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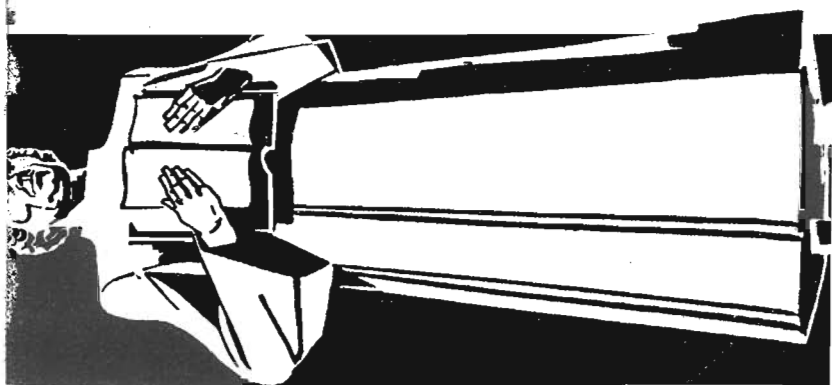
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Modern Literary, Form, And Redaction  
Critical Methodology

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# The Analysis of Exodus 24, According To Modern Literary, Form, and Redaction Critical Methodology

WALTER A. MAIER

PRINCIPAL ASPECTS OF THE MODERN, so-called historical critical method as employed in the study of the Old and the New Testaments are the investigative techniques of literary source criticism, form criticism, and redaction criticism. The three disciplines are distinct, but practitioners of the historical critical method normally make use of them in conjunction. It will be the purpose of this paper to offer a brief overview of ways in which representative Old Testament scholars have applied current historical critical methodology in their exegetical consideration of the twenty-fourth chapter of Exodus and to indicate resultant conclusions reached in their interpretation of this Scripture section. The writer, who takes issue with some of the presuppositions, procedures, and fruits of this literary, form, and redaction critical study of Exodus 24, proposes also to express and explain his disagreement with certain of the positions advocated by a number of authors whose views have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## LITERARY CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER 24

Exodus 24: 1-11 purports to be the account of the inauguration of the covenant God made with Israel at Mount Sinai, after the people had been conducted forth from Egypt under the leadership of Moses. Exodus 24:12-18 relates the story of Moses' ascent of Sinai and his waiting there preparatory to receiving the stone tables of the law from Yahweh, as well as the Lord's instructions concerning the construction of the tabernacle and its furnishings, and regulations for worship in the sanctuary (provisions recorded in Ex. 25:1-31:17). Beginning with a literary-critical analysis of the text of Exodus 24, many modern exegetes assert that its verses reflect the presence of a number of sources which were combined in the composition of the chapter. A lack of homogeneity in Exodus 24 is assumed because of a number of problems which are seen in the text. Martin Noth and Walter Beyerlin, for example, find initial difficulties in the two opening verses—first, the fact that, although the Lord is presented in the introductory words as speaking to Moses, the designation "Yahweh" occurs "in the third person, as though some third person, as though some third person was giving the instructions to go up the mountain 'to Yahweh.'"<sup>1</sup> Secondly, in the words of Beyerlin:

There is a break to be felt between the two halves of the first verse: vv. 1b-2 reverse the sense of v. 1a, which orders Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders to go up the mountain

(sc. to God), whereas verses 1b-2 keep them at a distance and permit only Moses to come near.<sup>2</sup>

The same author advises:

xxiv. 1b-2, therefore, should be treated as a distinct unit of tradition. xxiv. 1a is continued in verse 9, which describes exactly how the divine command in v. 1a was fulfilled.

Verses 1a, 9-11, which deal with the theophany before, and the covenant meal celebrated by, the representatives of the people named in verses 1 and 9, are then also to be regarded as a separate unit of tradition, according to Beyerlin.<sup>3</sup>

Three other tradition-units are presumed to have been combined in the text of Chapter 24: verses 3-8; 12-15a, 18b; and 15b-18a. The first, verses 3-8, reports that Moses "told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments," that he "wrote all the words of the Lord," and that he established the covenant with sacrifice and the sprinkling of blood (on altar and people). All of this material is considered a unity, except for the phrase "and all the judgments (verse 3), which Beyerlin supposes to have been "added later as a result of the subsequent insertion of the Book of the Covenant"<sup>4</sup> (Ex. 20:22-23:33) into the Exodus narrative at the place it presently occupies. He suggests, furthermore, that, in view of the parallelism of verses 3 and 7, the unity of verses 3-8 appears to have been created out of two originally parallel versions of the declaration of the divine will and the people's promise to obey.

Beyerlin sees 12-15a and 18b as comprising a unit dealing with Moses' ascent of Sinai for the long, forty-day stay with the Lord. This new section is marked by the divine bidding to "come up" (as in verse 1) and with the additional directive "be there." It is because Moses is expected to remain for some time on the mount that Beyerlin chooses to attach verse 18b to 15a, and have 18b constitute the conclusion of the unit. Verses 12-15a are regarded as the combination of two different traditions, with verses 12, 13b, 15a, and 18b coming from a source which emphasizes the ascent of Moses alone, and verses 13a and 14 coming from another which speaks additionally of a companion Joshua accompanying Moses on the way up Sinai.

According to Beyerlin, verses 15b-18a constitute another version of the Sinai-theophany described in Ex. 19:16-20. Verses 15b-18a introduce the long section Ex. 24:15b-31:18a, which presents information on the institution of the tabernacle and the worship to be carried on in it. The same verses from chapter 24 are to be connected previously and directly with 19:1-2a.<sup>5</sup>

Noth agrees generally with Beyerlin in the designation of tradition-units in the text of Exodus 24, with a few minor differences. Noth distinguishes the following as units: verses 1-2, 3-8, 9-11, 12-15a, and 15b-18. Other scholars identify units of tradition similarly, with some variations.

