

Exodus 33-34

- In chapter 32, the nation of Israel broke the terms of the Sinai covenant when they worshipped the golden calf
 - As a result of that sin, the Lord declared they would all be killed, which was the normal penalty for violating a covenant
 - Instead, Moses interceded on behalf of the people, offering his own life to spare their lives
 - In the process, Moses formed a picture of the Messiah, who gave His life to spare ours in the face of our violation of God's law
 - And so the Lord delayed the execution of His penalty against that generation of Israel
 - They did eventually die in the desert as a result of their sin under the covenant
 - But the Lord condemned them to die slowly rather than all at once
 - So the word of God concerning these people hasn't changed
 - They broke the covenant, so they will die
 - Meanwhile, the covenant with Israel has been broken, which means God is no longer bound to His part of the covenant either
 - So so as we enter chapter 33, Israel and the Lord stand at a crossroads
 - Will the nation go forward with the Lord leading them, or will the Lord abandon them?

Ex. 33:1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'

Ex. 33:2 "I will send an angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite.

Ex. 33:3 "Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, because you are an obstinate people, and I might destroy you on the way."

- Moses has returned to the top of the mountain to meet with the Lord

- At the end of chapter 32, he told the people he would return to see if something could be salvaged of the covenant
 - Moses stands before the Lord, and he receives good news and bad news
 - The good news is found in vs.1-2
 - The Lord says the people will still enter the land the Lord promised to them
 - They will enter Canaan
 - And the Lord will send His angel before the people to drive out the peoples in the land
- More importantly, the Lord tells the people why He is still willing to do this for them
 - The Lord is acting to fulfill a promise He delivered to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, starting in Genesis 15
 - He's referring to the covenant the Lord made with Abraham, a covenant that was a one-way agreement
 - It was never dependent on Abraham's performance
 - In fact, Abraham had no terms at all
 - He merely received the blessing God promised
 - So God's promise came without conditions
 - And that promise was not to be forgotten even though the people of Israel committed such a great sin
- Then the bad news comes
 - The Lord tells Moses that the people are to leave the mountain and go to the Promised Land by themselves, without the Lord's presence
 - In v.3 the Lord says I will not go up in your midst
 - That phrase is a powerful statement
 - It means the Lord has revoked everything given to the nation in chapters 25-31, which was the building of the tabernacle

- The tabernacle's purpose was to serve as the place God would dwell within Israel
 - But because of the sin of the nation under the covenant, the Lord no longer plans to dwell with Israel, thus negating the need for the tabernacle
- Furthermore, the Lord says if He did dwell with this people (referring to this generation of Israel), He would likely destroy them because they were so obstinate or stiff-necked
 - Because they won't submit to Him, it was only a matter of time before they offended Him again provoking Him to anger to their own destruction
 - Everything we're hearing confirms what we're told by the writer of Hebrews, concerning this generation of Israel

[Heb. 3:16](#) For who provoked Him when they had heard? Indeed, did not all those who came out of Egypt led by Moses?

[Heb. 3:17](#) And with whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

[Heb. 3:18](#) And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?

[Heb. 3:19](#) So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

- In the next passage we learn the peoples' reaction to learning that the Lord would not dwell among them

[Ex. 33:4](#) When the people heard this sad word, they went into mourning, and none of them put on his ornaments.

[Ex. 33:5](#) For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the sons of Israel, 'You are an obstinate people; should I go up in your midst for one moment, I would destroy you. Now therefore, put off your ornaments from you, that I may know what I shall do with you.'"

[Ex. 33:6](#) So the sons of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

- This was indeed a sad word, and the people went into mourning over their sin and the consequences the Lord imposed
 - As a sign of their mourning, they were told by the Lord to remove all their ornaments, which means jewelry and other trappings
 - They were to go about in a plain & bare appearance

