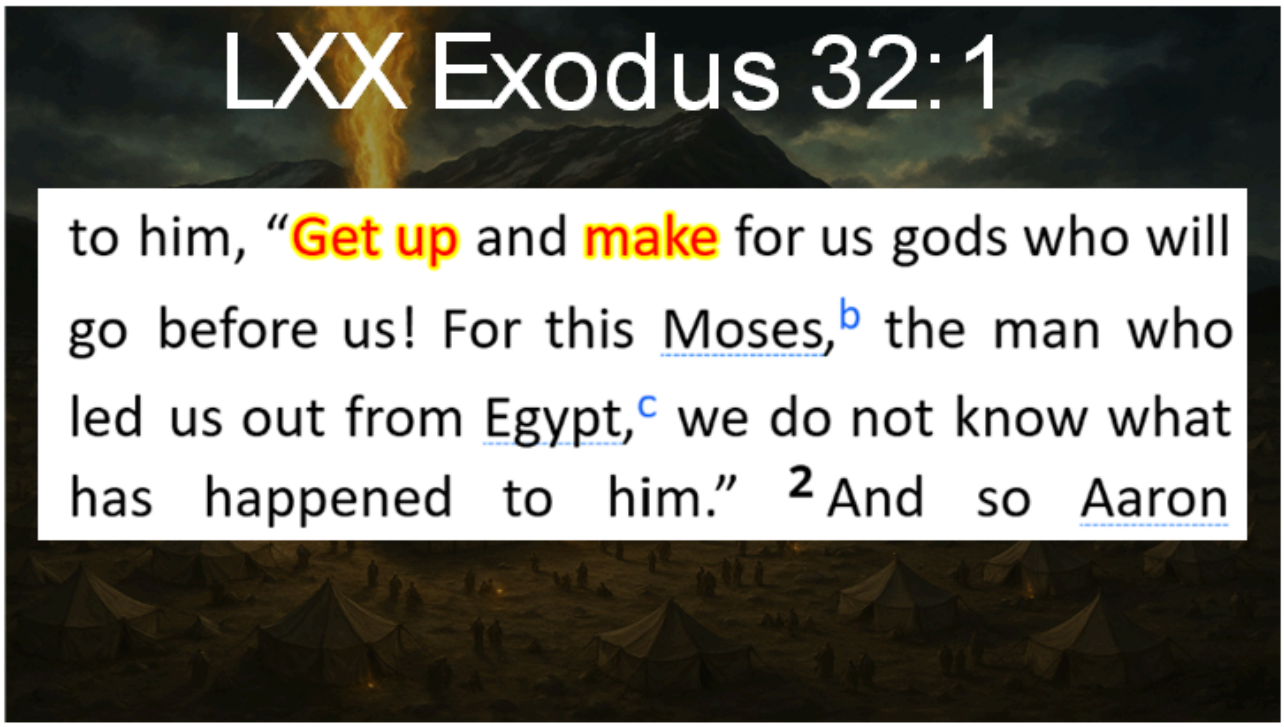
Exodus 33

Good Evening Arising Church!

We have been given the opportunity to study an extremely unique subject! We are getting to read about Moses' private, personal interactions and conversations with the Creator of the Universe. Tonight, we will see the potential of what a man's relationship to Adonai can look like. There may be horrific idolatry at the base of the mountain, but the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is able to bestow great honor on men when they approach him.

As we go through the chapter, you will see God's desire to be merciful to his people and his immutable justice. You will see what it takes to be a man that carries the presence of God and what kind of men God avoids so that his wrath does not flare up and kill them! Is that a topic you would like to learn more about? We thought so! Before we get into our chapter tonight, we need to review where we are in the story so we can "Set the scene" properly. This will enable us to understand the heart of God and the chapter we are studying tonight. Then, as always, we will jump into our text. Take a Look at this slide:

Read Slide



You should remember this slide from last week. What we see here is a translation of the Greek Septuagint version of Ex 32:1. This helps us to understand better what the Israelites are actually saying to Aaron. While many of our English translations make verse 1 sound more like a request or invitation. What is evident in the Greek here is that the language used is NOT passive or suggestive. The Israelites are COMMANDING Aaron to make gods for them.

This is an important note when you are considering the setting of Ex 32-Ex 34. The Israelites did not passively slip into sin or unwittingly fall into Idolatry; they aggressively pursued and demanded their idolatry! This is the kind of behavior that is expected out of the unregenerate, namely that the moment authoritative supervision is not present, the commands of the LORD begin to slip from their hearts until they are in outright, abject sin and are even demanding more of it! This happened among the people of God, in the family of God!

Before judging them too harshly, take an honest look at your own life. Do you move through cycles of intense zeal for the LORD when you know respected people are watching, only to drift back into old, habitual sin when the affirmation and approval you think you deserve fades? Or is it even more revealing than that, do you only repent when someone else notices your sin or confronts you about it?

What we saw in Israel is very much like a child who knows that dad is not home, so he decides to act like a hellion to his mother. With that in mind, let's take a look at our next slide:

(Read what makes since to)

DISRESPECT OF MOSES

As for this Moses is meant to be disrespectful. Since Moses was still on the mountain, it may be better to say "for that Moses" (NJB) or "for that man Moses" (TAN), combining it with the following phrase. The word "that" also conveys disrespect in English. The man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt is literally "the man who caused us to ascend from the land of Egypt." This may imply that the people were now at a higher elevation than they were in Egypt. 32:1 TEV simply has "who led us out of Egypt." (See the comment on the similar expression at 3:8.) We do not know what has become of him is literally "we do not know what is to him." This also means "we do not know what has happened to him." Another way to express the final part of this verse is "**That person (or, man) Moses brought us out of Egypt, but nobody knows what has happened to him**

Osborn, N. D., & Hatton, H. A. (1999). A handbook on Exodus (p. 750). United Bible Societies.

You should remember from this slide that the language used in Ex 32:1 regarding Moses is intentionally disrespectful! Not only did the people command Aaron to make an idol, but they also had to throw in disrespect toward the man who led them out of Egypt! We were going to make a personal application here, but we KNOW that no one in this church would even dream of privately cutting down someone because they didn't want to admit that the other person was stronger. We also know for SURE that in this body, no one would EVER show disdain and disrespect to someone because they called out their sin!

What we are seeing here is that the Israelites had been acting like children who not only harass mom when dad is not around, but will even go so far as to besmirch his name when he is out of earshot. Let's take a look at our next slide:

Read bullet points

THE APIS BULL

- Thought of as the son of the gods and an intermediary between men and the gods.
- Believed to have been sacrificed and then reborn.
- Believed to have been conceived through a ray of sunlight or lightning.
- Was associated with the King of Egypt.
- It was given the title: "The Renewal of Life".
- Was believed that his breath could heal, strengthen others in proximity.
- The Greeks gave him a human form.

References

1. Quote: Virtual Egyptian Museum
2. Vos R.L. The Apis Embalming Ritual - P. Vindob. 3873. Peeters publishers 1992, ISBN 978-90-6831-438-0. Retrieved 2015-07-02.
3. "Apis Bull". Walters Art Museum.
4. Anabasis of Alexander (http://websfor.org/alexander/arrian/book3a.asp), Arrian, from websfor.org 5. Arrian, Anabasis, VII. 26
5. Wikimedia Commons has media related to Apis.

Further reading

1. Dorothy J. Thompson, Memphis Under the Ptolemies, Second Edition. Princeton, 2012.
2. Jacques Vandier, "Memphis et le taureau Apis dans le papyrus Jumilhac" (in French), in Jean Sainte Faire Garnot (ed), Mélanges Mariette. Cairo, 1961.
3. R. L. Vos, The Apis Embalming Ritual: P. Vindob. 3873. Leuven, 1992.

External Links

The Virtual Egyptian Museum: Apis (http://www.virtual-egyptian-museum.org/Collection/FullVisit/Collection.FullVisit-JFR.html?../Content/MET.LL.00887.html&0)

Last week, we taught you that the original language and Egyptian culture both point to the Golden Calf being an image or version of the Apis bull. You can even find carvings and paintings of similar bulls in the area. The Israelites have made an idol and called it YHWH; they seem to have picked one that shares similar attributes to YHWH! Amongst the myriad of difference that are obviously present, there is one key difference between what they called YHWH and who the actual YHWH is. The biggest difference is that their worship of the Apis bull required no holiness, purity, or self-control. They set up a God for themselves so they could sin to the max without feeling guilty. Rather than wait on what the LORD wanted to give them, which was the eternal law and covenant of love, they chose to enjoy the passing pleasure of unrestrained sin.

It is very important to remember that all of this was happening while Moses was on the mountain with the LORD, who was giving Moses the Ten Commandments and instructions for the tabernacle, which would allow Israel to dwell with him. This begins to help paint a picture or "Set the scene" for us in our chapter tonight. Israel is much like a child who is misbehaving, mistreating mom, and casting dispersions on dad's name, all the while the LORD is like a father coming home from work with presents for his children. However, when he gets home, he cannot give them to his children because of their behavior.

Perhaps this is what Jonah was thinking about in Jonah 2:

- **Jonah 2:7-9 (NIV)**

  7 "When my life was ebbing away,
  I remembered you, Lord,
  and my prayer rose to you,
  to your holy temple.

  8 "Those who cling to worthless idols
  forfeit the grace that could be theirs.
  9 But I, with a song of thanksgiving,
  will sacrifice to you.
  What I have vowed I will make good.
  Salvation comes from the Lord."

This is Jonah's prayer when he was experiencing rebuke from the LORD and (the stomach acid of a fish) for his rebellion to the LORD. Tonight you will see a clear distinction between those who cling to Idols and those that fulfill their vows to the LORD. You will see a clear contrast emerges between those who cling to idols and those who remain faithful to the vows they have made to the LORD. Those who persevere in doing what is right are granted the honor of nearness to Him, while those who are stubborn and wayward experience distance, not as rejection, but as an opportunity to repent! The LORD does not reward wickedness, yet He reveals profound mercy by creating the circumstances and conditions that offer the greatest possible opportunity for repentance!

Before we pray and get into our text tonight, we thought it best to cover a few passages to remind us of the character of the LORD and the destiny of his people:

- **Matthew 7:9-12 (NIV)**

  9 "Which of you, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? 11 If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

The LORD gives GOOD gifts to his children who ask! We do not need to take what does not belong to us or fight for our piece of the pie. The LORD gives his children

good things because he desires to do so, however it is entirely possible to forfeit those gifts through rebellion and idolatry.

We must wait on the LORD to give us what he desires, and we must rid idolatry from our lives, which would prevent the LORD from giving us those gifts because of our wickedness.

Take a look at:

- **Hebrews 11:6 (NIV)**
  And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

The LORD rewards those who seek him! If you want more of the LORD, ask for him and seek him.

Much of our rebellion comes from a lack of desire for him or a lack of faith that our efforts in seeking him will be rewarded. These are short-sighted and sinful inclinations, but they are easily cured by seeking out his presence.

