

Exodus Chapters 33-34 John Karmelich

1. Do you want God's presence in your life? Sounds like a stupid question for a Christian! ☺
 - a) It is not obvious as one thinks.
 - i) Yes, the Holy Spirit is always with us. (John 14:26)
 - ii) Yes, God promises to never leave us nor forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5)
 - b) But God requires *obedience*.
 - c) Many a person makes the mistake of thinking, "All I have to do is accept Jesus and then I have a free license to live like I want".
 - i) They trust in a childhood baptism or confirmation.
 - ii) They may have stepped forward at some altar call at some point in their life.
 - a) That's a good first step, but that's all it is!
 - b) Yes faith in God is not about obedience (a.k.a. "works"). But obedience is *evidence* of our faith. That is what the Book of James focuses upon.
 - d) When we sin, we *break fellowship* with God. It doesn't mean we lost our salvation, but it does mean we have lost God's *presence* until we confess our sins. That is why it is necessary for daily examination of our lives.
 - i) Further, it *does not mean* that horrible things are necessarily going to happen to us (via God) once we sin. Yes, sin has consequences that lead to trouble, but it does not necessarily *cause* the wrath of God. God is like a parent who knows we are doing wrong, but still loves us and is waiting for us to admit the wrong of our ways. This is why God is often described as a "Father" (literally "daddy") by Jesus.
 - e) This is what we are going to focus on today. The Israelites sinned. They built the Golden Calf. God is saying he will still lead them into the Promised Land, but his *presence* will not go with them. Moses intercedes on the people's behalf.
 - f) What is God's "presence" like? It is difficult to describe. Sometimes it can be a feeling of joy, but we should not rely on feelings, especially if it contradicts God's word. Other times it is simply the knowledge of knowing God's promise for our lives, and knowing he will never forsake us.
 - g) Tonight's lessons are not about salvation issues, they are about *maturation* issues.
 - i) It is about how to grow in faith in God. How to trust Him more.
 - ii) God lays out in Chapter 34 *how* to grow in faith. There are many lessons for the Israelites as well as us. With that, let's get to it.
 - h) To review, the Israelites made the Golden Calf while Moses was talking with God on Mt. Sinai. Moses came down, broke the two stones that had the 10 commandments on them, and made the Israelites destroy the Golden Calf. The leaders of the rebellion were killed. The people repented, but not to a point of sorrow. (Like a guy who got caught in a crime: Not necessarily sorry for the crime, but sorrow for being caught!). That will become more obvious as we read Chapters 33 and 34.
2. **33:1** And the Lord said to Moses, "Go up from here, you and the people whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' **33:2** And I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite. **33:3** Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go up among you, for you are a stiff-necked people, and I might destroy you on the way."

- a) Don't miss what God is telling Moses here.
 - i) He's not saying, "I'm going with you".
 - ii) God's saying effect: "You guys, you're on your own until you get to the Promised Land". I'll meet you there because I made unconditional promises to Abraham, Issac & Jacob. Not because of you.
 - iii) God is saying the people are stubborn (i.e. "stiff necked".) This is about their rebellion via the Golden Calf.
 - iv) Why such a harsh treatment by God? Didn't they repent in Chapter 32?
 - a) A couple of thoughts. This is another situation where God is testing Moses *directly*. This is about leadership. God wants Moses to intercede on the people's behalf.
 - b) I get the impression the Israelite people were *sorry* about building the Golden Calf. The question now becomes "how much do they trust God?" Since God knows the hearts and minds of men, I suspect the people would be just as likely to build another "golden calf" had not God given this warning/lecture to Moses.
 - (1) God often works this way in our lives. We may be sorry for what we did, but we are still likely to commit that sin again. God is asking in effect "do you want me to be with you or not?"
 - b) A reminder of something I said some time ago: What did the Canaanite's, Amorite's and the rest do to deserve God's wrath they God said he will drive these people out?
