

## Exodus 23-24 - “Moving Up The Mountain”

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### 1. Justice

**23:1-3 - *You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. <sup>2</sup> You shall not follow a crowd to do evil; nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice. <sup>3</sup> You shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute.***

These verses are dealing with a judicial context. When things are undergoing a trial, you are to uphold truth and justice.

So first off, Israel is instructed to have nothing to do with gossip, slandering, or spreading false reports. Don't just take someone's word about someone; make sure it's true. Rather than continuing on gossip when you hear it, be the one who ends it.

- **Proverbs 20:19**, *“A gossip betrays a confidence; so avoid a man who talks too much.”* (NIV)
- **Proverbs 26:20**, *“Without wood a fire goes out; without gossip a quarrel dies down.”* (NIV)

Many years ago in a small European Jewish village a man had become dissatisfied with the local rabbi. He engaged in gossip about the rabbi all over town. As time went by, the rabbi became very sick and was on his deathbed. The man was convicted about his gossiping and didn't want the rabbi to die with the bad blood between them so he went to the rabbi, confessed his sin and asked for forgiveness. He asked if there was anything he could do to undo the damage his gossip had caused.

“Of course, I will forgive you,” the old man said, “and there is something you can do if you are willing.”

“Anything,” the repentant gossiper anxiously replied.

“I want you to take a sack of chicken feathers,” came the request, “go up on the big hill on the outside of town and release them into the wind.”

Thinking this was a very odd request indeed but wanting to demonstrate his contrition, the man did exactly as asked. He returned to the rabbi and asked him if there was anything else.

“Just one thing,” the dying man said. “I want you to go and pick up all the feathers.”

“That's impossible!” the offender exclaimed. “There is no way to pick up all the feathers. There is no way of knowing where the wind has taken them.”

“Neither is it possible for you to undo the damage of gossip,” the rabbi responded.

...don't ***follow a crowd to do evil...***

- **Psalm 1:1**, *"Blessed is the man Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor stands in the path of sinners, Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;"*
- **1 Corinthians 15:33**, *"Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits.""*

**23:4-5** - ***"If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. <sup>5</sup> If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.***

If you have an enemy and you see them in need, for the love of God, help them out! To deny them help in time of need only reveals your own stubborn and sinful heart.

Jesus instructs us to pray for those who are a thorn in our side:

**Matthew 5:43–45**, *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'<sup>44</sup> But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, <sup>45</sup> that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust."*

- When we pray for those who have hurt us or wronged us, we get to develop a heart for them. We're bringing them before the Lord, and we begin to see how the Lord forgives and reconciles. It's what He desires for us in our human relationships. Life is too short to hold on to grudges and be bitter. Bitterness only hurts you and handicaps you from God's best. Forgive and walk in grace towards others.
- "Holding a grudge against someone means you think you know what they deserve and you take it upon yourself to give it to them." - Tim Keller
- Many of the people Christians have held grudges towards are the same people they're going to be spending eternity in heaven with. What an awkward reunion that will be. I think Jesus is going to be bringing people together and saying, *I think you two know each other. And it looks like you have some things to clear up.*

**23:6-7 - “You shall not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute. <sup>7</sup> Keep yourself far from a false matter; do not kill the innocent and righteous. For I will not justify the wicked.**

Just because a person may be poor or not able to adequately defend himself, don't abuse the situation. Give them a fair trial.

***Do not kill the innocent and righteous...*** When I read this I think of the crazed fascination with abortion today.

It's a sad state to see how people have become so irate over Roe Vs. Wade being overturned. People are crying out for women's rights, actually calling it health care, and this is all in the name of being able to abort/kill babies. And they're doing so under the guise that not being able to kill babies is going to cause the death of many expectant mothers. And to see how the envelope continues to be pushed to advocating for late term abortions. It's a twisted and wicked culture.

Murder destroys the very person God created in His image. It's a devaluing of the precious gift of life.

