

Sunday, March 10, 2024 pm

## JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE (25)

### At Mount Sinai (2)

#### Exodus 32-34

As we continue our study of the 17 time periods of Bible history, we are in the midst of the 6<sup>th</sup> time period – the wilderness wanderings. Our current focus is on Israel at Mt. Sinai. It took them between 45 & 90 days for them to arrive at Mt. Sinai. In our last lesson we addressed their arrival as well as YHWH giving them the 10 commandments. We also addressed various other commandments that we addressed as part of their laws (Exodus 21-23). We concluded with Moses going up on Mt. Sinai where he will be with YHWH (24:9-18).

They will stay at Mt. Sinai for about 1 year (Ex. 19 - Numbers 10:11). During that time, Moses received the Law from the LORD (a total of 80 days), they built the tabernacle, established the priesthood, began offering regular sacrifices, observed the 2<sup>nd</sup> Passover, numbered their army & priesthood, and prepared to leave to head toward Canaan. We will devote 2-3 more lessons to this time as it is the foundation for the rest of the Old Testament – the history of Israel.

In this lesson, we begin with Moses on Mt. Sinai and Israel breaking their covenant with the LORD. Our text for this lesson is primarily Exodus 32-34.

#### I. Breaking the Covenant

- a. Recall in our last lesson, we noted that 3 times Israel affirmed the covenant God made with them. Exodus 19:8, 24:3 & 7, All Israel promised, “*All that the LORD has said we will do*” and be obedient. RECALL also the 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> commandments – “You shall have no other gods before Me” (20:3) & “You shall not make for yourself a carved image” (2:4-5).
- b. Moses is on Mt. Sinai for 40 days (Ex. 24:28) where the LORD gave him “two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God” (Ex. 31:18). NOTE: We are told that written on these 2 tablets was the 10 commandments (Exodus 34:28, Deuteronomy 4:13). But also, while on the mountain, Moses received detailed instructions in Exodus 24-31 concerning freewill offerings of the people, the building of the tabernacle and its furnishings, the priestly garments, implementation of feasts and the Sabbath and the promise of gifted artisans who would help to make all of these things (31).
- c. Joshua accompanied him, while Aaron and Hur stayed with the people to lead them (Ex. 24:13-14). Joshua would not go all the way with Moses, but he was nearby as his assistant.
- d. 32:1 notes that while Moses delayed His coming down from the mountain, the people approached Aaron and asked him to make “gods” to go before them. Aaron tells the people to break off their golden earrings and bring them to him. They do, and he “fashioned it with an engraving tool, and made a molded calf.” (32:4).
- e. The people declared that this was their god (at least representing the god) that brought them out of Egypt. RECALL again the first 2 commandments!
- f. The next day, they proclaimed a feast, rose early and offered sacrifices and “the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” (32:3-6)

#### II. Moses intercedes

- a. 32:7-10 YHWH told Moses, “*Go, get down! For YOUR people whom YOU brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted themselves.*” (32:7) NOTICE how the LORD is declaring the people did

not belong to Him. He declares that he is about to consume all the people and start over with Moses to fulfill His promise.

- b. 32:11-14 – Moses pleads with the LORD and intercedes for Israel. He reasons that to utterly wipe them out would send the wrong message to Egypt (and other nations). He also appealed to His promise to Abraham, Isaac & Israel. So YHWH relented (but He was certainly not done).
- c. 32:15-19 – as Moses comes down the mountain with Joshua they hear the noise of the people singing. As soon as he saw the calf, he became very angry and cast the tablets out of his hands and broke them. NOTE that they were the work of God and written on by Him (15-16). Imagine breaking that. ALSO consider the implications: They had broken their covenant with God: Whether intended or not, what Moses did declared how God had broken His covenant with them.
- d. 32:20- Moses DESTROYED the calf, burned it and ground it to powder and scattered the powder in the water and made the people drink it.
- e. 32:21-24 – He confronts Aaron who said the people made him do it. Furthermore, he cast the gold into the fire “and this calf came out.” Sad excuses!!!!
- f. 32:25-28 – Moses separates those who were on the Lord’s side from those who were not. He commanded that the righteous kill (execute) whomever, even of his own family and neighbors. About 3000 men fell that day.
- g. 32:29-32 – Moses intercedes for the people, first acknowledging their great sins. He even declares if the LORD would not forgive that his name also be blotted out.
- h. 32:33-35 – the LORD declared (righteously), “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.” And while He would send His Angel before them, the sinners would be punished.
- i. 33:1-6 – The LORD commands them to depart. Again, note how YHWH said, “*go up from here, YOU and the people whom YOU have brought out of the land of Egypt...*” He has yet to declare that Israel is again His people. He would send His Angel and drive out the enemies (fulfilling his promise to the patriarchs), but He would not go with them because of their rebellious attitude. NOTE: This is a command to leave BEFORE they had opportunity to prepare the tabernacle and priesthood and sacrifices which were crucial to their spiritual heritage and approaching YHWH. The people mourned at this rejection.
- j. 33:7-11 – Moses then pitched his tent outside of the camp and called it the tabernacle of meeting (NOT THE tabernacle to be built). When Moses would go to his tent, the people would stand, as the cloud would descend upon the tent and the people would worship the LORD at the door of their tents. NOTE vs. 11, “*So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to a friend.*”
- k. 33:12-17 – Moses again intercedes for the people. He appeals to his relationship with the LORD noting that he had found grace in His sight. Therefore Moses requests, “*Show me now Your way, that I may know You... and consider that this nation is YOUR people.*” YHWH listens and says His Presence would go with them and give them rest.
- l. Moses declares, “If not, do not bring us from this place. “For how will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us?” The LORD heeds the request of Moses.
- m. 33:18-23 – Moses then requests, “Please, show me Your glory!” The LORD agrees to show him His glory but not his face. He designated a place where he would put Moses in the cleft of the rock and cover him with His hand. “*You will see My back, but My face shall not be seen.*”
- n. 34:1-4 - Moses goes up a 2<sup>nd</sup> time on the mountain. This time Moses is instructed to cut 2 tables of stone which the LORD would write upon. Moses did so. Moses goes up the mountain again by