 - i) A good clue is Leviticus Chapter 18:
 - ii) This chapter talks about such sins as sexual relationships with animals, with your parents, near relatives, your children and other things equally as disgusting. Yet, God says in this chapter these nations are guilty of *all* these things! That is a danger of sexual sin. Like all types of sins, one is never satisfied, and one grows in perversion to satisfy that desire.
 - iii) There is a judgement day for the world for their sins. Just because someone is getting away with something now, does not mean its permanent.
3. **33:4** When the people heard this troubling word they mourned; no one put on his ornaments. **33:5** For the Lord had said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'You are a stiff-necked people. If I went up among you for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments, that I may know what I should do to you.'" **33:6** So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments by Mount Horeb.
- a) Let's give the Israelites a little credit. They repented. Repentance means a willingness to change. When God wants you to confess your sins, he wants repentance. That is, a desire on our part to change our way.
 - i) If we confess our sins with a desire to repent, God does forgive us (See 1st John 1:9). Often, we fail, and sin again. The key is the desire of our hearts. If our confession every time is *genuine* in the desire to change, God forgives *each time* and works with us to improve our lives.
 - ii) "Stripping off their ornaments" is a cultural way of repentance. Just like the same way we wear black at a funeral. It is a sign of remorse.
4. New topic. **33:7** Moses took the tent and pitched it outside the camp, at a good distance from the camp; and he called it the tent of meeting. And anyone seeking the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting that was outside the camp.
- a) First of all, this is not "the" tabernacle. Moses just came down off the mountain with the blueprints. He hasn't started building it yet. This is just a special place Moses had for communicating with God.

- b) Many commentators talk about why Moses pitched the tent “outside the camp”.
 - i) As Christians, many of us desire a retreat center alone where we can get away from our daily lives to spend time listening and communicating with God.
 - c) In The Gospel of John, Jesus says he is the doorkeeper of the sheep and he leads his people out. (John 10:3).
 - i) A relationship with God often requires a separation from religious rituals. That is what Jesus meant in the Gospel of John.
5. **33:8** And when Moses went out to the tent, all the people would get up and stand at the entrance to their tents, and they would watch Moses until he entered the tent. **33:9** And whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. **33:10** When all the people would see the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people, each one at the entrance of his tent, would rise and worship.
- a) The people would watch Moses go to this tent. But none of them joined in!
 - b) I can't help think of a time where my wife & I were in New Orleans and spent time in a “Gospel Tent” at a large music festival. This was a secular event. One out of seven music stages was all Christian music in this Gospel Tent. What amazed me was how many people stood *at the edge* of this tent *but refused to go in*. (As if they were going to catch some sort of disease!) Many people stand at the doorway of Christianity, but refuse to come in!
 - i) I see the same analogy here. The people worshipped God from a distance, but refused to come to the tent of meeting with Moses.
 - c) I speculate the other Israelites felt guilty, and felt they did not deserve to go to the tent of meeting. Given how God showed many miraculous signs to prove how Moses was the leader, I'm sure there was an intimidation factor about others approaching this tent. Remember that God wants a relationship with all of us *individually*. He does *not* want you to go through a pastor or priest to communicate with God. He wants that direct relationship.
6. **33:11** And the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And then Moses would return to the camp; but his servant, Joshua son of Nun, a young man, did not leave the tent.
- a) Most commentators write about how “face to face” is an expression. God is not a man with a face that Moses could sit and talk to. (Numbers 23:19 is a scriptural example of God *not* being a man.). It simply means God communicated directly with Moses. It may have been audible. The text does not say.
 - b) Why this mention of Joshua?
 - i) Joshua was in-training to be the next leader. It is important as leaders to train others and have your next leaders near by.
 - ii) For all you “typology nuts”, Joshua is the same root-word as Jesus. Some commentators see this as a “pun” of Jesus staying in the tent with God.
