while Israel was a special people under the Mosaic law, we know that this great promise of a kingdom of priests is a promise that is repeated long after the age of the law is passed, and God still holds before us the fact that we are going to be a kingdom of priests. Only now, Israel has joined by the gentiles who have believed as Paul puts it in Romans chapter 11, "Gentiles have been grafted into the olive tree and have become fellow partakers of those Abrahamic promises." So they are to be a peculiar treasure to him, they are to be a kingdom of priests, but notice they are also to be a holy nation.

Whenever we think of the way in which God has dealt with us in marvelous grace, let us never forget and one of the reasons he has dealt with us as he has dealt with us is that we be holy people. That's one of the things that Amos makes so plain when he says, "You only have I known of all the families or nations on the face of the earth; therefore, I am going to require it of you when you are disobedient." So we who rejoice in the fact that we have been in grace chosen by God and made a part of the people of God, we have special responsibilities. Let's never forget it and it summed up by this word that we are a holy nation.

Now you know when you turn over to 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 9 and verse 10, these are some of the things that Peter says are true of the people of God today. So by analogy the same things that were true of Israel are true of the people of God today because we inherit the same promises within.

Now I want to concentrate for a moment on that little word if. He says now therefore if you will obey my voice indeed. Now when he says if, he is obviously introducing a condition, it is surprising to me that some people like to try to affirm that the Mosaic covenant is not a conditional covenant. It is a conditional covenant that little

word if makes it very plain that it is a conditional covenant. In that sense, it is different from the Abrahamic Covenant. The Abrahamic Covenant was an unconditional covenant. God gave promises to Abraham and to his seed and then you remember he had the sacrifice, he laid the animals out, and then at the appropriate time after Abram had waited a whole day, God himself walked between the pieces and Abram was not invited to follow.

One of the finest commentators on the Epistle of the Galatians says, “Abram was an astonished spectator because you see that little sacrificial activity on the part of God was designed to show him that the ultimate fulfillment of the Abrahamic promises rests upon the person of a faithful God alone. He will bring it to pass and if you should say, Oh, but suppose a disobedient, well Paul asks that question. He say, Shall the disobedience of man nullify the promises of God? God forbid; no, the promises are to be the possession of penitent people, but God guarantees that certain people will be penitent in the future by his efficacious grace. So, if he will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant then you shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people for all the earth is mine.

Now what would you have expected Israel to do? We read in the seventh and eighth verses, And Moses came and called the elders of the people and he laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. Now I ask you a question. If you had been there and if you knew now something about the truth that you know, what would you have said? Forget the text if you have already looked at it, what would you say?

Well, I think any person who has any understanding of human nature would say, we can never keep the condition, we cannot obey his voice, of ourselves if it depends upon us, we shall fail. You know why you think that? Because I think most of you do. Do you know why you think that? Because through the work of the Holy Spirit, you have been led to see your nature and your condition before God, and you have been led to



appeal to the grace of God and Jesus Christ. You have come to be saved by the grace of God. He has delivered you from the burden of sin, you have come to the knowledge of yourself and to the knowledge of the Savior, and you have been saved.

But now listen to what the people do and all the people answered together, we read in verse 8, And said, all that the Lord hath spoken will we do! I would like for you to notice this first of all that this legal age was proposed to the nation before it was imposed upon them. So in other words, if the nation had been so sensitive to their condition before the Lord God and have said but we are sinners and we cannot keep any covenants at all, we might never had a legal age. We might have had the Savior coming, of course all this is just hypothesis, you understand, but we might have had the Savior coming soon, the fullness of time would have come much sooner than those hundreds of years that it took but the fact that the people say, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do, and Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord as evidenced by two things. They had little knowledge of the holiness of the law of God that is the first thing. They have very little knowledge of the holiness of God's law.

Later, the Apostle Paul will describe the law as holy, just, and good. No man can keep the law of God. No man can possibly of himself be pleasing to the Lord, only one person has ever pleased the Lord, and that is the God man, the Lord Jesus Christ, so that is the first error they made, they had very little knowledge of the holiness of the word of God.