Next:

- **Romans 11:25-27 (NIV)**
  25 I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. 26 And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written:
  "The deliverer will come from Zion;
  he will turn godlessness away from Jacob.
  27 And this is my covenant with them when I take away their sins."

All Israel will be saved! If he doesn't save them, then we cannot be saved. What we are seeing in Exodus is part of God's process to have a pure and spotless bride.

He has mercy on whoever he wants, and he chose them.

Now that you have the correct setting in mind of the LORD as a father who wants to give good gifts to his children but was unable to because of their current behavior, know that he will set up the best possible chance for his children to repent. Let's jump into our chapter!

Pray and Read

What an interesting set of chapters we've been walking through. Things looked very dark in the last chapter, and yet, at just the right time, God raises up an Israelite to intercede for the nation. At several points in Israel's history, it can seem as though everything is over, as if the nation will not survive. And yet God always keeps a remnant of those who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Men and women who have a special relationship with the LORD. Through them, He intends for that intimacy to flow onto the rest of the people.

Tonight we are about to witness Moses reach a defining moment in his walk with the LORD. This chapter represents the culmination of a long journey. From the opening of Exodus, we have seen his growth, his background, his family, his reluctance, and his struggle with the call of God. Now, we will get to see him stand fully in the gap for an entire nation…a nation that has more than once wanted to stone him. This is the moment toward which God has been shaping him all along.

So let's pick up in verse one.

Exodus 33:1–23 (NIVUK84)
1 Then the LORD said to Moses, “Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, ‘I will give it to your descendants.’

When you consider our last chapter, these are some very welcome words for the Israelites. God is not allowing his people to remain in their failure and telling them they cannot stay where they are. How relieving it would be to hear, "Leave this place?" If you were there, you probably would never want to see that place again.

The same is true about all of God's people: after a serious moment of failure, you must get up and go where the Lord has told you. You are not allowed to sit in your current status!

It is true that Israel has failed royally, but remember that they still have a promise and an advocate. Last week, we saw Moses interceding with the Lord on behalf of the people called by his name. You should remember this verse:

- **Exodus 32:14 (NIVUK84)**
  14 Then the LORD relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened.

We taught you last week that God allowed a conversation to take place between Himself and Moses about the outcome of the Israelites' sin, and in that conversation, God was leading Moses on so that he would grow as an intercessor. With that said, we also read that about 3,000 Israelites died as a result of their sin… Since this verse says that God turned away from the disaster he had threatened, it is understandable that the correction God gave was not as severe as it could have been.

- **Jeremiah 5:1 (NIVUK84)**
  1 “Go up and down the streets of Jerusalem, look around and consider, search through her squares. If you can find but one person who deals honestly and seeks the truth, I will forgive this city.

The Lord is not looking to destroy his people; if he can find any righteousness in them, he will save them, or to say this another way, he is looking for anything that can be redeemed in us! Moses stood before the Lord and advocated for God's name, which was already on the people. Because they were chosen, they are able to be redeemed! God is never looking to punish his people for their sin. His aim is their redemption and restoration, which means that if he has to punish them, the aim of the punishment is their redemption.

- **Psalm 106:19–23 (NIVUK84)**
  19 At Horeb they made a calf and worshipped an idol cast from metal.
  20 They exchanged their Glory for an image of a bull, which eats grass.
  21 They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt,
  22 miracles in the land of Ham and awesome deeds by the Red Sea.

23 So he said he would destroy them— had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them.

The Israelites shared in the Glory of Adonai because they worshiped him, and they exchanged their Glory, not Adonai's, for the image of a bull. To do this, they had to forget the Lord. The Psalmist is remembering that Israel had an advocate who was raised up by Adonai to stand in the breach for them. This is why remembering is imperative in the scripture, which is repeated many times! Now we would like to remind you of the promise that Israel had, has, and always will have:

- **Numbers 23:19 (NIVUK84)**
  19 God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfil?

Not only did Israel have an advocate, but they also have a promise that is irrevocable because it was made by Adonai, who cannot lie. This mandates that the people of God have to forget what they leave behind and completely lose their lives in him. We are not allowed to stay in our misery because we have an advocate and a promise, and we must get up and go on to our next act of obedience.

- **Joshua 23:14 (NIVUK84)**
  14 “Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.

At this point, the Israelites have had many moments of unbelief and disobedience. This did not stop God from being faithful to his promises! He brought them to the Land just like he said that he would in Exodus 6.

- **Nehemiah 9:7–8 (NIVUK84)**
  7 “You are the LORD God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and named him Abraham.
  8 You found his heart faithful to you, and you made a covenant with him to give to his descendants the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites,

Perizzites, Jebusites and Girgashites. **You have kept your promise because you are righteous.**

The text does not say that the people were righteous. He kept his promise because he is righteous and his promise is tied to his unchanging nature. Although the people were unrighteous, Adonai still raised up advocates for them because they still have a promise.

Let's re-read verse 1 so that we can make a few more comments before we move on.

1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.'

Notice the wording in the quoted promise: "I will give it to your **descendants."** Abraham and Moses' lives were not about themselves but about what God would do through the generations. This is what made them such powerful intercessors and advocates. With that in mind, it is our job to put the next generation on better footing! What you do in this life actually affects the generations ahead of you. Tonight's chapter is a beautiful example of Adonai's ability to work in the generations despite flaws and failures. Consider the first several commandments in Exodus 20.

- **Exodus 20:1–4 (NIVUK84)**

  1 And God spoke all these words:
  2 "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.
  3 "You shall have no other gods before me.
  4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.

The Israelites broke all of these commands, and yet God has been faithful to them for generations. This is because, despite their failures, they have refused to sit around and mourn. Israel has not forgotten His character, and they rose up and did His will.

- **Isaiah 38:19 (NIVUK84)**

  19 The living, the living—they praise you, as I am doing today; fathers tell their children about your faithfulness.

How could fathers tell their children about the faithfulness of the Lord if they never need God to be faithful? Fathers who are fallible and allow their children to see them repent help their children see the faithfulness of God regarding the promises he has made. Hiding your weakness causes them to become as rebellious as you are.

- **Psalm 78:5–8 (NIVUK84)**

  5 He decreed statutes for Jacob and established the law in Israel, which he commanded our **forefathers to teach their children**,
  6 so that the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children.
  7 Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands.
  8 They would not be like their forefathers— a stubborn and rebellious generation, whose hearts were not loyal to God, whose spirits were not faithful to him.

We are commanded to teach our children and all of the generations coming after us so that they will put their trust in his commands. That means that if you sinned on Monday, do not let it prevent you from doing his will on Tuesday. What does God hate the most, when we sin once, or when our sin prevents us from doing his will?

On the next slide, you will see something you might remember from last week.

(Read Slide)

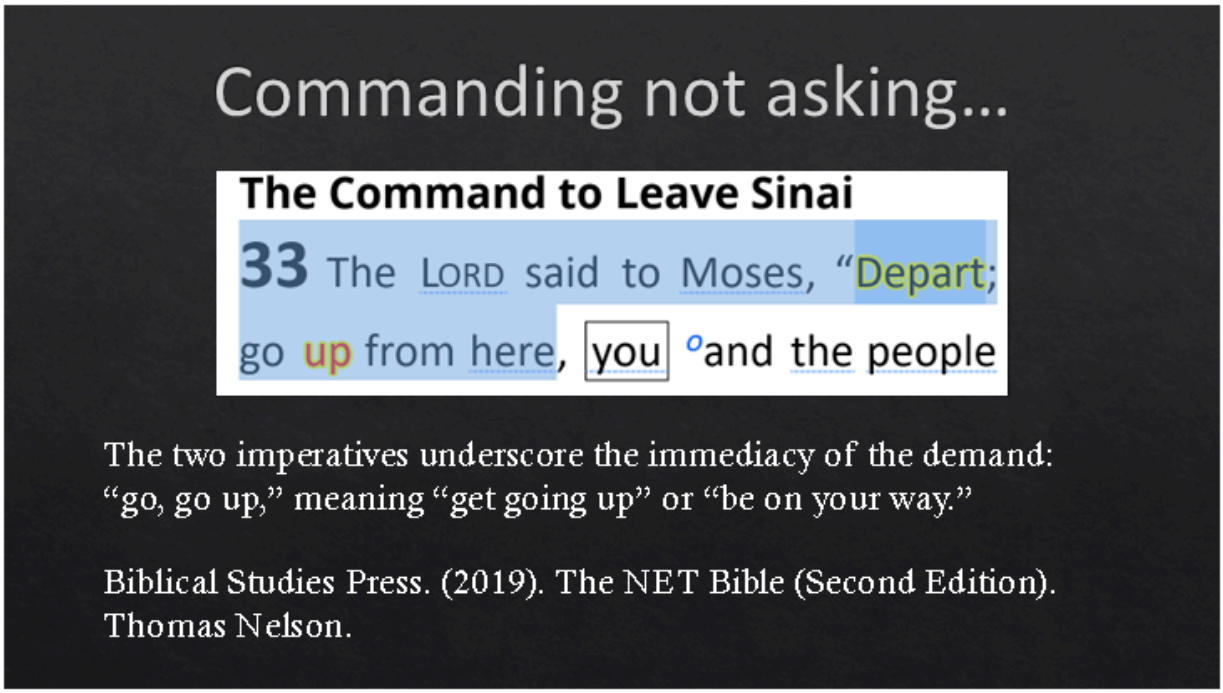
The People YOU Brought Up…

The Lord said to Moses, literally "And Yahweh spoke unto Moses," is identical with the opening of the first dialogue in 32:7. Depart, go up hence is literally "you go, you ascend from this [place]." This is in sharp contrast with 32:7, where Yahweh says "You go, you descend." In both cases the "you" is singular. You and the people, however, now includes the Israelites. Whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt is literally "whom you [singular] caused to ascend from the land of Egypt." The same expression is used in 32:7. (See the comment on brought up at 3:8.)

Osborn, N. D., & Hatton, H. A. (1999). A handbook on Exodus (p. 777). United Bible Societies.

In our first verse tonight, we see God using the same language that he used in our last chapter. He is speaking to Moses and still referring to the Israelites as the people Moses brought out of Egypt. Next, notice the tone that Adonai is using when he is speaking to Moses.

(Don't read slide)



When God is speaking to Moses, it is not a polite request but rather a sudden, immediate, and imperial command. He is ordering his people to rise from their failure and move toward the promises he has called them to. There is also something about this command that would have been familiar to Moses and the Israelites, because it was spoken to Israel in their recent history. Take a look at this next passage.

- **Genesis 35:1 (ESV)**
  35 God said to Jacob, **"Arise, go up** to Bethel and dwell there. Make an altar there to the God who appeared to you when you fled from your brother Esau."

This is right after the heinous event at Shechem that featured the intentional usage of the Covenant of God by the Sons of Jacob to deceive the Shechemites. After this massive failure, God speaks to Jacob and his family and orders them to get up and go! Take a look at Jacob's follow-up in the next verses.