To what literary sources shall the respective, presumed units of tradition in Exodus 24 be attributed? A wide range of critical opinion is offered. Beyerlin,<sup>6</sup> though he holds that 1a, 9-11 and 3-8 are two different versions of the establishment of the divine covenant with Israel, assigns both sections to the E-source. He regards the first

of these tradition-units as Elohistic because of the idea of God dwelling on a mountain that appears in verses 1a and 9, which is understood to be an E-concept; because of the use of the divine name "*Elohim*" in verses 10 and 11; and because of the relation of 1a, 9-11 to 13a, 14 following, which are also seen to be Elohistic. Verses 3-8 are supposed to have come from the E-source on account of the similarities of 24:3, 7b and the Elohistic 19:7, and because verse 4 reports the erection of pillars in a way similar to the account given in Genesis 31:45, a presumed E-passage. To E, Beyerlin also assigns 12-15a, 18b. He sees in this section the blending of two E-traditions: 12, 13b, 15a, 18b, which speak of Moses ascending the mountain alone, and 13a, 14, which indicate that Joshua was a companion to Moses on the ascent. The former tradition is considered Elohistic, because behind the verses is the idea of God dwelling on a mountain; the latter tradition, because of its emphasis on northern Israel in the provision of names of leaders from northern tribes. As for the remaining units found in Exodus 24, Beyerlin labels 1b-2 a "theological correction" which, with its "afar off" and "Moses alone," corresponds to the E-tradition; and 15b-18a, a P-section, introducing the long P-section 24:15b-31:18a (which is to be linked with the previous and following P-sections, 19:1-2a and 34:29-Num. 10:10, respectively). The unit 24:15b-31:18a is viewed as Priestly because it gives an account of the origin of various Israelite institutions, sacrifices, and rituals.

Noth sees 1-2 as a passage largely worked over in a redactional way, containing E and other strands. It is his opinion that 3-8 and 9-11 are two different versions of covenant ratification. The latter he assigns to E, because of the use of the name *Elohim* in this section. The source of the former he does not definitely identify, but writes:

The source J, which suggests itself because of the use of the divine name *Yahweh*, cannot be involved, as in it the making of the covenant only follows in the context of what is narrated in ch. 34. . . . The reference to the "words of *Yahweh*" in 24:3-8 presupposes the delivery of such words. But then the most obvious thing is to think of the words of *Yahweh* which have been reported immediately beforehand, i.e. of the book of the covenant which is in fact proved to be the "Book of the Covenant" by 24.7. In that case 24.3-8 may be given a literary connection with the Book of the Covenant. . . .<sup>7</sup>

Concerning the Book of the Covenant, 20:22-23:33, Noth expresses himself as follows:

It is probably that this collection [of judgments] once formed an independent book of law which has been inserted into the Pentateuchal narrative as an already self-contained entity. We can no longer say with certainty at what stage of the literary growth of the Pentateuch this insertion was made; no clear relationship to any one of the Pentateuchal narrative "sources" is recognizable.<sup>8</sup>

Since the source of the Book of the Covenant is not identifiable, neither can the source of 24:3-8, a section which is to be given a literary connection with 20:22-23:33, be named. Noth believes that



24:12-15a "belongs to the older source which is present in chs. 32 and 34."<sup>9</sup> This source he supposes to be an unknown author who has provided subsequent literary additions to the J-narrative.<sup>10</sup> 24:15b-18, according to Noth are a P-section. He comments:

For P the whole significance of the events at Sinai is that Moses receives these words [25:1-31:17, for which 24:15b-18 serve as the introduction] and that the instructions for the establishment of the cult which they contain are subsequently carried out. . . .

For P the encounter with God at Sinai represents the beginning of legitimate cultic worship, which is of course in P's view of fundamental importance for the continuance of the relationship between God and people. . . .<sup>11</sup>

Otto Eissfeldt ascribes 3-8 and 12, 13b, 18b (which he isolates as a tradition-unit) to E;<sup>12</sup> and, 15b-18a to P.<sup>13</sup> He feels that 1-2, 9-11, and 13a, 14-15a (isolated) do not fit with J, E, or P, but are fragments of another narrative, which he designates as the "Lay source" (L). These and other L-strand passages are marked, according to Eissfeldt, by "a certain air of antiquity and crudity."<sup>14</sup> S. R. Driver<sup>15</sup> and Herman J. Keyser<sup>16</sup> alike assign 1-2 and 9-11 to J; 3-8, 12-14, and 18b to E; and 15-18a to P. According to G. E. Wright, 1-2 and 9-11 belong to J; 3-8, 12-15a, and 18b, to E; and 15b-18a, to P.<sup>17</sup> J. Coert Rylaarsdam distributes the verses in this way: 1-2, 9-11, and 12-14 to J; 3-8 to E; and 15-18 to P.<sup>18</sup> G. Henton Davies attributes 1-2 and 9-11 to J; 3-8, 12-14, and 18b to E; and 15-18a to P.<sup>19</sup> Gerhard von Rad labels 3-8, E, and 15b-18a (or 18), P, and does not specify the sources for the balance of the material in Exodus 24.<sup>20</sup> Artur Weiser ascribes 16-18 to P;<sup>21</sup> he says that the rest of the chapter is generally assigned to the Elohist strand, with J-material intermixed.<sup>22</sup> A variety of viewpoints is indeed represented in the listings of the above paragraphs.

#### OBJECTIONS TO CERTAIN ASSUMPTIONS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THIS ANALYSIS

It may be observed that the source-critical analyses of Exodus 24 which have been indicated above are based alike on the fundamental assumptions that the text of this chapter is uneven, or non-homogenous, in its composition, and that the lack of homogeneity is best explained by supposing this section to be of composite authorship. The critical theory is that Exodus 24 is the product of various redactors' having combined into a single running account different units of tradition, each of which the scholars variously assign to a J-, an E-, or a P-source. In response to these views, the present writer offers objections, as follows. First, it is not at all clear that Exodus 24 lacks homogeneity. On the contrary, the assertion should be made that the chapter appears to possess a basic unity. The sequence of thoughts, and of sections, or paragraphs, is plain, coherent, and logical. The account provided in the eighteen verses has the marks of an orderly, factual recitation of actual historical occurrences, and there is no need to suppose that units of originally variant and dis-juncted tradition have been artificially imported and joined in the

chapter. The writer's summary-interpretation of the sequence of events mentioned in Exodus 24, which is presented in the final portion of this paper, will demonstrate this.