Now let me say this. I know some of you may say well, if you turn over to Deuteronomy 5, the Lord praised them for saying what they said. Well, there is a sense in which they should have been praised because it is obvious that they had a sense of devotion to him. In Deuteronomy chapter 5, and verse 28 and verse 29, we read, And the Lord heard the voice of your words, Moses is talking, when you spake unto me and the Lord said unto me I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they

have spoken unto thee. They have well spoken. They have well said that they have spoken.

O, that there was such an heart in them that they would fear me and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them and with their children forever. In other words, the Lord commended them for their desire to please him. But what was implicit in their response was what of course they did not yet know, and that is, they were kind of like Peter you know when the Lord said before the cock crows, you are going to deny me, and Peter said Lord, I will never deny you, I would lay down my life for you, and it is not long before he does that, so it was fine for them to have that desire to please the Lord but desire to please the Lord without understanding of ourselves is zeal without knowledge and Paul talks about that in Romans, when he talks about the children of Israel, he said, I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

So when a person says, like they said, all that the Lord hath spoken we will do, well that’s good as long as you realize you cannot please the Lord of yourself. You must depend upon the indwelling Holy Spirit who now permanently indwells all of the believers. So they had little knowledge of the law’s holiness, they had little knowledge of themselves. In that same chapter where Paul says the law is holy, just, and good, he says I am carnal, sold under sin. So you praise them for the way they responded, but it was the imperfect response of very, very immature people, and it made it very evident that what they needed was what they were going to get and the Law of Moses was given to them.

Now let’s read the charge that is given by the Lord God and notice the first thing that happens when the children of Israel say, All that the Lord had spoken we will do, and the ninth verse we read, “And the Lord said unto Moses, Lo I come unto Thee in a thick cloud.” You see if you are on the basis of the law before the Lord God you only can have judgment. You will ultimately break that law, and I didn’t even use the term

ultimately because you probably have already broken it once you say all that the Lord has spoken we will do, your very next thought is probably breaking of the holiness of the law.

So when God says, “Lo, I come unto Thee in a thick cloud,” he is signifying that if you are on the legal principle there can be no fellowship between a human being and the Lord God for we are sinners. “Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud,” I love the way that is written. Moses just leads you right up to if you will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant then you will have all of these things, Lord all that you have said we will do and the Lord said I come unto you in a thick cloud.” Fellowship can be no fellowship on the legal basis. I come unto thee in a thick cloud that the people may hear when I speak with thee and believe thee forever.

“And Moses told the words of the people unto the Lord and the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Go unto the people and sanctify them today and tomorrow and let them wash their clothes, they are dirty, and they are filthy, they need sanctification already, and be ready against the third day for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai and thou shalt set bounds unto the people roundabout saying take heed to yourselves that you go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it; whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death. (That’s fellowship with God on the legal basis. There is no -- death is the inevitable result. That’s why the law is called a ministration of death and condemnation. Why people think that they can be saved through the keeping of the Ten Commandments is beyond any spiritual human understanding.)

“There shall not an hand touch it but he shall surely be stoned or shot through whether it be beast or man, it shall not live when the trumpet soundeth long, they shall come up to the mount. And Moses went down from the mount unto the people, and sanctified the people, and they washed their clothes. And he said unto the people, Be

ready against the third day, come not at your wives. And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunders and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; so that all the people that was in the camp trembled. (The writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews lays stress upon this in the twelfth chapter of his book and the point that he makes is the same thing that God in the Mosaic Covenant is a God before whom we should tremble.) And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. And when the voice of the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder, Moses spake and God answered him by a voice and the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai on the top of the mountain and the Lord called Moses up to the top of the mount and Moses went up. (He is the mediator, the only one permitted in the presence of God.)

“And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘Go down, charge the people, lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish. And let the priests also, which come near to the Lord, sanctify themselves, lest the Lord break forth upon them.’ And Moses said unto the Lord, ‘The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai for Thou chargest us, saying, set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it.’ And the Lord said unto him, ‘Away, get thee down; and thou shalt come up, thou, and Aaron with thee: but let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the Lord, lest he break forth upon them.’ So Moses went down unto the people, and spake unto them. So the children of Israel were to be sanctified (evidently a reference to some ceremonial preparation that was to be made involving the cleansing of themselves and their clothes) and then in the midst of the darkness and thick clouds, which were bounds to the holiness of God, Moses and Aaron were invited up and God is going to give them the law.”

