

Sinai is Now in the Sanctuary¹

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The title is somewhat enigmatic – it is from Psalm 68. The *torah* of God, the Words of eternal life, comprise the Covenant of Knowledge associated with the Sinai Covenant, the “Old Covenant”. The teaching of the Old Covenant is the basis of the New Covenant. Under the New Covenant, “the sanctuary”, the temple of God, is the Church. There is direct continuity between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant (Hebrews 9:1-2a, 11-12, 15a, 18-22).

The Covenant Ratification Ceremony: the **original “sanctuary” was the Tabernacle**; from the service and the teaching at the Tabernacle Israel was to learn about **the Nature of God** beginning with “holiness” as demonstrated by the covenant ratification ceremony. First Moses and group of others go up the mountain, **only Moses is accounted “holy” so he can approach YHWH** (Ex24:1-2). Moses receives the material we have in the Book of the Covenant, comes down from the mountain, and presents the material to “**the people**”, who **confirm** that “**all the words that YHWH has spoken we will do**” (Ex24:3-4a). The next day the ceremony proceeds: sacrifices are made, “**the people**” are sprinkled with the blood which formally brings them into the covenant – now they can be accounted “holy” by God (Ex24:4b-8). Moses and the same group go back up the mountain and all participate in a covenant meal and “**they beheld God**” – a **theophany** (Ex24:9-11).

Breaking the Covenant: Moses returns to the mountain to receive the tablets with the Ten Commandments and the instructions for building the Tabernacle (Ex24:12-13, 15-16, 32:1). The people prevail upon Aaron to make **the golden calf**; **the covenant is broken**, and **the people are to be destroyed** (Ex32:7-10). Moses implores YHWH NOT to destroy the people, and YHWH relents, but as a symbol of the broken covenant, Moses smashes the two tablets in the sight of the people (Ex32:11-12a, 14, 19b).

Making Atonement: The sacrificial system had not yet been specified, so **there was no formal way to atone for the sin** – Moses requests YHWH’s forgiveness and offers his own life as a sacrifice (Ex32:30-33). YHWH declines the offer but points out that the sin has left the nation in an unclean state (Ex32:34a, 33:3, 5b). God is holy. If anything unclean comes into contact with something holy, the unclean thing must be destroyed. **The people cannot have contact with God**. Moses does not see how he can succeed without God’s presence so prays for deeper understanding (Ex33:12-17).

The Nature of God: YHWH promises that the understanding of God’s nature will be given to Moses (Ex33:18-23). Moses requested to see YHWH in his “glory” – YHWH responds that is not possible, but he will proclaim to Moses his “name”; that is, **allow him deeper understanding of key attributes of his nature**. Moses prepares blank stone tablets and next day goes back up the mountain where God reveals his nature (Ex34:5-9). The verb *qara’* is again used for “proclaimed” – YHWH is making clear to Moses important aspects of his nature, which Moses is to teach the people. **Note *hesed* is mentioned twice:** first as something in which YHWH “abounds”; secondly, as a commitment which YHWH keeps with those repent. **YHWH is characterized as “forgiving”:** the three main words for sin: עָוֹן - ‘awon, “iniquity”; פֶּשַׁע - peshah, “transgression”; and, חַטָּאת - ḥata’ah, sin, are mentioned as all can be forgiven – but, YHWH reserves the right to administer retributive justice to those who refuse to repent.

The Glory of God: The Book of Exodus ends with the erection of **the Tabernacle** (Ex40:34-35). This **represented God’s presence among the people** – from the service and the teaching at the Tabernacle, the people were to learn of God’s nature and his Plan for them. The Sinai Covenant required them to do this, the explanation of the covenant, the *torah*, showed them how to do it. The two tablets with the Ten Commandments were stored in the Ark of the Covenant and YHWH’s presence emanated from above the Ark. **“Sinai”, the teaching and the revelation were encompassed in the “sanctuary”, the Tabernacle.**

Fast Forward to David: The Ark of the Covenant had been removed from the Tabernacle some forty years before David’s time – David recognized the symbolic significance of the Ark: it had to be in the Temple that Solomon would build, so **David erected a “tent”, a new “sanctuary” for the Ark** in Jerusalem and fetched the Ark to it (2Sm6:2, 12b, 15, Ps68:24-27, 7-8, 17, 32-35)

Fast Forward to Today: **Jesus declared himself to be “The Temple”, the sanctuary** (Jh2:19, 21). Jesus came to build the Church (Mt16:17-18). The Church is the Body of Christ (1Cr12:27, Eph5:23, Cl2:17, 19). **The Church is “The Temple”, the sanctuary** (1Cr3:16, 6:19, 2Cr6:16).

Sinai is Now in the Sanctuary: **We are NOW the covenant bearers** – the Covenant of Knowledge is our inheritance: it is up to us to inculcate the massive revelation from God through Moses known as the “*torah*”. The *torah* is the basis of the whole teaching of the Bible – it will be the basis of the World Tomorrow. **The Family of God is indeed the Temple of God – Sinai is truly in the Sanctuary** (Eph2:18-22, Rv3:12).

God’s covenants are a perfect and complete expression of God’s love: God’s love is most clearly expressed by the grace he holds out to each and every human being (Jh3:16). God’s holiness is the defining distinction between man and God – we can only be truly holy when God grants us the gift of eternal life at the resurrection. God’s purpose for human beings is to become members of his family – metaphorically, a “Temple”, a sanctuary. The Tabernacle of Moses first symbolized this, now the New Testament Church and True Christians are the inheritors of this legacy – our job is to prepare to take it to all people in the World Tomorrow.

¹ This material is based on the paper “Covenants of Grace”, located on www.mikewhytebiblicalresearch.ca