

Adult Bible Class
Study of Exodus, Lesson 18
July 6, 2025

In Exodus 32 we read about a horrible failure of the Israelites. While impatiently waiting for Moses to return from the mountain where he was meeting with God, the people instructed Aaron to build them a god to lead them onward to the Promised Land. Aaron, instead of rebuking the people and leading them to have patience and wait for Moses, bowed down to their request and fashioned a calf made out of gold. The people then proclaimed it to be their god that brought them out of Egypt. Aaron built an altar to worship the image, and the people worshipped in shameful revelry. It was blatant idolatry which God has just commanded them not to do:

Exodus 20:22 . . . 'You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. **23** You shall not make *anything to be with Me—gods of silver or gods of gold you shall not make for yourselves.*

Exodus 22:20 "Anyone who sacrifices to any god other than the Lord must be destroyed.

God, meanwhile, informed Moses what the people had done while Moses was communing with Him on the mountain. God was going to destroy them for their horrible sin and start all over again with Moses to build a new nation. Moses pleaded for the people, and God relented. He did not destroy the whole nation of Israel, but He did bring judgment on the worst of the lot by destroying about 3000 that day (this was done through the Levites who went about the camp slaying them at God's instruction).

It was one of the worst days in the history of the nation of Israel. God called the Israelites, "your people," speaking to Moses and separating Himself from them. He said He would send His angel to lead them forward, but He would not be in their midst. But Moses wasn't finished pleading for the people.

Exodus Chapter 33 (continued) - Israel Needs God's Presence

Moses Meets with the Lord

Exodus 33:7 (NKJV) Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp. **8** So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. **9** And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. **10** All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man in his tent door.

While on the mountain, Moses received instructions to build the Tabernacle with all its furnishings. However, at this time the Tabernacle had not yet been built.

So Moses set up his own tent outside the camp to be a “tabernacle of meeting” for the time being. This is not the future Tabernacle (which would *also* be called the Tabernacle of Meeting).

Israel had humbled themselves by mourning and removing their ornaments because the jewelry reminded God of the golden calf idol (made from their gold earrings). This was a good start, but Moses continues to help restore Israel’s relationship with God. God had previously dwelt in the very midst of His people. Now, Moses puts up his tent outside the camp to begin this process of restoring Israel’s relationship with God. If someone really wanted to seek the Lord, he would have to make the trip outside the camp, separating himself.

It was bold of Moses to pitch his own tent and to call it “the tabernacle of meeting.” It speaks of Jesus Christ who would pitch His tent of flesh among us:

John 1:14 (Amplified Bible) And the Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us; and we [actually] saw His glory (His honor, His majesty), such glory as an only begotten son receives from his father, full of grace (favor, loving-kindness) and truth.

Moses pitched his tent outside the camp because God said He would not dwell in their midst. Therefore, people had to go outside the camp to meet with God. It appears that perhaps the people who wanted to seek God pitched their tent by Moses’ tent. They followed Moses’ lead - when Moses entered the tabernacle the pillar of cloud appeared, and the Lord talked with Moses. When this happened, those who sought the Lord worshiped in their tent doors.

It is important that we pitch our tent in a place where God can be found. Jesus is our leader. He pitched His tent of flesh here on this earth for awhile, and now we can pitch our tent next to Him. We will have to move from the crowds (the Presence is not there) and go to where God can be found.

Let’s continue in Exodus:

Exodus 33:11 (NKJV) So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.

The Lord spoke with Moses “*face to face*.” This is probably a figure of speech since the Bible says, “*No man has seen God at any time*” (John 1:18). Numbers 12:8 gives more insight to this:

Numbers 12:8 Then He said,

“Hear now My words:

If there is a prophet among you,

I, the Lord, make Myself known to him in a vision;

I speak to him in a dream.

7 Not so with My servant Moses;

He *is* faithful in all My house.

8 I speak with him face to face,

Even plainly, and not in dark sayings;

And he sees the form of the Lord.

God was saying that Moses heard from God clearly and plainly while other prophets received things from God in visions and dreams. Also, Moses saw a form of some sort - what exactly he saw, we are not sure.