Secondly, the critics' assignment of the several units of tradition presumed present in the text of chapter 24 to J-, E-, and P-sources seems to be arbitrary and conjectural. The arbitrariness and conjectural nature of the ascription are evidenced by the fact that the scholars whose opinions were consulted are not fully agreed either on the exact delineation of the various tradition-units or the sources to which the units ought be attributed, as the tabulations of the preceding paragraphs show. A more satisfactory explanation of the origin of the text, which has every appearance of being a straightforward account of events as these transpired in a close temporal sequence, is that it had a single author, and that this author was probably the eyewitness Moses himself. The likelihood of the Mosaic authorship of Exodus 24 rests on the considerable evidence offered by the Pentateuch itself and other Biblical writings to the effect that the illustrious Israelite leader was the original writer, indeed, of all the first five books of the Old Testament.<sup>23</sup> The twenty-fourth chapter of Exodus itself twice refers (verses 4 and 7) to the fact that Moses prepared a literary record of certain legislation which the Lord had communicated to him. Other Pentateuchal passages speak likewise of Moses' writing concerning legal matters and historical events.<sup>24</sup> These considerations alone render the surmise that Moses wrote remaining portions of the Pentateuch probable.

#### FORM AND REDACTION CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF CHAPTER 24

Modern form critical analysis of a given section of Biblical literature addresses itself to the determination of the one or more literary types (*Gattungen*; literary forms) of the Scripture verses under consideration, the setting in life (*Sitz im Leben*) of each type, and, where possible, the specific "transmission history" of "the isolated unity" of each type (termed a "tradition").<sup>25</sup> Redaction criticism studies the work of the "redactor" (first writer), or "redactors" (this writer and subsequent revisers) of Biblical material, seeking to discover the theological point of view which is expressed in and through the composition of a tradition.<sup>26</sup> How have these investigative techniques been applied to Exodus 24?

Chapter 24 is a part of the so-called "Sinai pericope," designated by Beyerlin as Ex. 19: 1-Num. 10: 10,<sup>27</sup> and helps constitute a part of the "Sinai Tradition in the Hexateuch," according to von Rad.<sup>28</sup> General form and redaction critical observations concerning the Sinai tradition as a whole will, of course, relate also to chapter 24, as a portion of the whole. Von Rad in "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch"<sup>29</sup> expresses the opinion that

The canonical redemption story of the exodus and settlement in Canaan on the one hand, and the tradition of Israel's experiences at Sinai on the other, really stand over against each other as two originally independent traditions, and theorizes that the Sinai tradition came to be combined with the canonical pattern only at a very late date.<sup>30</sup> As for an analysis of the

Sinai tradition itself, von Rad finds its predominating and central, constitutive elements to be the account of the theophany and the making of the covenant. Upon these emphases the literary sources are alike agreed. Von Rad summarizes the central events of the Sinai tradition, as presented by the Pentateuchal sources, in the following manner:

After the arrival of Israel at Mt. Sinai, in E immediately, in P perhaps seven days later, Moses climbs the mountain, there to meet with Yahweh. Here he learns, according to J and E, that the people are to prepare themselves for God's coming on the third day. Moses comes down from the mountain and makes provision for the cultic cleansing of the people. This third day now brings us to the climax of the events in Sinai, the theophany itself. The people are drawn up before the mountain and witness with terror the manifestations of the presence of God—fire, smoke, and the blast of the trumpet. Moses thereupon climbs the mountain a second time and receives the revelation of God's will for the people in the form of the decalogue (E). The sequence of events in J's account is very much the same, the second part of this account being found in *Exod.* xxxiv, the point to which it was subsequently transferred.

The order of the commandments in J is, of course, no longer ascertainable, for what we now read at vs. 10ff. is a "secondary, composite account." Probably J had its own version of the actual decalogue, which understandably was obliged to give place to the present one when the sources were conflated. As a necessary sequel to the communication of the divine will to Moses, the people are bound under an oath in the course of a cultic ceremony in which Moses proclaims the commandments to the people and seals the covenant with a sacrifice (E). The same outline of the facts also underlies the much more highly developed account found in the Priestly Code. On the mountains, Moses receives the law of the tabernacle; there follows the proclamation before the people (*Exod.* xxxv), the setting up of the holy tent (*Exod.* xl) and the great sacrifice of Aaron, authenticated by the appearance of the "glory" (*Lev.* ix), all these events being re-shaped in a highly individualistic manner to suit P's peculiar theological interests.<sup>31</sup>

The rest of the material comprising the Sinai tradition is seen as consisting of "various less important traditional elements of an aetiological nature" associated with the central traditional elements of the theophany and covenant-making.<sup>32</sup>

Von Rad classifies the Sinai tradition as "the cult-legend of a particular cultic occasion"—that event being its *Sitz im Leben*.<sup>33</sup> He characterizes this occasion as the festival of the renewal of the covenant between Yahweh and the people and, on the basis of the reading of the law referred to in Deut. 31:10b-11 and Nehemiah 8, identifies this festival as the Feast of Booths.<sup>34</sup> He suggests that in earliest times the ceremony of covenant renewal took place annually at Shechem.<sup>35</sup>

According to the view of von Rad, it was the Yahwist who



incorporated the written form of the Sinai tradition (which he, von Rad, regarded as an originally independent sacral tradition) into his account, in order to support the outline plan for his entire narrative, namely, the Settlement tradition. The German scholar states:

We have no means of knowing where or in what form the Yahwist found this Sinai tradition. We can say with some certainty only that the incorporation of the Sinai tradition should be attributed to the Yahwist, and that probably the fusion of the two traditions had not been previously attempted. Certainly the Yahwist did not find the pattern ready to hand.<sup>36</sup>

In what way does the Sinai tradition serve the Yahwist's theological purpose? Von Rad explains:

Even though the interpenetration of one tradition by the other still fails to achieve complete harmony, the Settlement tradition is theologically enormously enriched by its absorption of the Sinai tradition. The former bears witness to Yahweh's generosity, but over against this, at the very heart of the Sinai tradition, is the demand of Yahweh's righteousness. Thus by its absorption of the Sinai tradition the simple soteriological conception of the Settlement tradition gained new support of a powerful and salutary kind. Everything which the Yahwist tells us, as he unfolds the plan of his tradition, is now coloured by the divine self-revelation of Mt. Sinai. This is above all true with regard to the underlying purpose of that tradition, which now becomes the record of the redemptive activity of One who lays upon man the obligation to obey his will, and calls man to account for his actions. The blending of the two traditions gives definition to the two fundamental propositions of the whole message of the Bible: Law and Gospel.<sup>37</sup>

As the Yahwist's narrative progressively brings to light the hidden growth of divine, redeeming grace extended to the sinful race of men (salvation history), he necessarily, says von Rad, emphasizes along with this the developing power of sin in the world and the resultant ever-widening gulf between God and man. The latter theme the law, as enunciated in the Sinai covenant, may be considered to undergird.