7. Next, we see Moses interceding on behalf of the people. **33:12** Then Moses said to the Lord, "See, you have been saying to me, 'Bring this people up,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. But you said, 'I know you by name, and also you have found favor in my sight.' **33:13** And now, if I have found favor in your sight, show me your way, that I may know you, that I may continue to find favor in your sight. And see that this nation is your people.
- a) Moses is praying in a way, that we as Christians, don't do enough. That is, call on God's promises to us.
 - i) This isn't to bargain with God. God doesn't make bargains.
 - ii) It is to *remind* us of what God *has* promised for our lives.

- iii) God makes *many* promises in the Old and New Testament that apply to believers. Christian bookstores sell little booklet's called "God's Promises" that list these by category. They are excellent to meditate upon, especially in times of worry and distress.
 - b) Some verses back, God threatened to "not be" with the people and led them into the Promised Land. Moses is asking for God to "be" with the people to lead them into the Promised Land. That is why Moses is pleading based on God's previous promises.
 - c) One thing to remember as Christians is that God will take you as far as you want to go. God will never violate your free will. If you only want "some" of the blessings of God, and are not ready to trust God further, God will stop there.
 - i) For example, some people don't give a lot of money to the church. They still trust themselves rather than God to provide. Does that mean they'll lose their salvation? No. But they will never know the rich promises of God of growing in maturity and trusting God with that area of their life (their finances).
 - ii) I can site other examples. One could hold a grudge against a single person. They may trust God in other areas, but they refuse to forgive that person.
 - d) This is the problem, spiritually of the Israelites here. They believe in the God of the Bible. It is just that when God tests them (by not being there for 40 days), they turn to their own resources (i.e. The Golden Calf). I suspect we all have "our golden calves" that we refuse to turn over to God.
 - e) The good news for the Israelites is that Moses is there pleading on their behalf. The good news for us is Jesus is at the right hand of the father pleading on our behalf!
8. **33:14** And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."
- a) God desires to go with us! The highest calling of our lives is to glorify God. Remember that the tabernacle is *portable*. Most of the furniture pieces came with handles. God wants to go where we go.
 - i) That does not mean it is automatic. God can not stand sin. The confession and repentance is required in order for God to go with us.
9. **33:15** And he said to him, "If your presence does not go with us, do not take us up from here. **33:16** For in what way will 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 will be distinguished, I and your people, from all the people who are on the face of the earth?"
- a) Moses is further pleading by saying in effect "You *have* to go with us because your reputation is on the line. Moses is pleading with God that the surrounding nations are well aware of the Egyptian plagues and how God miraculously saved the people.
 - b) The application to Christians is similar.
 - i) People are watching us! God's reputation is on the line. Other people consider becoming a Christian based on how we *act* far more than what we say. People want to see if we "walk the walk" that we claim is the way to salvation.
10. **33:17** And the Lord said to Moses, "I will do this thing also that you have spoken, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."
- a) First of all, this is about *Moses being ready for God's answer*, not God making a decision. God does not sit there and go "Hmm, OK, should I show Moses my presence or not. What shall I do?" ☺
 - i) Our God is perfect. A perfect God knows all things and can not learn.
 - ii) This is about Moses giving God the answer God wants to hear, and God giving the proper response.
 - iii) God works that way in our lives. He wants control of our lives. When *we* are ready for the next step and pray/act accordingly, God responds accordingly.

- b) So therefore, God agreed to show Moses "His Glory". As we read further, we'll know what God meant by that statement. (Never do your own interpretation when the Bible text makes it clear for you. Always read verses in context of the surrounding verses!)
11. Moses responded: **33:18** And he said, "Show me your glory."
12. God's response: **33:19** And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before your face, and I will proclaim the Lord by name before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy."
- a) God is honoring Moses request in the first part of the verse.