**23:8-9 - *And you shall take no bribe, for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous. <sup>9</sup> “Also you shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the heart of a stranger, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.***

Accepting a bribe causes a person to overlook what they know to be right. This was a common problem in the ancient Near East.

Israel was to have compassion on the stranger. They themselves experienced the pain of being strangers in a foreign land. Because of that, they should have a deeper sensitivity and concern for those still in that situation.

- In much the same way, we all were wretched sinners, none of whom deserved forgiveness and salvation. Yet we've experienced God's great grace and mercy. How we need to exemplify that with others too.

All of these things are an amplification of the ninth commandment.

**Exodus 20:16, “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”**

God is a God who wants truth to rule in all things. He's a God of His Word. There's one thing God can't do – lie!

- **Titus 1:2**, *"in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began,"*
- **Numbers 23:19**, *"God is not a man, that He should lie, Nor a son of man, that He should repent. Has He said, and will He not do? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good?"*

## 2. Sabbaths

**23:10-12** - *Six years you shall sow your land and gather in its produce, <sup>11</sup> but the seventh year you shall let it rest and lie fallow, that the poor of your people may eat; and what they leave, the beasts of the field may eat. In like manner you shall do with your vineyard and your olive grove. <sup>12</sup> Six days you shall do your work, and on the seventh day you shall rest, that your ox and your donkey may rest, and the son of your female servant and the stranger may be refreshed.*

Here God lays down the principle of the Sabbath. God loves to operate on this 6+1 principle. Let your land be productive for 6 years, then let it rest for the 7<sup>th</sup> year. And if there is still crops in it, let it be for the poor in your community. Let them come and eat of it.

- Now some may begin to think, how are we going to make it if we give up a whole year of farming? But God in His wisdom knew that to farm the land repeatedly without any break, is eventually going to cause that land to become barren and not produce at all. It may seem like a sacrifice, but God was actually ensuring their productivity.
- How we need to trust God. We often do not know the reasons why He does things, but we need to trust that His ways are best and for our good.

But not only was this to be helpful for the land, it was to be a blessing to the poor. This was kind of God's welfare system. It was to provide for those in need.

In the same way, people were not to become workaholics. Take a day to rest! It's a real shame to see how people have pushed themselves to climb the corporate ladder or try to get ahead, yet in doing so they've sacrificed family and relationships. It's not worth it! Put in your time, but make sure you're taking time to rest and be refreshed. And make sure others around you are benefiting in that too.

Interestingly, upon entering the promised land, the Israelites did not follow through with this law. They continued to till the land and did not give it a break on the 7<sup>th</sup> year. They paid a price for this disobedience.

**Leviticus 26:33-35**, *~~“I will scatter you among the nations and draw out a sword after you; your land shall be desolate and your cities waste.<sup>34</sup> Then the land shall enjoy its sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies' land; then the land shall rest and enjoy its sabbaths.<sup>35</sup> As long as it lies desolate it shall rest—for the time it did not rest on your sabbaths when you dwelt in it.”~~*

- Israel was carried along into captivity after being in the land for 490 years. They were held in Babylon as captives for 70 years. During this time the land had its Sabbath rest. The amount of time that Israel neglected to do so.

**23:13** - ***And in all that I have said to you, be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth.***

To be ‘*circumspect*’ means to keep watch; be on guard. We may not worship idols or other gods in such a blatant way as they did in Old Testament times, but we can easily follow after things that have nothing to do with God. I think of how easy it is to be lured in to the streams of culture. We have so many voices sounding off these days through social media, movies, advertising, that before we know it we can become sounding boards of the enemies agendas. If you’ve not been paying attention, we see this happening more and more as pulpits in churches have become a mouthpiece for unbiblical trends and teachings.

We need be watchful of these things, and be on guard.