Von Rad sees the Elohist and the priestly writer as diverging in no way from the pattern set by the Yahwist for the Hexateuch. "Their writings are no more than variations upon the massive theme of the Yahwist's conception, despite their admittedly great theological originality."<sup>38</sup> Nor did the redactor(s) of the J and E materials, or the redactor(s) of JE and P accounts, desire in their work to express theological viewpoints different from those of the sources they combined.

The conclusions of von Rad's redaction-critical analysis of the Sinai tradition may be regarded as having application also to Exodus 24, the chapter which provides the important final facts of the core of the Sinai tradition. It may be presumed that, in the various stages of the redaction of the Pentateuchal accounts, the purpose of chapter 24 is regarded by all redactors to be a continuation of the Sinai tradition's stress on the divine giving of law—and this, as a comple



ment to the most prominent Hexateuchal message, the working of a gracious God in behalf of physical and spiritual welfare of his own people (salvation-history), and ultimately of the world of men.

Artur Weiser<sup>39</sup> considers von Rad's separation of the Sinai tradition from the Settlement tradition as a forced simplification and unacceptable in the light of the evidence in the Pentateuch. Weiser agrees that the traditions are distinct but rejects von Rad's deduction drawn from this fact that there would not have been room for both these traditions side by side in the same festival cult. As Weiser sees it, the two traditions were closely joined from the very beginning of Israel's national history. He discerns these two components of festival celebration already at the foundation of Israel's tribal union at the Shechem assembly (Joshua 24) and believes that they served as the foci of worship in regularly recurring cultic festivals of covenant renewal (held probably in autumn; compare Deut. 31:11), of which the assembly at Shechem was the first in the series. In his opinion the cultic usage afforded a substantial formative and controlling influence on the literary productions of the Pentateuchal sources. Weiser writes:

Here [in the festival of covenant renewal] is to be sought the original cultic environment into which all the Pentateuchal sources were compelled by the weight of a living tradition to fit their presentation of the history of salvation. Hence also the Pentateuch as such is not to be judged merely as a literary precipitate of tradition long since detached from the cult (von Rad), but as a fixation of traditions intended for liturgical recitation which sprang directly out of the cult and still stood in active relationship with it. Account must be taken of the fact that the institution of the sacral union of the tribes, which in my view has no rival as the original bearer of the Pentateuchal tradition, continued to exist still in the time of the kings. The basic characteristic common to all the Pentateuchal sources lies in their collecting and developing older traditions of different kinds and origins into a complete presentation of history as directed by God, the purpose of which is to realize divine salvation in and for "Israel," the people of the twelve tribes. It is not "history" in the usual sense, but *salvation-history* which is the real subject matter of the descriptive parts of the Pentateuch, and this belongs to the sacral sphere of the cultic celebration, as the place where salvation is mediated and realized. . . . Thus the Pentateuch also by combining "history and law" expresses the fundamentals of salvation as the manifestation of the nature and will of God in the form which is typical of and valid for the Old Testament.<sup>40</sup>

Beyerlin agrees with Weiser that the Sinai and Exodus-Settlement traditions were linked together from the earliest period of Israel's national history.<sup>41</sup>—In *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions* it is one of Beyerlin's aims to show that despite their variety "all the pieces and elements of the Sinai tradition have one *Sitz im Leben: the History of the sacral tribal confederacy of Israel*."<sup>42</sup> In this connection he endeavors (via traditio-historical in-

quiry) to demonstrate that most elements of the Sinai tradition go back to the historical beginnings of the Israelite covenant with Yahweh in the desert period (probably in Kadesh); and that the development of this tradition was influenced by the tribal union constituted at Shechem. It will be useful for the purposes of our study briefly to note how and in what detail Beyerlin traces the background of portions of the Sinai tradition in Exodus 24 to Israel's early days.

In Ex. 24:1a, 9-11, Beyerlin points to three smaller elements of tradition<sup>13</sup> which may be discerned in the larger section of the text. First, there is the reference to the elders of Israel, who represent the covenant people. Mention of the elders as representing the people of Israel occurs in Joshua 24, in several passages of 1 and 2 Samuel, in 1 Kings 8, and then not again. The tradition of their appearance on the mountain as reported in Ex. 24:1, 9 must have originated, reasons Beyerlin, during the period of the premonarchic amphictyony. Secondly, God's presence on the mountain is presupposed and described in a particular manner by the narrative (Ex. 24:10-11). The designation of the deity by the name "God of Israel" is seen to be connected with the cult at Shechem before Israel became a state, since the same title is employed in (Gen. 33:20) Joshua 8:30 and 24:2. The divine appearance portrayed as accompanied by brightness like a jewel's is said to follow a well-established picture: in numerous other texts of ancient tradition (for example, Ex. 13:21-22 and 34:29-30) Yahweh's appearance is linked with the shining of light. Beyerlin adds this thought:

As the shining appearance of Yahweh's *kabod* seems to have arisen in close connection with the Ark and the name *'elohe yisrael* must have been linked with the Ark, and since, moreover, Yahweh's feet are thought of chiefly in connection with the Ark, while the crystalline platform for God's feet, according to the evidence of Ezekiel, seems to be modelled on the covering lid of the Ark-shrine, there are good grounds for believing that the tradition of God's appearance in Exod. xxiv. 10 was influenced by the ideas which were connected with the theophany above the Ark. Bearing in mind that this piece of tradition, in which the elders of Israel make their appearance and in which the expression *'elohe yisrael* is used to describe God, took shape in the historical period of the pre-monarchical tribal confederacy . . . we should not be surprised if the Ark of Yahweh, as the central shrine of the amphictyony, has in fact left its mark on this tradition.<sup>14</sup>

