

Exodus Chapter 34

Exodus 34:1 "And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon [these] tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest."

“Hew ... two tables of stone”: Renewal of the covenant meant replacement of the broken original tables on which God had personally written the Ten Commandments (32:19).

We spoke in the last lesson that the Lord had forgiven the people for their sins. The covenant He had made with these people had to do with them keeping the law. Moses had broken the first two tables of stone when he saw the sins of the people. God had the first two stones ready for Moses. Even the stones were provided by the Lord the first time. We see that the Lord required Moses to hew these stones, because he broke the others. The Lord would write on the stones that Moses provided. The words would be the same as the first stones.

Verses 2-28: Moses’ second period of 40 days and nights on Mt. Sinai (Chapters 25-32).

Exodus 34:2 "And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount."

It was necessary to allow an interval for the hewing of the stones.

“In the top of the mount”: I.e., in the same place as before (compare Exodus 19:20; 24:12; 24:18).

The Lord told Moses to have the stones ready the next morning. Moses, once again, was to go to the top of Mount Sinai and commune with the Lord.

Exodus 34:3 "And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount."

These stringent commands were new. On the previous occasion, Aaron, Hur, and the elders had ascended the mount part of the way (Exodus 24:9-11). And Joshua had accompanied his master almost to the summit (Exodus 24:13), and had apparently remained in some part of the mountain during the whole time of Moses’ stay (Exodus 32:17). Now Moses was to be quite alone, and no one was to be seen in any part of the mount. The stringency of the new orders must be connected with the promised revelation to Moses of God’s glory (Exodus 33:21-23).

“Neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount”: Or over against it, or rather "near" it. Which was ordered, not so much on the account of the flocks themselves, who were not capable of any moral guilt; nor that they might not come to any hurt, since they were to be stoned or thrust through with a dart if they touched it, which order it is highly probable was in force as

before. But on the account of their shepherds, that there might be none of them on the spot, or near, to observe what passed. And chiefly this was said to command fear and reverence in the minds of the people, while this solemn affair was transacting between God and Moses, and to check all curiosity in them.

This whole mountain had been made a very holy place because of the presence of God. This was why the restriction was made not to allow anyone, or any animals to touch the mountain. Had they touched the mountain, they would die. Moses was the only one who could go to the top of the mountain.

Exodus 34:4 "And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone."

Moses obeys all the directions given him to the letter. Hews, or causes to be hewn, the two tables, making them as like as he can to the former ones. He rises early, and ascends the mountain to the appointed spot, and takes with him the tables, for God to perform his promise of writing the commandments upon them (verse 1).

We see that Moses obeyed to the letter. He lost no time heading up the mountain the next morning. Moses carried the two tables to the Lord to be written on.

Exodus 34:5 "And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD."

In this stunning self-revelation, Yahweh doubled the word "LORD" to say, "This is who I Am". "Merciful" and "gracious" go together, He is extensively gracious. "Longsuffering" is a comic term in Hebrew; it means "long of nose" in the sense that it takes a great deal to make the Lord angry.

The Lord left the tent "tabernacle" after meeting with Moses and went out of sight of the people. When Moses went up the mountain, the presence of God came down. Just as the Lord had promised, He revealed the Lord's name to Moses.

Verses 6-7: Here is one of the testimonies to the character of God.

Exodus 34:6 "And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"

The most import phrase is "abundant in goodness and truth": These words in Greek describe Jesus (in John 1:14), as "full of grace and truth." Parallel descriptions of the Lord are found throughout Scripture (Neh. 9:17; Psalms 86:15; 100:5; 103:8; 117:2; Joel 2:13; Johan 4:2).

Exodus 34:7 "Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear [the guilty]; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth [generation]."

In his own heart, in his purposes and decrees, in his counsels and covenant, in his Son, with whom he keeps it for ever, and for all in him (Psalm 89:28). And they are many who are ordained to eternal life, for whom Christ gave his life a ransom, and for whom his blood was shed for the remission of their sins.

"Iniquity, and transgression, and sin": Sins of all sorts and sizes, secret or open, infirmities or presumptions, against God or men, as the heap of various words here put together signifies.

"That will by no means clear the guilty": This is commonly esteemed a title of justice or vengeance, which is here added by way of correction lest men should mistake or abuse God's mercy. God is most gracious indeed, but so as he is also just. And will not pity nor spare impudent and impenitent transgressors, but will severely punish them.

