

2025 Q3 Exodus, Lesson 12

Show Me Your Glory

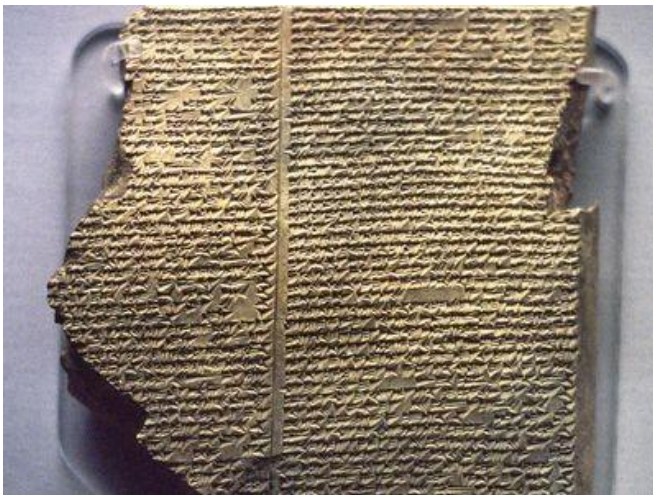
by Stanley Baldwin

This quarter we have been studying the Book of Exodus. In each story God is revealing Himself to those of us who are open to learning about Him.

Today we have world-wide communication via radio, TV, books, magazines, news papers and now personal computers and phones which out rival Buck Rogers by having almost unlimited information storage and almost instant information retrieval.

It is hard to imagine what it was like for Moses in a time when chiseling pictures and words into stone was the method of choice for historical records. In a verse covered by this week's lesson (Ex. 34:27) we even read this: "Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Write down these words...'"

For millenniums Jews have believed that Moses had followed this command of God and that as a result he was the inspired author of 6 books of the Bible, the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, as well as the book of Job. The miracle, and I use this term advisedly, the miracle of the preservation of these books for 3,500 years is unparalleled!



[Epic of Gilgamesh](#) The Flood Tablet, 11th cuneiform tablet in a series relating the Gilgamesh epic, from Nineveh, 7th century BCE; in the British Museum, London. Britannica

God told Moses to write down the covenant for posterity close to a 1,000 years before the reign of Ashurbanipal in Ninevah. I mention this because it was in Ashurbanipal's library of clay tablets that the Gilgamesh Epic was found by archeologists.

If the Gilgamesh of the Epic was the same man as the Gilgamesh listed among the Sumerian list of kings then he was probably a contemporary of Moses or at least close to being a contemporary. However, when this Epic was pressed into a soft clay tabled is unknown.

Amazing how stories told over decades even centuries can change over time! Gilgamesh and Moses both record the early history of humanity. But the history of the creation, the fall, the promise of eternal life, and the flood are diametrically opposed in these two records!

Satan's twisting of the facts is evident in the fantasy portrayed in the Gilgamesh Epic. No wonder God wanted an accurate record of His relationship with humans and the revelation of His true character. It needed to be accurately preserved for us and not twisted and distorted as was the dubious history recorded in the Gilgamesh Epic.

"The fullest extant text of the Gilgamesh epic is on 12 incomplete Akkadian-language tablets found at Nineveh in the library of the Assyrian king Ashurbanipal (reigned 668–627 BCE).... The Gilgamesh of the poems and of the epic tablets was probably the Gilgamesh who ruled at Uruk in southern Mesopotamia sometime during the first half of the 3rd millennium BCE and who was thus a contemporary of Agga, ruler of Kish; Gilgamesh of Uruk was also mentioned in the Sumerian list of kings as reigning after the Flood. There is, however, no historical evidence for the exploits narrated in poems and epic."

S. S. Quarterly ChatGPT Outline

Ex. 1, 2 First 40 Years of Moses
Ex. 3, 4 Commission of Moses
Ex. 5-6 Jewish Life Becomes Worse
Ex. 7-10 First Nine Plagues
Ex. 11, 12 Tenth Plague and Passover
Ex. 13-15 The Exodus and Red Sea
Ex. 16-18 The Journey to Sinai
Ex. 19, 20 The Commandments
Ex. 21-23 God's law Applied
Ex. 24-31 Covenant Confirmed, Blueprint
Ex. 32 Golden Calf Apostasy
Ex. 33, 34 [God's Self-revelation](#)
Ex. 35-40 Tabernacle Built