- Notice in v.5 the Lord tells them the same thing He told Moses
 - They were so stiff-necked they were in jeopardy of destruction were the Lord to remain in their midst
 - Remember, stiff-necked doesn't just mean a stubborn personality
 - In scripture it refers to a failure to submit to God, which is a sign of unbelief
 - So the Lord is saying that He would be forced to destroy them eventually because of their unbelief
 - So He tells them to strip themselves of their ornaments while He decides what to with them
 - Why does the Lord make this requirement?
 - First, we know He doesn't need time to make up His mind
 - Secondly, why does He want them to strip themselves bare of jewelry in the meantime?
- The answer is another connection back to the Fall in the Garden
 - When Adam and Woman fell in the Garden, they experienced numerous consequences for their sin
 - They were set outside the Garden, so they lost the opportunity to enjoy fellowship with the Lord
 - We've seen that same consequence in this moment
 - The Lord says He can't be in their presence or else He will have to destroy the Israelites
 - Secondly, Adam and Woman were immediately aware that they were naked
 - They sensed they were bare and vulnerable before the Lord
 - So they hid from Him
 - Now we see that consequence mirrored here in a sense
 - Obviously, the Lord isn't going to require the people of Israel strip naked in response to their sin

- Going about naked is what got them into trouble in the first place
 - Instead, the Lord commands them to strip bare of any adornments
 - Through this order, the Lord creates a comparable picture
 - In fact, the people stop wearing the jewelry from that point forward in the wanderings of the desert
- Then Moses explains how the breaking of the covenant impacted the Lord's presence in the camp of Israel

[Ex. 33:7](#) Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp.

[Ex. 33:8](#) And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent.

[Ex. 33:9](#) Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses.

[Ex. 33:10](#) When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent.

- Up to this point in the story of Exodus, we've been told that the glory of God in the form of the fire and cloud were over the camp of Israel
 - God's glory was positioned in the midst of Israel until this moment
 - And Moses' own tent was also pitched inside the camp of Israel
 - The image created was clearly that God was among His people and God's representative was nearby
 - But now as a result of the sin of Israel, Moses moves the tent of the meeting outside the camp of Israel
 - This is not the tabernacle, since it hasn't been built yet
 - This is another structure that Moses used to meet with God
 - And now it is moved outside the camp, away from the people of Israel

- In v.7 we're told that anyone seeking for the Lord would have to go outside the camp of Israel to find the Lord
- In fact, when Moses left the camp of Israel and walked out to his tent, the event caused all of Israel to stop what they were doing and stare at Moses
- As Moses entered the tent and God's glory descended upon it, the people worshipped
- Notice, what triggered the people to participate in acts of worship?
 - The appearance of a physical manifestation of God's glory upon Moses' tent
 - It was an act of worship triggered by a physical manifestation
 - What does this tell us about that generation of Israel?
 - We could say that it's nice to see them worshipping the true God finally
 - But what does the Bible say faith is?

[Heb. 11:1](#) Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

- True faith is an acceptance of things not seen
- And what must faith hold?

[Heb. 11:6](#) And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

- We must believe not only that God is, but we must also believe in His promises of good things to come
- We must believe He is a rewarder of those who seek Him
- Finally, how are we to demonstrate our faith in Him through worship?

[John 4:24](#) "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

- Jesus said men are to worship God in spirit, which means to worship Him in His invisible form

- And to worship Him in truth, which means to worship Him according to His word
- These are things that cannot be seen or touched, but we accept on faith alone
- This is why the writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 12 that this generation could not stand though they worshipped at a mountain they could touch
 - But we worship greater things, things we have yet to see in Heaven
 - Thus demonstrating our true faith
- So in this new location, Moses went to speak with the Lord in the tent of meeting
 - And Moses made a point to beseech the Lord to continue forward with the people as they traveled up into the Land

Ex. 33:11 Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Ex. 33:12 Then Moses said to the LORD, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people!’ But You Yourself have not let me know whom You will send with me. Moreover, You have said, ‘I have known you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.’

Ex. 33:13 “Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people.”

