
Exodus 24: The Covenant

Hebrews 9:9-12, 18-24

We have two speakers this morning. The first is Josiah.

My name is Josiah and I am so excited! God has made a covenant with us, the Israelites.

We are now officially his people! I am one of the 70 elders who went up to Mt Sinai. We had a great time with God.

Before that, we had a rather hard time. We were slaves in Egypt but in the end, Pharaoh let us go. Then this dreadful journey through the desert. Soon we lacked food and drink, but God provided manna and water. We got to Mt Sinai where we received the Ten Commandments and then much else. We said 'Yes, we can do this! Sign us up.' Moses wrote everything down.

Moses then built an altar for all of us; he made sacrifices and sprinkled blood on us. You may think this abhorrent, but we are familiar with blood; we're used to it. We're farmers and blood is part of life for us.

We, the people, repeated our promise to God. We will keep the covenant!

Soon after Moses selected me, Josiah, as one of the elders. We went up on the mountain and had a meal with God up there. We had an audience with the King of the universe! We *were* slaves, now we are princes at the table of the Lord! We have come of age.

We saw God, well, kind of. God cannot really be seen. We saw the beautiful blue under his feet. We are a bit jealous of Moses, who now gets to see so much more of God. For Moses went much higher up to meet God.

The good thing is: Our sins were covered by the blood of the sacrifices. God has accepted us. We are really grateful to him!

But now Moses has been on the mountain on his own for almost 40 days. I wonder what he is doing up there... And I hope our people can keep their peace.

Our second speaker is the author of Hebrews

I am the author of Hebrews. If you know my name, please tell me.

Today I have some additions to my letter to share with you.

That first covenant, it was quite nice. It was the covenant with Moses at Mt Sinai. But it required lots of blood, every time again. And of course, that blood never really removed sin and guilt; it merely covered it. Only the blood of Jesus really takes away sin.

Josiah told you about the great meal the 70 elders had. The new covenant also has a meal, called the Lord's Supper. Jesus himself initiated it just before his own blood was going to be shed. You read that in Luke 22 and other places. We become God's people when we share the cup at Communion. We can all enter the place where God is; we live life to the full in Christ. The new covenant in Christ is really much better.

[Hebrews 12:18-28 with Isaiah 25:] We have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire. We have not come to Mt Sinai but to Mt Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. We have come to God and to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, and to his blood that fully forgives our sins.

And this new covenant includes all nations. As Isaiah wrote, on this Mt Zion the Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, not just for Israel, a banquet of aged wine – the best of meats and the finest of wines.

The new covenant does not require these constant sacrifices. It does not major on keeping commandments. It's about Jesus dying in our place.

As a result, God has put his laws in our minds and written them on our hearts. He is now our God, and we are his people. We can all know him from the least of us to the greatest.

He has given his Spirit in our hearts.

But don't you just sit back. Jesus is not looking for followers, spectators and 'likes' on Facebook, but for true disciples. Do your neighbours know that you are a true disciple?

The new covenant is easier for believers, nicer, better – but no less serious! If you commit yourself to Jesus, you are fully committed.