He is so gracious, that though he will severely punish the iniquity of the fathers, and especially their idolatry, upon themselves, and upon their children, as he hath said (Exodus 20:5). Yet in judgment he will remember mercy, and will not utterly destroy his people for their sins.

"Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation" (see note on Exodus 20:5-6).

Here we see the personality of God. All goodness, all grace, all truth, all mercy and even long-suffering in all of this. At the very same time that we see all of this goodness, we also see justice. The Lord is the Judge of all the world. They had known God until this time as Jehovah. The Self-Existent One. This name "Jehovah" had shown the power and greatness of God. Now we see the Lord revealing to Moses more of Himself in His dealings with man. We are told by Jesus that He is the Truth, the Word and the Light.

The name that tells all about God is the one that I believe He revealed Himself to Moses here. This name is not to be spoken or written by mere man. We will not know this name until we hear it in heaven. Most people want the Lord to be all the good things and want to forget that He is also, the Judge and that He is just. Forgiveness is the only way to get to heaven. Jesus is the door we must go through. There is no other way. Without Jesus' shed blood, we would be judged and found guilty as charged. We have been pardoned and justified; just as if we had never sinned.

Exodus 34:8 "And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped."

As the Divine glory passed before him, Moses bowed his head in adoration, worshipping God, and not daring to look until the glory had gone by. It is thus seen that with his ardent desire to look into the things of God he combined the highest and deepest reverence.

Moses, even though he was God's friend, knew that God is the Lord. Moses bowed and worshipped. Moses knew better than anyone else what reverence should be shown. Moses knew that he was not equal with God. He knew that he was the servant and he knew to let God alone be God.

Exodus 34:9 "And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it [is] a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance."

The Lord's ways (Exodus 33:13), and character having now been disclosed to Moses, he again entreats the Lord, who is ready to forgive (verse 7a). To pardon His people's sin, and give proof that He has again received them into His favor, by going personally with them to Canaan (Exodus 33:14).

"Stiffnecked": This character of the people (Exodus 32:9, 33:3; 33:5), is here made the motive for its being treated with favor and forgiven.

"For thine inheritance": The thought of Israel being Jehovah's inheritance occurs (in Deut. 4:20; 9:26; 9:29, and in the Song, Exodus 32:9). But nowhere in the earlier books of the Pentateuch.

Moses repeated the prayer of the previous day and asked God afresh to forgive His people, even though they did not deserve it. Moses feels sure at this point that he had found favor ("grace"), with the Lord. God had said the day before that He would do this, so we know that Moses prayed more than once. Sometimes it is difficult to believe that God has answered our prayer. I believe this was the case here.

Verses 10-28: In this renewed covenant, the Hebrew people were not to intermarry with the unbelieving peoples of the land or make alliances with them. To align with them would mean to eventually act like them, turning the children of Israel to idolatry (Hosea 4:13-14).

Exodus 34:10 "And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou [art] shall see the work of the LORD: for it [is] a terrible thing that I will do with thee."

I.e., "I lay down afresh the terms of the covenant which I am content to make with Israel. I will go with them, and drive out the nations before them (Exodus 34:11). And work miracles on their behalf (Exodus 34:10), and enlarge their borders (Exodus 34:24), and prevent their enemies from desiring their land at the festival seasons (Exodus 34:24).

They, on their part, must 'observe that which I command them this day. The "command" given included the moral law, as laid down in the Ten Commandments (Exodus 34:28). And a summary of the chief points contained in the "Book of the Covenant," which must be regarded as a re-publication and re-authorization of that book.

“Marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth”: Such as the drying up of Jordan (Josh. 3:16-17), the falling down of the walls of Jericho (Josh. 6:20), the destruction of the army of the five kings by hailstones (Josh. 10:11), and the like.

“A terrible thing” (compare Deut. 10:21; Psalms 106:22; 145:6).

God is “terrible” to the enemies of His people. It is better to understand it of the ministry of Moses, and of the awful things that God would do by him. Or rather of the people of Israel, among whom, and for whose sake, God would do such things as should cause a panic among the nations all around them. Particularly what he did for them to Og king of Bashan, and Sihon king of the Amorites. Because which terror fell, as on the king of Moab, so on the inhabitants of Canaan (see Num. 21:33; Josh. 2:9).

