

A Royal Priesthood (Ex. 13-24)

1. Introduction

a. Exodus 19:3-6 is a summary of this section

i. Journey from Red Sea to Mount Sinai (E13-19)

ii. Covenant at Sinai (E19-24)

1. Abrahamic: Not a new covenant, but one that God promised Abraham (G17:7-8)

2. Blessing: Not only meant to bless the seed of Abraham (Israel in this case) but to bless all the nations through that seed (G22:18). They were to become a blessing of the world.

3. Royal Priesthood: Therefore, Israel was meant to become God's own possession that has a certain relationship with the rest of the world, "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (E19:6).

a. "A holy nation" = set apart from the world

b. "A kingdom of priests" = "A royal priesthood" (1 Pet. 2:9), language found in the Septuagint (a third century Greek translation of the Hebrew) and it aligns God's promise that kings will come from Abraham (G17:6).

i. Not kingdom subjects who serve as priests

ii. But kings who serve as priests

c. Israelites were to become a blessing to the world as benevolent rulers over the world and holy priests who bring the sinful world near to the holy God.

- i. Israel was to become the seed that conveyed the LORD's blessing to all the nations.
 - ii. Israel was to become the ultimate seed of Abraham.
 - 4. Seed Promise: God's plan (in Genesis) to bring the Savior, the seed of the woman, the seed of Abraham, who brings relief from the curse of sin (G5:29), who blesses the whole world (G22:18), is not lost but developed further in Exodus. The seed was to be king and priest.
 - 5. The Law: Exodus 19-24 not only shows us that Israel entered the covenant toward this end but that they did so with full awareness of the law of the LORD as the terms of this covenant.
 - 6. Failure: But Israel will not keep the covenant. They will fail to become what the LORD wanted them to be. Israel does not turn out to be the ultimate seed of Abraham.
 - iii. Title: "A Royal Priesthood"
- b. Overview:
 - i. E13-24 can be seen in terms of its events:
 1. Journey to Sinai
 2. Meeting with God at Sinai
 3. Covenant with God at Sinai
 - ii. This section is better seen in terms of its significance with the covenant at its center:
 1. **Law** as the terms of this covenant (E19-24)
 2. **Reasons** to enter this covenant (E13-18)
 3. **Failure** to keep the covenant (E13-18)

2. #1 Law as the terms of the covenant
 - a. Definition of covenant
 - i. Covenant is a relationship built on promise.
 - ii. The marriage covenant best illustrates this.
 - b. God wants a covenant with Israel (E19:5)
 - c. This relationship was God's long-devised plan
 - i. Since Abraham (G17:7-8)
 - ii. Announced in Egypt (E6:6-7)
 - d. Israel's Initial affirmative response (E19:8)
 - e. God conveys solemnity and the terms of the covenant
 - i. Solemnity
 1. Preparation to meet and hear God with three days of consecration (E19:10-11)
 2. They saw the LORD's magnificent power (E19:16-20)
 - a. "thunder and lightning flashes"
 - b. "a thick cloud upon the mountain"
 - c. "a very loud trumpet sound"
 - d. "Mount Sinai *was* all in smoke because the LORD descended upon it in fire"
 - e. "the whole mountain quaked violently"
 3. Appeared to be the end of the world
 4. God began to speak the terms of the covenant with the ten commandments, which began with the proper self-identification of the LORD (E20:2).
 - a. The commandments were then given (E20:3-17)

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| 1) No other gods | 5) Honor father and mother |
| 2) No idols | 6) No murder |
| 3) No blasphemy | 7) No adultery |
| 4) Keep the Sabbath | 8) No theft |
| | 9) No false witness |
| | 10) No covetousness |

5. The thunderous voice of the LORD (E19:19) was to show them the solemnity of the covenant.

a. God's voice terrified the people. They, therefore, asked Moses to speak for the LORD (E20:18-21).

b. But it was "so that you may not sin" (E20:20)

6. This covenant was no joke.

a. It was a serious matter.

b. They were entering into a covenant with the LORD, the powerful God who delivered them from Egypt, the awesome God of Sinai.

ii. Terms

1. The terms went beyond the ten commandments.

2. Moses entered the thick cloud (E20:21) and heard the rest of the law of the LORD.

a. Many of these laws were specific applications of the ten commandments

b. Other topics included:

i. Treatment of slaves,

ii. Capital crimes,

iii. Laws of retaliation and restitution,

iv. Care of the poor, the disabled, and the foreigners,

v. Required feasts,

vi. Separation from the Canaanites

3. Moses spoke all these words to the people (24:3)

4. The people responded, “all the words which the LORD has spoken we will do!” (24:3).

iii. Solemnity

1. Moses wrote down the words of the LORD (E24:4)

a. These are found in E20:22-23:33.