- In v.11 we’re told that Moses met God face to face
 - The phrase “face to face” in Hebrew does not suggest a theophany
 - Moses was not staring into the face of God
 - This becomes readily apparent in toward the end of this chapter
 - Instead, this refers to the degree of intimacy of Moses’ communication with the Lord
 - No man since Adam had enjoyed the kind of regular, intimate communication with the Lord that Moses was given

- Nor would any prophet be given such opportunity again
 - In fact Moses became known as the man who spoke to God face to face
 - And alongside Moses was Joshua
 - Joshua was a young man at this point, but still he has been given the responsibility of guarding the tent of meeting in Moses' absence
 - This is our early indication that Moses will be succeeded by Joshua
- Then in vs.12-17 Moses appears before the Lord to make a new request of God in an attempt to repair the covenant
 - The request has two parts...first, Moses makes a request for himself
 - In v.12 Moses reminds God that He ordered Moses to lead the people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land
 - That's what is meant by "go up" which means up to the Promised Land
 - But Moses also reminds God that when He gave Moses that directive, the Lord promised to be with Moses in that work
 - And so now Moses asks who will go with him in leading the nation?
 - Moses says God told him previously that Moses had received favor (which is the word grace)
 - So Moses says if Moses has received God's grace, then let me know your ways and find favor (grace) in your sight
 - By these words, Moses is asking the Lord to establish an intimate relationship with him on the basis of grace
 - In fact, the word for grace appears four times in Moses' appeal
 - Moses is seeking assurance on the basis of God's grace that the Lord would never leave Him
 - Moses is asking the Lord to establish a relationship of lovingkindness with him on the basis of grace alone

- Why did Moses insist on such a relationship for himself?
 - Clearly, Moses' relationship with the Lord must be based on something other than Law if it was going to persist
 - Moses is God's representative to the people of Israel, and yet he is also one of Israel
 - For if Moses' relationship with the Lord were based solely on a covenant of Law, then sooner or later the nation would violate their covenant again
 - And when the nation falls, Moses would fall too
 - With a relationship based on grace rather than Law, however, Moses could be assured that the Lord would never forsake Him
 - So he wanted God's assurance of His enduring presence based on His grace rather than on the covenant of Law
- In the second part of his appeal, Moses reminds the Lord that the nation Israel was God's people
 - Moses is appealing to another covenant based on grace, the covenant the Lord made with Abraham
 - In that covenant, the Lord promised Abraham to make a great nation from his descendants
 - God said He would bring those descendants into land He gave Abraham
 - So Moses is once again appealing to God's grace on behalf of Israel
- Then we hear the Lord's response

[Ex. 33:14](#) And He said, "My presence shall go with you, and I will give you rest."

[Ex. 33:15](#) Then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here.

[Ex. 33:16](#) "For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?"

[Ex. 33:17](#) The LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name."

- The Lord agrees to Moses' request
 - The Lord makes a statement that has no conditions
 - He will accompany Moses and give Moses rest
 - This is the Lord's personal covenant with Moses, and there are no conditions or exceptions
 - It is a one-way, suzerainty covenant on the basis of grace
 - Moses then asks the Lord to how will it be known to the world that the Lord has promised to accompany the people of Israel
 - Moses is seeking a sign of this promise
 - And the Lord responds again with a statement of His promise
 - He says He will honor Moses's words because Moses has found favor
 - Once again, that phrase means God has bestowed grace upon Moses
 - And the Lord knows Moses in an intimate way
- Once more Moses presses for a sign, and this time the Lord grants Moses' request in a unique way

[Ex. 33:18](#) Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!"

[Ex. 33:19](#) And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

[Ex. 33:20](#) But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"

[Ex. 33:21](#) Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock;

[Ex. 33:22](#) and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by.

[Ex. 33:23](#) "Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."

- Moses proposes that the Lord allow Moses to see the Lord's glory
 - Remember up to this point Moses has been meeting with the Lord in the form of cloud and fire and thunder

- These manifestations of God's glory were not the actual appearance of God Himself but only physical representations of God
- For weeks now Moses has conversed with God through these methods, but now Moses proposes that the Lord reveal Himself truly to Moses as a sign of their new, intimate relationship
- The Lord agrees to the request but with significant limitations
 - And these limitations are grace to Moses as well
 - The Lord speaks in covenantal language in v.19
 - First, He says He will allow His "goodness" to pass in front of Moses
 - The word goodness is *tub* in Hebrew
 - It simply means a good thing or the best of something
 - The Lord will show the fullness of His goodness to be manifested to Moses
 - Secondly, the Lord says He will proclaim His name before Moses
 - This is the name of God which no Jew hence forth would pronounce
 - The name represented by the letters YHWH in scripture
 - Thirdly, the Lord says He will be gracious upon those He chooses
 - Finally, the Lord says He will show compassion on those He chooses
 - These final two statements emphasize that His covenant of grace with Moses is not a promise to show mercy on all of Israel
 - Instead, He is making a promise of grace to Moses and to those the Lord chooses within the camp of Israel
 - But not all Israel will necessarily receive this grace
 - The Lord still intends to hold many within Israel guilty for their sin under the Sinai covenant