### 3. Feasts

**23:14-16** - ***“Three times you shall keep a feast to Me in the year: <sup>15</sup> You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread (you shall eat unleavened bread seven days, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt; none shall appear before Me empty); <sup>16</sup> and the Feast of Harvest, the firstfruits of your labors which you have sown in the field; and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year, when you have gathered in the fruit of your labors from the field. <sup>17</sup> “Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the Lord God. <sup>18</sup> “You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread; nor shall the fat of My sacrifice remain until morning. <sup>19</sup> The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.***

Of all the various feasts, there were three that were to be observed by all the males before the Lord God. They are:

- 1) The Feast of Unleavened Bread – 23:15
- 2) The Feast of Harvest – 23:16
- 3) The Feast of Ingathering (Tabernacles) – 23:16

These feasts were to be: A) a commemoration of what God has done for them practically. B) an expectation of what He'll do for them prophetically.

The **Feast of Unleavened Bread** took place right after Passover (often becoming synonymous with each other). This took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of Nisan. This feast commemorated the Israelites deliverance out of Egypt. They were to make bread without yeast (a picture of sin). They were to cleanse themselves as they were now entering into new life with God. The bread would be made in haste upon their exodus as God would bring them out swiftly.

- This feast of Passover and Unleavened bread had prophetic significance with a future Passover when Jesus would be crucified as our Passover Lamb who takes away the sins of the world. We've been granted forgiveness and eternal life through faith in Him. Jesus is our great deliverer!

The **Feast of Harvest** or feast of weeks took place 50 days after Passover (7 weeks from Unleavened bread). It is the time to present an offering of new grain of the summer wheat harvest to the Lord. It shows joy and thankfulness for the Lord's blessing of harvest. It's sometimes referred to as Matan Torah, which means 'giving of the Law', as it is believed God gave Moses the Ten Commandments at this time.

- This feast looked ahead to Acts 2 and Pentecost. There the Holy Spirit would be poured out and a new harvest took place – the church. Peter explained that what the people were seeing was what was recorded in Joel 2:28-32. Jesus had risen and was exalted at the right hand of the Father and now Jesus had poured out the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:32–33). The people responded to Peter's message with repentance, and about 3,000 were baptized (Acts 2:41). The new covenant was now initiated – 50 days after the death of Christ.

The **Feast of Tabernacles**, or Ingathering, is a week-long celebration of the fall harvest and a time to build booths (temporary shelters of branches) to remember how the Hebrew people lived under God's care during their forty years

in the wilderness (Nehemiah 8:14-17). This celebration is a reminder of God’s faithfulness and protection.

- Two ceremonies were part of the last day of Sukkot: (1) Giant golden lampstands were lit in the temple courtyard, and people carrying torches marched around the temple, then set these lights around the walls of the temple, indicating that Messiah would be a light to the Gentiles (Isa. 49:6). (2) A priest carried water from the pool of Siloam to the temple, symbolizing that when Messiah comes the whole earth will know God “as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). When Jesus attended the Feast of Tabernacles, on the last day of the feast, He said, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. <sup>38</sup> He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” (John 7:37-38). The next morning while the torches were still burning, He said, “I am the Light of the world.” (John 8:12).

Sukkot represents the final harvest when all nations will share in the joy and blessings of God’s kingdom. This feast of thanksgiving is the only one of the many feasts that will still be appropriate in the new kingdom—the others will have been fulfilled, but thanksgiving will be a continual theme in Messiah’s kingdom.” (Zechariah 14:16–19). We’ll forever be grateful for God’s protection and provision during our wilderness journey on earth.

***You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk...*** Now this can seem like a strange rule. But this was a common pagan fertility ritual. The Israelites were not to be like their neighbors. This is another purpose in these dietary laws. No doubt there was a health benefit to it, but it served as a clear separation from the practices of their pagan neighbors.

- Today, many observant Jews will not eat meat and cheese together because of this verse. They feel that the meat may have possibly come from the same cow that produced the cheese.

#### 4. Provision

***23:20-26 - Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. <sup>21</sup> Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him. <sup>22</sup> But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. <sup>23</sup> For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the***

***Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off. <sup>24</sup> You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works; but you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars. <sup>25</sup> “So you shall serve the Lord your God, and He will bless your bread and your water. And I will take sickness away from the midst of you. <sup>26</sup> No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.***

This is not just any ordinary angel, God says this is ***My Angel*** who has ***My name*** in Him. This is referring to the Angel of the Lord and anytime we see Him in Scripture it is referring to the pre-incarnate Jesus Christ. A Christophany. He’s seen in Genesis 16:7; 22:11; Exodus 3:2.