We had already seen some miracles, but in this, He was speaking of miracles like the walls of Jericho which would fall down before them and crossing the Jordan on dry land. Just the fact that they walked forty years in the wilderness and never wore their shoes out is a fantastic miracle in itself. I really believe that the most unbelievable miracle of all was that God forgave them over and over and truly did lead them to the land of promise. We see in all of this (speaking of the terrible things), these were not terrible for the children of Israel who God brought through victoriously, but terrible for their enemies. The surrounding people would greatly fear and would avoid any trouble at all, because God would remove everyone who got in the way of His people.

Exodus 34:11 "Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite."

The same six nations are particularized (in Exodus 3:8; 3:17; 23:23, also in 33:2).

In (Deut. 7:1; and Josh. 3:10; 24:11), the Girgashites are added, and the number of the nations made seven (see note on 3:8).

God promised to move all these people out so that the children of Israel could inhabit the land with no problems. God would do this, if the Israelites followed His commands.

Verses 12-17 (see note on 23:32). This time the admonition on international treaties included a warning of how idolatry could easily ensnare them by seemingly innocent invitations to join the festivities like a good neighbor or by intermarriage. Because these events would require recognition of the contracting parties' deities. Their future history demonstrated the urgency of such instruction and the disaster of disobeying it.

Exodus 34:12 "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee:"

This is said not to Moses, but to the people of Israel, as a caution to them when they should enter the land of Canaan, and possess it.

"Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest": Enter into a league and alliance, to live friendly and amicably, and support and assist each other against the common enemy. Whereby they were to smite the seven nations and destroy them, showing them no mercy (Deut. 7:1).

"Lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee": Be the means of drawing them into the same sinful practices with themselves. Especially into idolatrous ones, and so of bringing ruin and destruction on them.

Exodus 34:13 "But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves:"

The Israelites are commanded to destroy every monument of idolatry, however curious or costly. They were to refuse all alliance, friendship, or marriage with idolaters, and all idolatrous feasts. And they were reminded not to repeat the crime of making molten images. Jealously is called the rage of a man (Prov. 6:34). But in God, it is His holy and just displeasure. Those cannot worship God rightly, who do not worship him only.

“And cut down their groves”: Which were clusters of trees, where they had their temples and their idols, and did service to them. And where, besides idolatry, many impurities were committed. Such places were originally used by good men for devotion, being shady and solitary, but when abused to superstitious and idolatrous uses, were forbidden. It is said, the word for "grove" is general, and includes every tree they serve, or plant, for an idol.

Exodus 34:14 "For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name [is] Jealous, [is] a jealous God:"

Than the Lord their God, the one only living and true God, which was the first command given to the people of Israel, and binding upon all men.

"For the Lord whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God": His name and nature answer to one another. He admits of no rival or competitor in worship; he will not give his glory to another god, or one so called, or his praise to graven images. And in this he is distinguished from all nominal and fictitious gods, who have many joined with them, and are rivals of them, which give them no concern, being insensible. But it is otherwise with the Lord, who knows the dishonor done him, and resents it, and is as jealous of any worship being given to another. As the husband is of the honor of his marriage bed; for idolatry is spiritual adultery, as is suggested in the next verse.

The believers are warned all through the Bible not to be yoked with those of unbelief. Compromise is not in God's plan. God wants our 100% devotion.

2 Corinthians 6:14 "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" "And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

God will not allow His people to worship with those who worship false Gods. In fact (in verses 12-13), we see that these Israelites were to destroy the altars of these false gods and break their images. They were to aggressively destroy these items of false worship. Agreements with these people would include tolerance of their false religion which God would not allow. This was the reason God told them not to make a covenant with them. God would remove His blessings, so this would certainly be a snare to these people. These altars, images and groves were all used in false religion. We find that God is not only jealous, but that one of His names is Jealous. This is the first of the Ten Commandments as well. God will not under any circumstance allow the worship of other gods.

Exodus 34:15 "Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and [one] call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice;"

If a covenant were made with the idolatrous nations of Canaan, and they were allowed to dwell in the land together with the Israelites (Exodus 23:33), the danger would be, in the first place, that Israel would be induced to partake in the idol-feasts. Secondly, that intermarriage would take place; and thirdly, such Israelites as married idolatrous wives would be persuaded by them to join in their worship, and would thus be seduced into actual idolatry. Solomon's example shows the reality of the peril (see 1 Kings 11:1-8).

