

# Bible Study #17

1/22/19

# Exodus 23 (Cont)

Laws concerning Justice

# Exodus 23 (Cont)

- **Exodus 23:18-19**

- In this section, we are introduced to the regulations concerning **sacrifice and first fruits**
- It is all about countering the pagan culture and their fertility cults which led God to providing His *Kosher* laws
- The blood of an animal was considered its life force
- Upon the birth of a kid goat, the mother goat produced the life-giving milk for her kid
- They believed that cooking that kid in the milk of its mother would give the pagan twice the fertile life of the sacrifice

# Sacrifice

- Animal sacrifice dates to ancient times as a part of man's need for religious expression
- It was incorporated by God into the *Torah* as a profound expression of the human desire to come as close as possible to God (Cain, Abel, Noah)
- Webster defines sacrifice as:
  - An act of offering something precious to a deity; specifically, the offering of an immolated victim
  - The destruction or surrender of something for the sake of something else
  - Something given up or lost

# Sacrifice (Cont)

- The Hebrew word for “sacrifice” is *korban*
  - Its understanding can only be grasped through its root – the concept of *coming close*
  - The goal of the temple sacrifice was the dedication of human life to a higher sphere of awareness as in *becoming closer to the Creator* who is the source of all life
  - It was not an idea of giving something up or losing something of value
  - Instead, it was a *striving for nearness to God*
  - For the Jew, nearness to God was the truest, highest, and only conception of what goodness really was

# Sacrifice (Cont)

- Without this nearness, the Jew thought of himself to be like an animal, devoid of that which made him into a human being
- Thus, what happened to the animal during a sacrifice was also taking place within his heart and mind
- When a sinner brought a *korban*, his offering showed him what he deserved, should God judge him severely
- Because God was the God of love, He prepared the sacrificial system as a means of restoring and purifying man's moral and spiritual life

# Sacrifice (Cont)

- The sacrifice represented the death of man's physical side, and the pleasing aroma was the product of this purification
- The experience of bringing this sacrifice gave him a vicarious taste of death, and reconciled his animal and spiritual natures
- Furthermore, God would not accept the sacrifice unless it was accompanied by true repentance
- The Law required a multitude of sacrifices to include a variety of obligatory and voluntary offerings: Sin offerings, Peace offerings, Trespass offerings, Burnt offerings, and Meat offerings

LEVITICUS  
1-7

# The FIVE OFFERINGS

FELLOWSHIP



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# Exodus 23 (Cont)

- These requirements led to the modern Jewish beliefs requiring two sets of everything in the kitchen: one for the preparation of **meat products** and the other for **dairy products**
- Father said that this was a “hedge” around the law
- In **Genesis 18:7-8**, we find God not keeping kosher because their “hedge” had nothing to do with “Natural Law”
- Jesus clarifies this in the New Testament when he says, *“Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and so passes on?”* (**Matthew 15:17**) \*

# Exodus 23(Cont)

- **Exodus 23:20-33**

- God promises the Israelites that an “**angel**” would go before them into the “Promised Land”
- He would represent God and operate by His authority
- We continue to see reference to him as the “Angel of the Lord”
- We can also see this “presence” in the *Glory Cloud* and the *Pillar of Fire*
- There will be an important interaction between *Joshua* and this angel upon entering the “Promised Land” and at the destruction of *Jericho*

# Exodus 23(Cont)

- Many of the *Fathers of the Church* see him as a pre-incarnate Christ
- Some ask “What about the Holy Spirit?”
- We can see all three members of the Trinity operating in all these events
- We saw the “spirit of God” in
  - The creation story as He hovered over the waters
  - Stopping of the flood
  - Parting of the Red Sea
- Obviously, it was the Father who sent Him in these incidents

# Exodus 23(Cont)

- God speaks through the word throughout the Old Testament
- Jesus is the “Word” made flesh in the New Testament
- Thus many of the Fathers see this “angel” as the Lord Jesus in many of these Old Testament stories
- John follows on this idea when he speaks of the “Word” being present in the beginning

# Exodus 23 (Cont)

- Some today speak of the annihilation of the pagans in the Promised Land as a kind of **genocide**
- Father said that no where in the *Torah* was an indication that the conquering of the Promised Land was a *genocide*
- It was about killing the demons (pagan gods) and cleansing the land of paganism

# Exodus 23 (Cont)

- It was not genocide, for if any of those people wanted to convert, they were certainly permitted and God gave them 40 years to make that decision
- We will see this play out in the story of *Ruth*, the *Moabite* girl and *Rahab*, the prostitute of *Jericho*
- This was about the spiritual battle between the revelations of the one true God to the descendants of Adam for their salvation

# Exodus 23 (Cont)

- Then another warning (curse) concerning worshipping the gods of the pagans followed by the blessing for fulfilling His edicts
- We are not sure who were the “hornets?”
- Finally, God promised to help the people drive out the pagan nations **in a tempered process** so that they would not worship their false gods\*