- God is assuring the people of Israel that He will be with them, and not just in some spiritual sense, but in a real physical manifestation through the Angel of the Lord.
- And notice, this Angel would keep them in the way and bring them into the place which was prepared for them. This is just what Jesus does for us. Jesus in His ministry goes before us, protects us, and prepares a place for us. **John 14:2–4**, *“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. <sup>4</sup> And where I go you know, and the way you know.”*
- Not only does He prepare a place for us, but He prepares us for that place – as we’ll see in the rest of this chapter.

***My name is in Him***... Jehovah, taken from the Hebrew tetragrammaton, YHWH. Jesus’ name is literally ‘Yahshua’ - “Jehovah is salvation”. More so, God’s name being in Him, meant that He was in full representation of God, they were in unity.

Now this promise was based on their obedience. This blessing and protection would be conditional upon their faithfulness and obedience.

- Now here’s the key, the land was theirs unconditionally by God’s grace! Just as we have been saved and inherit eternal life by God’s grace! But the amount that we experience joy and the fruitful life depends on our faith and faithfulness. Are we walking in obedience to His Word?



**23:27-33 - “I will send My fear before you, I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come, and will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. <sup>28</sup> And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivite, the Canaanite, and the Hittite from before you. <sup>29</sup> I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beasts of the field become too numerous for you. <sup>30</sup> Little by little I will drive them out from before you, until you have increased, and you inherit the land. <sup>31</sup> And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea, Philistia, and from the desert to the River. For I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand, and you shall drive them out before you. <sup>32</sup> You shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods. <sup>33</sup> They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against Me. For if you serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you.”**

Now the question begs to be asked, are these literal hornets being sent against them? It could be. That would certainly get me running!

Some have wondered if this was being used as a reference to Egypt (Isaiah used the fly as a reference to Egypt and the bee for Assyria in Isaiah 7:8).

Nevertheless, God was going to go before them and bring confusion to the nations there. God would do the work of driving them out.

- We should have the same confidence as this. When God is for us, who can be against us? (Romans 8:31).

~~I'm so glad the Lord fights for us. We've seen in the history of Israel how He has confused its enemies:~~

~~“When Israel declared itself an independent state on May 14, 1948, still another miracle occurred. The armies of seven Arab nations marched on the newborn State, boasting that they would “push the Jews into the sea.” Outnumbered 100 to 1, Israel not only repelled the invaders but acquired more of Palestine than was granted in the UN partition plan. Yigael Yadin, Israel’s commander of operations in that war, had a terse explanation of Israel’s victory. “It was a miracle!”~~

~~A Syrian column of 200 armored vehicles—including 45 tanks—attacked Degania, the oldest kibbutz in Israel. What a psychological blow this defeat would be! Without artillery, Jewish forces were helpless to block the Syrian advance. Until then the only heavy weapons available in all Israel were four howitzers of the type used by the French army in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Two of~~

~~these ancient fieldpieces were promptly dismantled and rushed to Degania. The local commander, Lieutenant Colonel Moshe Dayan, had them reassembled at the very moment the first Syrian tanks rumbled through the kibbutz perimeter, and they scored a hit on the advance tank. Had the Syrians known that these two obsolete weapons represented half the arsenal of fieldguns in all Israel, they would have pressed the attack. Instead, the armored vehicles swung around in their tracks and clattered back up the mountain road.~~

~~At Safed, near the Sea of Galilee a small unit of Israeli defenders were holding off thousand Arabs. A sudden tropical storm broke loose. The Israelis in desperation took their remaining gasoline, poured it over 50 empty drums, set them afire and rolled them down the hill. The flaming barrels flying down the slopes, the rumble of hollow barrels striking rocks—together with the tropical storm—created such an illusion that the bewildered Arabs imagining some sort of secret weapon took to their heel and fled.”~~

~~(<http://www.bible411.com/nationofmiracles/>)~~

This acquisition of the land would be a gradual process. God won't do it all at once lest they become prideful or complacent.