The third smaller traditional element which Beyerlin finds in Ex. 24:1a, 9-11 is the meal which Israel's representatives hold in God's presence (verse 11b). The author conceives of this as a covenant-meal and regards the reference to it as reflecting very old sacral usage. He asserts that the sharing of a sacrificial meal was observed in the ratification of a pact, treaty, or covenant during the periods both of Israel's patriarchs and the Conquest (Gen. 31:44, 54; 26:26-31; Joshua 9:14-15). The account of the God of Israel making a covenant with his people, insofar as He lets Israel's representatives eat and drink in his presence, then, Beyerlin suggests, pre-

supposes ancient usage and—together with the other tradition-units—the pre-monarchic tribal union. "It may be said to be established, therefore, that the tradition of Exod. xxiv. 1a, 9-11 originated in the context of ancient Israel's amphictyony and that it presupposes the amphictyony in several respects."<sup>45</sup>

Ex. 24:3-8 Beyerlin sees as a rival tradition to 1a, 9-11. The two are in his estimate variant accounts dealing with the making of the covenant on Sinai, and both are approximately the same age.<sup>46</sup> He feels that the antiquity of the tradition in verses 3-8 is attested particularly by the ceremony of the twofold sprinkling of blood (reference to which is made nowhere else in the Old Testament) and by the appointment of Israelite young men, who were not priests, to offer the covenant-sacrifice (a practice reported only here in the Scripture). The sprinkling of sacrificial blood for the purpose of establishing a covenant with God is presumed by the author to be a ritual which originated in the Yahwistic community's nomadic past, inasmuch as it appears the pre-Islamic Arabs also sought to bind themselves to the deity by means of similar blood rites. The fact that young laymen are involved in the acts of covenant-sacrifice points to an early Israelite period, prior to the establishment of the Levitical priesthood. Beyerlin also conjectures that the mention of these lay functionaries reflects an ancient custom in Israel, according to which at the annual ceremony of covenant renewal a new generation of young men was occasionally received into the covenant-people by being given an opportunity actively to participate in "making" the covenant.

Further considerations point to the early nature of the tradition in Ex. 24:3-8, as far as Beyerlin is concerned. First, Moses' free, oral declaration of the divine will described in verse 3 and his reading of the written record of that will as related in verse 7—the people on both occasions responding with similar promises of obedience—is regarded as a doublet and as indicative of "a cultically repeated proclamation of the law and promise of obedience, such as took place particularly in the worship of Yahweh at Shechem."<sup>47</sup> Then, ancient cultic usage is seen, too, in Moses' writing down the words of the Lord and the erection of pillars (verse 4), since a similar recording of the divine Word and the setting up of a stone is reported in Joshua 24:26 as having taken place at the amphictyonic assembly in Shechem. Beyerlin's opinion is that both references to the writing down of the words of God constitute aetiological explanations of amphictyonic laws.<sup>48</sup>

A distinctive feature of the tradition in Ex. 24:12-14<sup>49</sup> is the mention of Joshua, according to Beyerlin, who feels that Joshua had no place there originally. That the reference to him came to be included, the author proposes, may be traced to the influence on the Sinai tradition of the "Shechemite covenant-cult," the cult which had installed Joshua as the central figure of its tradition. It is in the Shechemite covenant-cult that the Sinai tradition was presumed to have had its *Sitz im Leben*. Therefore Beyerlin concludes:

His [Joshua's] appearance in Exod. xxiv. 13a could be a fresh indication . . . that the Sinai tradition was transmitted and given



shape in close connection with the institutions and history of the amphictyony.<sup>50</sup>

#### NEGATIVE REACTIONS TO THIS ANALYSIS, AND A SHORT INTERPRETATION OF EXODUS 24

Objections to various aspects of the preceding form and redaction critical analysis of Exodus 24 may be expressed. First of all and fundamentally, the opinion that the material in chapter 24 is a portion of a cult-legend (as the Sinai tradition has been classified) seems to be unwarranted and highly speculative. A careful study of this pericope leads rather to the more natural conclusion that its form is that of straight forward historical narrative. The account in the chapter appears to be the report of a single author, doubtless an eyewitness of the events related (such as Moses). Rather than to suppose that the Schechemite cult originated and shaped the so-called Sinai tradition—including the portion of it preserved in Exodus 24—as Hexateuchal form criticism suggests, a valid assumption concerning the cultic relationship to this "tradition" is that the cult preserved a received, written record of all the events connected with Israel's stay at Sinai and gave attention to the accurate and periodic re-presentation of this record to Israelite worshippers in the subsequent periods of time (at occasions of cultic covenant renewal, for example).<sup>51</sup>

If the view is accepted that a written record of all the events connected with Israel's stay at Sinai was produced a short time after the transpiration of these events and carefully preserved for Israelite cultic usage thereafter, then other conclusions of the form and redaction critical investigation of the Sinai pericope as a whole, and of Exodus 24 in particular, will not be entertained. For example, a Schechemite (or other) cultic combination of originally variant and disjuncted elements of "tradition" into a single "Sinai tradition" will not be assumed. In chapter 24, verses 1b-2 will not be seen as a "tradition" different from 1a, 9-11 or labeled a "theological correction." In verse 3, the words "and all the judgments" will not be regarded as an addition to the text, because of a redactor's previous, forced inclusion of the Book of the Covenant (Ex. 20:22-23:33) in the "Sinai tradition." Verses 3 and 7 will not be considered doublets, nor will 3-8 and 9-11 be seen as conflicting descriptions of a same ritual of covenant ratification. Two different traditions will not be found in verses 12-15a, nor will 18b be attached to 12-15a and thought to comprise an originally single, larger unit of tradition. Verses 15b-18a will not be regarded as another version of the Sinai theophany described in Ex. 19:16-20. The results of literary source analysis of chapter 24 which form and redaction criticism acknowledge as valid) will not be accepted. Beyerlin's endeavor through traditio-historical inquiry to demonstrate that many elements of the Sinai tradition, as preserved in chapter 24 and elsewhere, go back to the historical beginnings of the nation in the desert will be studied with interest, but adjudged superfluous. Sinai, the gathering of Moses and Israel at the mountain before Yahweh, will be seen as the original *Sitz im Leben* of the Sinai tradition—not Kadesh, not

the Schechemite (or other) cult, not the long history of the sacral Israelite confederacy, or any other setting in life. The combination of Sinai tradition with Exodus tradition (for the purpose of associating law with Gospel) will be attributed to neither Yahwist or cult but to the writer of the Pentateuch, who had witnessed the mighty, divine Israelite deliverance from Egypt and the theophany on Sinai; who had conversed with Yahweh and received the deity's instructions, including the command to write down the words the Lord had given him; and who was pre-eminently qualified to prepare a coherent, orderly, factual, written recitation of historical events as they had (actually) transpired.<sup>52</sup>