# Exodus 24

The Blood of the Covenant

# Exodus 24

- **Exodus 24:1-5**

- As discussed earlier, this is a framing device for this entire section
  - **Exodus 19:8** “All that the Lord has spoken we will do”
  - **Exodus 24:3** “All the words which the Lord has spoken we will do
- The phrase “young men of the people of Israel” is not referring to *Levitical* priests, as that priesthood had not started at that time
- Moses erects an altar of 12 pillars and these young men who offered sacrifices represented the 12 tribes

# Exodus 24 (Cont)

- Many commentators see these “young men” as a fulfillment of the references to the “firstborn” serving as the priesthood
- Earlier, we saw a reference to priests in **Exodus 19:22-25** who were directed by Moses to ascend the mountain
- Many commentators see them as the firstborn sons who were serving as priests
- They were believed to have had special roles and gifts from God to take over governing the family upon the death of the father

# Exodus 24 (Cont)

- They were to serve in a mediatorial or priestly role
- If we consider the importance of the firstborn based on the Passover story, we can see them acting in this capacity
- There will be more on this role when we get to the **Book of Numbers** \*

# Exodus 24 (Cont)

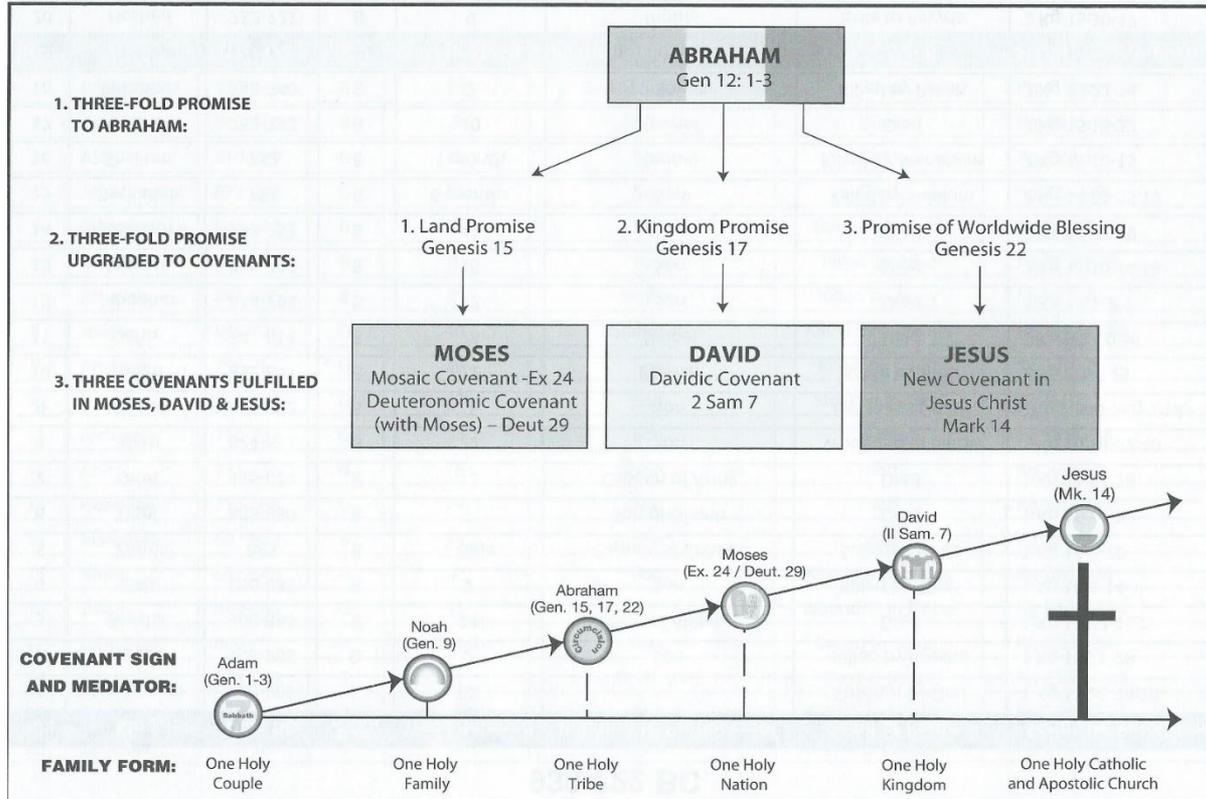
- **Exodus 24:6-8**

- Here we are introduced to the **Book of the Covenant** written by Moses.
- The altar was the image of God's presence
- Moses took  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the blood and threw it against the altar which was the closest thing to the "presence of God" among them
- The other  $\frac{1}{2}$  he put in basins and then sprinkled it on the people as soon as they agreed to the terms of the covenant
- Father spoke of the irony of everyone getting cleaned up and dressed in their finest clothes and then being sprinkled with animal blood!
- Blood was the image of life and they had just been restored to life with God

# Exodus 24 (Cont)

- This was the restoration of the relationship between God and His people Israel
- Father pointed out how *Scott Hahn* does a great job discussing the “covenants” in his writings\*
- The final covenant will be fulfilled in Jesus
- Looking backward from each covenant, we eventually return to the *Garden of Eden* which was being fulfilled in each covenant
- Thus, the reference to the “Book of the Covenant,” which Moses read in the hearing of the people\*