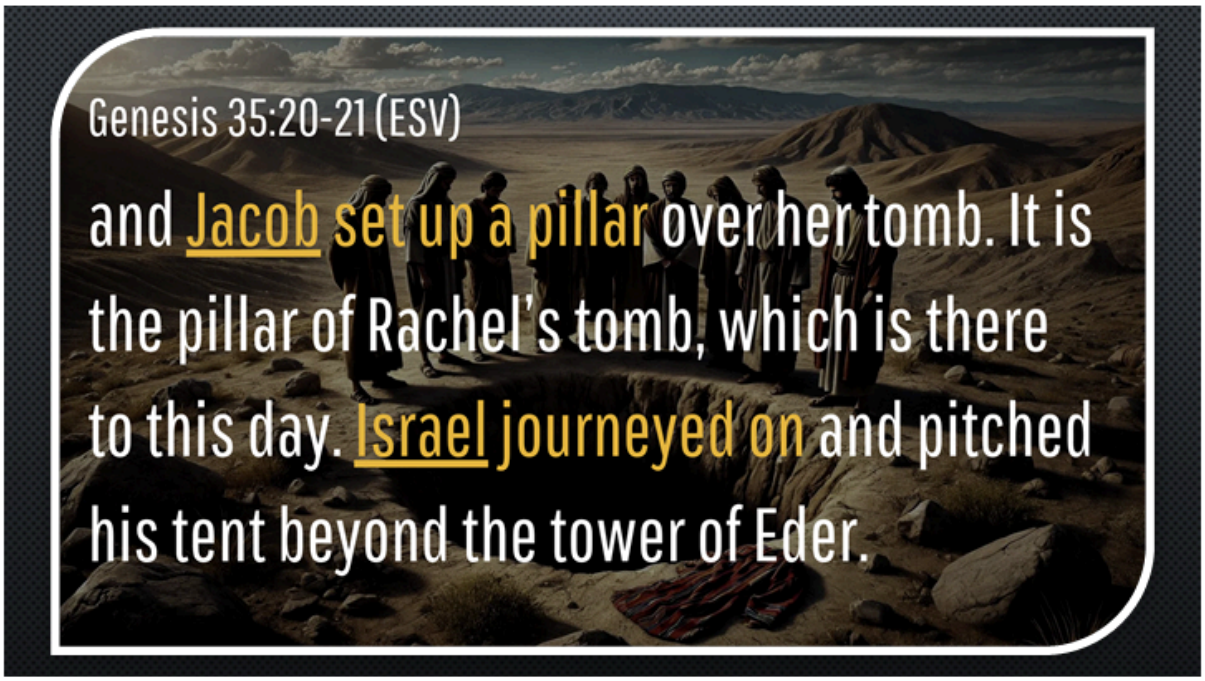
- **Genesis 35:2–4 (ESV)**
  2 So Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, "Put away the foreign gods that are among you and purify yourselves and change your garments. 3 Then let us arise and go up to Bethel, **so that I**

may make there an altar to the God who answers me in the day of my distress and has been with me wherever I have gone." 4 So they gave to Jacob all the foreign gods that they had, and the rings that were in their ears. Jacob hid them under the terebinth tree that was near Shechem.

Jacob wasted no time when being ordered by God to leave his failures behind. He immediately turns to his family and begins ministering to them, telling them to get rid of anything that has prevented them from a right relationship with Adonai. Jacob then refers to the Lord as the "God who answers me in the day of my distress". This is the intentional remembering of who God always has been and how he has been faithful along the way. This is what it looks like to repent and move towards righteousness!

Take a look at this next slide because there is an intentional interchange of names that occurs after Jacob visits Bethel later in Genesis 35.

(Read Slide)



Earlier in Genesis, Jacob faced obstacle after obstacle and even had to be commanded by God to get up and go after a major failure in his family. Later in the chapter, Jacob suffers another painful event in his life and has to bury his wife. Did you notice the interchange between the name Jacob and Israel in these

verses? While Jacob is mourning his wife, the name "Jacob" is mentioned. When he rises and leaves, his name is mentioned as "Israel". This is very interesting and cannot be missed. When the Patriarch is in struggle, he is called Jacob; when he is on his way to accomplish God's will, he is called "Israel"!

This serves to emphasize the Godlike nobility of Israel as a prince with God, who prevails with God! Jacob's story embodies the royal election of Israel, the struggle of Israel, and the triumph of Israel, as the Messiah perfects the nation in the same way he was perfected. The name Jacob can be associated with the patriarch's struggle and the process of being transformed. The name Israel is associated with the patriarch's royal election and the transformed state.

With this in view, take another look at the conversation between God and Moses so that you can see another contrast between Moses' and God's choices of wording.

(Do not Read)

In Exodus 32, while the Israelites are in sin, Moses is appealing for the lives of the community, and he uses the name that is associated with the patriarch's royal election and transformed state. In Exodus 33, after judgment and punishment,

God uses the name associated with the patriarch's struggle and process of being transformed, which was difficult and took a while.

This is beautiful, and you should be able to see the preciousness of how Moses and God are speaking to each other. Moses reminds the Lord of what he accomplished in Jacob's life, and in the next chapter, God reminds Moses of the difficult, ongoing process of transformation!

In the midst of the transformation there are times that we will fail and sin and anytime you sin against God, we want you to be aware that you are actually in the middle of at least three battles.

The first battle that you face is not sinning to begin with. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says that no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man, but that when you are tempted God provides a way of escape—take it.

The second battle that follows is the battle to confess. If you lose that first battle, the enemy wants to keep that sin in the dark so that it can grow. And even if you don't do it again, he wants to paralyze you with shame for the rest of your life. 1 John 1:9 says that if you confess your sins, He will forgive you and cleanse you of all unrighteousness. You have to win that second battle.

Then, immediately following, another battle: getting back up and being the person God has called you to be. Leading your wife, your kids, teaching sinners righteousness, doing the good you know to do. This battle is one that so many lose because they think it is noble to stay down. God intends for you to get back up and be who He has called you to be!

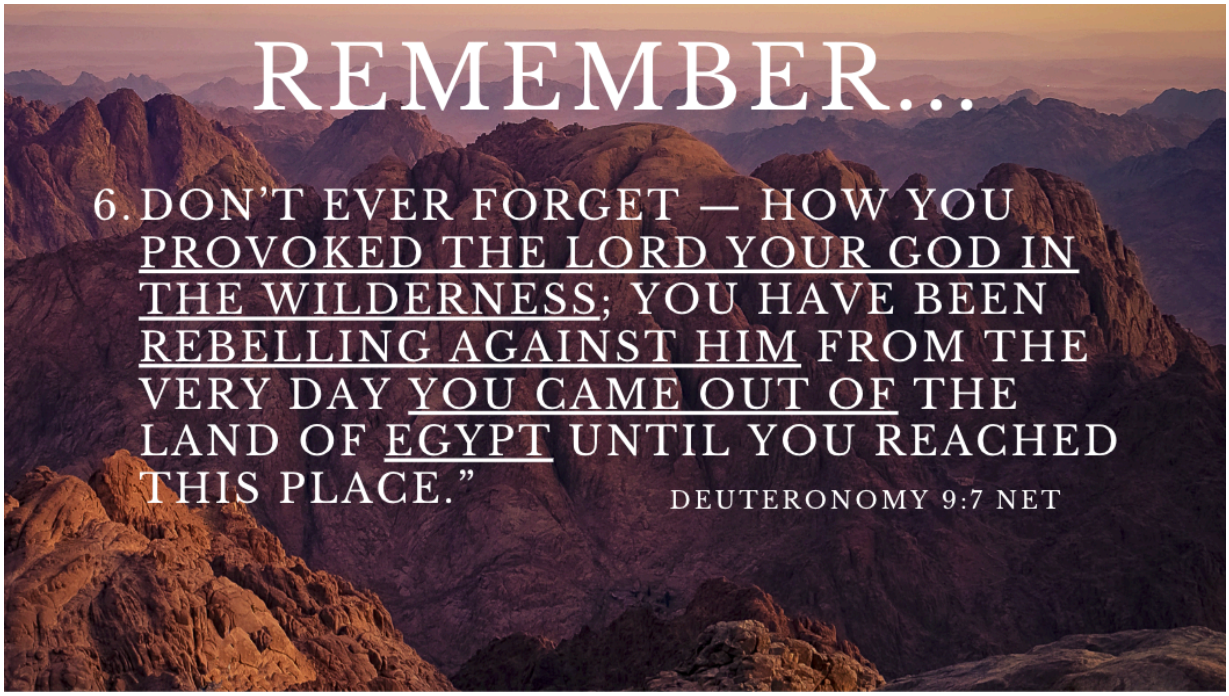
2 I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.
3 Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way."

When you hear God say that he might destroy them on the way, you either have to think that God wants to isolate himself from his people in his anger, or something else is going on. Remember, the goal of this book is for God to dwell with his people, so with that in mind, we think it is far more likely that God said this to spare the Israelites so that he can dwell with them! This is just like what a parent would do when refraining from judgment or proximity, because they might consume the child in wrath if there is no distance.

We want to pause right here and help create a little more context surrounding God's statement about the people being stiff-necked.

Where do you think the rebellion within the Israelites began? Did it start at Mt. Sinai when Moses was gone for 40 days? Was it earlier than that? Let's recall the verse from week 6 of our Remember Series:

(READ SLIDE)



As we read this verse, it is clear there was rebellion since the day they came out of Egypt. But could it have possibly been even earlier than that? Let's take a look at a passage that is rarely taught but is very pertinent for our time tonight.

(READ HIGHLIGHTS)

REBELLIOUS SINCE...

"ARE YOU WILLING TO PRONOUNCE JUDGMENT? ARE YOU WILLING TO PRONOUNCE JUDGMENT, SON OF MAN? THEN CONFRONT THEM WITH THE ABOMINABLE PRACTICES OF THEIR FATHERS, 5 AND SAY TO THEM:
"'THIS IS WHAT THE SOVEREIGN LORD SAYS: ON THE DAY I CHOSE ISRAEL I SWORE TO THE DESCENDANTS OF THE HOUSE OF JACOB AND MADE MYSELF KNOWN TO THEM IN THE LAND OF EGYPT. I SWORE TO THEM, "I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD." 6 ON THAT DAY I SWORE TO BRING THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT TO A LAND WHICH I HAD PICKED OUT FOR THEM, A LAND FLOWING WITH MILK AND HONEY, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL OF ALL LANDS. 7 I SAID TO THEM, "EACH OF YOU MUST GET RID OF THE DETESTABLE IDOLS YOU KEEP BEFORE YOU, AND DO NOT DEFILE YOURSELVES WITH THE IDOLS OF EGYPT; I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD." 8 BUT THEY REBELLED AGAINST ME, AND REFUSED TO LISTEN TO ME; NO ONE GOT RID OF THEIR DETESTABLE IDOLS, NOR DID THEY ABANDON THE IDOLS OF EGYPT. THEN I DECIDED TO POUR OUT MY RAGE ON THEM AND FULLY VENT MY ANGER AGAINST THEM IN THE MIDST OF THE LAND OF EGYPT. 9 (BUT) I ACTED FOR THE SAKE OF MY REPUTATION, SO THAT I WOULD NOT BE PROFANED BEFORE THE NATIONS AMONG WHOM THEY LIVED, BEFORE WHOM I REVEALED MYSELF BY BRINGING THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT. 10 "'SO I BROUGHT THEM OUT OF THE LAND OF EGYPT AND LED THEM TO THE WILDERNESS. 11 I GAVE THEM MY STATUTES AND REVEALED MY REGULATIONS TO THEM. THE ONE WHO CARRIES THEM OUT WILL LIVE BY THEM!