Precisely what information relating to the Israelite sojourn at Sinai does Exodus 24 provide, if the chapter is considered a straight forward historical account? The following summary-interpretation of the sequence of events mentioned in 24:1-18 may be offered. After God spoke the words of the decalogue in the hearing of all Israel; after the divine speaking and accompanying thunderings, lightnings, and other awesome phenomena filled the people's hearts with fear (20:1-20), Moses ascended Mount Sinai (20:21) to receive of the deity various ordinances for the nation and other instructions, the record of which is furnished in 20:22-24:2,<sup>53</sup> and the bulk of which in their written form constituted the Book of the Covenant (24:4, 7). Moses was told (24:1-2) that he, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the Israelite elders were to come up the mountain and all worship the Lord "afar off," that is, at some distance from the summit. Then, Moses alone was to draw near to Yahweh. The people were not to come up at all. The implication of the divine instruction is that Moses was first of all to descend the mountain and repeat to the people the ordinances God had just communicated to him, and thereafter to reascend Sinai with the persons named. According to verses 3, 9, and 12, Moses followed all the Lord's directions.

The ceremony by which Yahweh established his covenant with Israel (verse 8) is described in verses 3-11. The rite was opened, when Moses recited to the people "all the words of the Lord" (the words in 20:22-26; not the decalogue, which the people had heard directly from Yahweh's mouth), "and all the judgments" (those recorded in chapters 21-23). The people, it is related, responded unanimously: "All the words which the Lord hath said will we do" (verse 3). Following this, the Israelite leader wrote down the words and judgments of the Lord, producing the record which is referred to as the "book of the covenant" in verse 7.<sup>54</sup> The next morning Moses built an altar at the foot of Sinai and erected twelve pillars, representing the twelve Israelite tribes, near the altar (verse 4). Young men of Israel were directed to sacrifice burnt offerings and peace offerings (of oxen) to the Lord (verse 5). As the oxen were slaughtered, the blood was saved. Half of it was sprinkled on the altar. At this point Moses read the book of the covenant to the people and received their pledge of obedience. Then, the other half of the blood, which had been put into basins, was sprinkled on the people with these words: "Behold the blood of [that is, inaugurating] the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these

words" (verses 6-8). The covenant was actually put into force at this point.<sup>55</sup>

The final feature of this covenant-making ceremony is related in verses 9-11. Obedient to the divine instruction given them (verse 1); and qualified to ascend the mountain through their consecration with the blood of the covenant, Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders go up Sinai part way to worship the Lord and, as verse 11 indicates, to celebrate the covenant meal. As the delegation was worshipping the God of Israel, they experienced the theophany described in verse 10.<sup>56</sup>

After partaking of the covenant meal, Moses and the other representatives of the people returned to the camp. The Israelite leader was again told by the Lord to come up to Yahweh in the mountain. Verse 12 repeats the command given in verse 2. This time the instruction is added that Moses is to remain with Yahweh for some time ("and be there"). One purpose of his meeting with the Lord is mentioned, namely, that Yahweh might give Moses the laws of the decalogue inscribed on tables of stone (compare 31:18). Since verses 12-18 prepare the way for the subsequent revelation recorded in chapters 25-31, it may be added here that Moses' reception of this additional revelation was another reason for his being asked to appear before the Lord again.

Moses obeyed the divine summons, as the last portion of Exodus 24 indicates. The information is provided that Joshua (who had entered the special service of Moses apparently already at Rephidim, Ex. 17:8-9) accompanied Moses (at least part way<sup>57</sup>) up the mountain (verse 13). Prior to his ascent of Sinai, Moses had ordered Israel's elders to remain in the camp, and had appointed Aaron and Hur to superintend the administration of justice among the people (verse 14).

Moses did not at once proceed to the very summit of Sinai. A cloud covered the mountain top for six days; on the seventh day the Lord called him into the cloud (15b, 16bc). Thereupon Moses climbed the rest of the ascent and entered into the midst of the cloud (18a). During this week, the glory of the Lord, which dwelt upon the mountain top (16a), appeared to the Israelites in the camp below like devouring fire (17). Advance notice is furnished in verse 18b that Moses remained on the mountain a total of forty days and forty nights.

### FOOTNOTES

1. Martin Noth, *Exodus*, translated from the German by J. S. Bowden (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), p. 196. Walter Beyerlin, *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions*, translated from the German by S. Rudman (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), p. 14.
2. Beyerlin, p. 14.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*, p. 15. The phrase "all the judgments" refers, no doubt, to the designation "the judgments" which appears in 21:1. *Hammishpatiyim*. occurs in both 21:1 and 24:3. (The Revised Standard Version helpfully translates with "ordinances" in both passages.) On the widely held view that Ex. 20:22-23:33 was originally independent of its present context, see *ibid.*, pp. 4-6.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 2.