# Covenantal Structure of Salvation History



# Exodus 24 (Cont)

- **Exodus 24:9-11**

- How could they have seen God?
- They had just been restored to a covenantal relationship with Him and now they could perceive Him
- They ate and drank in His presence and He did not kill them
- The last time God ate and drank with a man was after the covenant with Abraham which was a restoration of the *Garden of Eden*
- God living, eating, and drinking in great joy in the presence of His creation

# Exodus 24 (Cont)

- Hopefully, we can see this as a restoration of the Garden of Eden as it will have significant relevance for the New Testament where we will eat and drink with Him in a liturgical setting (Eucharist)
- We will experience the presence of the Lord in this feast as we wait for His second coming and the complete restoration of all things\*

# Exodus 24 (Cont)

- **Exodus 24:12-18**

- Once again, it sounds like Moses was on the mountain for a very long time
- There are two different stages going on here:
  - Moses went up on the mountain, received information, and then came down to explain the deal (covenant) to the people (**Ex 24:1-3**)
  - After the people agreed, they were bound to God in a covenant (**Ex 24:8**), so Moses needed to go back up the mountain to obtain additional information from God (**Ex 24:9- 32:14**)
  - As important as the covenant was, it was not, according to Father Sebastian, the *Telos* (*the ultimate object or aim*) of the passage

# Exodus 24 (Cont)

- The *telos* was what we saw in the meal (man living, eating with God and God living with man)
- This was the next thing to be fulfilled as all the people were about to experience what Moses, Aaron, and the priests had just experienced, which was **God coming down to dwell among His people!**
- This was the restoration of the *Garden of Eden*
- The people had just agreed to all that God had said and that they would obey the “word” of the Lord
- They pledged to worship Yahweh as the only true God and be restored to the experience of God dwelling among His people and they dwelling with Him

# Exodus 24 (Cont)

- That is what **Exodus 25** through **31** was all about
- This section will be the description (blue prints) of how they are going to **build the tabernacle**
- Later, we will see how they actually build the tabernacle
- Everything in **Exodus 25-31** will be about God speaking to Moses on the mountain
- **Exodus 25** established the *telos*

# Exodus 25

Offerings for the Tabernacle

# Exodus 25

- **Exodus 25:1-7**

- This is a request for a “freewill offering”
- Where were these shepherds and former slaves to get all these items?
- Three times, God instructed Moses to tell the people to despoil their Egyptian neighbors as they fled on the night of the *Passover* (**Ex 3:21-22; 11:2; 12:35-36**)
- God gave all of those items to them so that they would have something to give back to God
- Everything given to them by God was surplus
- Father Sebastian pointed out that even today God gives us extra so that we will have something to give back to Him

# Exodus 25 (Cont)

- **Exodus 25:8**

- This is one of the most important verses in the entire *Pentateuch* – ***And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst***
- Before we get into the details of the “Tent of Meeting,” we need to step back and look at the “big picture”
- The purpose of the “Tent of Meeting” was so that God could “dwell among His people!”
- And this meant that God and man could dwell together again (*Garden of Eden*) and only then would man have life since God is the source of all life

# Exodus 25 (Cont)

- Father said that if we asked most people what was the purpose of the “Tent of Meeting” (the temple), they would say that it was a place for man to offer sacrifices to God
- But, knowing that it was the place where God could “dwell among His people” will be critical to understanding the *Incarnation*
- The *Incarnation* is the fulfillment of **Exodus 25:8**
- Since the tabernacle was the place where God would dwell, it was a place where one would offer sacrifices to Him
- We will see more about this in **1 Kings 6** when Solomon builds the first temple

# Exodus 25 (Cont)

- **Exodus 25:9**

- This was not to be in accordance with the pattern that was in Moses' head
- It was in accordance with the pattern that God was going to give to Moses on the mountain
- Moses was commanded to build the tabernacle, the Meeting Tent, in accordance with the pattern that God was to reveal to him
- Thus, it was modeled after the “heavenly tabernacle”
- It was a reflection, a physical image of the invisible dwelling place of God

# Exodus 25 (Cont)

- It will be “heaven on earth” not according to the whims of a society or the education Moses received in *Egypt*
- This is important to us today when a parish goes about building a church
- The building should not be based on modern culture or architectural ingenuity of the time
- Father said that if that becomes the criteria, we end up with a building that looks like it came from the TV set of the *Jetsons*
- Christian tradition calls for a church building to be a temple as passed down from generation to generation
- If done properly, it will be something beautiful that will last for hundreds of years

# Exodus 25 (Cont)

- **Exodus 25:10-21**

- God started with the most important piece of **furniture in the Tabernacle**, the Ark – *look at presentation on the Tabernacle*
  - It was made of acacia wood and covered with gold
  - Its purpose was to carry the stone tablets, which were the words of God
  - It had a lid made of gold called the “mercy seat”
  - On its top, it had two cherubs (Cherubim) carved out of gold with their wings outstretched in the middle where the glory cloud would rest