- It's the same in our spiritual walk and growth – it's one battle at a time. It's a continuous journey and in doing so it teaches us patience and trust.
- But remember, it's the Lord that says, ***I will drive them out!***

The victory over sin and the flesh is not won by my striving or my strength. It's a work of the Lord sanctifying us by His Spirit. It's realized the more that we yield to Him and walk in obedience to His Word.

The land that was allocated to Israel was a huge portion of real estate, one that Israel never fully possess in entirety. They settled and compromised, and as a result battled the enemy often.

~~“It took Joshua and his army about seven years to conquer the land, and the victory was followed by a “mopping up” operation. God planned that they take the land gradually so they could control things, but some of the tribes never did fully conquer the territory that was assigned to them (Jud. 1–2). God set the boundaries of the land (Gen. 15:18–21), and they were reached during the time~~

~~of David and Solomon (2 Sam. 8:1–14; 1 Kings 4:20–25), but when the nation divided, they began to lose territory to their enemies.”<sup>1</sup>~~

Vs. 33 – **Romans 13:14**, *"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."*

Now in Chapter 24 a wonderful invitation is given – ***come up to the Lord...***

## 5. Covenant Confirmed

**24:1-8** - ***Now He said to Moses, "Come up to the Lord, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship from afar. <sup>2</sup> And Moses alone shall come near the Lord, but they shall not come near; nor shall the people go up with him."*** <sup>3</sup> ***So 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 has said we will do."*** <sup>4</sup> ***And Moses wrote all the words of the Lord. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>5</sup> Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord. <sup>6</sup> And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. <sup>7</sup> Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, "All that the Lord has said we will do, and be obedient."*** <sup>8</sup> ***And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, "This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you according to all these words."***

This group is invited to come and worship the Lord, but notice, they're to worship from afar – worship at a distance.

Under law, man was not able to come close in the way we now can through Christ by grace.

**Ephesians 2:13**, *"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."*

- Whether you feel close or distant, we need to be worshippers of God. Worship is not based on our emotions or feelings but are based on God's goodness and holiness – unchanging attributes. Don't let your feelings change how you come to God, come to God and align your heart to Him.

<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1998). *Be delivered* (p. 127). Chariot Victor Pub.

24:2 - Moses is given special instructions; he alone is to come near. Moses is acting as the Mediator of this first covenant, just as Christ is the Mediator of the new covenant (Hebrews 8:6).

24:3 - Moses now fills them in on all he has been told (from Exodus 20-23). Instead of saying 'we will do', they should have said, 'we desire to do...'. The Hebrew people spoke with an apparent self-confidence. No doubt they wanted to do what was right, but based on the law they just heard, they would have been better off to realize this was a difficult challenge. Instead of speaking forth with a dependence on their efforts, they should have depended on God's strength.

- This is a problem that can easily plague a Believer today. Living with a self-help attitude. People often try to accomplish in the flesh what can only be brought about through the Spirit. *'I'm going to implement this new strategy for holy living', or 'I'm going to this conference to teach me the victorious life.'* When in reality, it's not what I do, but what I surrender.
- People that live lives based on effort can either get proud and consider themselves the one to praise when things are going well. Or they can live in condemnation when things are not going well thinking that they have not been good enough. Yet the harder we try, the more we're inclined to fail.
- God wants us to learn dependency upon Him and to rely on His strength and sanctifying work in our lives.

24:4 - First mention of the written word. The Word of God is infallible, and inerrant.

