

April 25-May 1, 2022

## Exodus 24; 31-34

“MY PRESENCE SHALL GO WITH THEE”

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**Summary:** *Exodus 24. Israel accepts the word of the Lord by covenant—Moses sprinkles the blood of the covenant—He, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel see God—The Lord calls Moses on to the mount to receive the tables of stone and commandments.*

*Exodus 31. Artisans are inspired in building and furnishing the tabernacle—Israel is commanded to keep the Lord’s Sabbaths—The death penalty is decreed for Sabbath desecration—Moses receives the stone tablets.*

*Exodus 32. Aaron makes a golden calf, which Israel worships—Moses serves as a mediator between God and rebellious Israel—Moses breaks the tablets of stone—The Levites slay about 3,000 rebels—Moses pleads and intercedes for the people.*

*Exodus 33. The Lord promises to be with Israel and drive out the people of the land—The tabernacle of the congregation is moved away from the camp—The Lord speaks to Moses face to face in the tabernacle—Later, Moses sees the glory of God but not His face.*

*Exodus 34. Moses hews new tables of stone—He goes up into Mount Sinai for forty days—The Lord proclaims His name and attributes and reveals His law—He makes another covenant with Israel—The skin of Moses’ face shines, and he wears a veil.*

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### Supplemental Jewish and Holy Land Insights

#### What leadership councils did the Lord require?

The organization structure bears

repeating: a council of three, with Moses, Aaron & Hur, a Council of Twelve Elders and a Council of Seventy. It is comparable to the leadership of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The latter-day Israelites led now by the tribe of Ephraim (Joseph) are also organized with a “First Presidency of three, a Quorum of Twelve and a Council of Seventy. Two thousand years ago, an apostate group called the Essenes, established a community by the Dead Sea and had a text they called, *The Manual of Discipline*, a sort of doctrines and covenants of these religious people. It describes their organization that included a teacher of righteousness and two assistants. There was also a council of twelve overseers. Their priestly system

included two castes: One of a higher authority that connected with an order of the *Melech Zedek* (righteous king), and another of lesser authority that connected with the Levitical, or order of *Aaron*. They were bound by a strict order of unity. An Essene’s membership in a kibbutz-like united order came into effect only after a two-year trial period. They kept copies of the scriptures, interpretations of the scriptures, and their own scrolls of doctrines and covenants. Some people suggest that this governing system was copied by Jesus, and that he may have studied with this sect. It seems highly unlikely that this is the case. However, Jesus did use the same system of government that was given to Moses, a system that partially continued to exist in other Jewish traditions up to and at the time of Jesus. Moses had a governing body of twelve elders, one from each tribe. “These are those that were

numbered . . . and the princes of Israel, being twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers.” (**Numbers 1:44**) This order was continued after Moses as well.” Now therefore take you twelve men out of the tribes of Israel, out of every tribe a man. (**Joshua 3:12**) Moses had a council of seventy; “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.” (**Exodus 24:1**)

### **What is the importance of the Sabbath?**

The prime factor of religious observance for the Jews is keeping the Sabbath day holy. They feel that Sabbath observance identifies them over all other peoples. “The Hebrew name for the Sabbath is *Shabbat*, which derives from a root meaning to cease or desist. It gets this name because the Bible tells us that on the seventh day of Creation, God “*shavat mi-kol melakhto*” --- He “ceased” or “desisted” from all His work (i.e., of Creation). It is from this that the supreme importance of the Sabbath derives; observance of the Sabbath is an act of testimony to the fact that God created the world.” “In the course of time observance of the Sabbath became the identifying mark of the Jew. It set him apart from all other religions. According to the **First Book of Maccabees 2:31--41**, at the beginning of the Hasmonean revolt against Syria, the Jews would not fight on the Sabbath but let themselves be killed. Later they realized that was a mistake and that if danger to life is involved, the Sabbath is suspended.” “The rabbis of the *Talmud* thought that the Sabbath is the most important of all the laws of the Torah and that by itself it is equal to all the rest. One statement is that “if Israel keeps one Sabbath as it should be kept, the Messiah will come.” They saw *Shabbat* as a special privilege; a gift that God gave His people Israel and as a foretaste of the world-to-

come.” “Other biblical laws repeatedly show concern for the well-being of animals. Man must rest on the Sabbath and may not work his animals either. “Thou shalt not do any manner of work, neither thy son . . . nor thy servant . . . nor thy cattle, (**Exodus 20:10**).” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **What demeanor is appropriate for Sabbath and how did its meaning evolve?**

