

The Old-Time Evangelistic News

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How Will You Worship the Next Time? (Part 1)

Exodus 24:1-2, 9-11

Turn in your Bibles to Exodus 24. We are going to read verses 1 and 2, and then skip down to verses 9-11. This passage is probably one that most believers have never read, or, at least, never paid much attention to when they have read it. It is between the portions where God gives the law to Moses in chapters 21-23 and where God gives to Moses the details of the tabernacle and the priesthood from the end of chapter 24 until chapter 31. Verses 3-8 of Exodus 24 describe Moses' return from the mount, the people's acceptance of the law thus far, and Moses' dedication of the people through sacrifice and the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice on the altar and the people. They are important verses, but they do not pertain to the ones that we are focusing on, so we will not include them in the message.

Pay attention as we read these verses. Here are verses 1-2: *"And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off. And Moses alone shall come near the LORD: but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him."* Now verses 9-11: *"Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink."* Do you see what God was wanting? He was wanting them to be impacted by His presence. He called the leaders of Israel up to the mountain and manifested Himself to them. He had spoken to the entire nation from Mt. Sinai in chapter 20. It was too much for most of them, and they requested that Moses go before God and receive God's instructions and then relay them to the

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people (Exodus 20:18-19). But God still wanted a close relationship with His people. He would try on a limited basis with the leaders of the people.

I want to focus on three words right now. We will cover this in greater detail as we get into the message, but the reality of what is stated here is so wonderful, I must say something about it right now. Two times in verses 10 and 11, the words are recorded—*"They saw God."* Can you imagine that? Even the small glimpse of God that they saw must have been superb. The reality of this statement that they saw God is so amazing that it should have impacted these 74 men in such a way that they never should have forgotten it and never should have gotten over it. Sadly, as we will see, only one of them was ever completely moved by what happened there. The rest of them responded in other times of worship in terrible ways.

One more issue I want to cover before we get into the introduction is this—Has there ever been a time when you really worshipped God? Another way to phrase that question is this, Have you ever had a personal time when God was really close to you? This message is entitled, "How will you worship the next time?" The message is called that because we will look at the next time each of these men worshipped God. All of these men saw God and responded in a different way as they tried to worship God again. But I am convinced that most believers in our day and time have never gotten close to God on a first occasion. Even if we include a person's salvation as a first glimpse of God, many people fall short in having a life completely changed by God. Their view of God is different from the Bible's view of God and from my own personal experience with God. I realize that everyone responds differently, but what I cannot understand is why so many would rather have the things of this world rather than a close, intimate, personal relationship with God. If they have seen God, should it not transform them? It should, but most people respond to God, not like Moses did, but like the other men did.

Some may truly desire to worship God, but it is not a renewal of what they have seen, but what others have seen. Many today are trying to work up something they have heard about from others, or what they have read about in books. I have heard amazing stories from preachers and non-preachers alike, although most of them are dead and gone. (Very few are alive today who have experienced a genuine move of God in their own life.) I have read many books of wonderful things that God has done in the past. But living off the experience of someone else, and trying to work up what they talked about, is not what we need. These men saw God and responded to what they themselves saw, not what someone else talked or wrote about. In our day, we ourselves must see God. It must be personal. We cannot survive spiritually from what others experienced in the past. For worship to occur a second time, there must have been a first time. For many people, this message will make no sense because they have never seen God the first time. For you, you must desire God's presence to be real for the first time. You must ask yourself the question, How will I worship God the first time? I pray that this message will compel you to draw nigh to God in a way that you have never done before. For those who have experienced and worshipped God before, I pray that the Holy Ghost will impress upon you a desire to worship God again.

This message will have a lengthy introduction. Most messages do not and should not have a lengthy introduction. A normal introduction should explain the context and may provide some interesting details that supplement the message but do not necessarily advance the thought of the message. However, because this message involves a response to a previous encounter, we must have at least a basic idea of what happened the first time. The message itself will cover the responses of the men from the first occasion. I will try to go through the introduction as quickly as possible, so we can spend more time on the second occasion of worship.

There are three thoughts to consider in this introduction covering the episode on Mt. Sinai. The first is **The Desire of God**. Notice that

in Exodus 24:1 God says, "*Come up unto the LORD...and worship ye afar off.*" God's command to Moses is stating one reason that God made man—to worship Him. People often question why God made man to begin with. They reason that God existed for eternity, and He did without man for a long time before He made him. Why then did God make man? One thing we must understand is that we will never understand why God does something. His thoughts are beyond our thoughts, and His ways are past finding out (Isaiah 55:8; Romans 11:33). Could He have "survived" if He had never made man? Of course He could have survived without man. He is God. He did not "need" to make man, but He did. We cannot go into all of the possibilities as to why God made man, but we can discern from Genesis 3 that one reason God made man was because He wanted to spend time with man. Part of the time that man would spend with God would be in worshipping God.

Genesis 3:8 says, "*And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.*" This verse is right after Adam and Eve's sin in the Garden of Eden. The Bible does not tell us how much time elapsed after man's creation and the temptation by Satan. I do not think that it was a long period of time, but I believe it could have been a few days. As I read this verse, it seems that God is doing something, "*walking in the garden,*" that He had done on other occasions. From the time of Adam's creation, even though it was probably only a few days, God came every day to spend personal time with Adam. Adam's sin changed that relationship, but God still desires personal time with man. He desires a relationship with His greatest creation—man. That relationship can only take place when a sinner has his sin washed away by the blood of Christ, but once a person is saved, they can have a wonderful time with God. The fellowship that God desired when He made man is once again possible. Many times in Scripture, we can see that personal relationship which God has with man. Think about Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, and many others. God wanted that with man when He made him, and

now He is wanting that with the leaders of the nation of Israel. By the way, He wants a personal relationship with you today, as well.

Notice The Participants involved in this desire of God. There are both *Secular Leaders/Politicians* and *Sacred Leaders/Priests*. The secular leaders are Moses and the 70 elders, and the sacred leaders are Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu. There are no groups that have a special relationship with God that no one else can have. God may call certain men to preach, but He wants preachers and non-preachers to have a close relationship to Him. Catholics make a sharp distinction between the clergy and the laity. In fact, they teach that a layperson cannot pray to God except they go through a priest. That is not taught anywhere in Scripture! Hebrews 4:16 says, "*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*" A true believer does not have to reach God through a priest. Every believer has direct access to God because every believer is a child of God and all have equal access to God in prayer. The same is true of worship. God wants all of His people to worship Him. He wants an intimate relationship with all of His children. We will continue with this next month.