Beginning in chapter 20, verse 1, we have the Ten Commandments and then the several law through chapter 24 and finally in chapter 25 through the remainder of the book, the ceremonial law. We are not going to expound all of this because we are trying to follow the children of Israel from Egypt to Canaan, but I want to make the point of the giving of the legal covenant and say just a few words about it.

The three aspects to the legal covenant, but let me point out this. Sometimes people will say, the legal covenant or the Mosaic covenant is made up of the moral law, the civil judgments and the ceremonial requirements as if that three-fold division is made in the Bible itself. Let me hasten to point out to you that that is not made in the Bible.

Now of course I don’t mean that the Ten Commandments are not referred to as the ten words or the judgments referred to is the judgments and the ceremonial law referred to as the Levitical cultus. It is but you will never find any statement that says the law is divided into three parts. All three of these aspects of the law form one law.

Now it’s important for you to get that because there are people who tell us even today surprisingly after nineteen hundred years of study of the Scriptures after the time of the coming of our Lord there are still people who try to say we are under parts of the law and we are not under other parts of the law but the law was given as a unity. It contained its moral aspects, its civil aspects, and its ceremonial aspects. The moral law is a term that refers to the Ten Commandments that were given to Israel as a way of life. They were never given to Israel in order that Israel might be saved by keeping the law but they were given to Israel as a way of life. In other words when one of the commandments was broken, fellowship between the children of Israel and the Lord God was broken. It was a way of life, not a way of salvation. Listen to Paul, “If there had been a law given that could have given life, then verily righteousness would have been by the law.”

Now you do not even have to know anything about Greek to know that is a contrary to fact statement. If there had been a law given that could bring life then righteousness verily would have been by the law, but Paul in Romans and Galatians, and 2 Corinthians, makes so plain as well as the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews there is no righteousness through the keeping of the law. They were given the law as a sanctifying instrument, as a way of life and when they broke the law they were to bring the proper sacrifices to maintain a right relationship to the Mosaic law.

Now that, I say is so important. So many people forget that. If they are not erring by saying you can keep the Ten Commandments and be saved, they are saying things like in the Old Testament people brought the animal sacrifices in order to be saved, both of those things denied by the Scripture. But you know that is our big problem, isn't it, we don't read the Bible. I am talking about people in Believers Chapel, too. You thought I was talking about people at Fellowship Bible Church, didn't you? [Laughter] But I now was talking about people who go to Believers Chapel, they don't study the Bible enough, I don't study the Bible enough, I include myself with you poor people. You don't study the Bible enough. If you study the Bible more, Oh, how much wiser you would be, how much happier, how much more fruitful in the things of the Lord.

Now the second part of the law was the civil and social law. Actually they are called the judgments, verse 1 of chapter 21, after the giving of the moral law, we read now these are the judgments, which thou shall set before them and of course the judgments is a reference to the civil law, the things that could be called things that had to do with the everyday life of the children of Israel. They are described in chapter 21 and chapter 22 and chapter 23, and incidentally Moses doesn't give us all the law in the Book of Exodus. But these are the judgments.

Now in the judgment, there is a very important principle set out which would destroy I think some of the attempts of people in the 20th Century to put people back under the law. You know sometimes people like to say, we are under the law, and as

believers, but then if you ask them well do you mean that we should stone adulterers, Oh no, no I don’t mean that, but we are under the law but that is what stated in the law and a lots of other things is stated in the law. You couldn’t wear garment of mixed materials, a simple little thing like that, you have broken the law, you have come under the judgment of the law, well should we apply that, well no, not really, that’s not all that important, but you see the Bible does not make these distinctions as part of the Mosaic law and I would like to remind you of something. Webster in one of the statements, attributed to him, said something that bears directly on this point. Webster said, “A law without a penalty is simply good advice.”