2. Moses officiated the covenant

a. Built an altar (E24:4)

b. Had bulls sacrificed (E24:5)

c. Blood sprinkled on the altar (E24:6)

d. Read the law (E24:7)

e. Pledge of obedience (E24:7)

i. They affirmed the covenant

ii. “All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!”

f. Blood on the people (E24:8)

3. Significance of the blood on the people

a. Background:

i. Sprinkling of blood on the altar was a common practice to consecrate the altar.

ii. Sprinkling of people is uncommon.

iii. The only people who get the sacrifice blood sprinkled on them are the priests (E29:19-21)

b. Meaning:

- i. Israelite are an unholy people, even idolaters (E32).
 - 1. For them to become a holy nation and a royal priesthood, they had to be cleansed of sin and consecrated unto the LORD.
- ii. The blood signified the means of their atonement and consecration.
 - 1. This was entirely symbolic since animal sacrifices could not atone for sin (Heb. 10:4).

iv. This was the solemn covenant they entered with the LORD. They were given ample opportunity to hear the Law of the LORD as the terms of this covenant. They were aware of the seriousness of this covenant, and they chose to pledge themselves to it.

3. #2 Reasons to enter the covenant

- a. The reasons why Israel entered this covenant are not hard to find. In E13-18, there are at least four reasons:
 - i. Deliverance from the Egyptians at the Red Sea (E14)
 - ii. Guidance through the persistent pillar of cloud and fire (E13:21-22)
 - iii. Provision of continued food and water (E15-16) and leaders (E18)
 - iv. Victory over the Amalekites (E17)
- b. But would they trust in the LORD so as to obey Him?
 - i. They did not yet have a “heart to know, eyes to see and ears to hear” (Deut. 29:4)
 - ii. They still had an uncircumcised heart (Deut. 30:6).

4. #3 Failure to keep the covenant

- a. Disobedience before the covenant with manna
 - i. Command to not store manna overnight (E16:19-20)
 - ii. Command to gather twice for the Sabbath day (E16:22-29)
 - b. Full-fledged breach of covenant at Sinai
 - i. Violation of the prohibition against idolatry (E20:4-5)
 - ii. Golden calf (E32)
5. Total Depravity (a.k.a. Total Inability)
- a. The sinner is unable to trust and obey the LORD on his own.
 - b. He needs gracious work of the Holy Spirit to change his heart.
 - c. Doctrine's history
 - i. Synod of Dort (or Dordrecht), 1618-1619
 - ii. Response to Jacobus Arminius' five remonstrants (protests)
 - iii. Canons of Dort
 - 1. Five points of Calvinism
 - 2. T-U-L-I-P
 - a. Total Depravity (total inability)
 - b. Unconditional Election
 - c. Limited Atonement (definite atonement)
 - d. Irresistible Grace (effectual calling)
 - e. Perseverance of the Saints (preservation)
 - 3. Total Depravity was the first of those five points.
 - iv. Pentateuch teaches total depravity
 - 1. Deut. 29:4, "Yet to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear.
 - 2. Deut. 30:6, "Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your

descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.

a. But this does not mean just waiting for a holy zap to move you to repentance.

b. Deut. 10:16 [16] "So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer.

c. Cf. also Ezek. 18:31 and 36:26.

v. The NT clearly teaches the same.

1. John 6:65, "no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."

2. Eph. 2:5, "even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),"

vi. Augustine of Hippo:

1. "Command what you will, and grant what you command."

6. Conclusion

a. Israel failed to be a royal priesthood and a holy nation.

b. Israel failed to be the son whom God wanted (E4:22).

c. But there is an Israelite 1500 years later who is the true Son of God, who pleased the Father (Matt. 3:17), who is the true king and the faithful high priest for the nations. This is the Lord Jesus Christ.

d. All that Israel failed to fulfill as the seed of Abraham, God's son, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation, Jesus successfully fulfilled.

e. But there is more:

i. Christ shares with His people His position of priest and king.

1. 1 Pet. 2:9, "But you are A CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR [God's]

OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;”

- ii. God will one day also bring the remnant of Israel into this new covenant also:
 - 1. John 10:16
 - 2. One bride (Rev. 21:2) with marks of Israel (Rev. 21:12) and the church (Rev. 21:14)