

Exodus - Week 11

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 2024 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “The Story Continues”

As we saw in Exodus 32-33, the people of Israel had failed to worship the One True God. They had turned from the Lord and had fashioned a false idol, a calf made out of gold. Interesting in this is that a bull was representative of one of the god's of Egypt that the Israelites would have been forced to worship during their time in slavery to the Egyptians. They now have made a younger and cuter version of this bull to worship, a golden calf. Strange how quickly they, and we for that matter, can turn from our worship of the true Lord, to the idols that we are most familiar with. As we saw at the end of chapter 33, Moses intercedes for the Israelites. Moses asked God, “Stay with us, lead us, direct us, and allow your presence upon your people.” Moses understood that if God's presence was not going to be with the people, then it wasn't even worth moving forward. The Lord, in his incredible mercy and forgiveness, renews His covenant with Israel in chapter 34. Here we learn that He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, and forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. Moses, the people of Israel, and even we today, will learn: that even when we don't know His ways or His plans, and when we find ourselves weary and tired, we can continue to trust the God of the Exodus who delivered a sinful people to a promised land, and the God who delivered us, wicked/sinful people, through the promise of Jesus Christ. We will learn that we can trust His character, trust His nature, and trust all of who He is and is doing.

Scripture - Exodus 34:1-10

The Lord said to Moses, “Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. 2 Be ready by the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to me on the top of the mountain. 3 No one shall come up with you, and let no one be seen throughout all the mountain. Let no flocks or herds graze opposite that mountain.” 4 So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first. And he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone. 5 The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. 6 The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, 7 keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.” 8 And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped. 9 And he said, “If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance.” 10 And he said, “Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study

Exodus 33-34; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 86:15; Psalm 103:8; Ezekiel 18:30-32; Jonah 4:2; Romans 9-10; 2 Corinthians 5:17,

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions..

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)



Key Thoughts

Worship happens when we are in awe of who God is, not only of what he has done or will do. In chapter 34, we will see God teaching the people of Israel and us about this.

Even when we don't know the direction God is leading, we can still trust Him because of His character. When the people of Israel cannot discern the next 40 years or 40 days, or when their leader disappears for a few days in God's presence, God will remind them, "You can trust my character, my nature, who I am."

The LORD descended in a cloud. God came down, even after Moses reached the top of the mountain. This is a great foreshadowing of the coming of Jesus Christ in the New Testament because no matter how high we go, God still had to come down to save us. (Exodus 34:1-5)

God identifies himself to Moses with a distinct announcement, "The Lord, the Lord." Back-to-back uses of the sacred title for God, which is spelled YHWH, are used because the Hebrew heritage would not speak or write the full name of Yahweh. It was too holy! This title provoked a moment that would have caught Moses' attention. God's name alone caught his attention because the LORD had already done so many miracles in front of Moses and the children of God.

Tony Merida in his commentary *Exalting Jesus in Exodus* points out:

- To those in need, God is compassionate (merciful) (vs. 6) - God has compassion for those who fear Him. (Ps. 103:13)
- To those who cannot measure up, God is gracious (vs. 6) - God's graciousness is on display when, rather than giving us what we deserve, he gives us something that we don't deserve: the gift of his grace. This was given to the nation of Israel, but in a greater sense, to us, through Jesus Christ.
- To those who are rebellious, God is slow to anger (vs. 6) - We often view each other through the lens of the other person's sin. We are impatient, quick to anger, slow to display compassion, you have this sinful past, you committed adultery, you are bitter, you are a gossip, and we could usually be more gracious. These are reminders of how God views us through his compassion, grace, and long-suffering (patience).
- To the unfaithful, God abounds in faithful love and loyalty (vs. 6 & 7) - This depiction of God's faithfulness and love was not only for the Israelites at the bottom of the mountain who had just given in to idol worship when Moses departed. No, this faithful love and loyalty is a spring that continually flows of God's goodness and love to the thousands and for generations to come.
- To the guilty, God is forgiving (vs. 7) - God outlines three words, categories of our sinfulness: He forgives wrongdoing, rebellion, and sin. In each of those there must be repentance, but there is forgiveness. There is a payment for sin. And God poured out His judgment upon Jesus Christ on the cross for our sins. This was how God offered forgiveness for all who have sinned, including us.

Key Thoughts

Tony Merida also clarifies in *Exalting Jesus in Exodus* the confusion that often surrounds the idea of generational sins. "The mention of God's consequences on several generations does not mean grandchildren will be punished for something their grandparents have done. It means that as sin continues, God's justice continues." God will offer his forgiveness for generations because sin will continue. (See also Ezekiel 18:30-32)

It is evident that sin continues; it does not stop with Israel but continues to every generation, but the character of God's forgiveness is for all generations and does not cease.

What caused Moses to plant his face in the ground and worship? It was the LORD THE LORD revealing His character. What drew him to worship was a God who said: The Lord is talking to you, Moses, Moses, it's me, the LORD. Here is what you and your stiff-necked, stubborn people need to know:

- I am compassionate beyond comparison.
- I am gracious when you do not deserve it.
- I am slow to anger when I have every reason to smite you.
- I am loyal and steadfast in love.
- I am faithful.
- I will forgive you when you are rebellious,
- I will forgive your moral failures.
- And I know that your generation will sin, and the next, and the next, but I will still be the same God to all those generations.
- And I will stand by my promises, not because of who you are and what you have and have not done, but because of My character and My name.
- It was God's character that drove Moses. He had ascended the mountain to be near God, and God descended and revealed His character, His nature, and His qualities, which led to worship.

The character of God guides us to trust God for salvation. The character of God displays God's love for us. The character of God models how I am to love others, but only through my relationship with Jesus Christ.

God is teaching Moses, the leader. You may not experience me as you wanted to when you came up the mountain, but I will give you all you need - my personal, heart-changing character.

Reflect & Respond

In this week's study we are presented with the truth of who God is. As you think about the culture that we live in today, what differences do you see about how our culture describes the Lord and what we read here in Exodus 34 regarding the truth of who He really is?

In Exodus 33:11 we read, "Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend", yet in 33:20 God says, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." What if anything has changed? What is actually taking place here in these verses? How do you see God's grace and mercy show up even here?

What attributes of God do you see in Exodus 34:6-7 that reveal His character and nature? Which of these attributes of God stand out to you most? How have you seen these attributes lived out towards you by God in your own walk? How does this change your heart regarding how you treat others?

We see in 34:8 that Moses is quick to worship the Lord in this encounter. What does your worship look like? Are you quick to bow and worship the Lord when you are presented with His truth, His name, His word, His deeds, His mercy and forgiveness in your life?

What, if anything, has changed in your heart regarding your relationship with God and/or how you see Him after reading and studying this week's text?

Additonal Thoughts