EZ.20:4-11 NET

What you are reading is that the Israelites were rebellious even in Egypt! That God came to them and said: "Get rid of your idols and the idols of Egypt". And then it says, "No one got rid of their idols." Have you ever thought of Israel as having idols in Egypt? It then says that because the people rebelled against God's instructions that He was going to pour out His wrath on them in EGYPT!!! The Lord chose not to pour out His wrath on them in Egypt; instead, He brought them out into the desert to give them His instructions. This cycle of rebellion will continue through the desert, into the promised land, and throughout the generations.

Let's skip a little further down to see what else the Lord has to say through Ezekiel, nearly 1000 years after our chapter tonight.

(READ HIGHLIGHTS)

REBELLIOUS SINCE (CONT)...

32 " 'YOU SAY, "WE WANT TO BE LIKE THE NATIONS, LIKE THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD, WHO SERVE WOOD AND STONE." BUT WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND WILL NEVER HAPPEN. 33 AS SURELY AS I LIVE, DECLARES THE SOVEREIGN LORD, I WILL REIGN OVER YOU WITH A MIGHTY HAND AND AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM AND WITH OUTPOURED WRATH. 34 I WILL BRING YOU FROM THE NATIONS AND GATHER YOU FROM THE COUNTRIES WHERE YOU HAVE BEEN SCATTERED—WITH A MIGHTY HAND AND AN OUTSTRETCHED ARM AND WITH OUTPOURED WRATH. 35 I WILL BRING YOU INTO THE WILDERNESS OF THE NATIONS AND THERE, FACE TO FACE, I WILL EXECUTE JUDGMENT UPON YOU. 36 AS I JUDGED YOUR ANCESTORS IN THE WILDERNESS OF THE LAND OF EGYPT, SO I WILL JUDGE YOU, DECLARES THE SOVEREIGN LORD. 37 I WILL TAKE NOTE OF YOU AS YOU PASS UNDER MY ROD, AND I WILL BRING YOU INTO THE BOND OF THE COVENANT. 38 I WILL PURGE YOU OF THOSE WHO REVOLT AND REBEL AGAINST ME. ALTHOUGH I WILL BRING THEM OUT OF THE LAND WHERE THEY ARE LIVING, YET THEY WILL NOT ENTER THE LAND OF ISRAEL. THEN YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD.

44 YOU WILL KNOW THAT I AM THE LORD , WHEN I DEAL WITH YOU FOR MY NAME'S SAKE AND NOT ACCORDING TO YOUR EVIL WAYS AND YOUR CORRUPT PRACTICES, YOU PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, DECLARES THE SOVEREIGN LORD .'

EZ.20:32-38, 44 NIV

It is easy to look at the golden calf in the wilderness and assume that rebellion began there. That is not the case. Rebellion—manifesting as idolatry—has been present from the very beginning of Israel's calling. From the moment they were chosen, resistance was already in their midst.

But the Lord has always had a plan. That plan includes a sifting and a purging. He declares that He will enter into judgment with them "face to face", which is language that we will see tonight.

When you put the details of this passage together, the picture sharpens. In verse 33, He says, "I will reign over you." In verse 38, He says He will purge from among them those who revolt and rebel. That tells us something critical: not all Israel was rebellious, but rebellion has always been present within Israel. And the Lord will ultimately deal with it—completely and finally. God doesn't simply sweep the nation away because of their sins, as you have come to learn. Rather, He acts for His name's sake and according to His righteousness. The goal is not destruction but refinement. The outcome of this long process is a purified nation in which Adonai is unmistakably recognized as King.

Tonight, we are stepping into a glimpse of this multi-millennial dealing of the Father with His children. You will see that the ultimate aim was never rebellion or punishment as an end in and of itself. The aim has always been the revelation of His character—profound and life-changing.

The illustration of Father to children has limitations. We must also remember that He has brought Israel into the desert to marry her.

Isaiah 54:5-8 plainly states that the maker of Israel - Adonai - is their husband.
In Exodus 34:14, we learn that God is a Jealous God and his anger is aroused when his people are idolatrous.

Because He is a good husband, He won't tolerate competitors, and He also doesn't want to throw His bride away, so He provides a solution of refinement. In this chapter, God does this by sending an angel.

4 When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and no-one put on any ornaments.
5 For the LORD had said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you.’ ”
6 So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments at Mount Horeb.

We want to give you a few scriptures that use the same Hebrew word as "ornaments" so that you can understand the cultural associations that are in view.

- **Jeremiah 2:31–32 (NIVUK84)**

  31 “You of this generation, consider the word of the LORD: “Have I been a desert to Israel or a land of great darkness? Why do my people say, ‘We are free to roam; we will come to you no more’?
  32 Does a maiden forget her jewelry, a bride her wedding ornaments? Yet my people have forgotten me, days without number.'

This word for "ornaments" is marriage language as it refers to the kind of jewelry that a bride would wear on her wedding day. This means that in Exodus 33:4, when God tells the Israelites to take off their ornaments, he is saying something akin to *"why are you wearing that wedding ring? Take it off while I decide what to do with you."* This is striking when you consider what Ezekiel 7:20 says:

- **Ezekiel 7:20 (NIVUK84)**

  20 They were proud of their beautiful jewelry and used it to make their detestable idols and vile images. Therefore I will turn these into an unclean thing for them.

You can see the repeated pattern from Exodus all the way into the Prophets. The Israelites were given plunder that was supposed to be worn as ornaments during their union with the Lord. Yet, they used their "ornaments" to make idols, so the Lord is now telling them to take them off.

What is beautiful about this concept in the Bible is that no matter what has happened in Israel's history, God makes a very special promise regarding Israel's ornaments. Take a look at Isaiah 49.

- **Isaiah 49:18 (NIVUK84)**

  18 Lift up your eyes and look around; **all your sons** gather and come to you. As surely as I live,” declares the LORD, “**you will wear them all as ornaments**; you will put them on, like a bride.

Although Adonai was angry with his bride in Exodus and asked her to take off her wedding ring, later in the story, he not only promises that she will wear them

again, he says that her progeny will be her ornaments - this is the promise that the bride will be restored AND have godly offspring!

According to Isaiah 49, the fruit of covenant intimacy between Adonai and Israel is offspring—the bride would be adorned with her sons. That means intimacy produces something visible. So what is the evidence of your intimacy with God? It is not merely what you know; it is not how well you can articulate doctrine. The proof is whether your life is actually reproducing strength in others. Are there believers around you who are growing in devotion, increasing in obedience, and becoming stronger because of what you are pouring into them?

If you cannot look around and identify people who are being strengthened in Christ through your life, then you must honestly evaluate your intimacy with Him. You might look like you're intimate with God, you might be able to spout out a Bible study, or you might be able to quote a few pieces of doctrine. Nevertheless, intimacy with God always produces fruit. It produces revelation that transforms you. It produces obedience that reshapes you. It produces godliness that affects others. And when that transformation is real, it will multiply to those around you.

7 Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting". Anyone enquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp.

There has been some speculation over the years about Moses' tent of meeting being the same tent of meeting that was in the Tabernacle, because the Hebrew uses the same words to describe Moses' tent as well as the tent that housed the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

We want to tell you that this is simply not possible. According to Exodus 27:21, the Holy and Most Holy place is described as a tent of meeting with a curtain, located in the center of the camp. Moses' tent is outside the camp.

Exodus 28:43, 29:4, 30:18, and 31:6-7 all describe the "Tent of meeting," which housed the holy places and stood at the center of the camp. In our chapter tonight, Moses just came down from the mountain, and the people were in sin and had not yet built anything. To underscore this point, the NIV does not use capitalized letters when using the phrase "tent of meeting" in reference to Moses'

tent. With this understanding in place, we think that this is quite beautiful. Moses and Joshua stayed where God was in the "tent of meeting", and all of Israel took notice of Moses' special relationship with the Lord. The next verses mention that the people would rise and stand at the entrances to their tents while Moses went in. This means that all of Israel would get a chance to see what they would eventually enter into, but Moses and Joshua were first.

Hosea 3:1 gives us a similar description.

- **Hosea 3:1 (NIVUK84)**
  1 The LORD said to me, “Go, show your love to your wife again, though she is loved by another and is an adulteress. **Love her as the LORD loves the Israelites**, though they turn to other gods and love the sacred raisin cakes.”

There is a relationship between God and Hosea that was meant to demonstrate truths about God's desire for Israel and God's plans for Israel. In our chapter, God is close to Moses and Joshua, but he intends to have the same closeness with the entire nation, and Moses was the starting point. Before there was ever a Tent of Meeting for the Israelites, there was a tent of meeting outside of the camp for Moses and Joshua… Listen to how Hebrews 13:13 words this.

- **Hebrews 13:13a (NIVUK84)**
  13 Let us, then, go to him **outside the camp**…

Remember the connection between Jesus (Yeshua) and Joshua (Yehoshua)? This is because the writer of Hebrews is making an intentional connection between Joshua being in the tent of meeting outside the camp and what God wants to establish in the midst of the camp. Listen to the next verse.

- **Hebrews 13:14 (NIVUK84)**
  14 For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come.

When you go to Joshua (Jesus) outside the camp, He teaches you how to establish the other tent of meeting inside your camp. Exodus 25:8 states God's desire to dwell with his people in the midst of the camp. This means that the people seeing

Moses and Joshua dwelling in a tent with God outside the camp was intended to create in the Israelites a desire to dwell with God personally.

Have you ever asked why they were standing at the entrances of their tents watching this? Because something was being stirred in them. A holy desire was being awakened. They were watching a man dwell with God in a way they themselves had not yet experienced. And that sight was meant to provoke a hunger in them.

God was doing something with Moses and Joshua that He always intended for the entire nation to share. What they were witnessing outside the camp was a preview of what God desired to establish in the midst of the camp.

Let's pick up in verse eight.

8 And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent.
9 As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses.
10 Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshipped, each at the entrance to his tent.
11 The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young assistant Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

Many have misunderstood what is actually going on with Moses and Adonai because they have mistaken the phrase "face to face" as Moses being able to see God. The next verses will prove that to be untrue, but for now, we want to help you understand what the phrase means.