- i) God's definition of "showing his glory" is defining who he is. It's not about putting on a dazzling show for Moses. That wouldn't reveal who God is. Only by *defining* who God is, as we shall see, is God capable of showing His glory.
- b) In the 2nd part of this verse, God says "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious", etc.) God is emphasizing the fact that He, and he alone is control. God does not bargain with man. God is teaching Moses that God is doing this because God *desires out of his free will* to do so, not under pressure from Moses.
13. **33:20** And he (God) said, "You cannot see my face, for no one can see me and live."
- a) This is not a threat on Moses' life. It is a statement of the fact that God is so powerful, it is beyond our description to comprehend. A good paraphrase of this verse would be "No one can see God and live because in the human-mind, you are not able to comprehend all that God is and is capable of doing."
- b) This is why the 2nd commandment (of the 10) is not to make any images of God. The ability to describe God is beyond our physical ability.
- i) "Every time I try to comprehend God, all I get is a headache". David Hocking
14. **33:21** And the Lord said, "Here is a place by me; you will station yourself on a rock. **33:22** And when my glory passes by, then I will put you in a cleft in the rock and will cover you with my hand while I pass by. **33:23** Then I will take away my hand, and you will see my back, but my face must not be seen.
- a) OK, what is this all about? God is saying in effect "I'll put you inside a crack (cleft) of a big rock, and you'll see my "back-side", but not my face.
- i) I would argue that what God meant is that Moses is only *partially* able to comprehend God, and God is showing Moses what he is capable of understanding.
- ii) God didn't have to show Moses his glory in this fashion. There is something else going on here.
- b) As we read further, God is not going to do this at this time and on this spot. Moses has to go back up Mt. Sinai for this presentation.
- c) There is something bigger going on here. It has to do with prophecy.
- i) Note this New Testament Bible Verse: "They all ate the same spiritual food and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. (1 Corinthians 10:34 NIV)
- ii) Paul claims that the "rock" references in the Old Testament speak of Jesus.
- iii) The word-picture is wonderful. The rock was "split", as Jesus was crucified on our behalf. Here was Moses standing *in that split* (a.k.a. "cleft", King James Version) in order to see God's glory.
- iv) Using this same word-picture, what do you think God was "predicting" when God says "you will see my back, but my face must not be seen".
- a) I would argue (based on this "type" of Jesus) is because "The Cross" has not yet happened, Moses can not fully comprehend God's Glory. Salvation in the Old Testament meant looking forward to what Jesus was going to do on the cross, just as ours means looking backward.
- d) There is a famous Christian hymn "Rock of Ages (cleft for me)" based on these verses.

15. **34:1** And the Lord said to Moses, "Cut out two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you smashed. **34:2** And be prepared in the morning, and go up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and station yourself for me there on the top of the mountain. **34:3** And no man is to come up with you, nor let any man be seen throughout the mountain, nor let the flocks or the herds graze before that mountain." **34:4** So Moses cut out two tablets of stone like the first; and early in the morning he went up to Mount Sinai, just as the Lord had commanded him; and he took in his hand two tablets of stone.
- a) In order for God to show Moses "his glory", God's requirements were
 - i) 1. Take two "blank" tablets of stone with you.
 - ii) 2. Go back up Mt. Sinai.
 - b) Why? The "tablets" are associated with the law.
 - i) Ever carried something heavy on a long hiking trip? Does that load get heavier or lighter as you go?
 - ii) That is why God told Moses to carve out the stones again. They represent the law. It was up to Moses to *keep and enforce and the law*. God himself was going to write the words on the tablets again.
 - iii) The application is simple. God provides the law (the 10 commandments). Our job is to keep them.
 - iv) This second set of stone-tablets never gets broken. It is a "word-picture" of the law being preserved. This set gets put inside the Ark of the Covenant for safekeeping. Remember Jesus said he did not come to break the law but to *fulfill* it. (Matthew 5:17)
 - c) The law had to be given *again* from Mt. Sinai. This mountain will forever be associated with the source-location of the law.