6. Beyerlin's views, which the rest of this paragraph summarizes, are found in *ibid.*, pp. 1-4, 16-18.
7. Noth, p. 198. Noth discusses the sources of Exodus in pp. 194-201.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 173.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
10. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 246.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 200.
12. Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament*, translated from the third German edition by Peter R. Ackroyd (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 201.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 189.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 193.
15. S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: World Publishing Company, c.1956 as a Meridian Book), pp. 31-32.
16. Herman J. Keyser, *A Commentary on Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1940), p. 322.
17. G. E. Wright, "Exodus, Book of," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, edited by George A. Buttrick, et al. (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), II, 192-194.
18. J. Coert Rylaarsdam, "The Book of Exodus: Exegesis," *The Interpreter's Bible*, edited by George A. Buttrick, et al. (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1952), I, 1016.
19. G. Henton Davies, *Exodus* (London: SCM Press, 1967), pp. 192-197.
20. Gerhard von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, translated from the German by E. W. Trueman Dicken (London: Oliver and Boyd, 1966), p. 16.
21. Artur Weiser, *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development*, translated from the fourth revised German edition by Dorothea M. Barton (New York: Association Press, 1961), p. 136.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 112.
23. The present writer is in agreement with the statement of Gleason L. Archer, Jr., in his *A Survey of Old Testament Introduction* (Chicago: Moody Press, c.1964), p. 100: "When all the data of the Pentateuchal text have been carefully considered, and all the evidence, both internal and external, has been fairly weighed, the impression is all but irresistible that Mosaic authorship is the one theory which best accords with the facts." It is not within the scope of this paper to enter upon a lengthy defense of the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. The ample evidence which points to this conclusion is surveyed in the eighth chapter of Archer's book, titled "The Authorship of the Pentateuch," pp. 96-109. Cf. also Edward J. Young, *An Introduction to the Old Testament*, revised edition (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, c.1960), pp. 44-48; and Merrill F. Unger, *Introductory Guide to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, c.1951), pp. 213-274.
24. See Ex. 17:14; 34:27; Num. 33:1-2; Deut. 31:9(11); 31:22.
25. Klaus Koch, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition*, translated from the second German edition by S. M. Cupitt (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), pp. 38-39. (This volume, it may be parenthetically observed) offers a thorough introduction to the methodology of modern form-critical research, particularly of the Old Testament.)
26. What Norman Perrin writes concerning redaction criticism of the New Testament applies as well to redaction criticism of the Old: "It [redaction criticism] is concerned with studying the theological motivation of an author as this is revealed in the collection, arrangement, editing, and modification of traditional materials, and in the composition of new material . . . . Although the discipline is called redaction criticism, it could equally be called 'composition criticism' because it is concerned with the composition of new material and the arrangements of redacted or freshly created material into new units and patterns, as well as with the redaction of existing material." *What Is Redaction Criticism?* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), p. 1. Cf. Koch, pp. 57-59. According to Koch, redaction criticism takes into consideration, where possible, "redaction history: a written text is interpreted against the background

of its literary type, setting in life, and its transmission history" (p. 57). He says: "Redaction history . . . follows the work of both the first writer and the subsequent redactors. *It traces the path the unit [of tradition] has taken from the time it was first written down until the time it achieved its final literary form*" (p. 58).

27. Beyerlin, p. 1.
28. Von Rad, pp. 13, 16.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 1-78.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-17.
32. Von Rad holds that the subject matter of the less important traditional elements (presented in Ex. 32 and 33) bore no historical relationship to the account of the theophany and the covenant, and that the literary association of the former with the latter was only secondary (pp. 17-18).
33. *Ibid.*, p. 22. Von Rad states (pp. 21-22) that "The Sinai narrative in its canonical form (compared with which even J and E must be reckoned secondary!) is itself prior to the cultus and normative for it. Indeed, the whole authority of the cultus itself stands or falls by the Sinai narrative . . ." In von Rad's estimate the legend preceded the cultus and helped shape the cultus, that is, the public religious activity of the Israelite community which grew out of and in response to the tradition presented in the legend. The cultus is assumed to have included a preparatory hallowing, or ritual cleansing of the worshipping assembly; the people's drawing near to God at the blast of trumpets; God's message to the people, which was the reassertion of the legal requirements of the covenant and the reassurance of divine blessing upon those obeying the law; and the sealing of the covenant anew through the offering of sacrifice. Von Rad adds in a footnote, p. 22: "The facts cannot be adequately explained by the fashionable notion that there has been a process of 'historification' (*Historisierung*) at work here, i.e. that extant sacral traditions were subsequently put into a historical setting in the interests of Yahwistic belief. The present literary form of the Sinai tradition certainly derives from the cultic form, but the tradition itself must obviously be held to be prior to the cultic elaboration which is based upon it."
34. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-40. Von Rad associates the cultic ceremonies described in Joshua 24 and in Deut. 27. 11:29-32, and Joshua 8:30-35 with the festival of covenant renewal.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 53.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
39. Weiser's views which are summarized in the paragraph that follows are presented on pp. 81-99 of his *The Old Testament: Its Formation and Development*.
40. Weiser disagrees with von Rad's assumption that it was the Yahwist who first effected the combination of the Sinai and Settlement traditions which were originally separate. The former scholar asks, pp. 88-89: "What could have induced him [the Yahwist] to effect such a decisive operation on the tradition if he was not tied to what was already handed down in the cult regarding the intimate connexion between the traditions of Sinai and the Conquest? Could the 'canonical' weight of just this combination of the traditions of Exodus, Sinai and the Conquest which has been recognized in the general plan of all the Pentateuchal sources, and even beyond them, be understood as the consequence merely of the literary undertaking of a single individual whose work, moreover, von Rad wants to render intelligible as a late appearance in the whole development? The linking together of the two sets of tradition was not carried out first by the Yahwist, but was handed down to him as an established datum."
41. Cf. Beyerlin, pp. 169-170 (and elsewhere). He bases his conclusion on the supposition that the covenant-form attested in Hittite state-treaties of the 14th and 13th centuries B.C. also underlies the Decalogue, which he regards as the basic law of the Sinaitic covenant. As the Hittite

suzerainty treaty contained a historical prologue in which the beneficent acts of the covenant's author are described, so, he points out, in the Decalogue's preface Yahweh's saving act in delivering Israel from Egyptian bondage is referred to. Thus the Sinai and Exodus-Settlement traditions were already combined at this early date.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 167.

43. The author's comments concerning these traditional elements are recorded in Beyerlin, pp. 27-35.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

45. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.

46. The discussion of verses 3-8 is set forth in Beyerlin, pp. 36-48.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

48. *Ibid.*, pp. 43, 45.

