

- He says blot me out of the book of life, which is the book recording the names of the saints.
- Moses would be willing to receive the punishment that God was preparing to give the entire nation.

3. What makes Moses volunteer to do such a thing?

- He has embraced his role of representing the people.
- Moses believes his role as intercessor includes taking upon himself the sin of the people

4. Moses mistake...

- He assumes that his leadership role and his earnestness is enough to atone for sin
- He asks God to forgive the people under the terms of the covenant yet without making a payment for sin.
- Yes, the 3,000 men died, but they merely paid the price for their own sin.
- What about the sin of the nation regarding the terms of the Law?

1. Moses is continuing the picture of Jesus we saw earlier.

- Moses the intercessor for the nation
  - He's offering to be a sacrifice in their place, which is the atoning work Jesus did on the cross.
  - But Moses failed to understand that God is perfect in mercy and justice
- God can't overlook sin without a suitable payment, or else that would be injustice
- While Moses offered himself as payment, Moses isn't sinless
  - He can't serve as a substitute for a sinful nation
  - So the Lord rejects Moses' offer

**This is a general truth of scripture...**

- Whoever has sinned against God will suffer the penalty of eternal death
  - There is no getting around that penalty
- The only way out is to have someone else pay that penalty
- But Moses isn't going to be that person
- He merely pictures that Person

2. Moses speaks prophetically of this pattern of sin in Israel in his last words to the nation in Deuteronomy 32:5-6; 16-36; 43

# Chapter 33

## V. BLUEPRINT and CONSTRUCTION of tabernacle, Chapters 25 — 40 (*a pattern and picture of Christ*)

C. Golden calf — broken law — Moses' intercession, second tables of the Law, 32 - 35

In chapter 32, the nation of Israel broke the terms of the Sinai covenant when they worshipped the golden calf. As a result of that sin, the Lord declared they would all be killed, which was the normal penalty for violating a covenant. Instead, Moses interceded on behalf of the people, offering his own life to spare their lives.

In the process, Moses formed a picture of the Messiah, who gave His life to spare ours in the face of our violation of God's law. And so the Lord delayed the execution of His penalty against that generation of Israel. They did eventually die in the desert as a result of their sin under the covenant. But the Lord condemned them to die slowly rather than all at once.

So the word of God concerning these people hasn't changed. They broke the covenant, so they will die. Meanwhile, the covenant with Israel has been broken, which means God is no longer bound to His part of the covenant either. So as we enter chapter 33, Israel and the Lord stand at a crossroads.

Will the nation go forward with the Lord leading them, or will the Lord abandon them?

### **Verses 1 - 6...**

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

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

- In v.3 the Lord says I will not go up in your midst.
  - That phrase is a powerful statement.
  - It means the Lord has revoked everything given to the nation in chapters 25-31, which was the building of the tabernacle.
    - The tabernacle's purpose was to serve as the place God would dwell within Israel
  - But because of the sin of the nation under the covenant, the Lord no longer plans to dwell with Israel, thus negating the need for the tabernacle.
4. Furthermore, the Lord says if He did dwell with this people (referring to this generation of Israel), He would likely destroy them because they were so obstinate or stiff-necked.
- Because they won't submit to Him, it was only a matter of time before they offended Him again provoking Him to anger to their own destruction.
  - Everything we're hearing conforms to what we're told by the writer of Hebrews, concerning this generation of Israel...*Hebrews 3:16-19*
    - In the next passage we learn the peoples' reaction to learning that the Lord would not dwell among them.

### **Verses 4 - 6...**

This was indeed a sad word, and the people went into mourning over their sin and the consequences the Lord imposed.