To start, take a look at this slide.

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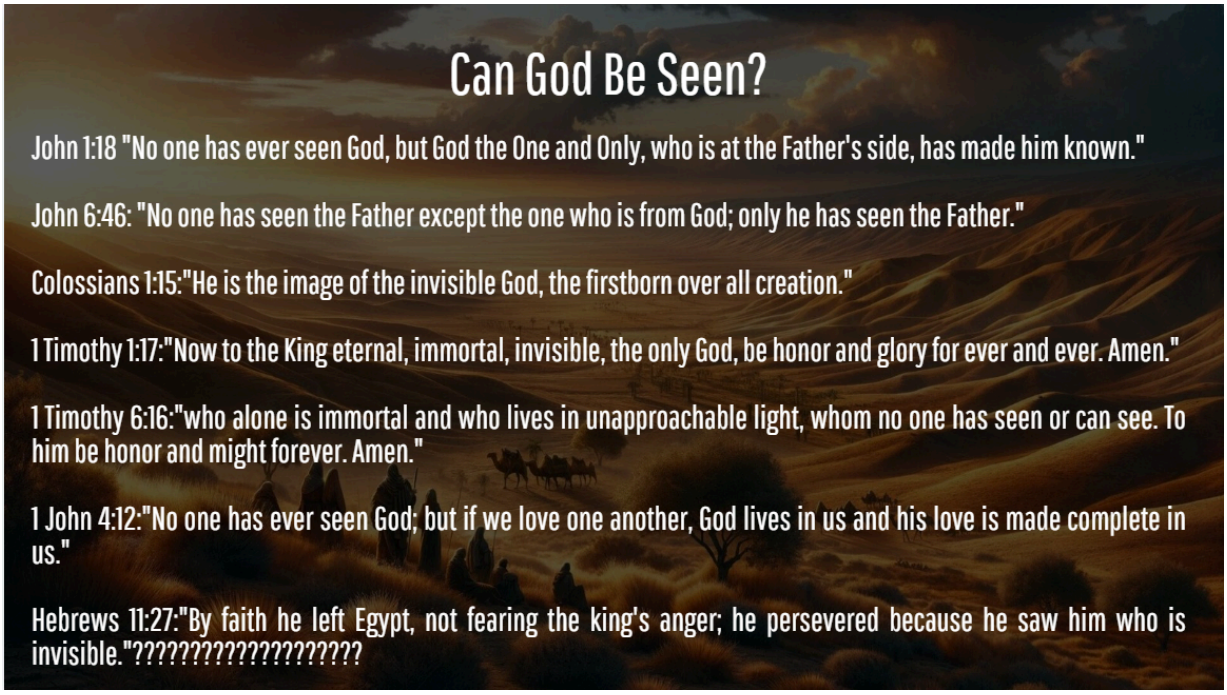

God cannot be seen, and the scripture is pretty clear about that, so what is being communicated in Exodus is that Moses had unfettered access in his relationship to YHWH. Take a look at this next passage.

- **Numbers 12:6–8 (ESV)**

  6 And he said, “Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream. 7 Not so with my servant Moses. He is faithful in all my house. 8 With him I speak mouth to mouth, clearly, and not in riddles, and he beholds the form of the LORD. Why then were you not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?”

The concept that is being conveyed is not that God allows Moses to see his face, but that the Lord speaks to Moses directly, and not through indirect forms of communication like dreams and visions. The phrase "mouth to mouth" conveys closeness.

- **Deuteronomy 34:10–12 (ESV)**

  10 And there has not arisen a prophet since in Israel like Moses, **whom the LORD knew face to face**, 11 none like him for all the signs and the wonders that the LORD sent him to do in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh

and to all his servants and to all his land, 12 and for all the mighty power and all the great deeds of terror that Moses did in the sight of all Israel.

The point is that Moses had unhindered access to Adonai in his relationship with him AND Adonai had unhindered access to Moses. This speaks to the openness and freedom they both had to communicate so clearly with one another. This means that Moses is in a different category from the rest of the nation.

You should remember that God already offered to make Moses like a second Abraham when he spoke in his wrath in the last chapter. Here, he describes Moses in terms at least as equal to those of Abraham. In fact, when you think about God speaking with a man face to face, you should be able to draw parallels from Genesis 18, which is an entire chapter dedicated to a conversation between God and Abraham. Take a look at some of the descriptors about Abraham in the Bible.

- **Isaiah 41:8 (ESV)**
  8 But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend.

Time and time again, Moses is portrayed as having the same depth of relationship with Adonai as Abraham did.

- **2 Chronicles 20:7 (ESV)**
  7 Did you not, our God, drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel, and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend?

Again, Abraham is called a friend of God, which means that all Israel are the descendants of God's friend. We see the same friendship being applied to Moses because God wanted Moses to prepare and propel the new nation into the same friendship that he had with God.

- **James 2:22–23 (ESV)**
  22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—**and he was called a friend of God.**

This was not intended only for Abraham and Moses; the Lord wanted the same unfettered access with the entire nation as he had with Abraham and Moses. **This is why the Tanakh is always calling to remembrance men like Abraham and Moses, because God wanted Israel always to have special recognition of them, just like the Israelites had in Exodus 33. This is for the purpose of showing the Israelites what they would become! This must be kept in mind for those who are leaders in the Body. Leaders are a sign of what the people can become. If you want the people in the body to become like Moses, with a deep intimacy with God, then you must first become like Moses.**

What is said about Abraham and Moses is all very similar to the N.T. description of Jesus' relationship with the Father. For example:

- **John 11:41–42 (ESV)**

  41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 **I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me.**"

Following in the footsteps of Abraham and Moses, Jesus had a special relationship with the Father that was intended to serve as a model for what the rest of the nation was to aim for.

- **John 17:1–7 (ESV)**

  17 When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, 2 since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. 4 **I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do.** 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.
  6 **"I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world.** Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you.

As you hear this prayer, you should be able to recall the prayers and conversations that Abraham and Moses had with the Lord, because Jesus is following in their footsteps.

Jesus' relationship with Adonai was intended to benefit those who would follow in his footsteps! Remember that you can either be the ceiling for those around you or the platform they stand on. The difference is in how deep your relationship with the Lord is and how much you allow others to see into your life so they can grow from it.

We see this principle clearly in Moses and Joshua. Joshua's discipleship did not happen only in formal settings. He remained in the tent of meeting even after the meetings ended. Discipleship is not confined to scheduled moments; it happens in proximity, in shared burden, and in real responsibility.

- **Exodus 17:8–9 (ESV)**

  8 Then Amalek came and fought with Israel at Rephidim.
  9 So Moses said to Joshua, “Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of God in my hand.”

Joshua first appears when he is entrusted with leading Israel into battle. Moses sends him to fight while he stands on the hill with the staff of God. Joshua is given real responsibility, but not isolation. He fights while Moses intercedes.

This is where discipleship takes shape — not in theory, but under pressure. Joshua learns dependence, courage, and the power of intercession.

After the victory, the training continues.

- **Exodus 17:14 (ESV)**

  Then the LORD said to Moses, “Write this as a memorial in a book and recite it in the ears of Joshua, that I will utterly blot out the memory of Amalek from under heaven.”

The LORD tells Moses to write the event down and recite it in Joshua's ears. There is battle experience, and then there is explanation. Moses not only leads; he interprets what God is doing. Joshua is being formed both in action and in understanding.

Later, in Numbers 14, when fear spreads through the camp, Joshua and Caleb rise while Moses and Aaron fall on their faces. Joshua has learned how leaders respond in crisis. He steps into courage because he has witnessed humility.

This pattern produces fruit.

- **Joshua 3:7 (ESV)**
  The LORD tells Joshua, "As I was with Moses, so I will be with you."

That is the goal of discipleship — not creating permanent assistants, but reproducing faithful leaders. Joshua does not replace Moses in spirit; he reflects him.

Then in Joshua 10, when Joshua commands the sun to stand still, the text says there has been no day like it, when the LORD heeded the voice of a man. This is not Joshua surpassing Moses. This is the fruit of faithful formation. The God who worked through Moses now works through Joshua.
Moses is not an anomaly. He is reproducible.

Discipleship is not about creating admirers. It is about forming men and women who carry the same presence, the same obedience, and the same boldness before God.

And everyone who remains in the process long enough will reflect the one who formed them.

Remember, in our passage tonight, with Joshua, it started as simply being near Moses and then continuing to seek God even after Moses left. In our own lives, we have seen discipleship yield the greatest results when students spend time with their teacher before, during, and after the scheduled services. This is what will produce men like Joshua who are capable of leading the people into the promised land. If, for some reason, you are not able to be with your teacher at any

given moment, you can follow Joshua's example by continuing to hear from God on your own time or by rallying the people to the vision the LORD has given!

Before moving on, we wanted to make one more point about Joshua. According to the Jewish sages, Joshua was not a young man by American standards. Take a look at this next slide.

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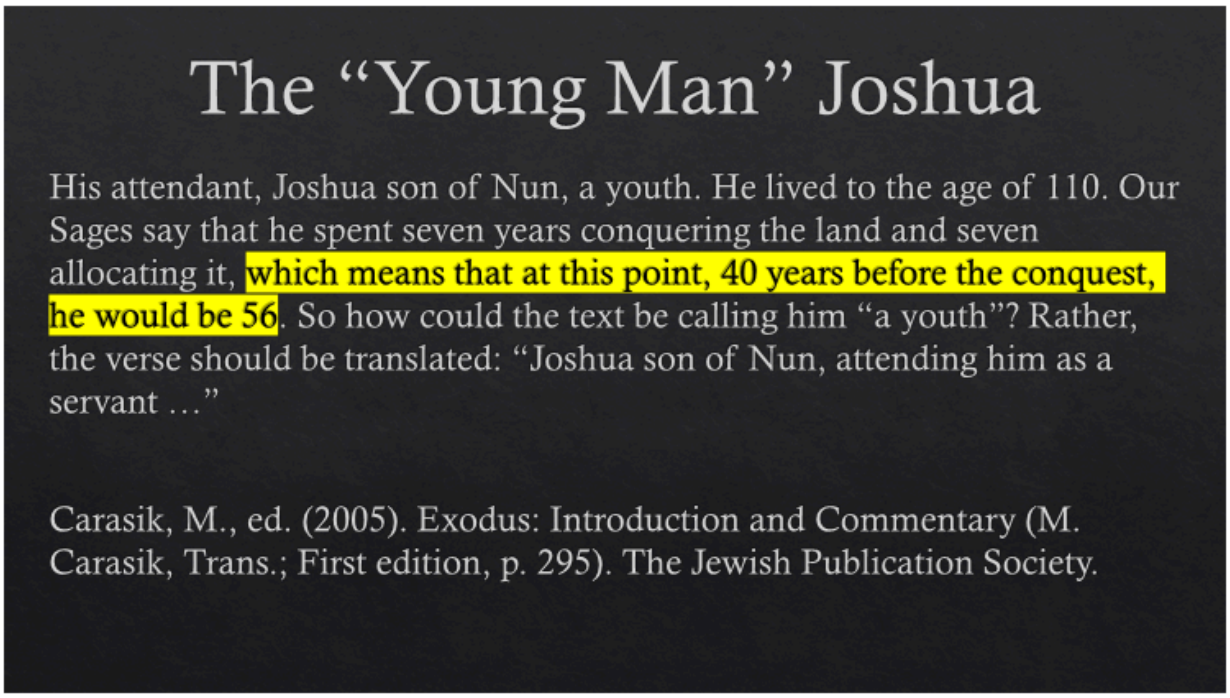