- Finally, the Lord spells out how He will reveal Himself to Moses as a sign of this promise
 - He will not allow Moses to see the Lord's "face"
 - The reference to face is an anthropomorphism
 - It is a human characteristic assigned to God to help us relate to Him
 - But it is not a literal description of His being
 - God does not have a physical face
 - As we saw earlier in John 4, the Father is all spirit according to Jesus
 - So the word "face" refers to the witnesses the full expression of God's glory
 - Just as we get a better appreciation of a human being by looking at their face than their back
 - When we see only their back, we have a sense of who they are, but we lack the most important details
 - Similarly, to see God's glory in partial or limited form is described as not seeing God's "face"
 - God tells Moses that no man can see Him in His fullness and live
 - The reason this is true relates to our sinfulness
 - God is so pure and holy and just that He cannot allow sin to coexist in the fullness of His glory
 - He can permit it to exist while it is outside His presence
 - But if it enters into His presence, He must judge it as His perfect nature requires
 - As an analogy, a perfect judge can allow a criminal to go unpunished so long as he does not stand trial in the courtroom
 - But once the accused enters the court and stands before the judge, now the judge has no choice but to convict the person
 - To do otherwise would be an injustice

- So the Lord's solution was to place Moses in a recessed part of the rock on the Mountain
 - From within that cleft, Moses can only see a narrow sliver in front of him
 - From that vantage point, the Lord can control Moses' exposure to the Lord
 - The Lord could reveal more of Himself to Moses while allowing Moses to remain protected from immediate judgment
- When the fullness of God's glory passed in front of the cleft, the Lord would cover the cleft to preserve Moses' life
 - But after God had passed in front of the cleft, then He would allow Moses to see God's "back" but not His "face"
 - Once again, this is an anthropomorphism
 - God no more has a back than He has a face
 - The literal Hebrew word for back is afterward, which refers to the afterglow of God's presence
 - Like a reflection or a photograph
 - The image Moses would see was not God Himself but the afterglow of God's glory reflected or left behind as a result of God's presence passing by
- So the Lord executes this plan of granting Moses a sign of His promise of grace, which takes us into Chapter 34

Ex. 34:1 Now the LORD said to Moses, "Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered.

Ex. 34:2 "So be ready by morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain.

Ex. 34:3 "No man is to come up with you, nor let any man be seen anywhere on the mountain; even the flocks and the herds may not graze in front of that mountain."

Ex. 34:4 So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand.

[Ex. 34:5](#) The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD.

[Ex. 34:6](#) Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth;

[Ex. 34:7](#) who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

[Ex. 34:8](#) Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship.

- To begin, the Lord orders Moses to cut two new stone tablets like the ones that he broke when he descended the mountain
 - By ordering Moses to cut these tablets, the Lord is indicating that He intends to re-establish the covenant of Law with Israel
 - We'll see the Lord re-instate His covenant in the latter part of this chapter
 - But for now we understand that the Law and the covenant of Law is not going to be dissolved as a consequence of the nation's sin
 - The Lord will also explain later in this chapter why it must continue
 - However, the covenant is going to be changed in several ways as a result of the nation's sin, which we'll see
 - Meanwhile, the Lord grants Moses the sign of His grace that He promised to him
 - The Lord says that nothing can be on the mountain except Moses himself
 - Not even the herds may graze on the mountain
 - Then Moses cuts the stones as directed
 - Then the Lord passed in front of Moses as He promised declaring the covenantal word of lovingkindness
 - Then the Lord gives a testimony to how He assigns His grace and lovingkindness