1. As a sign of their mourning, they were told by the Lord to remove all their ornaments, which means jewelry and other trappings.
  - They were to go about in a plain & bare appearance.
  - Notice in v.5 the Lord tells them the same thing He told Moses.
    - They were so stiff-necked they were in jeopardy of destruction were the Lord to remain in their midst.
    - Remember, stiff-necked doesn't just mean a stubborn personality.
    - In scripture it refers to a failure to submit to God, which is a sign of unbelief.
  - So the Lord is saying that He would be forced to destroy them eventually because of their unbelief.
2. So He tells them to strip themselves of their ornaments while He decides what to do with them.
  - Why does the Lord make this requirement?
    - First...** we know He doesn't need time to make up His mind.
    - Second...** why does He want them to strip themselves bare of jewelry?
    - The answer...** When Adam and Eve fell in the Garden, they experienced numerous consequences for their sin.
      - 1) They were set outside the Garden, so they lost the opportunity to enjoy fellowship with the Lord.
        - We've seen that same consequence in this moment
          - The Lord says He can't be in their presence or else He will have to destroy the Israelites.
      - 2) Adam and Eve were immediately aware that they were naked.
        - They sensed they were bare and vulnerable before the Lord.
          - So they hid from Him.
          - Now we see that consequence mirrored here in a sense
          - Obviously, the Lord isn't going to require the people of Israel strip naked in response to their sin.
          - Going about naked is what got them into trouble in the first place!

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

### **Verses 7 - 10...**

Up to this point in the story of Exodus, we've been told that the glory of God in the form of the fire and cloud were over the camp of Israel.

1. God's glory was positioned in the midst of Israel until this moment.
  - And Moses' own tent was also pitched inside the camp of Israel.
  - The image created was clearly that God was among His people and God's representative was nearby.
2. But now as a result of the sin of Israel, Moses moves the tent of the meeting outside the camp of Israel.
  - This is not the tabernacle, since it hasn't been built yet.
    - This is another structure that Moses used to meet with God.
    - And now it is moved outside the camp, away from the people of Israel.
  - In v.7 we're told that anyone seeking for the Lord would have to go outside the camp of Israel to find the Lord.
  - In fact, when Moses left the camp of Israel and walked out to his tent, the event caused all of Israel to stop what they were doing and stare at Moses.
  - As Moses entered the tent and God's glory descended upon it, the people worshipped.
3. Notice, what triggered the people to participate in acts of worship?
  - The appearance of a physical manifestation of God's glory upon Moses' tent.
  - It was an act of worship triggered by a physical manifestation.
  - What does this tell us about that generation of Israel?
    - We could say that it's nice to see them worshipping the true God finally.

**But what does the Bible say faith is?** *Hebrews 11:1*

- True faith is an acceptance of things not seen.

**What must faith hold?** *Hebrews 11:6*

- We must believe not only that God is, but we must also believe in His promises of good things to come.
- We must believe He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

**How are we to demonstrate our faith in Him through worship?** *John 4:24*

- Jesus said men are to worship God in spirit, which means to worship Him in His invisible form.
- And to worship Him in truth, which means to worship Him according to His word.
- These are things that cannot be seen or touched, but we accept on faith alone.

4. This is why the writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 12 that this generation could not stand though they worshipped at a mountain they could touch.
  - But we worship greater things, things we have yet to see in Heaven.
  - Thus demonstrating our true faith.

5. So in this new location, Moses went to speak with the Lord in the tent of meeting.
- And Moses made a point to beseech the Lord to continue forward with the people as they traveled up into the Land.

### **Verses 11 - 13...**

In v.11 we're told that Moses met God face to face.

1. The phrase "face to face" in Hebrew does not suggest a theophany.
  - Moses was not staring into the face of God.
    - This becomes readily apparent toward the end of this chapter.
  - Instead, this refers to the degree of intimacy of Moses' communication with the Lord.
  - No man since Adam had enjoyed the kind of regular, intimate communication with the Lord that Moses was given.
  - Nor would any prophet be given such opportunity again.
    - In fact Moses became known as the man who spoke to God face to face.
2. And alongside Moses was Joshua.
  - Joshua was a young man at this point, but still he has been given the responsibility of guarding the tent of meeting in Moses' absence.
  - This is our early indication that Moses will be succeeded by Joshua.
3. Vs.12-17... Moses appears before the Lord to make a new request of God in an attempt to repair the covenant.

#### **The request has two parts...**

1<sup>st</sup> ... Moses makes a request for *himself*.