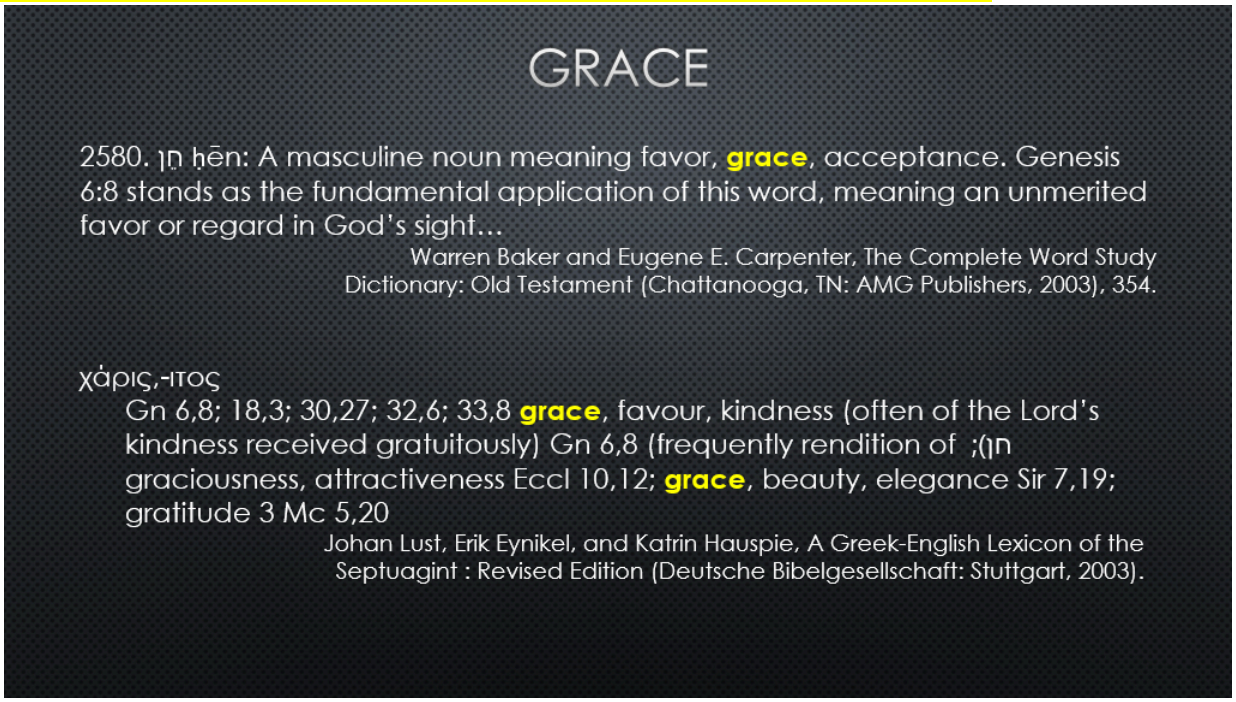
Saying that this kind of discipleship is only for single men, or men in their 20's, is just as stupid as saying that a man in his 70s is excluded from following Christ. Discipleship was never about age; it was about a way of life being transferred that prepares them to expand the Kingdom of God.

12 Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.'

Moses is about to request something from the Lord, and before we get there, we want to take a moment to recognize something unique in his opening statement. Moses says that God has told him that he has found favor with the Lord… This

word for favor is CHEN, and it indicates the purpose God has called Moses to. Take a look at what this word means in Hebrew:

(Read slide starting with the Hebrew and then to the Greek LXX)



This word for favor means grace and you should also know that it occurs exactly five times in our chapter tonight. Take a look at this next slide.

(Don't read)

Exodus 33:12-17 (ESV)

12 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 favor in my sight.' 13 Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." 14 And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." 15 And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. 16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?" 17 And the LORD said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."

God's favor was given to Moses for the saving of many lives. In fact, the Bible speaks about God's favor given to Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, and Moses—all for the saving of many other lives through that favor. The Father also gave his favor/grace to the Son for the saving of many lives. Take a look at this next passage.

- **Romans 5:15–19 (NIVUK84)**

  15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did **God's grace** and the gift that came by the **grace of the one man**, Jesus Christ, **overflow to the many**!
  16 Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification.
  17 For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of **grace** and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.
  18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men.

19 For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

The point is that Grace was extended to the Son because God knew that it would overflow to many other lives through him. The same is said about Paul's life in the next passage.

- **Ephesians 3:7–8 (NIVUK84)**
  7 I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power.
  8 Although I am less than the least of all God's people, **this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ,**

Why might God's favor be extended to you? For the saving of many lives. God's grace in your life is given for this same purpose. Yes, it's power over sin, but the whole purpose of conquering the sin in your life is that you might serve God's people and become a witness to His grace. Consider this next passage…

We can't tell you how many times we have heard someone respond to a call to righteousness by saying, "Well, we are not under law, we are under grace…" But that statement actually reveals the problem. Grace was never given as permission to remain unchanged. Grace is power. Grace is favor with a purpose. It is given so that you can overcome sin, so that your life can be transformed, and so that what God does in you can overflow into the lives of others. Grace is not an escape from obedience…it is the divine enablement to walk in it! If grace is truly at work in your life, it will produce victory, service, and fruit that many will benefit from.

- **1 Peter 4:10–11 (ESV)**
  10 As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 11 whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

The test of whether you are being a good steward of God's grace is to evaluate how much victory over sin you actually have. For those who are focused on

transferring the favor on them to others, God will give them more grace to conquer sin, and others will learn from their example. For those who are not concerned with being outward-focused, they will find themselves struggling with more sin and becoming graceless.

The answer is twofold: ask God to help you conquer sin so that you can be a light to others!

If the end goal of your freedom is not the transfer of what God has done in you to someone else, then you have misunderstood why He set you free in the first place. God does not liberate people simply so they can maintain a quiet Christian life. He frees them so they can become conduits of life to others. Have you noticed that the believer who is actively serving, discipling, and pouring into others often walks in greater victory? That is not accidental. When grace is being spent for the kingdom, more grace is supplied.

So ask yourself honestly: are there areas of habitual struggle in your life that never seem to break? It may not simply be a willpower issue. It may be that you have not yet committed to placing your hand to the plow. Grace is not given to those who are spiritually stagnant. It is given for advancement. When you step into God's purposes for others, you position yourself under the flow of the grace designed to accomplish those purposes.

Consider it this way: no investor releases vast resources without a vision for multiplication. If you asked for tremendous capital and planned to spend it only on groceries, the request would not make sense. In the same way, when we ask the Lord for the storehouses of heaven, we must be prepared to steward what He gives for kingdom increase. He supplies power where there is purpose.

So step forward. Risk obedience. Invest your life in others. As you do, you will find that sin loses its grip, holiness deepens, and grace increases…not because you sought victory for its own sake, but because you aligned yourself with the saving purposes of God.

13 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

This is probably the most amazing request that a Man of God could ever make. Moses is asking for the only thing that matters… Even though he speaks to the Lord "face to face," he is asking to know the Lord better, and he is continuing to advocate for the people at the same time. To put it simply, he is asking for continued favor so that the people will be benefited.

We need to move on, but before we do, we want to show you one passage because it shows that God did, in fact, honor Moses' request.

- **Psalm 103:7–10 (ESV)**

  7 He made known his ways to Moses,
  his acts to the people of Israel.
  8 The LORD is merciful and gracious,
  slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
  9 He will not always chide,
  nor will he keep his anger forever.
  10 He does not deal with us according to our sins,
  nor repay us according to our iniquities.

The word for "teach" in the phrase "Teach me your ways" is the same as "know" in this passage when it is said that the Lord made "known" his ways to Moses. As you can see, the psalmist concludes that God did not deal with Israel according to her sins, and this was a direct result of Moses "knowing" or being taught the ways of the Lord! What does your knowledge of the Lord produce?

14 The LORD replied, “My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”
15 Then Moses said to him, “If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.
16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?”

Just a few comments here before we move on. Notice that Moses keeps linking himself to the people. He says, "**me and your people**" and "go with **us**?" Moses has not separated himself from the People of God because they sinned; he is continuing to find favor with the Lord on their behalf.

This is what it looks like to be an advocate, rather than trying to run away because the people are holding you back, an advocate draws closer and presses into the Lord so that they will be saved! Let's keep moving.

17 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

In the conversation so far, Moses has asked a lot, and often his requests are made on behalf of the people. This response from the Lord means that everything that Moses has asked about up to this point will be granted.

We want you to take a look at this next slide because it summarizes the request that Moses has made.

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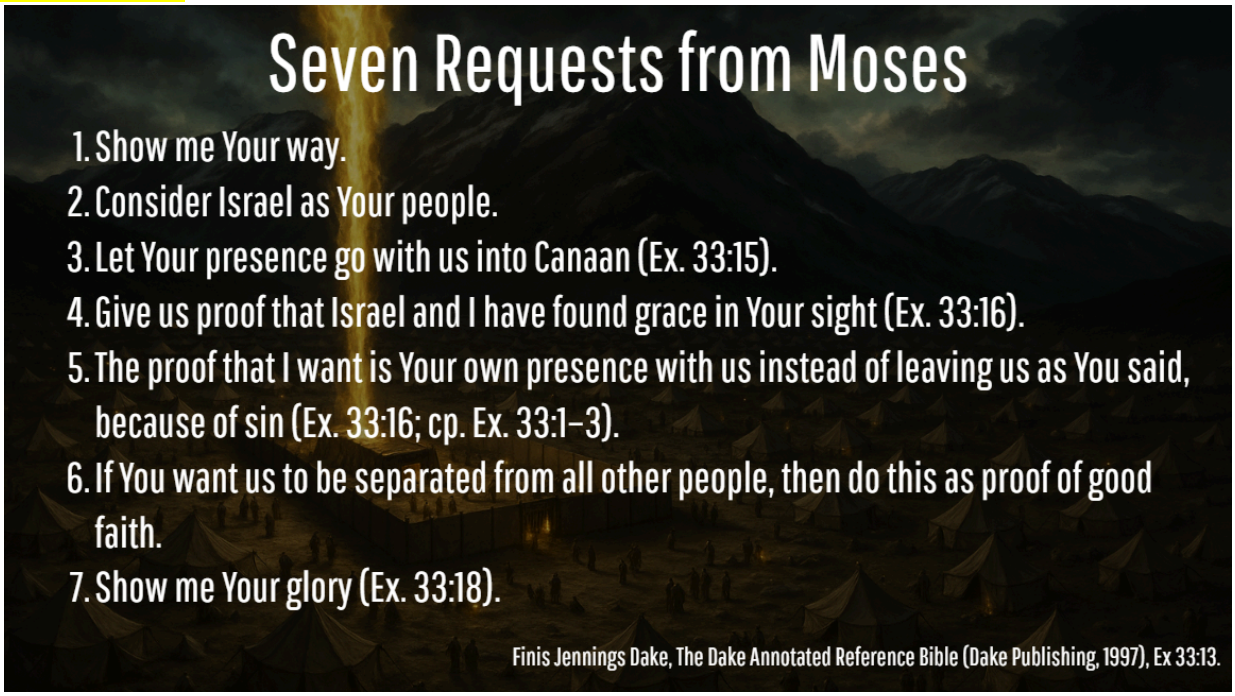

In response, God gives Moses seven promises.

