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They Saw the God of Isra'el

24: 9-11

They Saw the God of Isra'el DIG: Why does God let Moses and the seventy elders see Him but not Moses alone? How did Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Isra'el see God and not die?

REFLECT: How is this meal similar, or dissimilar, to the Wedding Feast of the Lamb? In what sense have *you* seen God?

They saw God: To finish the covenant ceremony **Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Isra'el ascended** the foot of Mount Sinai. They were entering into sacred space, even as **YHVH** had commanded **them**. Then, to our utter dismay and surprise, the Bible says: **They saw the God of Isra'el (24:9-10a)**. The word **saw** here is not the normal Hebrew word meaning *to see*. It is a stronger, more intense term that is commonly used of prophetic visions. Its use here underscores the uniqueness of this event.⁴⁶³ This is the first occasion on which **He** is called **the God of Isra'el**. It is equivalent to that moment in a marriage ceremony where the officiant says, "May I introduce you to Mr. and Mrs. So-and-so." But what is shocking is that **the Torah** says: **They saw the God of Isra'el**. In what manner or revelation we do not know, we only know that **they saw God**. The text speaks only of **His** feet, or rather, what was below **His** feet - **under His feet was something like a blue pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself (24:10b)**.⁴⁶⁴ What **they** saw was similar to the description of **the throne** in the vision in **Isaiah (to see link click Bq - I Am a Man of Unclean Lips)**. Yet it remains obvious that the revelation of **God** granted to **the elders** on Mount Sinai was higher and greater than any revelation which had been bestowed upon mankind before. Nowhere else in the Bible is it so matter-of-factly reported that **they saw God**. In this passage it says it *twice* (**24:10a** and **24:11b**).⁴⁶⁵



They shared a meal: In Jewish eschatology there is a well-established belief that following the coming of **the Messiah**, **God's** judgment on earth, and the resurrection of the dead, the righteous of the TaNaKh will be entertained by **ADONAI** at a great banquet (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Hp - The Parable of the Great Banquet**). The banquet is said to be foreshadowed in the weekly Shabbath and in all of **God's** feasts. **The covenant** meal upon the mountain was a type of **the wedding supper of the Lamb**, where **Yeshua will present** believing **Jews and Gentiles** from all ages **as a bride to be proud of, without spot, wrinkle or any such thing, but holy and without defect** (see the commentary on **Revelation Eg - The Wedding Supper of the Lamb**).⁴⁶⁶

They were saved by the blood: **The Torah** notes that **God did not** strike, or **raise His** hand against **Moses**, or **Aaron**, or **Nadab**, or **Abihu**, or **the seventy elders of Isra'el** as **they** beheld **Him (24:11a)**. There is a biblical principle that assumes that **no one can see God and live (33:20)**. Yet, the Torah states here that **Moshe**, **Aaron**, **Aaron's sons**, and **the seventy elders of Isra'el** **saw God**, and **they** did not **die**! What is this mystery? How can mortal man even stand, much less sit and eat in the presence of **God**? The answer is in the story. **The men** who climbed Mount Sinai were first marked with **the blood** of the covenant. **They** still had **the blood** that was **sprinkled on them** after the reading of **the book of the Covenant** as **they** ascended the mountain. **For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for yourselves; for it is the blood that makes atonement because of the life (Leviticus 17:11)**. **They saw God and lived! They were atoned** for by **the blood**! The implication is that those mortals who bear the marking of **the covenant blood** can enter into the presence of **God**.⁴⁶⁷

Isra'el's history continued for almost fifteen hundred years after this memorable occasion. But never again did **their elders** see **the God of Isra'el**, and never again did **they** eat and drink in **His** presence. Sin had its way with them. Their very next act was to break **His Torah** by worshiping a golden calf, and the next time we see them drinking it was of the



waters of judgment (**32:20**). How wonderful to remember that what **Isra'el** (through **their** official heads) enjoyed for a brief time, is now ours forever!⁴⁶⁸