“The Sabbath and the festivals are particularly times of joy, and indeed it is a positive commandment, often difficult to observe, to be happy on them. The joy required is not frivolity but, contradictory though it may sound, a serious happiness. The highest level of joy according to the rabbis is the *simhah shel mitzvah*, the joy felt at performing a commandment or doing a good deed.” “For the Sabbath, there are special candlesticks and oil lamps, *Kiddush* cups, *hallah* covers and tablecloths; and for *Havdalah*, special candleholders and spice containers in many shapes and sizes, some of them masterpieces of artistic workmanship.” “Women usher in the Sabbath each week by lighting candles and blessing God “who sanctified us by His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath light.” On Saturday night, traditional Jewish families light a *havdalah* candle made of several wicks braided together, raise a cup of wine and sniff fragrant spices, thus bidding farewell to the Sabbath peace and beginning a new week.” “From Talmudic times, it was the special duty of the housewife to bake the bread for the Sabbath. This bread, usually prepared from white flour, is also called “*hallah*.” Two such loaves are placed on the festive Sabbath table as a symbol for the double portion of manna which the Israelites in the wilderness received every Friday, and because of the Showbread in

the Temple, which was displayed each Sabbath.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) On the Sabbath, a special bread called hallah is used. The Hallah is baked sweeter than regular bread because the Sabbath is a “sweeter” day. “In some communities it is customary for the father to bless his children on the Sabbath eve when he returns from the synagogue.” “Funerals may not take place on the Sabbath or on the Day of Atonement . . .” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Concisely stated, Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, at first was a memory of the creation and its rest-day, then Sabbath included a memory of being delivered from Egypt plus an expectation of a greater deliverance in the future. Since the Savior’s atonement and resurrection in the meridian of times it became a memory of that greater deliverance, completed on the “first day of the week, hence “Sunday.”

### **How can I relate to the symbolic meaning of the Altar?**

The altar had to be of uncut stone, natural and not shaped by mankind. “According to the Bible the altar was made of stones joined together with earth, the wider stones being placed below and the narrower above. The stones of the altar of the Temple were smooth and were plastered over twice a year, and according to Judah ha-Nasi were smoothed down with a cloth every Sabbath eve. Four stones were placed at the four corners of the altar; these were known as the “horns” of the altar.”

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) Because of the covenants we make at the altar, it is a symbol of the Lord. The Lord has many names such as “Rock of Salvation.” Another name is the “Bread of Life.” There is a distinct connection of rock and bread considering the ancient methods of preparing flour to make bread. “When threshing, in order to separate the kernels from the husks, a

large wooden board whose underside was set with basalt stones was dragged over the grain by a pair of oxen. The grains could then be shaken horizontally in a round sieve with a fiber net attached. This winnowing caused the lighter elements to be carried away by the wind while the heavier kernels fell down in a heap. The kernels were then milled or crushed (by stone).”

(**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**) The Law that Moses conveyed to the Children of Israel was written on stone. Stones have always been symbolic for them. “On the breastplate were embedded 12 precious stones, one for each of the tribes of Israel, and the Talmud speculates that the oracular message was miraculously spelled out by the protruding of letters out of the tribal names inscribed on the stones.” (**Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.**)

### **What prompted Michelangelo to create Moses with horns?**

The Moses sculpture and painting done by Michelangelo (1475-1564) shows horns on his head. The Hebrew word for “Horn” is pronounced *KAREN*, the same pronunciation, *KAREN* also means “Rays of Light,” Moses “beamed” because he was in the presence of the Lord. This is typical of being in the companionship of God. Similar repetition is in the New Testament. “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.” (**Matthew 17:1-2**) Light is the form of endorsement, in this case a reflection – not originating in the mortal person – however, reflecting God’s words and power rather than man’s own thoughts and feelings. “Two hundred years ago, a pillar of light rested on a young man in a grove of trees. In that light, Joseph Smith saw God the Father and His Son, Jesus

Christ. Their light drove back the spiritual darkness that covered the earth and pointed the way forward for Joseph Smith—and for all of us. Because of the light revealed that day, we can receive the fulness of blessings available through the Atonement of our Savior, Jesus Christ.”  
**(Bonnie H. Cordon Young Women General President, April 2020 General Conference)**

### **Must it be gold – to glitter?**

The Golden Calf was made because the Children of Israel grew tired of waiting. How long do we stay strong in times of waiting? Some repeated thoughts on gold and the golden calf may also be helpful. “According to the *midrash* (Jewish scriptural commentary), God created gold specifically for use in the Temple . . . On account of the idolatrous worship of the Golden Calf, gold became a symbol of sin and was not to be used to sheath the

*shofar* mouthpiece. On the Day of Atonement there was no gold on the vestments of the high priest; he officiated in robes of pure white linen. International treaties were inscribed on bronze tablets. Corinthian bronze, famous for its luster and quality, was used for the Nicanor Gates of the Herodian Temple in Jerusalem.” **(Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.)** What does the phrase “wait upon the Lord” mean? **(Psalm 37:9; 123:2; Isaiah 8:17; 40:31; 2 Nephi 18:17)**. “In the scriptures, the word wait means to hope, to anticipate, and to trust. To hope and trust in the Lord requires faith, patience, humility, meekness, long-suffering, keeping the commandments, and enduring to the end. **(Robert D. Hales, Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, General Conference October 2011)**