16. Moses did as he was told. Therefore, God keeps his part of commitment and shows His glory: **34:5** And the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there; and he made proclamation of the Lord by name. **34:6** And the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed: "The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, and abounding in loyal love and faithfulness, **34:7** keeping loyal love for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin. But he by no means leaves the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and on the children's children, to the third and fourth generation."
- a) God described his "glory" by describing his attributes. That's what these verses are all about. I could spend a long time discussing each aspect of God's glory. There are books out there on this topic. They are great things to consider.
 - b) God's description of himself falls in two categories: The "positives" & the "negatives".
 - i) The "positives" includes his name itself. It is repeated twice in a row in Verse 6 for emphasis. (Just like Jesus would often say "verily verily" for emphasis.)
 - ii) The "positives" include God's loyalty, which is given to those who trust in Him. We can count on this as a promise of God. He will never leave us nor forsake us.
 - iii) Others promises include God's commitment to be "slow to anger". Praise God for that, when it comes to my faults, and for God's willingness to continually forgive us of our sins when we ask Him to do so.
 - c) The "negatives" is that he won't let the guilty go unpunished. I take comfort in that. God is a God-of-love, but he is also a God-of-justice. When we see people commit wrongful acts, we can sleep well knowing God will take care of justice, either in that person's lifetime or afterward.
 - i) The reference to "3rd and 4th generation" does *not* mean God punishes children for the sins of their parents. (See Ezekiel 18:20 for evidence to that fact.)
 - ii) The reference is that sins of the parents have effects upon the next generations.

- d) If you stop and think about this, the “positives” and “negatives” are actually contradictions of each other. Let’s start with the assumption that God is perfect. If God is perfect in Love, he will forgive us of our sins if we ask for repentance.
- i) *However*, to forgive us is not justice. If God is *perfect* in “justice”, He can not forgive us of our sins.
 - ii) The ancient Greek philosophers understood this contraction. This is why Plato believed that God *could* resurrect man, but didn’t understand how.
 - iii) The solution of course, is “the cross”. Only by *God*-himself paying the price for our sins can you reconcile Perfect-Love with Perfect-Justice.
 - a) This is why I reject Mormonism and Jehovah Witnesses. They see Jesus as less-than-God. If that is true, God is being cruel by making Jesus pay for our sins. It doesn’t solve the perfect-love/perfect-justice dilemma.
 - iv) This is why the Old Testament sacrifices provided a *covering* for sin. It never takes sin away. Only Jesus on the cross can do that.
17. Moses reaction: **34:8** And Moses quickly bowed to the ground, and worshiped. **34:9** And he said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, let my Lord go among us, for it is a stiff-necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance."
- a) Did Moses’ fully comprehend God’s statements? I don’t know. It’s hard to read between the lines on that one.
 - b) God’s answer *did* drive Moses to his knees. That is what the glory of God should do for us. Out of gratefulness of the glory of God, we should be driven to our knees.
 - c) Moses then got back to his original question of asking God’s presence to go with him. Back in Chapter 33 Verse 14, God said he would do this. I suspect Moses just wanted further reassurance. (Remember, the chapter numbers were added centuries later.)
18. Here’s God’s response to Moses’ second request for God’s presence. **34:10** And he said, "I am going to make a covenant; before all your people. I will do wonders such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. And all the people among whom you are will see the work of the Lord, for it is a fearful thing that I am doing with you.
- a) First of all, this is the same covenant God made earlier with the Israelites. The covenant of keeping the 10 commandments and all the other decrees past down through Moses.
 - b) God is teaching the principal of when we break a law, we have broken our relationship with Him. Once we confess our sins, that relationship is re-established. But it doesn’t nullify the law. By simply confessing our sins does not give us a license to act in every sinful matter.
 - i) This is why God restates the summary principals of the law in these verses, and many successive verses.