- In v.12 Moses reminds God that He ordered Moses to lead the people out of Egypt and into the Promised Land.
  - That's what is meant by "go up" which means up to the Promised Land
- But Moses also reminds God that when He gave Moses that directive, the Lord promised to be with Moses in that work.
  - And so now Moses asks who will go with him in leading the nation?
  - God told him previous that Moses had received favor (which is the word grace)
- So Moses says if Moses has received God's grace, then let me know your ways and find favor (grace) in your sight.
  - By these words, Moses is asking the Lord to establish an intimate relationship with him on the basis of grace.
- In fact, the word for grace appears four times in Moses' appeal.
- Moses is seeking assurance on the basis of God's grace that the Lord would never leave Him.
  - Moses is asking the Lord to establish a relationship of loving kindness with him on the basis of grace alone.

#### ***Why did Moses insist on such a relationship for himself?***

- Clearly, Moses' relationship with the Lord must be based on something other than Law if it was going to persist.
  - Moses is God's representative to the people of Israel, and yet he is also one of Israel
  - For if Moses' relationship with the Lord were based solely on a covenant of Law, then sooner or later the nation would violate their covenant again.
  - And when the nation falls, Moses would fall too.

- With a relationship based on grace rather than Law, however, Moses could be assured that the Lord would never forsake Him.
- So he wanted God's assurance of His enduring presence based on His grace rather than on the covenant of Law.

2<sup>nd</sup> ... part of his request...Moses reminds the Lord that the nation Israel was God's people.

- Moses is appealing to another covenant based on grace, the covenant the Lord made with Abraham.
- In that covenant, the Lord promised Abraham to make a great nation from his descendants.
- God said He would bring those descendants into land He gave Abraham
  - So Moses is once again appealing to God's grace on behalf of Israel
  - Then we hear the Lord's response.

### **Verses 14 - 17...** The Lord agrees to Moses' request

1. The Lord makes a statement that has no conditions...vs.14
  - This is the Lord's personal covenant with Moses, and there are no conditions or exceptions.
  - It is a one-way, covenant on the basis of grace.
2. Moses then asks the Lord to how will it be known to the world that the Lord has promised to accompany the people of Israel...Vs.16
  - Moses is seeking a sign of this promise.
  - And the Lord responds again with a statement of His promise...Vs.17
  - He says He will honor Moses's words because Moses has found favor.
    - That phrase means God has bestowed grace upon Moses.
    - And the Lord knows Moses in an intimate way.
    - Once more Moses presses for a sign, and this time the Lord grants Moses' request in a unique way.

### **Verses 18 - 23...**

Vs. 18... Moses proposes that the Lord allow Moses to see the Lord's glory

1. Remember up to this point Moses has been meeting with the Lord in the form of cloud and fire and thunder.
  - These manifestations of God's glory were not the actual appearance of God Himself but only physical representations of God.
  - For weeks now Moses has conversed with God through these methods, but now Moses proposes that the Lord reveal Himself truly to Moses as a sign of their new, intimate relationship.

Vs.19... The Lord agrees to the request but with significant limitations.

- And these limitations are grace to Moses as well.
- The Lord speaks in covenantal language in v.19
 

*First...* He says He will allow His "goodness" to pass in front of Moses.

  - The word goodness is "tub" in Hebrew.
  - It simply means a good thing or the best of something.
  - The Lord will show the fullness of His goodness to be manifested to Moses.

*Second...* the Lord says He will proclaim His name before Moses

- This is the name of God which no Jew hence forth would pronounce.
- The name represented by the letters YHWH in scripture.

*Third...* the Lord says He will be gracious upon those He chooses

*Fourth...* the Lord says He will show compassion on those He chooses.

- These final two statements emphasize that His covenant of grace with Moses is not a promise to show mercy on all of Israel.
- Instead, He is making a promise of grace to Moses and to those the Lord chooses within the camp of Israel.

But not all Israel will necessarily receive this grace

- The Lord still intends to hold many within Israel guilty for their sin under the Sinai covenant.

*Finally...* the Lord spells out how He will reveal Himself to Moses as a sign of this promise.