49. Discussed: *ibid.*, pp. 48-49.

50. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

51. Cf. Deut. 11:26-32; 27; Joshua 8:30-35; 24; and Deut. 31:9-13.

52. It has been noted in footnote 33 that von Rad assumes that the Sinai tradition is "prior to the cultic elaboration which is based upon it." As far as the present writer can see, von Rad does not, however (in his essay "The Form-Critical Problem of the Hexateuch"), declare himself explicitly as to the actual historical occurrence of events mentioned in all the elements of that tradition. Beyerlin appears to lean in the direction of the historicity of these events, when he writes, p. 169: "However much the growth of the Sinaitic tradition was determined by its cultic associations, which lasted into the period of the kings, the history of the beginning of the tradition certainly did not *originate* in the cult. Rather, it was God's activity in *history* that gave the impulse to the formation of this tradition and had a decisive influence on its content and character. The part played by the cult of Yahweh in developing the Sinaitic tradition should not cause us to overlook the impulses which proceeded from *historical* circumstances. . . ." Klaus Koch indicates that many form critics do not regard various occurrences as reported in the Hexateuch to be genuine historical facts. In discussing the "wider view" of modern form criticism as compared with the older literary criticism, he states, p. 75: "in passages describing . . . *historical events* the true literary critic could find no way of deducting the tendency of the writer, and therefore took for genuine historical facts all that remained after the removal of improbable and incredible aspects of the story. But the form-critical approach is first to study the history of the literary type and of the individual passage and to compare these with the setting in life, so that all that had been added in the course of oral transmission could be ascertained. This process proves many details in a story to be much more recent than was previously assumed. Much that the strict literary critic had taken for the reporting of actual events turns out to be merely interpretative. Thus the accepted chronological framework of the Tetrateuch (or the Hexateuch) . . . proves to be only the 'theological' calendar of later generations. In analysing the historicity of a story of, say, Moses, there is very often found to be little left." Koch goes on to assert, pp. 76-77: "It was later discovered that the Old Testament historical writings . . . possess a kerygmatic quality. Von Rad has shown that the Jahwist and the Elohist follow the scheme of an ancient creed with its roots in the cult, and have no intention but to interpret this as vividly as possible . . . Accordingly therefore the biblical traditions were formed by faith and confession, and are very far from being 'objective' presentations in the modern historical sense. We are deluded if we suppose that this complex of amassed tradition can simply be by-passed and the historical 'facts' freely discovered. The exegete or historian must first subject himself to the process of real understanding, and to a certain extent must identify himself with the Israelite . . . faith and confession before he can deduce any possible facts."

It is the view of the present writer that a form-critical rejection of the historicity of any of the events which are reported as factual occurrences in the Book of Exodus or other parts of the Hexateuch is the consequence of a refusal to judge fairly the written Biblical records and give them



the honest hearing accorded other historical literature. Such a discounting of these records (or portions of them) is marked rather by an unreasonable bias against their reliability and an extreme subjectivism in the determination of what is presumed to be unauthentic in the Biblical accounts. From the point of view of conservative, Lutheran, Old Testament scholarship, furthermore, an adjudging as non-historical what the Hexateuch presents as actual historical happening—and what the canons of Biblically sanctioned, traditional, Lutheran hermeneutics that have been handed down from the period of the Reformation require the exegete to accept as historical fact—can occur only in conjunction with a disregard of the Scriptural doctrine of the inspiration and inerrancy of the Word of God and of the time-honored Lutheran principles for the interpretation of that Word. All form-critical procedure which operates in this manner is to be summarily rejected.

53. For grammatical support of the inclusion of 24:1-2 as a part of the divine address which begins at 20:22, see C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: The Pentateuch*, translated from the German by James Martin (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1949), II, 155.—The summary-interpretation of the sequence of events mentioned in Exodus 24, which is presented in the concluding paragraphs of this paper, follows in the main the interpretation of Keil and Delitzsch, pp. 155-161. Other commentators explain the course of events similarly—e.g., U. Cassuto, in *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus*, translated from the Hebrew by Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1967), pp. 310-316; and J. C. Connell, in "Exodus," *The New Bible Commentary*, edited by F. Davidson, et al. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1953), p. 124.
54. It may be noted in passing that there is a considerable scholarly debate as to the identification of the Book of the Covenant. Noth, pp. 173-198, and many commentators agree with the view expressed above. Eissfeldt, e.g., p. 213, applies the designation to the decalogue of 20:2-17. Cassuto, p. 312, prefers the explanation that the book of the covenant "denotes a short general document, a kind of testimony and memorial to the making of the covenant, that is, a written declaration that the people undertook to listen to the voice of the Lord and to keep His covenant (xix 5), and that in return the Lord chose them to be a people that is His special possession . . ." There are other views.
55. Cf. Heb. 9:16-20, 22.
56. Keil and Delitzsch comment on the words of 11b, as follows (p. 160): "They saw God, and did eat and drink," i.e., they celebrated thus near to Him the sacrificial meal of the peace-offerings, which had been sacrificed at the conclusion of the covenant, and received in this covenant meal a foretaste of the precious and glorious gifts with which God would endow and refresh His redeemed people in His kingdom. As the promise in chap. xix. 5,6, with which God opened the way for the covenant at Sinai, set clearly before the nation that had been rescued from Egypt the ultimate goal of its divine calling; so this termination of the ceremony was intended to give to the nation, in the persons of its representatives, a tangible pledge of the glory of the goal that was set before it. The sight of the God of Israel was a foretaste of the blessedness of the sight of God in eternity . . ."
57. It may be inferred from the account of the latter third of Exodus 24, and from the section's wider context in Exodus, that Joshua went only a certain distance up the mountain with Moses—perhaps as far as the point at which Moses waited until receiving the divine summons to enter into the closer presence of the Lord (verse 16c, 18a). Cassuto, commenting on the reference to Joshua in verse 13, suggests (p. 315) that Joshua accompanied Moses "in order to minister to him during the period that he would have to wait until God called him to ascend to the top of the mountain, and he would rise above the plane of everyday life, and would no longer need food and drink. Possibly the text means that Joshua set up a tent on the slope of the mountain, and there they both dwelt." Keil and Delitzsch write: (p. 161) "Whether Joshua followed him [Moses] we are not told; but it is evident from chap. xxxii. 17 that he was with him

on the mountain, though, judging from ver. 2 and chap. xxxiii. 11, he would not go into the immediate presence of God."—According to 32: 17-18, Joshua is with Moses once again, when the latter has come down the mountain and both men are yet at some distance from the Israelite camp. Joshua presumably had remained at a position on Sinai beneath the mountain's summit.

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