 - c) Notice the first words out of God’s mouth after this declaration is a promise.
 - i) The promise of “doing a wonderful work” *through* you.
 - ii) That type of promise exists for Christians too.
 - iii) Jesus said: “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.” (John 14:12 NKJV)
 - a) Jesus is saying we will do greater things than he did during his 3-year ministry? How’s that? What’s that? Bring salvation to people. Through us the Good News is spread and salvation occurs!
 - b) It also implies that we have the power of the same miracles Jesus had (that’s staggering to think about). While we are not given the authority to perform such things with the regularity of Jesus, most Christians can tell stories of miracles that have occurred through the power of prayer.

- d) OK, I've drifted off topic, back to the text.
19. Next verse, God's promises *for obedience* continues: **34:11** Keep what I am commanding you this day. I am going to drive out before you the Amorite, the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite.
- a) I am convinced we as Christians spend too much time worried about our enemies and the people of this world. God gives the promise here that *he* would fight our battles for us. (This principal alone is a lecture unto itself. Strong boundaries are still needed in some situations. The general idea is not to *worry*.)
20. The next set of verses is God giving Moses *warnings*. **34:12** Be careful not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it become a snare among you. **34:13** But you must destroy their altars, smash their images, and cut down their Asherah poles. **34:14** For you must not worship any other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. **34:15** Be careful not to make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to their gods, then you will be invited, and you will eat from his sacrifice; **34:16** and you then take their daughters for your sons, and their daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will make your sons prostitute themselves to their gods. **34:17** You must not make yourselves molten gods.
- a) This is the Old Testament equivalent of "Lead us Not into Temptation" is in these verses. Here God is giving some good practical advice on *avoiding* temptation.
- b) First basic rule is not making a covenant (contract) with any of the people. The basic same rule applies to Christians. Paul teaches the same thing:
- i) "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?" (2 Corinthians 6:14 NIV)
- ii) God wants us to be *in* the world, but not *of* this world.
- iii) I see this as not marrying or going into business partnership with unbelievers. As believers, our primary focus is in God's will, not ours. People who haven't turned their live over to Jesus focus on their own interests, not God's.
- c) Verse 13 says to destroy their alters, etc. I don't see this as a "green light" to run into a Mormon temple or Buddhist temple and trash the place ☺. It refers to *our* lives. Don't let idolatry creep into the church, or our own personal lives.
- d) Notice in the remaining versus deal with the *gradual* increasing of sin. God warns us if we start down the wrong path of idolatry, it is only going to get worse. Oh, how that is true. Any action other than with the true God is *always* going to require more and effort in an attempt to reach a point of satisfaction, that never comes!
21. Keeping the same topic of keeping from idolatry, God reminds them of their religious holiday requirements: **34:18** You must keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you must eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you; do this at the appointed time of the month Abib, for in the month Abib you came out of Egypt.
- a) This the feast days in the spring, including Passover. Why this reminder here?
- b) The answer is one of the key ways to keep from idolatry is to spend time with other believers. God never wants our relationship with him to be a "solo act". We need to spend time with other believers. Not just to build each other up, but also to hold each other *accountable*. I find that the Christians who go off on weird tangents have usually spent too much time away from other Christians.

22. God's advice on idolatry, continued: **34:19** Every firstborn of the womb belongs to me, even every firstborn of your cattle that is a male, whether ox or sheep. **34:20** Now the firstling of a donkey you may redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then break its neck. You must redeem all the firstborn of your sons.
- a) Remember *whom* you belong to. Perform a ceremony where you "redeem" your donkey with an (innocent) lamb, or kill the donkey for the redemption of your sons. Why? Donkeys, then, and now are associated with stubbornness. "Breaking the neck" is a word-picture of submitting our will to God and "killing" our stubbornness. Offering a lamb is associated with the Passover, the "Lamb of God", offered for our sins.