himself. The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with Moses, proclaiming His name, “*The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children’s children to the third and fourth generation.*” Moses bowed his head and worshipped and again asked the Lord to go with them.

- o. 34:10-28, the LORD again makes a covenant with the people. His instructions REPEAT their need to drive out the idolatrous nations AND to not intermarry with them (Ex. 34:12-17). Furthermore, they were to keep the Passover feast and consecrate all first born to Him. ALSO, keeping the Sabbath is repeated, etc. Finally, vs. 27, Moses was commanded to write these words for the people. AGAIN, Moses was on the mountain 40 days and nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water. YHWH wrote the 10 commandments on the tablets.
- p. 34:29-35, AS Moses comes down from the mountain, his face was shining so brightly that the people feared to come near him. As the children gathered (face uncovered) Moses gave them all the commandments of the LORD. When he finished speaking, he covered his face. AFTER this, whenever Moses would go before the LORD to speak, he would remove the veil and then come out and speak what was commanded. BUT after that he covered his face with the veil, until the LORD spoke with him again. NOTE: Moses had been in the presence of YHWH. WE see His glory in this powerful account.

### III. **Lessons to consider**

#### a. ***Moses is a type of Jesus in many ways:***

- i. Deuteronomy 18:15-18 – the LORD would raise up a prophet like Moses whom the people would hear. Jesus was that prophet. Like Moses, Jesus was a lawgiver.
- ii. As we have seen in today’s text – Moses interceded with God on behalf of Israel. Jesus intercedes for us – Hebrews 7:25, Romans 8:34.
- iii. Indirectly, Jesus in John 3:14-16 appealed to Moses lifting up the serpent to draw people to salvation (Numbers 21:6-9), in the same way Jesus would be lifted up to draw all men to Himself.
- iv. Both saw the glory of God on the mountain – Moses in our text (34:29-35), Jesus on the mount of transfiguration – Matthew 17:1-2
- v. Moses would erect the physical tabernacle (Exodus 40:2), Jesus would erect the spiritual tabernacle (the church - Hebrews 8:1-6, NOTE vs. 5.
- vi. Other examples could be given, but this is sufficient to see the comparisons.

#### b. ***God listens to His people –***

- i. He listened to Moses. While this was certainly more direct than what we experience, we learn from examples like this that God does listen to us.
- ii. His ears are open to our prayers. NOTE: I do not claim to understand the workings and mind of God, even in this occasion, but I do know that God hears our prayers and considers them (1 John 5:14-15, 1 Peter 3:12, etc.).

#### c. ***When we sin, our relationship with God is affected.***

- i. This is clearly demonstrated in the account of the golden calf. Israel continually sinned against God and it did affect their relationship with Him. Paul in 1 Corinthians 10:5-6 makes reference to this occasion. Heed the warning of vs. 11-12.
- ii. When we sin, our sins separate us from Him. Romans 3:23, 6:23.

- iii. That is why we need to genuinely repent and confess our sins to Him – Acts 8:22, 1 John 1:8-10. And to be forgiven we need to be “walking in the light as He is in the light...” (1 John 1:7)

**d. WHEN the LORD speaks to us, we must listen to Him!**

- i. Consider our final verses as Moses comes down from being in the presence of God. His face shone so brightly that he had to wear a veil. BUT, when he did reveal God’s word, he removed the veil demonstrating the glory of God’s word.
- ii. When God speaks we MUST listen. 2 Peter 1:9 speaks of the prophetic word (which is an example of the word of God), “which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place.” Continually scripture calls for us to listen to what God tells us – 1 John 5:3, “this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments”; James 1:22, 25 calls for us to be doers of the word and not hearers only. We look into His laws and continue therein. Recall Matthew 7:21 also – we must do the will of the Father.
- iii. 2 Corinthians 3:7-18 appeals to our context. Addressing how Moses had to wear a veil (perpetually) unless he was speaking God’s word. Sadly, the Jews of Jesus and Paul’s day had a veil over their hearts that kept them from hearing the truth of God’s word. 2 Cor. 4:3-4 compares this to the one today who is blinded by the god of this age thereby rejecting the gospel.
- iv. Do NOT be that person. Show God’s word the reverence it deserves – 2 Timothy 3:16-17, cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:13, etc.

And thus we see God’s covenant with Israel. It was made, broken and because of God’s grace and mercy, it was renewed. What about you? How are you living your life? Have you broken covenant with God by living in sin? If so, take consolation that God WILL forgive you if you return to Him. So, are you living for Him or against Him? Think about it!