I. Ex. 1-12 Israel in Egypt
II. Ex. 12-18 Journey to Sinai
III. Ex. 19-24 Covenant at Sinai
IV. Ex. 25-31 Tabernacle Blueprints
[V. Ex. 32-34 Rebellion and Renewal](#)
VI. Ex. 35-40 Building the Tabernacle

Most Others

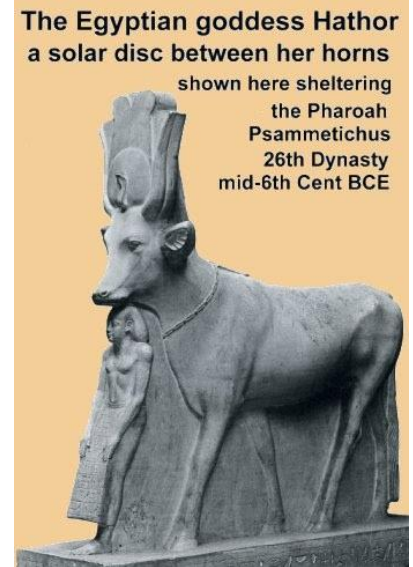
I. Ex. 1 -18 Exodus from Egypt
A-?
II. Ex. 19 -40 Israel at Sinai
A-?

Britannica Jiri Moskala tells us in his preface to the lessons for this quarter that he has divided up the book of Exodus into 13 sections as summarized here. Now, obviously, the divisions are not as neat as portrayed here. For example: the title in blue, which is today's lesson, he actually starts in vs. 7 of chapter 33, not vs. 1. The same is true of a number of other sections as well.

For interest's sake I have also included two other outlines of the Book of Exodus. The first is what the AI (artificial intelligence) software ChatGPT told me when I asked it to outline the Book of Exodus. Most other sources divide Exodus into two divisions with a varying number of sections in each of these two divisions. I reference this because I want to point out how artificial it is to try to divide the study of a Biblical book into 13 discreet sections to fit the typical 13 Sabbaths of a quarter.

We see that today's study of Ex. 33 and 34 is incomplete until we take notice that these two chapters are a continuation of the story in the previous chapter, the story of the Golden Calf as in the outline by Artificial Intelligence. With that in mind let's take a look at the results to Israel, the nation, for their actions of rejecting God's covenant after agreeing to it.

What Were the Results of Israel's Disobedience?



The Egyptian goddess Hathor
a solar disc between her horns
shown here sheltering
the Pharaoh
Psammetichus
26th Dynasty
mid-6th Cent BCE

The Apis Bull and Hathor, a female cow, were two of the gods that were worshiped in Egypt. The book of Exodus reports that Aaron sculpted a **calf** and the Hebrew word used for "calf" seems to specifically refer to a young cow or a steer and not an adult cow or bull.

Whether Aaron was trying to say that Israel's God was an offspring of the Egyptian god Apis or Hathor I do not know. Why almost all artistic depictions of the animal sculpted by Aaron is of an adult bovine and not a calf I do not know either.

But, I do know that human creatures worshiping animal creatures is Satanic and destructive, completely out of harmony with heaven and God's creation of reality. Not only that but picturing God as an animal degrades God in human minds even when miraculous super-powers are ascribed to this animal god. And if God is an animal that concept obscures the fact that humanity needs a character change rather than trying to appease some imaginary, animal-like god. And the idea of such a god leads to a whole host of Satan inspired concepts of a vengeful, autocratic, corrupt, judge as the ruler of the universe.

As a result of the Israelites breaking their agreement to obey the covenant, not only were 3,000 Israelites killed but also the whole congregation experienced at least 8 other consequences that are listed in Ex. 32 through 34. The focus of this lesson is rightfully on God's revelation of His name—His character—with a list of His attributes, however, the total context is vitally important also. BTW the 3,000 Israelites killed were mostly from the mixed multitude according to *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pg 324.

Results of worshiping the Golden Calf in Ex. 32 through 34:

1. 32:20 Israelites drink water laced the powder of the destroyed golden calf
2. 32:28 About 3,000 Israelites killed
3. 32:33 God says He will blot them "out of His book." (what they deserved!)
4. 32:35 God "sent a plague" on the Israelites.
5. 33:1 -6 God says "I will not go up among you" but He promises to drive out the inhabitants of Cannan, and Israelites removed their "ornaments." (32:6 "play")
6. 33:7 -11 The Tent of Meeting was pitched far out of the encampment.
7. 33:12 -16 Moses's first request, "Show me now thy ways."
8. 33:17 -34:9 Moses' second request to "see His glory." Moses is asked to prepare replacement tablets for the ones he broke.
9. 34:10 -28. The covenant is reestablished.