 - b) Giving of the first of their animals is the same as us giving the first of our income. It is a reminder that *everything* we own belongs to God and we need to depend upon Him.
23. God's next bit of advice: **34:21** On six days you may labor, but on the seventh day you must rest; in the plowing time and in the harvest you are to rest.
- a) God is saying that even during their busiest time of year, observe the Sabbath.
 - b) This is that reminder of no matter *how* busy we are, we need to dedicate time to God.
 - i) The Christian's role of the Sabbath is a whole lecture unto itself. I talked about some of this back in Exodus 20, in the Ten Commandments lecture.
24. **34:22** And you must observe the Feast of Weeks-the first fruits of the harvest of wheat-and the Feast of Ingathering at the end of the year. **34:23** At three times in the year all your men must appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. **34:24** For I will drive out the nations before you, and enlarge your borders; no man will covet your land when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times in the year.
- a) This is a continuation of God's requirements to appear before him *to avoid idolatry*. God already gave details of how these holidays were to be observed. Like the requirements in Verse 18 about keeping the Feast of Unleavened bread, this is a further reminder of God's promise for *obedience* by observing the holidays God commanded them to observe.
 - b) Quick side note. Are Christians required to keep these Jewish holidays? No.
 - i) This was a covenant between God & Israel. The primary purpose of this covenant was for God to use the Israelites to teach the world about his Laws and to prepare the world for the coming of the Messiah.
 - ii) Our covenant (contract-relationship) with God is different as Christians.
 - iii) Our requirements are to have faith in what Jesus did for us and be obedient to what God calls us, as individuals to do. Through prayer, time with other believers and studying God's word do we discover God's will for our lives.
25. **34:25** You must not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leaven; the sacrifice from the feast of Passover must not remain until the following morning.
- a) God is teaching the Israelites through word-pictures.
 - b) Leaven is associated with sin, as it grows by "puffing up". It teaches us to avoid sin before it gets worse.
 - c) The Passover (lamb) must be eaten on that day. It is a prophecy of Jesus' day on the Cross. (See my lesson on Exodus 12).
26. **34:26** The first of the first fruits of your land you must bring to the house of the Lord your God. "Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk."
- a) Again, the focus on the topic is idolatry. Bringing the first fruits (e.g. our "tithes") to God is a reminder that all we have belongs to God and we depend upon Him for our income, our lives, etc.
 - i) Not giving to God is trusting in yourself. That is a form of idolatry.

- b) Next we have the infamous “young goat in its mother’s milk” reference.
 - i) Most commentators agree it was some form of idolatrous practice practiced among the Canannites. That would make sense as it fits in the overall topic of avoiding idolatry in these verses.
27. **34:27** And the Lord said to Moses, "Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." **34:28** So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread, and he did not drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten words.
- a) Moses was on the mountain 40 days during his *second* time on Mount Sinai. (The 1st time was the *original* giving of the 10 commandments. Those were the tablets that Moses broke.)
 - b) These two verses emphasize two things.
 - i) 1. Moses was obedient in what God called Moses to do.
 - ii) 2. Moses was miraculously preserved from hunger & thirst during this time.
 - c) Why mention this here?
 - i) The miracle of God sustaining Moses *miraculously* is a validation that God is able to sustain all our needs if we are obedient to God.
 - ii) Sometimes that ability to sustain us will be through natural “coincidences”, and other times through amazing miracles.
 - iii) The point is for us to be obedient. God will provide for all our needs, even if we can’t foresee *how* God will do this! That is what faith is all about.
 - d) There is speculation that Moses wrote more than just these commandments and the tabernacle instructions during the 40 days on the Mountain. It doesn’t take 40 days to write down this section of Exodus. Moses may have written all of Leviticus during this time, or perhaps much of Exodus. It is speculation, but it is reasonable speculation.