We must also note that Joshua, who would take Moses' place as the leader of the people, lingered in the Presence of the Lord.

The Promise of God's Presence

Exodus 33:12 Then Moses said to the Lord, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people.' But You have not let me know whom You will send with me. Yet You have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight.' **13** Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation is Your people."

14 And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

15 Then he said to Him, "If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. **16** For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who *are* upon the face of the earth."

17 So the Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken; for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name."

A true man of God wants the people in His charge to experience the mighty Presence of God. Now we see that God has relented; God Himself will go *with* Israel into the Promised Land.

But Moses questions God, almost beyond what a man would think proper to do. He says, "*If your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.*" Think about it. What is the one thing that made Israel different from other nations? It was the Presence of the Lord. God was going to be in their midst after all.

18 And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."

19 Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." **20** But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live." **21** And the Lord said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock. **22** So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. **23** Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."

Did Moses go too far? Everyone of us should want to experience more of the glory of God - more of His presence. Experiencing the presence of God is Pentecostal. It is expected in a Pentecostal service to feel the presence of God. We are disappointed if we do not feel the wonderful Presence of the Lord in a Pentecostal church service.

When Moses asked God to show His glory, God then said He would show His goodness. Jesus Christ gave Himself on Calvary because He is good. He suffered because He is good. It is the goodness of God that leads people to repent. God's glory and goodness are connected.

Moses could not see God's face and live. This indicates that no one can experience the full glory of God's person and bear it. Some of us have been in powerful services where the glory of God is so strong, we almost couldn't bear it. The Lord allowed Moses to experience just enough of His glory so he could bear it. When we receive our glorified bodies, then we will be able to bear His glory.

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known.

Exodus Chapter 34

Exodus 34:1 (NKJV) And the LORD said to Moses, "Cut two tablets of stone like the first ones, and I will write on these tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. **2** So be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself to Me there on the top of the mountain. **3** And no man shall come up with you, and let no man be seen throughout all the mountain; let neither flocks nor herds feed before that mountain."

4 So he cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.

Moses broke the first set of stone tablets - tablets that were written with the finger of God. He broke them when he came down from the mountain and found the Israelites worshipping the golden calf. He broke the tablets because Israel had broken their covenant with God - it was a highly symbolic thing to do, although it was done in anger and frustration. Now God was going to give Israel new, replacement tablets of the covenant, because they had repented of their great sin.

This time, Moses was going to have a hand in creating the stone tablets. This time, Moses was going to cut the stone for the tablets. God was still going to write the law on them, but Moses would prepare the stone for God's hand. This time, after the work and preparation of readying the tablets, Moses would be less likely to throw them down in anger and break them. When we have a hand in something, we are less likely to be critical or to destroy our own work or something that we have helped create. The biggest critics are those who are on the sidelines.

God again told Israel to stay away from the mountain, just like He did when He first gave the Ten Commandments. The people couldn't deal with God directly because of their sin. Moses bridged the gap between the people and God. Again, we see Moses as a type of the man, Jesus Christ - an intercessor between God and sinful man.

5 Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

The glory of the Lord was in that cloud. A cloud associated with the glory of God is mentioned many times in Scripture:

It went with Israel by day (Exodus 13:21-22)

It covered Mt. Sinai at the giving of the law (Exodus 19:16)

It stood at the tent of Moses outside the camp (Exodus 33:9-10)

It was present at the transfiguration of Jesus (Luke 9:34-35)

Jesus is coming again with clouds (Revelation 1:7)

God's glory and His name were together. There is great glory in God's name because it reveals His character to us. God's Old Testament name, LORD (as expressed in English language Bibles), is translated from the Hebrew YHWH, or Yahweh (Jehovah). The name of Yahweh expresses what God is - He is the self-existent one, the I AM. His name reveals His character. His glory and His name are linked together.

In New Testament days, the name Jesus translates to "Jehovah our Savior." His name tells us who He is and what He has come to do. Jesus' glory and name are linked together in the plan of salvation. His name is present at water baptism and His glory descends on us when we are filled with His Spirit.