1. He will not allow Moses to see the Lord's "face"

The reference to face is an *anthropomorphism*

It is a human characteristic assigned to God to help us relate to Him

- But it is not a literal description of His being
- God does not have a physical face
- As we saw earlier in John 4, the Father is all spirit according to Jesus.

So the word "face" refers to the witnesses the full expression of God's glory.

- Just as we get a better appreciation of a human being by looking at their face than their back.
- When we see only their back, we have a sense of who they are, but we lack the most important details.
- Similarly, to see God's glory in partial or limited form is described as not seeing God's "face".

2. God tells Moses that no man can see Him in His fullness and live... Vs.20

The reason this is true relates to our sinfulness

God is so pure and holy and just that He cannot allow sin to coexist in the fullness of His glory.

- He can permit it to exist while it is outside His presence.
- But if it enters into His presence, He must judge it as His perfect nature requires

As an analogy... a perfect judge can allow a criminal to go unpunished so long as he does not stand trial in the courtroom.

- But once the accused enters the court and stands before the judge, now the judge has no choice but to convict the person.
- To do otherwise would be an injustice.

3. So the Lord's solution was to place Moses in a recessed part of the rock on the Mountain... Vs.21-22 thus the hymn..."He Hideth My Soul"

From within that cleft, Moses can only see a narrow sliver in front of him

From that vantage point, the Lord can control Moses' exposure to the Lord

- The Lord could reveal more of Himself to Moses while allowing Moses to remain protected from immediate judgment.

4. When the fullness of God's glory passed in front of the cleft, the Lord would cover the cleft to preserve Moses' life.

- But after God had passed in front of the cleft, then He would allow Moses to see God’s “back” but not His “face”.
- Once again, this is an *anthropomorphism*
  - God no more has a back than He has a face
  - The literal Hebrew word for back is afterward, which refers to the afterglow of God’s presence.
  - Like a reflection or a photograph.
- The image Moses would see was not God Himself but the afterglow of God’s glory reflected or left behind as a result of God’s presence passing by.
  - So the Lord executes this plan of granting Moses a sign of His promise of grace.

## Chapter 34

### V. BLUEPRINT and CONSTRUCTION of tabernacle, Chapters 25 — 40 (*a pattern and picture of Christ*)

C. Golden calf — broken law — Moses’ intercession, second tables of the Law, 32 - 35

#### Verses 1 - 8...

1. By ordering Moses to cut these tablets, the Lord is indicating that He intends to re-establish the covenant of Law with Israel.
  - We’ll see the Lord re-instate His covenant in the latter part of this chapter.
  - But for now we understand that the Law and the covenant of Law is not going to be dissolved as a consequence of the nation’s sin.
  - The Lord will also explain later in this chapter why it must continue.
  - However, the covenant is going to be changed in several ways as a result of the nation’s sin, which we’ll see.
2. Vs.3...Meanwhile, the Lord grants Moses the sign of His grace that He promised to him
  - The Lord says that nothing can be on the mountain except Moses himself.
    - Not even the herds may graze on the mountain.
  - Vs. 4...Then Moses cuts the stones as directed.
  - Vs. 5...Then the Lord passed in front of Moses as He promised declaring the covenantal word of lovingkindness...
3. Vs.6...Then the Lord gives a testimony to how He assigns His grace and lovingkindness
  - The compassion and grace and mercy of God is vast, the Lord says
    - He assigns it to “thousands” which can also be translated as “families” or clans.
    - In other words, God is prepared to show mercy to families and clans of sinners.
  - Vs.7...But nevertheless, the Lord is also prepared to hold the guilty accountable.
    - There will be those within the clans and families of the nation that will see God’s wrath for sin.
    - And this wrath will play out over generations, since sin is inherited.
    - What makes the difference between those who will receive His grace and those who will not?
4. As the Lord said earlier, He will show compassion on those He will show compassion.
  - It is a matter of God’s will alone.
  - Moses had requested grace and mercy, both for himself and for the people of Israel.
  - And the Lord responded with His promise of grace to Moses to never leave Him. **256**