

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD QUARTER: STUDIES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

B. C. 1491.]

LESSON I. GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL.

[July 1.]

Exod. 24. 1-12. [Commit to memory verses 7, 8.]



1 And he said unto Mo'ses, Come up unto the LORD, thou, and Aa'r'on, Na'dab, and A-bi'h'u, and seventy of the elders of Is-ra-el; and worship ye afar off.

2 And Mo'ses alone shall come near the LORD; but they shall not come nigh; neither shall the people go up with him.

3 And Mo'ses 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 hath said will we do.

4 And Mo'ses wrote all the words of the LORD, and rose up early in the morning, and builded an altar under the hill, and twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of Is-ra-el.

5 And he sent young men of the children of Is-ra-el, which offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the LORD.

6 And Mo'ses took half of the blood, and put it in

basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

7 And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people; and they said, All that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient.

8 And Mo'ses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words.

9 Then went up Mo'ses, and Aa'r'on, Na'dab, and A-bi'h'u, and seventy of the elders of Is-ra-el; and 10 and they saw the God of Is-ra-el; 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.

11 And upon the nobles of the children of Is-ra-el he laid not his hand; also they saw God and did eat and drink.

12 And the LORD said unto Mo'ses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there; and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written: that thou mayest teach them.

General Statement.

From the mountain where the ascending Lord established his Church our lessons take us back fifteen centuries to the mountain where God organized his ancient Church. There is a closer relation than appears at first glance, between these lessons. In one we see Christ sending out his chosen people into the world; in the other we see God calling his chosen people out of the world. In both the Lord was manifested, and in both there was a promise of the divine presence with his people. And each was precisely suited to the needs of the world at that time. In the earlier day, there was need of some one people to receive special training, to be isolated from the world, to be taught divine truths, to be disciplined and pruned and scourged into fidelity, until they should be ready, and the world should be ready, to receive the revelation of the one God, the one Saviour, and the one salvation. If the command given by Christ to his disciples on the mountain in Galilee had been given to Israel at Mount Sinai, the knowledge of the truth would have been lost out of the world in less than a generation; for the Israelites

were not then fitted to proclaim it, nor were the nations of earth able to receive it. For fifteen centuries Israel must be under instruction until "a remnant" should be developed into preparation for the gospel ministry, and the whole world should be led out of blank darkness into a morning twilight of readiness for the new covenant. For this high honor God chose the Israelite stock of Abraham's descendants, partly to honor their ancestor's faith, partly because in this race were the requisite sturdiness, independence, aggressiveness, and religious capacity. They were chosen, not because God loved them and hated the rest of the world; but because, loving all men, God selected the people best fitted to become his instruments in the great plan of redemption. In this lesson we behold the Lord and his people entering into covenant relations under the most solemn and impressive circumstances: the mountain smoking above, and the altar smoking below; while the chosen representatives are permitted to gaze upon the glory of their Lord.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verses 1. And he said. That is, the Lord spoke to Moses. By what means he spoke, whether by an inward consciousness or an audible voice we know not. **Unto Moses.** He had come down from the mount, and with him he had the utterance of the ten commandments (12: 25; 30: 30, 31), and had then gone nearer to the mount, to receive the additional commands in chap. 20: 22 to 32: 38. **Come up unto the LORD.** In order to impress and instruct the people whom God had chosen to be his people, the depository of religious truth for the world, the Lord gave to them a visible manifestation of his glory. **Aaron.** He was the elder brother of Moses, and the first high-priest of Israel. He died on Mount Hor at the close of the wanderings. **Na'dab and A-bi'h'u.** The two eldest sons of Aaron, one of whom might have been his successor in the priesthood if he had not trespassed in the "strange fire," Lev. 10. **Seventy of the elders.** Perhaps a round number for seventy-two, or six elders for each tribe, representing the people. **Worship ye afar off.** They were to ascend the mountain to a certain height, and there worship, while Moses should enter into God's immediate presence. (1) *Our privilege is greater, to enter into the immediate presence of God in prayer.*

2. Moses alone. Mo'ses was permitted to go nearest the divine glory, next was his assistant Joshua (ver. 13), and at a further distance were the priests and elders. **shall come near.** To act as mediator between God and the people, receiving from God the message and transmitting it to Israel. **They shall not come nigh.** Aaron

and the elders. **Neither shall the people.** The people were forbidden to come near the mount, which rises directly out of the plain, so that its walls can be touched. Heb. 12: 18. This was to inspire them with a reverence for God. **2: 11** can express the *Almighty through a better Mediator than Mo'ses.*

3. Moses came. From the mountain. **Told the people.** The laws and commandments which he had received in the mount. (3) *God d. livers the Gospel to us, not through his servant, but through his Son.* **The people answered.** Thus responding to God's command with a promise, and completing the covenant. **All the words... will we do.** A solemn pledge, sincerely made, but not so faithfully kept. (4) *Let us keep our vows to God more faithfully than the Israelites, as our light is clearer.*

4. Moses wrote all the words. This was the beginning of the written law, embracing the ten commandments and the precepts which follow them. Afterward Moses probably wrote the historical portion of Genesis and Exodus, for which some documents were already in his possession. **Rose up early.** Having much work to do, and taking advantage of the cool portion of the day. **Builded an altar.** This was a pile of rough, un-hewn stones, having earth within it. The earth was regarded as the real altar, and the stones as its casing. **Chap. 20: 24, 25.** Under the hill, Mount Sinai, or, as it is now called, *Ras Sufseih*, an abrupt mass of rock rising out of the plain *er Rahab*, where it is supposed that the Israelites were encamped. **Twelve pil-**

lars. It is possible each represents the germ of the wall around a great Sacrifice.

5. He sent representatives, for not yet been. This offering is and in it the **Peace-offering** with God; to three parts, other portions to the priest, thus to God, and the *let us, being ju-*

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