So here is a list that I came up with of 9 consequences for Israel's blatant sin of worshiping the "graven image" of a calf. The first thing I noticed when I compiled this list was that only the first 6 items are natural, immediate consequences of acting on their decision. The last three are God's response to their rejection of His covenant. And the last 3 are directly opposite to what we would expect!

God allows the natural consequences but postpones the ultimate result of their rejection and gives them another chance to establish a God-centered nation. This gives me assurance that even though I sin, even though I have knowingly and egregiously sinned and deserve death, God willingly offers me another opportunity to allow the Holy Spirit to change my desires so that I want to reflect His character.

Also, you will notice that the **first four consequences** are found in chapter 32 which was part of last week's lesson, so I won't dwell on them, except to say that three of these consequences are physical, only one is "spiritual."

Since worshiping the Golden Calf was a public rejection of God in favor of an animal-like god who resembled the gods of Egypt the Israelites certainly deserved rejection by God. But chapter 34 makes it clear that this did not happen, in fact the covenant was reestablished! What a magnificent, faithful, loving God we have! Totally unlike the gods dreamed up by the Egyptians.



The the Lord said to Moses, “Depart; go up from here ... **I will send an angel before you**, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey. **But I will not go among you** lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people. Ex. 33:1-3 (ESV)



Now we turn our attention to result **number 5**, God says, “I will not go up among you.” I like the English Standard Version here because it uses the word “among” and not “with” as several other translations do. Supporting the word “among” is that in the previous verse God promises to send an angel to drive out the inhabitants of Caanan for them. God’s visible presence in the midst of the camp would not be there but he would still be near.

The Israelites recognized that God, in the form of the pillar of cloud by day and pillar of fire at night in the midst of the camp, had been successfully leading them so far. Because they desired distance from God they depended on Moses to relay God’s directions to them; the loss of God’s ultimate leadership was devastating and they knew that the result would be death in the desert. They were fine with God leading them to Caanan **IF** He just left them alone in their personal lives! Isn’t that just like today, we want a heavenly future but now we want to live like hell. And that is only the first half of the 5th result.

Exodus 32:6 (KJV) And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and **rose up to play**.



Ex. 33:4-6 (NIV) When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and **no one put on any ornaments**.

For the Lord had said to Moses, “Tell the Israelites, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you.’”

So the Israelites **stripped off their ornaments at Mount Horeb**.

The second half of this result is they took off their ornaments. Aaron announced a festival by the altar in front of the golden calf. Israel, eager to celebrate, arose early, and led by Aaron, they offered sacrifices on the new altar before the golden calf then they sat down to eat and drink. (Any question about what they were drinking?) And then they “rose up to play,” or as the NIV says, “to indulge in revelry.”

I looked up this Hebrew word “tsaw-khak” translated “play” or “revelry,” and found that it is used 13 times in the O.T. but translated several different ways. For example, Abraham and Sarah “tsaw-khak” when God told them Sara who was 90 would have a baby son. Joseph was accused of “tsaw-khak” by Potifer’s wife. And Samson was brought out of prison so the Philistines could “tsaw-khak.”

So, this Hebrew word can refer to mirth, mocking, sport or even fornication. So what the Israelites were doing exactly is open to question. Whatever they were doing, it was degrading, self-indulgent, and probably drunken. And it certainly didn’t glorify the Creator God who had brought them out of Egypt!