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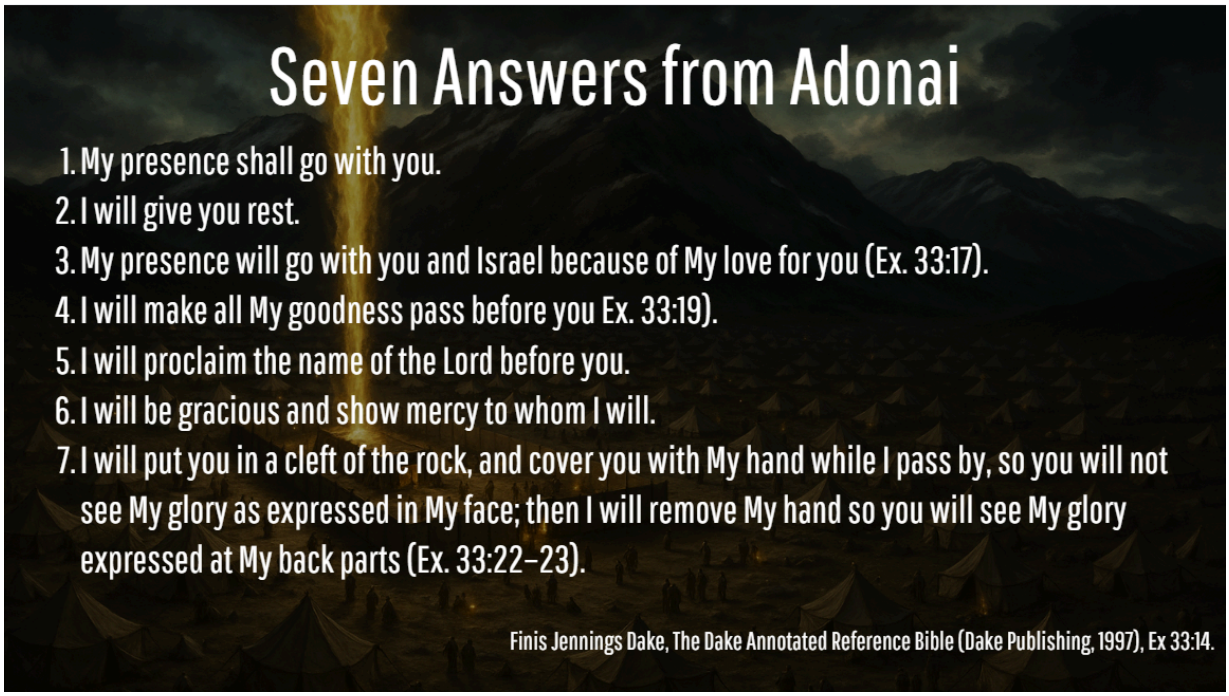


This is beautiful and makes us think of another passage when we see this interchange.

- **1 John 5:14 (NIVUK84)**
  14 This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything **according to his will, he hears us.**

We see that everything Moses asked about was not only heard by God, but also answered. When we pray to God about his will or anything in accordance with it, he will hear us because we are aligned with his desires. If you are not getting an answer, it may be because you are not praying in accordance with his will.

18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."
19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.
20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no-one may see me and live."

Not only is this proof that Moses did not see God when they spoke face to face, but this is also proof that Moses is one of the most bold and confident men in the Bible in his desire and directness in being close to the Lord.

This passage also shows the unparalleled beauty of God's favor toward Moses. This is the one request that God will not answer because he knows that it would be the death of Moses. He gave in to Moses' request as much as he could, but chose not to answer him fully in this regard because he knew that it would not be good for him.

With that in mind, because of Moses' boldness, these verses form the basis for Jewish pleas and prayers for mercy that are still prayed by Jews around the world today. When Jews appeal to Adonai for mercy, they begin by repeating what Moses says in these verses.

21 Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock.
22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by.
23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

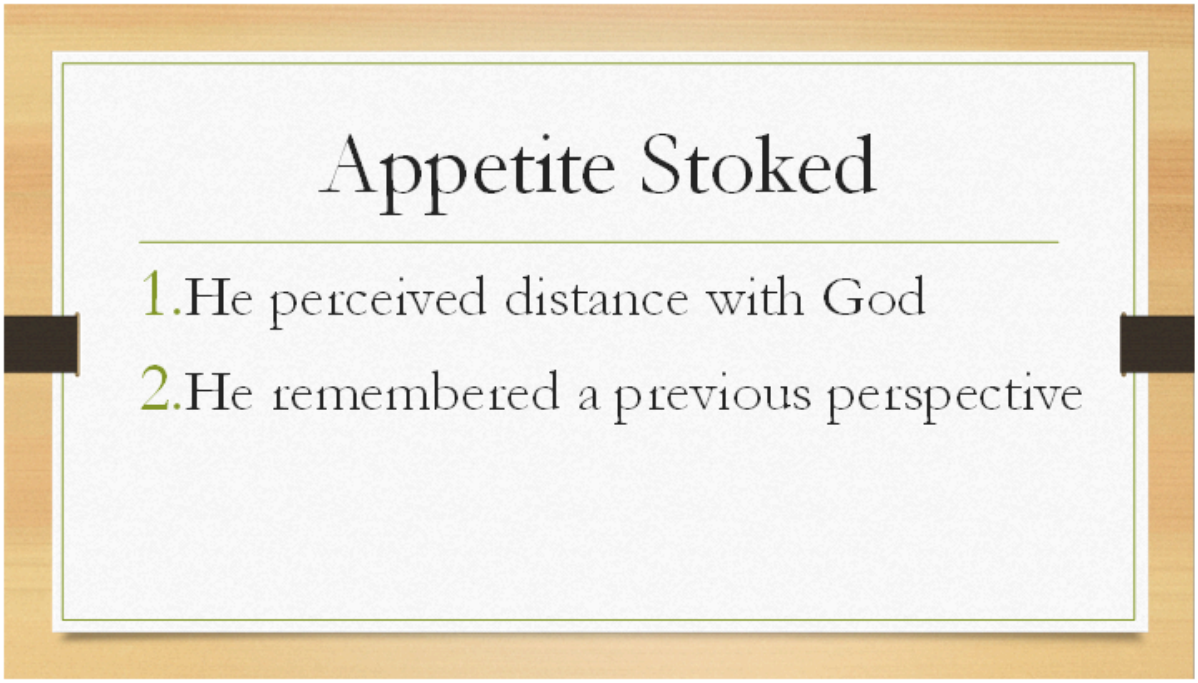
The situation the Israelites were in the last chapter was terrible, but we are not completely innocent either! We are seeing that Moses was not a victim in these circumstances and neither are we… they are developing us. They are used by our Gracious FATHER to stoke an appetite in us to be closer to His presence and to desire to be transformed into His image.

Let's get into a divine commentary on this event in Exodus.

- **Psalm 61:1-2 (ESV)**
  61 TO THE CHOIRMASTER: WITH STRINGED INSTRUMENTS. OF DAVID.
  1 Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer;
  2 from the end of the earth I call to you when my heart is faint. Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

In this passage, David is reflecting on Moses' words in Exodus 33, and Adonai has stirred up a hunger for the Lord in David's heart. How did God stir up a hunger for Him inside of David?

(Read Slide)



David envisions himself calling to the Lord "from the end of the earth". Think on that for a moment: David perceives or feels a distance between him and the Lord. This distance is not real, but it is a real feeling that needs to be dealt with. David knows that the only way to close the distance is to "call to you, O God!"

When did David feel this kind of distance and decide to do something about it? The answer was when his heart was faint. This could be viewed as depressed. The Hebrew is עָטַף ʿāṭap̱, which means "wrapped, covered, turned." Figuratively, it means wearied, feeble, faint, weak, or worn out.

David feels smothered in his heart, far from God, and this is causing him to call out to Him… even though he sees himself as on the other side of the earth from God. What do you do when you are in this position? David dealt with the perceived distance by "calling out!" We need to get in the habit of "calling out" anytime we perceive a distance, and to do so, knowing that He wants to close that distance.

Next, David remembered a previous perspective… David had not always been in this position, and neither have you always been in this position. He remembered a previous time when he had been closer to the Lord… And he wanted that again!

David asked to be "led to the Rock that is higher than I"! How could David ask for this experience if he had not previously experienced this before? The commentators have a myriad of opinions about what David means by this. Some think that he is just calling out to be put in a position of safety or security. Some think that he is calling out because the goal "the Rock" is higher than his ability to climb (Like the mountain he cannot climb)… We think all of that is probably true, but that he is most likely referring to the event in Exodus 33:17-22 when Moses asked to see more of Adonai after a national failure.

Let's remember some of the elements in this story: Moses was wearied by the golden calf incident and by the burden of leading the people.

- His brother was led astray
- His people sinned greatly
- He felt as if he were failing in every way

(Now think about the existence of Moses' current relationship with the Lord)

- Moses asked to have God's presence be with him and the people anyway
- Moses is told that Adonai will grant the request
- Moses is told that he has the favor of the Lord
- Moses is told that the Lord knows him by name

Moses was not satisfied with this level of relationship… He wanted more! Then Moses ups the ante: "Please show me your glory."

- Moses is told that all the goodness of the Lord will pass in front of him
- Moses is told that he will experience a proclamation of the name of the LORD
- Moses is told that he will experience both Grace and Mercy

However, Moses is told that he cannot see the Face of the Lord. In fact, that no man can see the Face of the Lord and live… Remember, this was all in response to the request, "Show me your glory," which figuratively seems to be associated with the face of God.

Let's zero in on verse 20-21 again:

- **Exodus 33:20–21 (ESV)**

  20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." 21 And the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock,

Moses is asking: To behold the goodness of God or the glory of God… Moses may not look directly into the face of God. However, there is a place! A place by the Father… a rock upon which Moses can stand. When Moses stands in this position, then he is able to perceive the goodness or Glory of God (as if he were observing the face of God- though he is not).

