

Lesson 33 - What God did through Moses

Heb. 11:24-29 - *“By faith **Moses**, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, 25 choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. 26 He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward. 27 By faith he left Egypt, not being afraid of the anger of the king, for he endured as seeing him who is invisible. 28 By faith he kept the Passover and sprinkled the blood, so that the Destroyer of the firstborn might not touch them. 29 By faith the people crossed the Red Sea as on dry land, but the Egyptians, when they attempted to do the same, were drowned.”*

Heb. 3:1-6 - *“Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, 2 who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house. 3 For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses—as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. 4 (For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.) 5 Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant, to testify to the things that were to be spoken later, 6 but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we are his house, if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.”*

Last week, we learned what God did through **Abraham** in the Patriarchal dispensation and the seven-fold promise. During that era. The Patriarch served as prophet, a priest, and a king over the family. These men of old - these “Patriarchs” - worshipped God offering sacrifices upon an altar, but there was no formality to the worship revealed in scripture.

This week, we will learn what God did through **Moses**. Through Moses there was the revelation and establishment of the **Mosaic ritual**.

A “ritual” is *“a religious or **solemn (formal and dignified)** ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order.”*

To establish this Mosaic ritual, a particular order of men was appointed to the priesthood and a very formal and dignified ceremony was prescribed. From the time of that appointment, the offering of sacrifices was restricted, in the main, to those who were duly invested with the **priestly office**.

At the same time, the **ALTAR** (the institution of worship in the Patriarchal Dispensation) was incorporated into the **TABERNACLE**, and became known as the **“altar of burnt offering”**; and by this change it ceased to be a **family altar** and became a **national altar**.

At this time, **the Patriarchal Dispensation came to and end** - when the Hebrew people were organized into a nation at mount Sinai under the leadership of Moses and the Aaronic

priesthood. What followed the Patriarchal Dispensation then can be termed the Jewish or Mosaic Dispensation.

All the posterity of Aaron were, at this time, divinely appointed to be priests (except of course such as were disqualified by special provisions of the Mosaic law. This is known as the “Aaronic” or “Levitical” priesthood. The office of **High Priest** was also established, and Aaron himself, the great-grandson of Levi and brother of Moses, was divinely designated to be the first man to occupy this singular exalted office; and, by divine appointment also, the firstborn of the family, in direct descent and in regular succession from Aaron, came into incumbency of the office by divine right. The High Priest thus became the chief of the whole Jewish priesthood, and later on the virtual head of the Jewish Theocracy. The Aaronic succession continued, despite numerous apostasies and captivities, down to the time of Jesus and came to an end only with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Roman legions under Titus, A.D. 70, and the subsequent dispersion of the Jews among all nations.

Through Moses, there was the revelation and establishment of the Levitical Priesthood in order to carry out the solemn rituals of the national worship at the national altar. Moses is therefore described by Paul in Galatians as an “intermediary” or “mediator” of the old covenant and “law giver” of Israel.

Gal. 3:19 - *“Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an **intermediary**.”*

John 1:17 - *“For the **law** was **given** through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”*

John 7:19 - *“Has not **Moses given you the law**? Yet none of you keeps the law. Why do you seek to kill me?”*

The first thing that God did through Moses, then, was He organized the children of Israel into a **NATION** and established the **THEOCRACY**.

A **theocracy** is defined as “a government of a state by the immediate direction of God”; hence the Hebrew nation, before it became a kingdom, is usually referred to as a **theocracy**.

The covenant made at mount Sinai was essentially a **national covenant**, and the Mosaic law was for both the civil and religious government of the nation. Maybe for purposes of comparison, the Decalogue or **Ten Commandments** might be said to correspond to our **federal constitution** and the other **laws, statutes and commandments** of the Mosaic law, to the **body of statutory law by which our society is organized and its government administered**.

The New Covenant, by way of contrast, is **strictly spiritual**, and separate from the state in every particular. Jesus Himself tells us to *“render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s”* (Matt. 22:21) making them categorically **distinct**.

So the first thing that God did through Moses was to organize the Israelite people into a nation and establish the theocracy which included the Levitical priesthood to serve at the national altar and establish their national rituals and institutions.

The outstanding features of the rituals given through Moses were:

1. Circumcision
2. The Passover
3. The Sabbath
4. The Levitical Priesthood
5. The Tabernacle
6. The solemn Sacrifices
7. The solemn Feasts and Assemblies

As national “law” or “code” these rituals are revealed in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy - which is why these books are collectively known as the books of “Law”.

Secondly, God, through the mediation of Moses, **enlarged the Abrahamic covenant** into a **national covenant**, retaining Circumcision as the seal of the covenant.

God’s covenant with Abraham was *“I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”*

Paul writing to the Galatians in 3:17:

“This is what I mean: the law, which came **430 years afterward**, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.”

Paul is arguing that the covenant made with Israel through the mediation of Moses did not **REPLACE** the covenant made with Abraham, but was an **expansion** of it retaining its promises and the sign of the covenant - **circumcision**.

