

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes

12-30-20

Exodus 34

Moses prepares two stone tablets to take up to Mt. Sinai - Verses 1-4

¹ The LORD said to Moses, "Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke. ² Be ready in the morning, and then come up on Mount Sinai. Present yourself to me there on top of the mountain. ³ No one is to come with you or be seen anywhere on the mountain; not even the flocks and herds may graze in front of the mountain." ⁴ So Moses chiseled out two stone tablets like the first ones and went up Mount Sinai early in the morning, as the LORD had commanded him; and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands.

34:1-4 God's commands had been broken. The people had rebelled against him and broken the covenant. They did not deserve to receive again the words of God. But God did not abandon or forget them. God chose to show them grace and mercy, to give them hope, to give them a second chance. The great lesson for us here is not to live in the past. Maybe you broke God's commands before like the Jews did here. But God wants you to stand up, confess, and strive once again to obey them the next time. Do not despair and think that God has left you and you can never turn around and turn back to God. While there is breath, there is always hope.

God descends the mountain and describes Himself to Moses - Verses 5-7

⁵ Then the LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. ⁶ And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation."

34:6-7 Moses had asked to see God's glory (33:18), and this was God's response. What is God's glory? It is his character, his nature, his way of relating to his creatures. Notice that God did not give Moses a vision of his power and majesty, but rather of his love. God's glory is revealed in his mercy, grace, compassion, faithfulness, forgiveness, and justice. God's love and mercy are truly wonderful, and we benefit from them. We can respond and give glory to God when our character begins to resemble his.

34:6-7 Many people think the God of the Old Testament is a God of wrath, only to be feared. These words from God revealed to Moses the very heart or essence of God's nature (33:19). What do we learn from these assurances to Moses? God is compassionate, gracious, loving, faithful, and forgiving. Don't accept anyone's argument that the God of the Old Testament is merely vengeful. Instead, remember that God is "slow to anger," and his love cannot be diminished.

34:7 Why would sins affect children and grandchildren? This is no arbitrary punishment. Children still suffer for the sins of their parents. Consider child abuse or alcoholism, for example. While these sins are obvious, sins like selfishness and greed can be passed along as well. The dire consequences of sin are not limited to the individual family member. Be careful not to treat sin casually, but repent and turn from it. The sin may cause you little pain now, but it could sting in a most tender area of your life later—your children and grandchildren.

Moses intercedes for the people the fourth time - Verses 8-9

⁸ Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. ⁹ "Lord," he said, "if I have found favor in your eyes, then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance."

34:8 Notice Moses' response when God revealed Himself and His character. Moses bowed down to worship. It says he "made haste" to do this. This implies it was urgent and important. Have you ever "made haste" to worship God or to thank God. We should. For us, these things are sometimes reserved until Sundays. But actually anytime we meet with God and learn of His character we should worship. This is important and we must take it as a priority.

34:9 Notice also that Moses once again intercedes for his people. This is the FOURTH time he has interceded for them in these three chapters. Why does he intercede for them so much? Because they are important to him. Are you interceding for others more than you were 3 weeks ago? We know what it means to intercede. We have seen the biblical precedent for interceding. We have seen the effects of intercession, the motivation for intercession, and God's response to intercession. All that is left now is to apply what we have learned. Make it a priority to intercede for others.

Covenant renewed: Make no covenant with the peoples of the land - Verses 10-17

¹⁰ Then the LORD said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the LORD, will do for you. ¹¹ Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ¹² Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. ¹³ Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. ¹⁴ Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. ¹⁵ "Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. ¹⁶ And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same. ¹⁷ "Do not make any idols.

34:12-14 God told the Israelites not to join in religious rites with the sinful people around them, but to give their absolute loyalty and exclusive devotion to him. Pagan worship simply cannot be mixed with the worship of the holy God. As Jesus pointed out, "No one can serve two masters...You cannot serve both God and money" (Luke 16:13). The love of money is the god of this age, and

many Christians attempt to make a treaty with this enslaving god. Are you trying to worship two gods at once? Where is your first allegiance?

34:13 Asherah poles were wooden poles planted beside Baal's altar (see Judges 6:25). They were used to worship the goddess Asherah who was the consort (wife) of Baal. As the fertility goddess, she was thought to bring good luck in agriculture and child bearing.

Review of the basic parts of the Israelites' covenant responsibilities - Verses 18-28

¹⁸ "Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread. For seven days eat bread made without yeast, as I commanded you. Do this at the appointed time in the month of Aviv, for in that month you came out of Egypt. ¹⁹ "The first offspring of every womb belongs to me, including all the firstborn males of your livestock, whether from herd or flock. ²⁰ Redeem the firstborn donkey with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem all your firstborn sons. "No one is to appear before me empty-handed. ²¹ "Six days you shall labor, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during the plowing season and harvest you must rest. ²² "Celebrate the Festival of Weeks with the firstfruits of the wheat harvest, and the Festival of Ingathering at the turn of the year. ²³ Three times a year all your men are to appear before the Sovereign LORD, the God of Israel. ²⁴ I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your territory, and no one will covet your land when you go up three times each year to appear before the LORD your God. ²⁵ "Do not offer the blood of a sacrifice to me along with anything containing yeast, and do not let any of the sacrifice from the Passover Festival remain until morning. ²⁶ "Bring the best of the firstfruits of your soil to the house of the LORD your God. "Do not cook a young goat in its mother's milk." ²⁷ Then the LORD said to Moses, "Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel." ²⁸ Moses was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights without eating bread or drinking water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant—the Ten Commandments.

34:18-28 These verses are mostly a review of the covenant obligations of the Jews that we learned about ten to fifteen chapters ago. It would not be necessary to review if no mistakes were ever made. Therefore God reviews over the basics. If the people are truly repentant and want to turn back to God they must follow these principles.

The Radiant Face of Moses - Verses 29-35

²⁹ When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the covenant law in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. ³⁰ When Aaron and all the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant, and they were afraid to come near him. ³¹ But Moses called to them; so Aaron and all the leaders of the community came back to him, and he spoke to them. ³² Afterward all the Israelites came near him, and he gave them all the commands the LORD had given him on Mount Sinai. ³³ When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. ³⁴ But whenever he entered the LORD's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. And when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded, ³⁵ they saw that his face

was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.

34:29-35 Moses' face was radiant after he spent time with God. The people could clearly see God's presence in him. How often do you spend time alone with God? Although your face may not light up a room, time spent in prayer, reading the Bible, and meditating should have such an effect on your life that people will know you have been with God.

34:29-35 Truly spending time with God will change us. His Word Isaiah 55:11. Acts 3:10. We spend time with God by prayer and reading the Word. Basically, devotions. It would be impossible for Moses' face to shine on its own. It is impossible for us to "shine" on our own. We don't shine the same way that Moses did. Moses' meeting with God was physically face to face. Ours is a spiritual encounter through the Word. Therefore our meeting with God, causes a spiritual "shining." Php 2:15. Matthew 5:15.