

## Week 7. The Covenant, the Law and the Worship

### [A] THE [MOAIC/ SINAI] COVENANT

First referred to in Exodus in 19:5. The main covenant referred to throughout the OT.

#### 1. The Relationship to the Abrahamic Covenant

Abrahamic Covenant was made not simply with Abraham but also with his 'seed' for all generations (cf Gen 17:7, 9). Mosaic Covenant is a subset of that covenant, but also an elaboration. Abrahamic (Gen 17:7-8): 'your God ... their God'. Mosaic is more two-sided, Ex 6:7 'my people ... your God.' See also Lev 26:12. Obligations on both God and Israel.

#### 2. The Covenant Introduced - Exodus 19:4-6

##### (a) Yahweh as 'the God of Israel' – Yahweh's Redemptive Activity

'my covenant' (v 5) - initiated by Yahweh and Yahweh's gift to Israel. It's established with a people already redeemed (v 4): (i) '*you yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt*' - summary of chapters 7-15, referring to the judgements God had brought against Egypt: the plagues and the drowning of the army at Red Sea; (ii) '*how I carried you on eagles' wings*' – summary of chapters 12-18 - Yahweh's care for his people, including guidance, protection and provision. (See also Deut 32:10-11). Also highlights Israel's utter dependence on her God; (iii) '*and brought you to myself*' – arrival at the 'mountain of God' (Ex 18:5; 24:13); place of his special presence. Ex 24:11b: '*they saw God and they ate and drank.*' Priority of grace. So it is still. Israel is almost completely passive in verse 4! They simply 'see' / witness what God has done.

##### (b) Israel as the 'People of God'- Israel's Vocation and Identity (vv 5-6)

(i) *Yahweh's treasured possession* Hebrew - *segullah*. Nuances: (a) personal ownership, e.g., Ps 135:4; Mal 3:17; (b) personal treasure (see 1 Chron 29:3; Eccles 2:8); stresses value and worth of the people to Yahweh: his crown jewels, prize diamond, pearl of great price. True of us! (c) implies 'election' - 'out of all nations ...' [Reason – Deut 7:8: '*the Lord loved you*']

(ii) *kingdom of priests* – Israel is 'priestly' mediating between God and the nations. Priests in Israel taught the law (Lev 10:11; Deut 33:10; etc) and were in charge of the sacrificial system; they also blessed the people (cf Num 6:22-27). So, Israel to bring the knowledge of God to the nations, and to bring the nations to the means of atonement with God. See, Is 2:2ff – the law goes out; the nations stream in. 'The priesthood of the people of God is thus a missional task' (Chris Wright). So today. Peter applies these verses to Christians, the new covenant people of God, the new Israel (1 Pet 2:9). See also Romans 15:15-16. Our task also.

'**Kingdom**' – Israel the Kingdom of God. Yahweh is King. Israel his servant people. 'Kingdom' translated as 'royal' by Septuagint; the way Peter renders it (1 Pet 2:9). Royalty of

Israel. See Gen 1:26, 28. Israel the new humanity. See **Rev 5:10**.

(iii) **holy nation**

Yahweh alone is holy: (a) separate; and (b) morally pure. Israel must become like him (see Lev 19:2): (a) 'set apart' unto God (v 6): 'you will be for me'; (b) be like God in his ways, so, a 'light to the nations'. 'Nation' applied to Israel here; instead of 'people' – but for the gracious electing love of God, Israel would be no different from any other nation? Israel to be a 'model' for all other nations?

(c) **The 'conditionality' of the covenant - (v 5) 'if'**

History of Israel is described in terms of Israel's faithfulness or otherwise to the covenant.

(d) **The People's Pledge to Keep the Covenant** (19:7-8; 24:7) but Golden Calf (ch 32)!

(3) **Metaphors for the Covenant Relationship**

'**Great King**' and servant (Ex 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3); **Shepherd and sheep** (Pss 23; 80:1; Is 40:11; Jer 31:10; Ezek 34:12, 16) – Shepherd-King (See also Jn 10:11, 14; Heb 13:20; 1 Pet 2:25; 5:4; Rev 7:17); **Marriage – Husband/ Wife; Bridegroom/ Bride** (See Hos 1-3); **Father-Son relationship** (Ex 4:22; Hos 11)

[B] **THE LAW OF THE KING**

1. **The Role of the Law/ Torah**

What it meant for Israel to be the Lord's people. Law summarized in the Ten Words (Ex 20:1). Words 1-4 vertical relationship; Words 5-10 horizontal relationships. Prologue (v 2) before commands; grace first, then law. OT is NOT about salvation by works, but salvation by grace through faith. Law shows Israel how to walk in the 'way of the Lord'. First word requires exclusive loyalty to the Lord (Ex 20:3). They broke second Word at Sinai (ch 32)!

2. **The Apparent Impossibility of Keeping the Covenant**

Deut 30:6 – only if God intervenes to circumcise the heart will Israel be able to love the Lord with all their heart and soul – a teaching developed by the prophets with regard to the 'New Covenant' (See Jer 31:31-34; 32:39-40; Ezek 36:24-27).

[C] **THE WORSHIP SYSTEM**

Exodus 25ff - the Tabernacle, King's tent, Father's 'house'. At heart of the camp; God dwelling among his people. Lev 26:12 - God 'walk among' his people, as Gen 3:8. Where Israel served/ worshipped its King; where the flock of God were fed by their Shepherd; where the Son of God met his Father; and the Bride of Yahweh met her Husband.

Problem – the 'holy nation' fell short daily -> need for sacrificial system (Leviticus). Sin must be dealt with. God provided substitute sacrifices *until*, his own Lamb would come to make once-for-all atonement for the sins of all his covenant people.