- The compassion and grace and mercy of God is vast, the Lord says
 - He assigns it to “thousands” which can also be translated as “families” or clans
 - In other words, God is prepared to show mercy to families and clans of sinners
- But nevertheless, the Lord is also prepared to hold the guilty accountable
 - There will be those within the clans and families of the nation that will see God’s wrath for sin
 - And this wrath will play out over generations, since sin is inherited
- What makes the difference between those who will receive His grace and those who will not?
 - As the Lord said earlier, He will show compassion on those He will show compassion
 - It is a matter of God’s will alone
 - Moses had requested grace and mercy, both for himself and for the people of Israel
 - And the Lord responded with His promise of grace to Moses to never leave Him
 - But in the sign of the promise, the Lord makes clear that His grace will be manifested as He pleases to whom He pleases
 - It is here that we see the formation of the principle of a remnant in Israel receiving God’s grace
 - God’s covenant of Law given to Israel holds all Israel guilty of sin
 - And God’s promise of favor (or grace) is limited to a remnant within Israel according to God’s choice
 - This is the teaching Paul gives in Romans 9-11, which he culminates by saying

[Rom. 11:5](#) In the same way then, there has also come to be at the present time a remnant according to God's gracious choice.

[Rom. 11:6](#) But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

- Paul reminds us that throughout Israel's history, there was the remnant within Israel who had received God's grace and the rest that had not
- And the distinction was purely a matter of God's favor or grace
 - It did not depend on the Law
 - For God Himself stated to Moses that He is showing favor or grace on whom He wishes within Israel
- Then in response to the Lord's declaration, Moses bows low, and requests that the Lord re-establish His covenant with the people

[Ex. 34:9](#) He said, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your own possession."

[Ex. 34:10](#) Then God said, "Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the LORD, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you.

[Ex. 34:11](#) "Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite.

[Ex. 34:12](#) "Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst.

[Ex. 34:13](#) "But rather, you are to tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and cut down their Asherim

[Ex. 34:14](#) – for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God –

[Ex. 34:15](#) otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice,

[Ex. 34:16](#) and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons also to play the harlot with their gods.

[Ex. 34:17](#) "You shall make for yourself no molten gods.

[Ex. 34:18](#) “You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you came out of Egypt.

[Ex. 34:19](#) “The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me, and all your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep.

[Ex. 34:20](#) “You shall redeem with a lamb the first offspring from a donkey; and if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck. You shall redeem all the firstborn of your sons. None shall appear before Me empty-handed.

[Ex. 34:21](#) “You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during plowing time and harvest you shall rest.

[Ex. 34:22](#) “You shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, that is, the first fruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.

[Ex. 34:23](#) “Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.

[Ex. 34:24](#) “For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before the LORD your God.

[Ex. 34:25](#) “You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread, nor is the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover to be left over until morning.

[Ex. 34:26](#) “You shall bring the very first of the first fruits of your soil into the house of the LORD your God. “You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

[Ex. 34:27](#) Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.”

- The Lord summarizes the Law again to remind Moses of all that the Lord had spoken
 - And in the summary, the Lord promises to re-establish the covenant with the people of Israel
 - The formal re-instatement of the covenant doesn’t happen until Deuteronomy at the end of the 40 years of wandering
 - The word deuteronomy means the second law, because it was the second time the covenant of the Law was given to Israel
 - In that future day, it is given to a new generation of Israel after the older generation has died out
 - The wait for their death was a requirement of their sin with the golden calf

- So here we see the Lord renew this covenant with Israel, which will begin to regulate their life even now
 - The terms of the law are unchanged in this quick summary from what was given earlier on the mountain
 - Obviously, we have already covered their meaning in those earlier chapters
- Notice that the Lord particularly emphasizes the importance of not falling to idolatry again
 - They should not associated with the people of Canaan else they will fall prey to idolatry
 - This is a reminder of a basic principle of scripture
 - When God's people seek to bind themselves with the world, we do not make the world more holy by our association
 - On the contrary, the world will corrupt us
 - Only by a shared faith in the promises of God can men find the opportunity to be yoked together
- Interestingly, in v.24 the Lord promises that when they leave their property to attend the three feasts each year, their homes and land will not be disturbed in their absence
 - That's a powerful reminder of how our obedience to God's commandments bring blessings that make obedience easy
 - We need not worry about the consequences of obedience, for they are always a blessing whatever form they take
- But there is also a change coming to the law as a result of the sin of Israel at the mountain
 - If we go to Numbers 3 we discover that the Lord will only permit the the Levites to serve Him in the temple, rather than the firstborn of all tribes

[Num. 3:5](#) Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

[Num. 3:6](#) "Bring the tribe of Levi near and set them before Aaron the priest, that they may serve him.