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, **7** keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

The above Scripture has been used by skeptics to challenge the Word of God. Let's read a passage from Ezekiel:

Ezekiel 18:19 (NKJV) "Yet you say, 'Why should the son not bear the guilt of the father?' Because the son has done what is lawful and right, and has kept all My statutes and observed them, he shall surely live. **20** The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

Just how are future generations affected by the right living of parents or the sinful living of parents? There is a difference between bearing the guilt of sin and bearing the physical consequences of sin. There really is no contradiction between these two passages of Scripture. Future generations are blessed by godly people, but it is still up to each individual to live for God for himself. When society is wicked, future generations suffer and often the wickedness continues from one generation to the next because that is what is taught and learned. However, each person is judged for his own sin.

Let's read a passage in Jeremiah that shows this. This takes place later in Israel's history when Judah is about to be taken away captive by the Babylonians as judgment for their many sins, the greatest of which is idol worship:

Jeremiah 16:10 (NLT) . . . 'Why has the Lord decreed such terrible things against us? What have we done to deserve such treatment? What is our sin against the Lord our God?'

11 "Then you [Jeremiah] will give them the Lord's reply: 'It is because your ancestors were unfaithful to me. They worshiped other gods and served them. They abandoned me and did not obey my word. **12** And you are even worse than your ancestors! You stubbornly follow your own evil desires and refuse to listen to me. **13** So I will throw you out of this land and send you into a foreign land where you and your ancestors have never been. There you can worship idols day and night—and I will grant you no favors!'

The above passage from Jeremiah vividly shows how the sins of the fathers affected the next generations, yet God was judging the current generation's own sins which were very great.

Let's continue in Exodus:

Exodus 34:8 So Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. **9** Then he said, "If now I have found grace in Your sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray, go among us, even though we *are* a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your inheritance."

Moses worshipped after coming to know God's glory and His name. That is the proper response. When we come to know who God is and how great He is, we will want to worship Him. People who do not worship do not know Him or appreciate Him.

The next part of chapter 34 is a renewal of God's covenant with Israel. We hear God's commands again.

10 And He said: "Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor 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. **11** Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. **12** Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst. **13** But you shall destroy their altars, break their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images **14** (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name *is* Jealous, *is* a jealous God), **15** lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and make sacrifice to their gods, and *one of them* invites you and you eat of his sacrifice, **16** and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and make your sons play the harlot with their gods.

God was giving Israel the land of the Canaanite peoples - all the different "-ites." These people were exceedingly corrupt and had been for centuries. Therefore, they forfeited their right to Canaan. God was going to remove them from the land and give it to Israel. God did not want Israel to copy any of the sinful practices found in the Canaanite culture.

There was a connection between the idol worship of the Canaanites and sexual immorality. This was also something that Israel participated in when worshipping the golden calf.

17 "You shall make no molded gods for yourselves.

God again gives this command. Obviously the Israelites needed to hear it again after the golden calf incident.

18 (NKJV) "The Feast of Unleavened Bread you shall keep. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, in the appointed time of the month of Abib; for in the month of Abib you came out from Egypt.

The Feast of Unleavened Bread was first mentioned by God in Exodus 12 when the Israelites were getting ready to leave Egypt. During this feast, all leaven was put away, a symbol that Israel was to live in purity. Leaven in Scripture is often a type of sin. God wanted His people to be pure before Him.

19 "All that open the womb *are* Mine, and every male firstborn among your livestock, *whether* ox or sheep. **20** But the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb. And if you will not redeem *him*, then you shall break his neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem.

God repeats the laws regarding the dedication of the first born to Him, first stated in Exodus 13:11-13 and 22:29-30. God spared the firstborn in Egypt, and now the firstborn are dedicated to Him. For humans, the firstborn *must* be “*bought back*” or redeemed from God (no human sacrifice in God’s law).

“And none shall appear before Me empty-handed.

Exodus 34:21 “Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.

Everyone should have some work to do and something to give unto the Lord. It honors God when we give to Him.

22 “And you shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the firstfruits of wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the year’s end.

23 “Three times in the year all your men shall appear before the Lord, the Lord God of Israel. **24** For I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders; neither will any man covet your land when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times in the year.