28. Last set of verses. We’ll take them as one big chunk: **34:29** Now when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand-when he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone while he talked with him. **34:30** When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to approach him. **34:31** But Moses called to them, so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him. Then Moses spoke to them. **34:32** And after this all the Israelites approached; and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken to him on Mount Sinai. **34:33** When Moses finished speaking with them, he would put a veil on his face. **34:34** But when Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil until he came out. Then he would come out and tell the Israelites what he had been commanded. **34:35** When the Israelites would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone, Moses would put the veil on his face again, until he went in to speak with him.
- a) Basically, Moses face “glowed” from talking with God. It glowed enough that it intimidated the Israelites. Therefore Moses wore a veil when he talked to the people.
 - b) I love when Jesus or Paul comments directly on verses. It makes my job much easier!☺
 - i) Paul said: “We are not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face to keep the Israelites from gazing at it while the radiance was fading away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts.” (2 Corinthians 3:13-15 NIV)
 - ii) Paul is making a radical claim. He is saying that “veil” represents the Israelites inability to see Jesus! God “blinds” the Israelites from knowing the truth.

- iii) Why would God do that?
 - a) First of all it applies to Israel *collectively*, not *individually*. There are many Jews who accept Jesus. Because we don't know who will and who won't accept Jesus, it is our responsibility to witness to all Jews.
 - iv) God does not want *anyone* to perish. He wants everyone to believe in Jesus. The Bible is designed to maximize the *evidence* that Jesus is the Messiah.
 - a) By "blinding" the Jews nationally, this helps support the evidence that Jesus *is* who He claimed to be!
 - b) Jews today deny Jesus is the Messiah because they generally believe that the Messiah will be a man and not God. Because Jesus claimed to be God, they deny that he is the Messiah. Also, they see worship of Jesus as worshipping multiple Gods. They forget the Hebrew word for "God" is "el-o-heem", which is a plural word! (for example "Let us make man in our image" from Genesis 1:26. Who was God talking to?)
 - c) Many cults deny Jesus as God. Now we have the Jews, who are *experts* on the language of Hebrew, and they, as neutral witnesses, *validate that Jesus claimed to be God!* That is *evidence* to support Jesus' claim.
 - d) That, in my humble opinion ☺, is one reason why God "blinds" Israel nationally. There are others, but we're already on Page 11!
 - c) To summarize: The basic purpose of the veil was so that the Israelites were not to be intimidated by Moses "glow" from being with God. God gave Moses this "glow" to validate Moses' commands as being the Word of God. Paul teaches us the spiritual application, which is that the veil is a separation of the Jew's understanding God's plans and purposes for the church.
29. Before we "tisk tisk" the Israelites for not getting it, let's look at what Paul says about us:
- a) "Now we see (God) but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. (1 Corinthians 13:12 NIV)
 - b) Our understanding of God is limited too. Let's face it, it would be a lot easier if God audibly spoke to us and gave us daily instructions. Walking by faith is difficult. God *wants* to walk by faith as that is how we build up our *trust* in God. If we just sat down and waited for God's daily phone call, we would trust in that phone call, and not our faith in Him.
 - c) But this verse is a promise to believers. God's purpose of creating us in the first place is for Him to show us his Glory in future ages. Eternity with God is going to *require* an eternity-of-time just for God to show off his Glory and reveal all his character aspects to us. We, in our present state, are unable to fully comprehend God. That is why God prohibits making images of Him. But a Perfect God who *desires* to reveal Himself for us must *first pay himself* for our sins. That is the "bridge" between perfect-love and perfect-justice that I've discussed earlier. All we have to do is accept the free gift.
30. Let's Pray. Father, we will be forever grateful of the love you have bestowed upon us. We will spend eternity praising your name and learning of your great glory. Now, on our time on earth, help us to be *obedient* to what you have called us to do, both individually and collectively. Help us to *strive* for the Kingdom of Heaven, by spending time in prayer, your word, and with fellow believers, so that we may enjoy your presence. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.