Now in the Law of Moses there were sanctions, that is the theological term for penalties, so when a person breaks the law, he is subject to sanctions, he is subject to penalties. You cannot talk about being under law without having sanctions or penalties so there is no such thing as being under law and not under the penalties of the law, not under the sanctions of the law. If you put yourself under the law, well as Paul says in Galatians, you have made Christ of non-effect. You have started that on a different way of life before the Lord God so you are subject to the things the law says positively and you are subject also to the penalties that are written in the Law of Moses.

There is a group of people today called theologians who would like to put Christians back under the aspects of the law that pertain to the judgment. Amazing, amazing Bible students can really do that on the light of the cross at Calvary, but they are. I attribute it again to failure to study the nature of the law as the Scriptures set forth the law.

There are some people who believe you cannot be holy if you are not under the Ten Commandments. They seem to forget that Christians are given the Holy Spirit to indwell them. He offered the law. He wrote the law and he is our God. We are to walk by him. Why is it a lowering of standard in the eyes of some people to say, I follow or try to follow the guidance of the second person of the Trinity. That is the

highest possible standard of life that you could have. The offer of the morality found in the Mosaic law. So you see I can get a little excited every now and then still there is still some life here.

One final thing, the third aspect of the Mosaic law, ceremonial law. Well, now most people wouldn't want to say if I sinned today then I ought to go and offer some animal sacrifice. That's too hard to do and even the children of Israel today don't offer their sacrifices any longer. They don't offer the lamb, they don't kill the bullocks, they don't slay the birds, they don't do the things that the Mosaic Law does, they have a little doctrine of as if in other words we have to live in a society in which we cannot do that but we live as if we were doing it. That is we do it in our mind or in our heart, that won't work, that won't work at all. The very fact that they cannot do it is an evidence that God is against them in their present attitude and possession. They have been scattered to the four corners of the earth and they cannot keep the Law of Moses because they have crucified the one of whom the law speaks the Lord Jesus Christ and until the nation comes to repentance in faith in him, there will be no keeping of Mosaic law. They stand under guilt and condemnation.

So Israel is given the moral law of the ten words. They are given the civil and social law, the judgments, and they are given the ceremonial law. And I would like to point out that the giving of the ceremonial law was a magnificent gift of grace on God's part because they were given in a sense a school of divine grace. They were through the priesthood and through the sacrifices, they were given a vivid visible picture of the things that the Lord Jesus Christ their Messiah would do when he came. He would offer a sacrifice and that sacrifice would be a penal substitutionary sacrifice by which a holy God is propitiated and so all of the sacrifices the priesthood itself all of those things were given by God to prepare them for the coming of the present age.

Furthermore, they were given feast days, they were given certain things that were to do like the Passover, like the day of atonement particularly the day of atonement and



the other feasts, the Passover being incorporated into them and all of these were designed to instruct them in what was going to come. Wasn’t God wonderful to them in spite of the fact that they say all that the Lord hath said, we will do?

Now there is one final thing that I want you to notice, I don’t like to say final. After all preachers should never say final, but anyway, in chapter 24, we have the ratification of the Mosaic Law and it is ratified by a sacrifice. Let me read beginning of verse 1,

“And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the Lord: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him. 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.? How confident can you be in your own strength? 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. And he sent young men of the children of Israel, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen unto the Lord.”

Now notice, “And Moses took half of the blood, and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. (Notice, half of the blood was sprinkled on the altar.) And he took the book of the covenant that is in the law, the things that God had given him, and read in the audience of the people and they said, here they go again, they can put this to music, ‘All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.’”

Wonder what hymn, you could play with that or what violin that you could play. All that the Lord has promised that we will do. They don’t understand yet their nature. Now notice the eighth verse, “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.” Now did you notice the sprinkling of the blood. Half of the blood was sprinkled on the altar. What does the altar signify? The altar signifies the Lord God. Half of the blood was taken and sprinkled on the people. So the Lord has certain responsibilities and unfortunately the people have certain responsibilities. What kind of covenant is this? How many of you think this is an unconditional covenant? Raise your hands. Look at there. How many of you think this is a conditional covenant? Raise your hands. About a third of you. The rest of you in total confusion. [Laughter]

Now, obviously this is a conditional covenant. The blood is sprinkled on the altar signifying the Lord God’s part and then the blood is sprinkled on the people signifying their part. So the two have something to do and the Lord God says, “If you obey, I will make you a one marvelous treasure to me, I will make you a kingdom of priests, I will make you a holy nation; and they say, all that the Lord has promised, we will do. That’s their responsibility. Well, it doesn’t take much spiritual intelligence to realize that this is a conditional covenant. They were to do something, the Lord God was to do something, and whenever we have to do something of ourselves, there is going to be failure, and that of course is what happens.