God commanded them to keep three feasts - Passover (or the Feast of Unleavened Bread), Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. God here promises His protection for those who obediently keep these feasts.

25 “You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leaven, nor shall the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover be left until morning.

Since leaven is a type of sin, it could not be included in a blood sacrifice which is given to take away sin.

26 “The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God.

When Israel possessed their land, the first of the crop was to be given to God in thanksgiving. Giving God the first and the best honors Him as our provider.

You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

This command is repeated from Exodus 23:19. They were not to imitate the pagan fertility rites practiced by the Canaanites, for this is what those people did in their pagan worship.

27 Then the Lord said to Moses, “Write these words, for according to the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel.” **28** So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And He wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

It is possible for someone to live for forty days without food, but a person can only live for three or four days without water. Moses’ fast must have been supernatural. He was sustained by the power and presence of God. Never again did a man fast this way. Jesus fasted forty days but from food only (satan tempted him with bread, not water). Moses could have testified to Jesus’ words, “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.*”

Exodus 34:29 Now it was so, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the Testimony were in Moses' hand when he came down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with Him. **30** So when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. **31** Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers of the congregation returned to him; and Moses talked with them. **32** Afterward all the children of Israel came near, and he gave them as commandments all that the Lord had spoken with him on Mount Sinai. **33** And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil on his face. **34** But whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he would take the veil off until he came out; and he would come out and speak to the children of Israel whatever he had been commanded. **35** And whenever the children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, then Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with Him.

Communion with God physically affected Moses. After fasting forty days, one might think that he would look sick, but instead Moses' face reflected the glory of God. Moses was a humble and meek man, and he did not know that his face shone.

To a certain extent, the face of a Christian can shine with the glory of God. Sometimes God's glory can be seen in the countenance of someone who has spent time in the presence of God. You may not be able to "put your finger on it," but when someone has spent quality time in prayer and in the presence of God, you can tell!

In the New Testament, Stephen also had a shining face:

Acts 6:15 And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel.

Exodus Chapter 35

Exodus 35:1 (NKJV) Then Moses gathered all the congregation of the children of Israel together, and said to them, "These *are* the words which the Lord has commanded *you* to do: **2** Work shall be done for six days, but the seventh day shall be a holy day for you, a Sabbath of rest to the Lord. Whoever does any work on it shall be put to death. **3** You shall kindle no fire throughout your dwellings on the Sabbath day."

Four times previously, God spoke to His people about honoring the Sabbath by doing no work. Exodus says that for someone who works on the Sabbath, the penalty is death. Why was God so adamant that the Sabbath should be respected, and why give the death penalty to someone who did not honor it?

The Sabbath is a type of the Spirit-filled life in the New Testament. By being filled with the Spirit of God we find spiritual rest - not of our own works. As we have stated in previous lessons, Paul taught in 1 Corinthians 14 that the baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in other tongues, is the rest and refreshing prophesied of in Isaiah 28:11-12. Through the baptism of the Spirit the New Testament Christian experiences the reality of the Sabbath rest - he rests in the Spirit of God and is refreshed. The Sabbath is the type or picture of the reality of the rest in the Spirit.

God is very particular about protecting the Old Testament types because they reflect New Testament realities. For instance, Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land because he hit the rock instead of speaking to it to obtain water for the children of Israel (Numbers 20:2-12). Why such a severe punishment for Moses? Because what he was doing was an important type: that Rock was Christ

(1 Cor. 10:1-4), and Moses was to *speak to it* to obtain water, just as we are to speak to Jesus Christ to obtain that “living water.” Though we may see only the surface of an incident in the Old Testament (Moses hits a rock and gets big-time punishment), God sees the big picture and His types and shadows of spiritual realities are very important to Him and to future generations who will also see that *they mean something very important!*

So why did God *again* remind the Israelites of the Sabbath rules this fifth time? There was a lot of work ahead for them. They had to build the Tabernacle. But before they began, they needed to be reminded that God has a rest, and they needed to respect it. Again, we New Testament Christians need to remember that God has a rest - the baptism of the Holy Ghost. We need to rest in His Spirit, and then our work can flow from that.