- ~~I just read this week about a printing error of the KJV back in 1631. Hundreds of Bibles were printed with the seventh commandment reading, "Thou shalt commit adultery." King Charles was not too pleased and had the Bibles referred to as the 'Wicked Bible'. He ordered them destroyed and had the printer fined 300 lbs (a lifetime of wages). About 11 still exist today.~~
- **2 Timothy 3:16–17**, *"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup> that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."*
- **2 Peter 1:20–21**, *"knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, <sup>21</sup> for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."*

24:5 - First was the burnt offering. This was the offering of consecration. The offering was consumed and it was as though you were consecrating your life to God, saying consume me, may my life be totally consumed for You.

Second was the peace offering. This was an offering of communion or fellowship. It was where you roasted the meat, you ate part of it, and you gave part to God. As though you were sitting down together for a meal, enjoying that sweet fellowship.

- But notice the time of communion comes after you have consecrated your life. That's when true fellowship occurs – after you have dedicated your life to God and are consumed by Him. It's where He has become your passion.

24:8 - This was known as a blood covenant. It was a sacred and binding covenant. The people said we'll do it, and God holds them to it. It's represented by this blood.

Thankfully it's through the blood of Christ that we find grace today. We were unable to keep the terms of the law, but the blood of Jesus has set us free!

- “Even before God gives the Law to them, the Israelites are sprinkled with blood to let them know that there must be a sacrifice. Hebrews 9:22 says, “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission” God will repeat this many times. Life must be given up, and a penalty must be paid before any of us can go to heaven.”<sup>2</sup>

**24:9-11 - *Then Moses went up, also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel,<sup>10</sup> and they saw the God of Israel. And there was under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.<sup>11</sup> But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank.***

Ever been invited to a very important dinner with very important guests? It's a little intimidating, isn't it? Well here's 74 key people of Israel going to have a meal with God. How wild is that?

But I'm sure you're wondering, how did they see God and live to tell about it?

**Exodus 33:20, "But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.""** (also John 1:18; 1 Timothy 6:16).

<sup>2</sup> McGee, J. V. (1997). *Thru the Bible commentary* (electronic ed., Vol. 1, p. 277). Thomas Nelson.

It's true that God's holiness is too great for us. That's why we must be changed, and given a new eternal body to enter into His glory. So how did these guys do it?

What they may have seen was a form of God, a similitude or an aspect of Him. Perhaps they saw the Christophany – an appearance of Jesus Christ. (**John 14:9**, "...*He who has seen Me has seen the Father...*").

It's interesting that they notice what He is standing on. Maybe they're looking up and getting a glimpse into the heavens. Maybe they're seeing the sea of glass under the throne – Revelation 4:6).

Either way, under His feet was a firm foundation, beautiful and heavenly. It's a reminder that what is over our heads, is simply under His feet.

They ate and drink. This is a wonderful picture of communion. To share a meal with someone in this time was an important act of friendship. God was revealing this fellowship they were to enjoy with Him.

We continue to do this in through communion. It's here we remember the work Jesus has done to bring us into fellowship with Him and our Heavenly Father.

**24:12-18 - *Then the Lord said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them."*** <sup>13</sup> ***So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.*** <sup>14</sup> ***And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them."*** <sup>15</sup> ***Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain.*** <sup>16</sup> ***Now the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.*** <sup>17</sup> ***The sight of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.*** <sup>18</sup> ***So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.***

Moses is called to go on further. God continues to call us to go deeper with Him. Don't settle for what you already know or what you've experienced, God is so much more. Keep pressing on and you will be rewarded.

So Moses goes up with his assistant Joshua. Joshua will eventually be the one that will lead Israel into the Promised Land. If you want to be a good leader, learn first to be a good servant.

~~24:17 – Hebrews 12:28–29, "Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear.<sup>29</sup> For our God is a consuming fire."~~

Moses now will be 40 days and 40 nights on the mountain of God. 40 is a number of testing. This will be a time of testing not for Moses, but for the people of Israel, who have been all too quick to say, *all that you say we will do!* They're not even going to let Moses get down from the mountain before they break their word. We'll see that in Exodus 32.

But from Chapters 25-31 we'll see all that Moses was instructed in on the mountain. Instructions for the tabernacle and the priesthood. Why was this important? So the people could continually come and find mercy and meet with God.