"And thou eat of his sacrifice": Invite to eat of what remained, that was offered to the idol. Hence it appears, that having feasts at sacrifices, and eating things offered to idols in a festival way, are very ancient practices (see 1 Cor. 10:27).

Exodus 34:16 "And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods."

That is, marry them to them, explaining what is meant by making a covenant with them. Entering into such a near relation, and joining families, and thus intermixing with one another.

"And their daughters go a whoring after their gods": The worship of which they have been trained up in from their infancy, and therefore hanker after them, and commit whoredom in a spiritual sense with them.

"And make thy sons go a whoring after their gods": By the means of tempting and drawing them into idolatrous practices, as the wives of Solomon were a snare to him.

God has always called unfaithfulness to Him "going a-whoring". The Christians are the bride of Christ. The book of Hosea actually deals with Israel being unfaithful to God. Hosea's wife, who is spoken of as a "whore", is symbolic of the church that is not faithful to God. This whoredom, spoken of above, is spiritual adultery. God does not want His people to fellowship with those

who worship other gods. He has commanded His people to be faithful to Him alone. This intermarriage of those of different faiths is a real problem in our society today. God will not permit His people to worship or even attend church in false religions.

Exodus 34:17 "Thou shalt make thee no molten gods."

Made of a melted liquid, whether gold, or silver, or brass, poured into a mold. And though graven images are not mentioned, they are included, a part being put for the whole, as appears not only from the injunction to break images in general, whether graven or molten (Exodus 34:13). But from the second command, which expressly forbids the making and worshipping of them. But "molten" ones are particularly mentioned, because it is probable they were chiefly such the Canaanites worshipped. And especially, because the calf the Israelites had lately made and worshipped was a molten one.

This is a terrible blight on our society today. Many people have Buddha's, totem poles and other items associated with false religion in their homes. God is Jealous. He will not allow this. "Molten gods" fall into the category of the created and should not be in any Christian's possession. God will not overlook this spiritual adultery.

Exodus 34:18 "The feast of unleavened bread shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, in the time of the month Abib: for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt."

This was instituted at the time of their coming out of Egypt, and on that account; and then observed (Exodus 12:15). And afterwards repeated, and the month expressed in which they were to keep it, and the reason of it, as it here follows (see notes on Exodus 12:14; 13:15).

We dealt with the feast of unleavened bread more than once before. This was the feast in April ("Abib") that closely coincided with the Passover. This eating of unleavened bread symbolized the body of Jesus Christ which was completely free of sin. The eating of unleavened bread for these Israelites was in remembrance of the flight from Egypt and of God delivering them, Himself.

Exodus Chapter 34 Questions

1. Who was to make the two stones for the Commandments?
2. What had happened to the first two tablets?
3. What was the condition of the covenant God made with these people?
4. Who would write on the stones?
5. Where was Moses to go to meet with God?

6. Who should come with Moses?
7. The mountain had been made what while the presence of God was on it?
8. When did Moses go?
9. What did God proclaim to Moses, when He descended on the mountain top?
10. What was a common name for the tabernacle?
11. What were some of the adjectives which described God in verse 6?
12. If not forgiven, how many generations will the sins of the people affect?
13. These people had known God by what name up until this time?
14. What did God do for Moses that we will have to wait for heaven to find out?
15. What would happen to us, if we did not have Jesus' blood protecting us?
16. What are three things Jesus called Himself?
17. What did Moses make haste to do?
18. What did Moses call the people?
19. What type of marvels was the Lord speaking of in verse 10?
20. What was meant by the terrible thing in verse 10?
21. Who did God promise to drive out of the land before the people?
22. What were these Israelites warned not to do with these strangers in the land?
23. What three symbols of false religions were to be destroyed by the Israelites?
24. We are told that God's name is _____ in verse 14.
25. In 2 Corinthians chapter 6:14-15, what are believers told not to do _____?
26. What does God call following other gods?
27. What was the book of Hosea about?
28. In verse 17, what were we not to do?
29. What is a blight on our society today?
30. What was the seven day feast they had to celebrate?

31. What month on our calendar is similar to Abib?