[Num. 3:7](#) "They shall perform the duties for him and for the whole congregation before the tent of meeting, to do the service of the tabernacle.

[Num. 3:8](#) “They shall also keep all the furnishings of the tent of meeting, along with the duties of the sons of Israel, to do the service of the tabernacle.

[Num. 3:9](#) “You shall thus give the Levites to Aaron and to his sons; they are wholly given to him from among the sons of Israel.

[Num. 3:10](#) “So you shall appoint Aaron and his sons that they may keep their priesthood, but the layman who comes near shall be put to death.”

[Num. 3:11](#) Again the LORD spoke to Moses, saying,

[Num. 3:12](#) “Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the first issue of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine.

[Num. 3:13](#) “For all the firstborn are Mine; on the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I sanctified to Myself all the firstborn in Israel, from man to beast. They shall be Mine; I am the LORD.”

- The original command from the Lord was to have the firstborn of every tribe dedicated to the tabernacle service
 - Since only Levites stood with Moses on the day of the sin at the mountain, God now makes the Levites the tribe to serve Him
 - Of course, the Lord always had this plan in mind, which is why there was a thirteenth tribe in Israel after the time of Joseph
- Having received the renewing of the covenant and the Law, Moses descends a second time to the people, but this time something is different

[Ex. 34:28](#) So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

[Ex. 34:29](#) It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony were in Moses’ hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him.

[Ex. 34:30](#) So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

[Ex. 34:31](#) Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers in the congregation returned to him; and Moses spoke to them.

[Ex. 34:32](#) Afterward all the sons of Israel came near, and he commanded them to do everything that the LORD had spoken to him on Mount Sinai.

[Ex. 34:33](#) When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

[Ex. 34:34](#) But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take off the veil until he came out; and whenever he came out and spoke to the sons of Israel what he had been commanded,

[Ex. 34:35](#) the sons of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone. So Moses would replace the veil over his face until he went in to speak with Him.

- Once again Moses spends forty days on the mountain with the Lord
 - During this time we're told Moses never eats or drinks, yet the Lord sustains him
 - This is a powerful example of the truth of Jesus' words, when he said:

[Matt. 4:4](#) But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON **BREAD ALONE**, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'"

- In the case of Matthew 4, Jesus was teaching that our eternal life is sustained ultimately not by physical means but by the power of God's word
- Here we see a dramatic proof of the power of God's word to sustain us, both spiritually and even physically when necessary
- Once again, Moses descends the mountain carrying the two stone tablets
- But this time as Moses returns from this restating of the covenant, he finds his face glowing
 - The shining of Moses face was another example of the afterglow of God's glory
 - This was an effect of coming so close to the glory of God
 - Each time that Moses came to speak to God in the tent of meeting, he found the same effect occurring
 - His face would shine with the reflected glory of God
- We're told that this effect was very unnerving to the people of Israel
 - They were made very nervous by it
 - Nevertheless, Moses commanded the people to come near him so he could once again relate all the commandments of God
 - Thereafter, Moses took to wearing a veil when he wasn't speaking to the Lord to hide the glow of his face from the people

- We might assume from this text that the reason Moses did this was because the people were so uncomfortable with the image of Moses' shining face
 - But Paul teaches us in 2Corinthians that this was not the reason for the veil

[2Cor. 3:5](#) Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

[2Cor. 3:6](#) who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

[2Cor. 3:7](#) But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was,

[2Cor. 3:8](#) how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory?

[2Cor. 3:9](#) For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory.

[2Cor. 3:10](#) For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it.

[2Cor. 3:11](#) For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory.

[2Cor. 3:12](#) Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech,

[2Cor. 3:13](#) and are not like Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end of what was fading away.