- **John 1:14 (ESV)**

  14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his **glory**, **glory** as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The early believers saw themselves as men in whom the glory or goodness of God had been revealed. This is similar to Moses' position and to David's request.

Do you really think that those early believers never had feelings of distance, depression, or defeat? John is writing this after Jesus is gone… The thing is… those early believers had a previous perspective… they had a remembrance of something better! That created in them a continual appetite to draw close again! To the one place that they could stand and see the Goodness of God.

- **John 1:18 (ESV)**

  18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

There is a place next to the Father appointed to those he favors… In this one place, they are able to behold His glory. Jesus, is that place. He is the Rock that is higher than David. He is the only way to glimpse into the Grace, Mercy, and Goodness of God that Adonai wants to cause to pass before you. This is what David's weary heart was crying out for… What does your heart cry out for?

You were saved… great, how are you doing right now? You used to walk closely with the Lord… great, what has your walk been like over the last year? Every experience that you have ever had with Adonai was meant to cause a hunger in

you to get even closer to him today! If you are in this room and you feel a distance… He is not distant from you; it is you who are distant from HIM. Turn on that feeling of distance and cry out to the Rock that is Higher than you, there is an appointed place next to the Father that you SHALL stand… That place is in a deeper relationship with Jesus, and He will cause all the goodness of the Father to pass before you.

Let's look at verse 22 again:

- **Exodus 33:22 (ESV)**
  22 and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by.

The imagery here is that Moses is hidden or sheltered within a rock. But you need to notice that Moses could not put himself in the Rock, nor could he cover himself. Even though Moses had an impressive relationship with God as a friend, these things could not be obtained through his human effort. God is giving him a divine gift, and the same Jealous God wants to give it to you!

Also, you should remember something else: God tells Moses that he will place Moses on a rock before the Lord, and the Lord will pass by him. This is remarkably similar to what Moses did for the Israelites back in Exodus chapter 17…

- **Exodus 17:3–6 (LSB)**
  3 But the people thirsted there for water; and they grumbled against Moses and said, "Why, now, have you brought us up from Egypt, to put us and our children and our livestock to death with thirst?"
  4 So Moses cried out to Yahweh, saying, "What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me."
  5 Then Yahweh said to Moses, **"Pass before the people** and take with you some of the elders of Israel; and take in your hand your staff with which you struck the Nile, and go.
  6 **"Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb**; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink." And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

In this earlier event, God stood before Moses on a rock while Moses passed on before the people. In Exodus 33, it is the other way around. Moses is going to stand on a rock before the Lord, and God is going to pass before Moses! This is beautiful because God is about to minister to Moses in the same way Moses was told to minister to the people!

You didn't get saved through your own human efforts, and you won't stay saved through your own human efforts. John 6:44 says, "the spirit of the Father drew you to Jesus." It is that same Spirit drawing you back to Jesus so that he can minister to you.

You cannot place yourself in the rock the first time or back to the rock for the hundredth time. You can call out to a God who is jealous for you and He will place you in the Rock that is higher than I… Again! The Apostle Paul understood this event with Moses in ways that almost all commentators have failed to grasp.

- **Colossians 3:1–4 (ESV)**

  3 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.
  3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
  4 When Christ who is your life appears, **then you also will appear with him in glory.**

This is such unusual language… to say that we are "hidden with Christ in God." It is the only time Paul used this kind of language in reference to our relationship to God. We think that it is obvious that he is referring to the way Moses experienced

the goodness of Yahweh. Christ is the rock that is by the Father! Higher than us and next to God! Paul is calling out for us to go up higher and be hidden in that Rock so that we may behold him the same way that Moses did and in the same way that David "called out" to the Lord from the end of the earth, to be led to the "Rock that is higher than I."

Let's return to our parent passage in Exodus:

- **Exodus 33:22–23 (NIV)**

  [22] When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by. [23] Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

Adonai is informing Moses how He is going to appear to him. We will actually see this happen next week and learn what God speaks while he passes before him. To be hidden with Christ in God is to stand in the one position that Adonai has appointed, where you can see His glory. This is the place that we have access by faith into His grace. This is where we must stand. When we talk about the cleft of a rock, does this make you think of Christ as a Rock in any other scenario? By the way, a cleft is an opening in the rock.

- **1 Corinthians 10:1–4 (ESV)**

  10 For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, 2 and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, 3 and all ate the same spiritual food, 4 and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

Moses struck a rock, and from the opening in that rock, life-giving water flowed for God's people. That life-giving provision followed God's people throughout the desert journeys. The Rock on which Moses is now standing (in Exodus 33) is meant to prefigure or point to Christ. Jesus was cleaved or pierced so that you would have a place to stand in Him and so that life-giving provision could be given to all who called on Him.

It is the prophetic intent to point to Christ, and we have the extreme benefit of having that revelation in our view. But Paul was not the first Jewish scholar to

connect this event with the Messiah. To find another Jewish man who caught the prophetic pattern, we have to go 700 years before Paul—let's consider Isaiah 49. You have heard portions of this chapter many times in this room.

In later parts of the chapter, Isaiah prophecies about a servant who will be formed to bring back Jacob to himself and be a light to the nations. Moreover, he prophecies about a day when the captives of a tyrant are rescued, and that people from the nations will carry the sons and daughters of Israel home. This is clearly eschatological and also prefigures the work of the Messiah in his first and second coming. But let's read the beginning of the chapter and see what Isaiah says before anything else.

- **Isaiah 49:1–3 (ESV)**

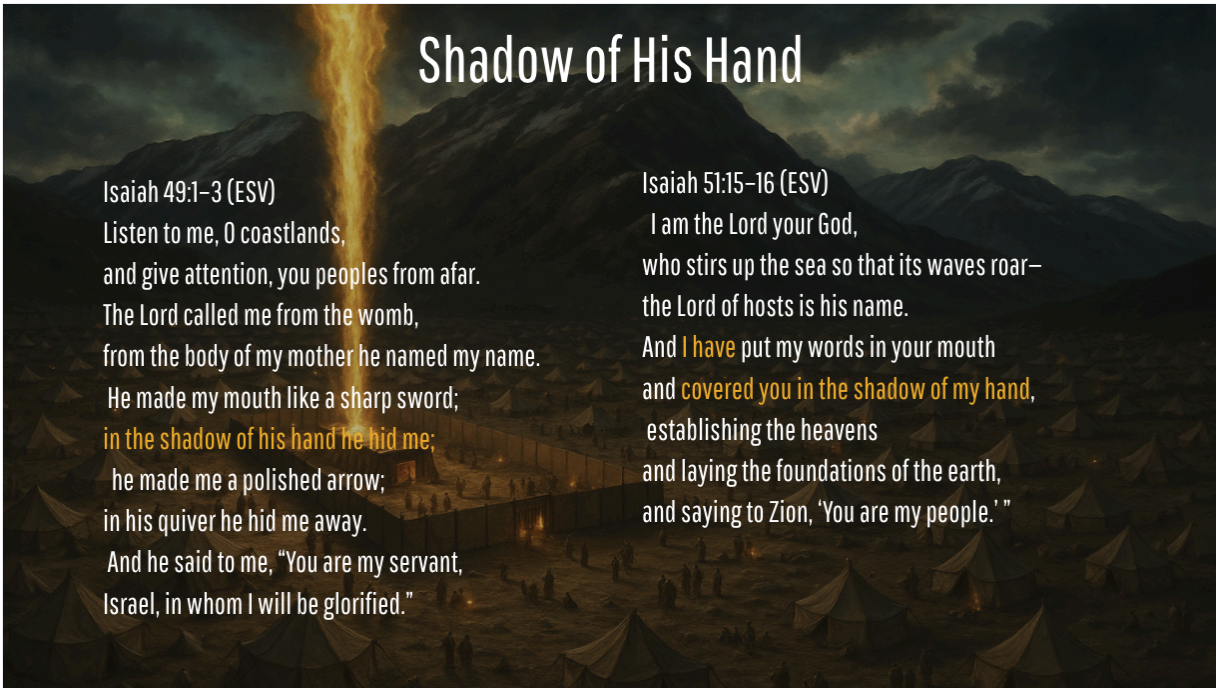
  The Servant of the Lord
  49 Listen to me, O coastlands,
  and give attention, you peoples from afar.
  The Lord called me from the womb,
  from the body of my mother he named my name.
  2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword;
  in the shadow of his hand he hid me;
  he made me a polished arrow;
  in his quiver he hid me away.
  3 And he said to me, “You are my servant,
  Israel, in whom I will be glorified.”

This passage, like Isaiah 53, has more than one meaning. Isaiah is both forecasting the Messiah and speaking of the entire nation. While it is true that Moses is unique in his relationship with God and his experiences with Him, Isaiah says that the nation and the Messiah have a similar experience. He writes that Israel has been hidden in the shadow of his hand, just like Moses was.

In light of their sin with the golden calf, and in light of their idolatry all along the way, Adonai never abandons His treasured possession—Israel. He has made Israel a polished arrow and hidden them in his quiver. The intimacy Adonai had with Moses, he extends to the whole nation by hiding them in the shadow of his hand. Isaiah 49 is written from the perspective of the writer, saying, "in the shadow of

his hand he hid me". Let's move a few chapters further and see something beautiful.

(READ ISAIAH 51)



In Isaiah 49, it was "he hid me"; now, in Isaiah 51, the Lord is speaking: "I…covered you in the shadow of my hand."

In Exodus, God covered Moses with his hand to protect him from His divine glory, lest he die. In Isaiah, the prophet is forecasting the true extent of his glory being realized to the entire nation at the reconciliation of Israel and the gathering of the Nations. Moses gets to see some of this glory, and one day the entire nation will see it fully.

- **Isaiah 60:1–3 (NIV)**

60 "Arise, shine, for your light has come,
and the glory of the Lord rises upon you.
[2] See, darkness covers the earth
and thick darkness is over the peoples,
but the Lord rises upon you
and his glory appears over you.
[3] Nations will come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

In light of current events and our passage tonight, there is a glorious promise—despite Israel's sin, Adonai is faithful to remember them and preserve them. Our God is gracious to take those who were once idolatrous and still cover

them in the shadow of His hand and promise the full extent of His glory to Jew and Gentile alike.

Therefore, we should all take a note from a man named Jacob, who writes of our response to such times.

- **James 4:5–8 (ESV)**

  [5] Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”? [6] But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” [7] Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. [8] Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

Jacob wrote it, and Moses modeled it in fear of death. Moses would rather risk his life and see the glory of God than go another moment without it.

There is no prayer that Adonai wants to answer more than that of a man who wants to close the distance and serve His God jealously. He is jealous for you and He wants you to be jealous for Him. (This will call you back up the mountain again… back into the presence of God again).

When a man is jealous for the Lord and jealous for the growth of God's people, God will place him in a supernatural place that is full of his glory and abounding in revelation!