Paul goes on: *“For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.”* - It was not the LAW given by Moses that was inheritance, but the PROMISE.

Just 430 years after the Promise was given to Abraham, its fleshly or “typical” side was fully developed in the Old Covenant:

Gen. 17:7 - *"I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you."* (the words of Jehovah to Abraham when the Promise was given)

The Mosaic covenant and ritual was therefore, just an **enlargement** of the Abrahamic covenant, which took in **Sacrifice**, the essential ordinance of the Patriarchal system, also.

It can be seen that the whole procedure was a progressive development of true religion.

Thirdly, God through Moses revealed eternal principles of right and wrong in the provisions of the decalogue (Ten Commandments) and we will deal with this in the next lesson.

The Old Covenant or Mosaic Covenant or System including the decalogue and the solemn rituals is commonly designated, in apostolic writings as simply **"The Law"**.

The Mosaic system is so called because it was essentially a **legal system**.

John 1:17 - *"For the **law** was **given** through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."*

John 7:10 - "Did not Moses give you **the law**?"

Gal. 3:24 - "**the law** is become our tutor to bring us unto Christ"

Starting with the wanderings in the wilderness and God's direction to Moses to build a tent wherein the nation could worship him and then proceeding to the time of Solomon, we see three successive three successive institutions of worship under the Mosaic Dispensation:

- 1. The Tabernacle**
- 2. The Temple**
- 3. The Synagogue**

1. The Tabernacle began with Moses. God Himself gave Moses the plans and specifications for it. It was a portable institution adapted to the needs of the people during the period of their wanderings in the wilderness.

2. The Temple was built by Solomon, who received the idea, inspiration, and materials from his father David. The general design of the Tabernacle was carried out, on a grander scale of course, in the building of the Temple. The first Temple was built at Jerusalem, on Mount Moriah, about one thousand years before Christ. The Temple was built and designed to serve the people as a national institution of worship after they had become firmly established in Canaan.

3. The Synagogue began with Ezra, after the **Exile**. In purpose it was similar to our local

churches; hence there was a synagogue in each community. Each synagogue served for a place of worship, a law-court, and a school; and was presided over by local elders or “rulers” (Luke 13:14; Mark 5:22; Acts 13:15, 18:8)

Luke 13:14 - *“But the **ruler of the synagogue**, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the people, “There are six days in which work ought to be done. Come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day.”*

Mark 5:22 - *“Then came **one of the rulers of the synagogue**, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet”*

Acts 13:15 - *“After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, **the rulers of the synagogue** sent a message to them, saying, “Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it.”*

Acts 18:8 - *“Crispus, **the ruler of the synagogue**, believed in the Lord, together with his entire household. And many of the Corinthians hearing Paul believed and were baptized.”*

God had promised the Hebrew nation that there would come a day when He would make a NEW covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah:

Jer. 31:31-34 - *“Behold, the days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the Lord. 33 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. 34 And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”*

The Jewish or Mosaic Dispensation ended with the death of Christ on the Cross. By His death He abrogated (repeal or do away with) the Old Covenant, and at the same time ratified and established the New Covenant.

Heb. 9:16 - *“In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove **the death of the one who made it**”*

Col. 2:14 - “having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross.”

See: Heb. 8:6-13; 2 Cor. 3 etc.

Milligan, Scheme of Redemption says:

“The Old Sinaitic Covenant had to be taken out of the way, before a new covenant could be fully inaugurated as a separate and independent institution. This was done at the death of Christ. Henceforth it was no longer binding on any one as a religious Institution; though it was, through the forbearance of God, allowed to remain as a civil and social Institution for about 36 years longer until Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans in A.D. 70”

The New Covenant, moreover, was not merely an **enlargement** of the Old. It was distinctly a new covenant.

Jer. 31:31 - “I will make a **new** covenant...”

Eph. 2:15-16 - “that he (Christ) might create in himself of the two (i.e. of Jew and Gentile) one new man, so making peace; and might reconcile them both in one body unto God through the cross.”

Note: “**one new man**” cf. Gal. 3:28, 1 Cor. 12:13, etc.

The faithful souls of the Jewish Dispensation were accepted by God on the ground of their faith which manifested itself in their obedience to the laws of God which were in force throughout the Jewish Dispensation:

Deut. 7:12-13 - “And because you listen to these rules and keep and do them, the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the steadfast love that he swore to your fathers. 13 He will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your ground, your grain and your wine and your oil, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock, in the land that he swore to your fathers to give you.”

See Moses admonition and teaching to the people before they crossed to the promised land:
Deut. 8:6-20; 28:1-6; 28:15-68; 30:1-10

See also: Neh. 9:9-37 (history summary)

and the faithful souls of the Jewish Dispensation were accepted by God on the further ground of the certainty of the Perfect Atonement for sin which was made once at the end of the ages by our Lord Jesus Christ

Heb. 9:15 - *“Therefore he [Jesus] is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.”*

Gal. 4:4,5 - *“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman,*

*born under the law, 5 to **redeem those who were under the law**, so that we might receive adoption as sons."*