[2Cor. 3:14](#) But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ.

[2Cor. 3:15](#) But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart;

[2Cor. 3:16](#) but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

[2Cor. 3:17](#) Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

[2Cor. 3:18](#) But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

- Time does not permit an in-depth treatment of this important passage, so we'll hit a few highlights as they apply to Exodus 34
 - Paul compares two covenants in this passage: the covenant of the Law with the New Covenant of grace in Christ
 - The old is called a covenant of letter engraved on stone and a ministry of death
 - The new is called the covenant of the Spirit, of life and a ministry of righteousness

- Both covenants were revealed with a measure of glory, Paul says
 - The Old came with the glory of God revealed in Moses' face
 - But that glory was one that faded
 - The glory of God shining in Moses' face would slowly fade away in the days after Moses had an encounter with God
 - Paul says it was this fading of God's glory that caused Moses to begin wearing a veil
 - In v.13 Paul says Moses took to wearing a veil so Israel would not stare at the fading of God's glory
 - Moses didn't want the people to see the glory of God leaving
- Paul then ends by teaching that Moses unknowingly created a beautiful picture of the relationship between the Old Covenant and the New
 - The hearts of the people of Israel in the desert were hardened, by God, just as He had done to Pharaoh in Egypt
 - So that even as the Law of God was read to them, they couldn't see the glory of God in it
 - They couldn't appreciate the testimony of Christ and of grace hidden in the meaning of the Law
 - The truth of these things was hidden from them, as pictured in the way Moses hid the glory of God by putting a veil over his face
 - That veil over their hearts is only lifted by Christ Himself, Who is the author and perfecter of our salvation Hebrews says
 - Even today, when the Law of Moses is read to someone, they cannot see it as a picture of Christ until they have first come to the Lord in faith
 - Then the veil of understanding is lifted
- Finally, Paul alludes to a beautiful picture of Christ in the circumstances of Exodus 34
 - Paul says in v.18 that today we are reflecting the glory of God as well, in the way we are being transformed into the glory of Christ by the Spirit

- Just as Moses reflected the Lord's glory by his testimony to Israel, so are we reflecting the Lord's glory to the world by our testimony
 - But our testimony is one of life not merely words
 - We shine the glory of Christ by how we reflect Him in our actions as well as our testimony
- Finally, Moses himself becomes another picture of Christ through His intercession in Exodus 34
 - He sought for an intimate relationship with the Father
 - He asked for God's grace to be given to His people
 - He asked to see the Father's glory, and then He reflected that glory to the world
 - And the Father responded that He will have mercy on those He chooses
 - And Moses would speak to a people who could not perceive the message because of a veiled and hardened heart
- These details picture Christ's ministry to Israel as well
 - Paul says Christ was the reflection of God's goodness and glory

[Col. 1:15](#) He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

[Col. 1:19](#) For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,

- In John's Gospel, we hear Jesus petitioning the Father in ways similar to the way Moses petitioned the Lord

[John 17:18](#) "As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

[John 17:19](#) "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

[John 17:20](#) "I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word;

[John 17:21](#) that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me.

[John 17:22](#) “The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

[John 17:23](#) I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.

[John 17:24](#) “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

- Jesus seeks to have the world know that the Father sent Him, just as Moses wanted the world to know that he represented God and Israel was His people
 - Jesus asks that the Father would love His people even as He loved Christ
 - And that those the Father has given to Christ from among those in the world would see the Father’s glory which was given to Christ
 - Again these words mirror the way Moses appealed to the Father and saw His glory and reflected it to the world
- So as we end these chapters, the nation is once again in a covenant of Law
 - Yet they this generation is also bound to endure penalties for their sin
 - Because they are an unbelieving generation, one that has been hardened and will not receive God’s grace
 - Yet Israel will be preserved through a remnant
 - In the meantime, God is showing grace to Moses and others within the nation
 - And in His grace, He fulfills His promises to Abraham’s descendants to bring them into the land
 - And by the renewing of the covenant, the nation may now proceed forward with building the tabernacle
 - So that the glory of the Lord may dwell in the midst of Israel
 - Just as the Lord promised to Moses