Now the language is very interesting. Because in the language, it says in verse 8, “Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord have made with you concerning all these words.” By the way, those words are words that our Lord picks up when he confirms the new covenant but He does not say that this new covenant is in token of the blood that I will shed which I will sprinkle on you as well as on Calvary’s cross but he says this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for a many for the remission of sins. So he takes the very words here as if to remind them this is not a Mosaic kind of covenant, this is not a conditional kind of covenant, this is the unconditional new covenant, which the Trinity guarantees will be fulfilled in the life of the people of God. So ratification of the legal covenant, blood on the altar, blood on the people, conditional

covenant, soon broken as a matter of fact they can hardly do anything before they have already broken the covenant, and they are making the golden ox and the children of Israel break the covenant, before they even begin their march past this place.

Well, let me sum up then what we have been talking about here. The law then was given with a two-fold purpose. It was given to show sin. The apostle asks the questions, “Wherefore serveth the law?” in Galatians and then he says, it was added on account of transgressions. That’s why the law was given. It was given in order that the children of Israel trying to keep it would discover they couldn’t keep it, recognize their sin, and recognize that they needed forgiveness, and that they would then go to the Lord God for the forgiveness that they needed. Read Romans chapter 3, read Romans chapter 4, read Galatians chapter 3, in fact read Galatians 1 through 6, and that’s the point that they apostle makes.

The law was given to show us our sins. It was never given to save us and to be circumcised in order to be saved. It is just a sophistication of trying to save yourself, but the law was also given to show us the Savior and the ceremonial law particularly is that part of the law in which we have from the hand of God into nations of the grace that would come through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Listen to the writer of the Epistle of the Hebrews, when he says in the tenth chapter, first verse, “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, could never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.” So the law was a shadow of good things to come and it was designed to teach men grace but it could not save.

One might also have a third use of the law and that would be to instruct and order the national life of the children of Israel, and that’s a valid thing. But that’s the thing that an academic may want to talk about.

Lutherans and Calvinists have debated whether there was a two-fold or three-fold purpose of the law. And the Lutherans insisted there were only two uses of the law, one

a civil use to order life and governments and the other to bring men to the conviction of sin. Calvinists also have tended to say that the law was given as a guide for the daily life of believers and that's why often in Calvinistic thinking, legalism has from time to time crept into their thinking. It's one of the things that Calvinists have as a kind of a Trojan horse of their teaching.

Unfortunately, it is nevertheless true and we need to keep it plainly before us that we are not unto law, we are unto the Holy Spirit, we are not under a smaller standard or a less holy standard, we are under the holiest and highest of all standards when we are called upon by the Apostle Paul to walk by the Spirit that we might not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

So Israel now is to be put under the Law of Moses and what a burden that turned out to be. When Peter later speaks about it, he says, Why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the disciplines, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear? May God help us as the apostle says, to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath set us free. If you are here and you have never believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we remind you cannot save yourself, you cannot save yourself by any kind of good works, keeping the law, or any kind of Christian modification of it like joining the church, and sitting at the Lord's table and being baptized, and being good, and treating the elders nicely and things like that, you can only be saved through the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross representative of the unconditional covenant, the New Covenant, made between a holy triune God in grace and his chosen people. May God help you to recognize your lost condition and come to Christ if you have never been saved. Let's bow in a closing word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we thank Thee for the clarity of the teaching of Thy word. We thank Thee also for the passing of the Mosaic age and the coming of the age of the freedom of grace under the Holy Spirit by virtue of the finished work of the Lord Jesus

Christ. Help us Lord to serve him by Thy grace to please Thee with our lives. Oh God, may we be fruitful in the service of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ who has done so much for us. Never let us forget Lord what has taken place in our hearts by the mighty power of our great God. We pray in Jesus name. Amen.