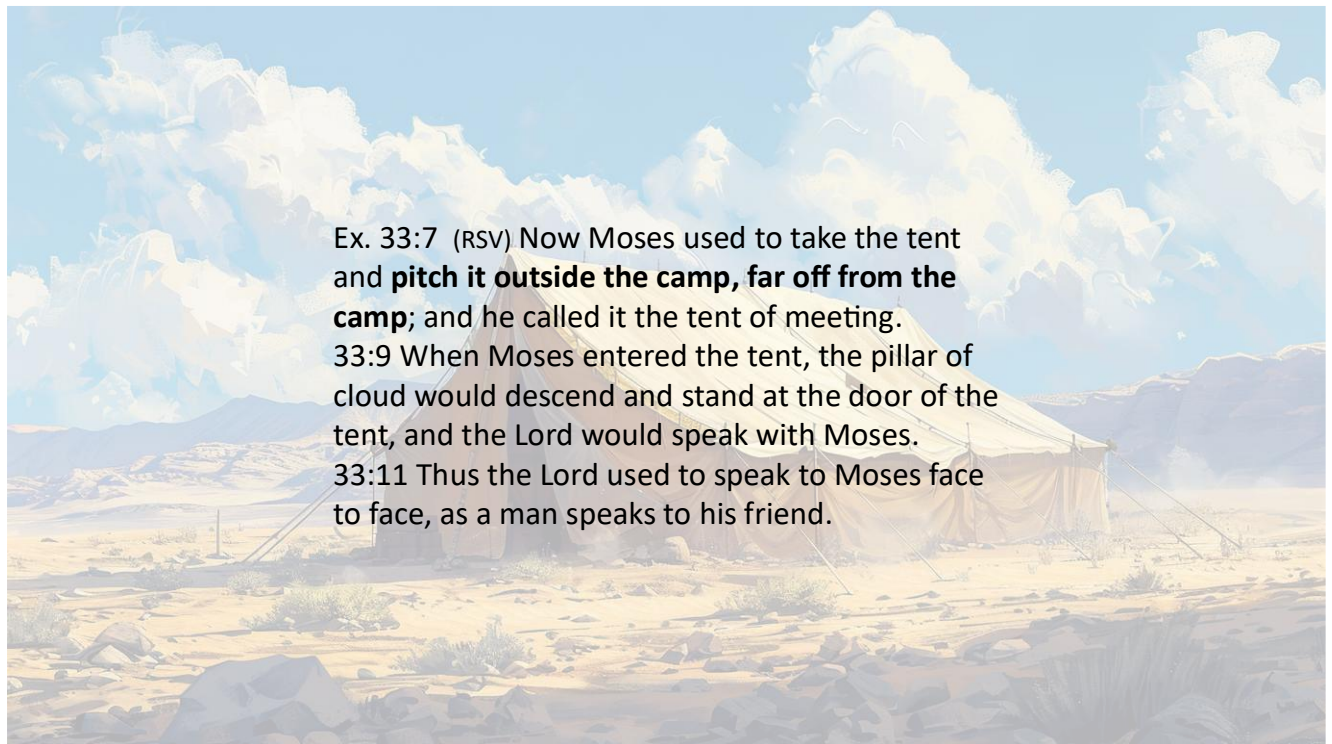
What I specifically noticed was in Ex. 33:4-6 (read slide) Evidently ancient Jewish jewelry, as illustrated in these pictures, was being worn indicating a celebration of the wrong god—maybe they should have been wearing their jewelry as a symbol of celebration on the Sabbath?!!

To some extent the Israelites desire to be left alone was granted, but it came with a cost. God moved out their encampment.

Which brings us to **result number 6**, its importance was a new concept to me, but it was a vital visual experience for the former slaves as they left behind Egyptian slavery and idol worship to establish a new and different type of government.

The covenant God asked Israel to agree to was the institution of a theocratic government established on the principle of love as was God's government of the universe which He had created. All the rules, including the family rules, the health rules, the civic rules, and the worship rules recorded in Ex. Chapters 20-31 were God's attempt to establish a utopian island of reality, a theocracy in the midst of a world of idolatry which was ruled by the usurper Satan and was filled with selfish, covetous, indulgent, corrupt humans just as Israel had experienced in Egypt.

But Israel had publicly rejected God's covenant and one natural consequence was that God, respecting their freedom of choice, moved "out of town." so to speak.



Two things to notice in this passage from Sunday's lesson in the Quarterly. First of all, God has just asked Moses to build a Tabernacle or Sanctuary as it came to be known. It would be another 6 months before it would be built! Meanwhile, Moses had been using a tent, evidently pitched within the camp, for his personal devotions and talks with God. We are not told when Moses started doing this,

probably when they first started out. It was there that the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night hovered.

As a result of Israel's sin, Moses, as a visual evidence of the spiritual consequence of worshiping an idol, moved this tent "far off from the camp." God was still there and approachable, just not in the center of the camp or IN their lives. It was a mighty visual representation of the results when we deliberately disregard God's directions for holiness and happiness and by our behavioral choices we ask God to "move out of town!"

He gives us the freedom to do just as we want and to also suffer the natural, built-in consequences. However, as Paul says in Rom. 7 there are times when we do things we really don't want to do, coming from such things as habits, conditioned reflexes, even unrealized destructive thoughts and behaviors. These do not drive God out of our lives. Through the agency of the Holy Spirit He is still in our lives and will continue to work in our minds to change our desires, and our thoughts, in other words change our characters as long as we are cooperative.

I don't know of anyone today who wants to worship a cow. So today, what does Satan try to substitute for God for us to worship? And what are the results?

Have you noticed anything missing from this list?

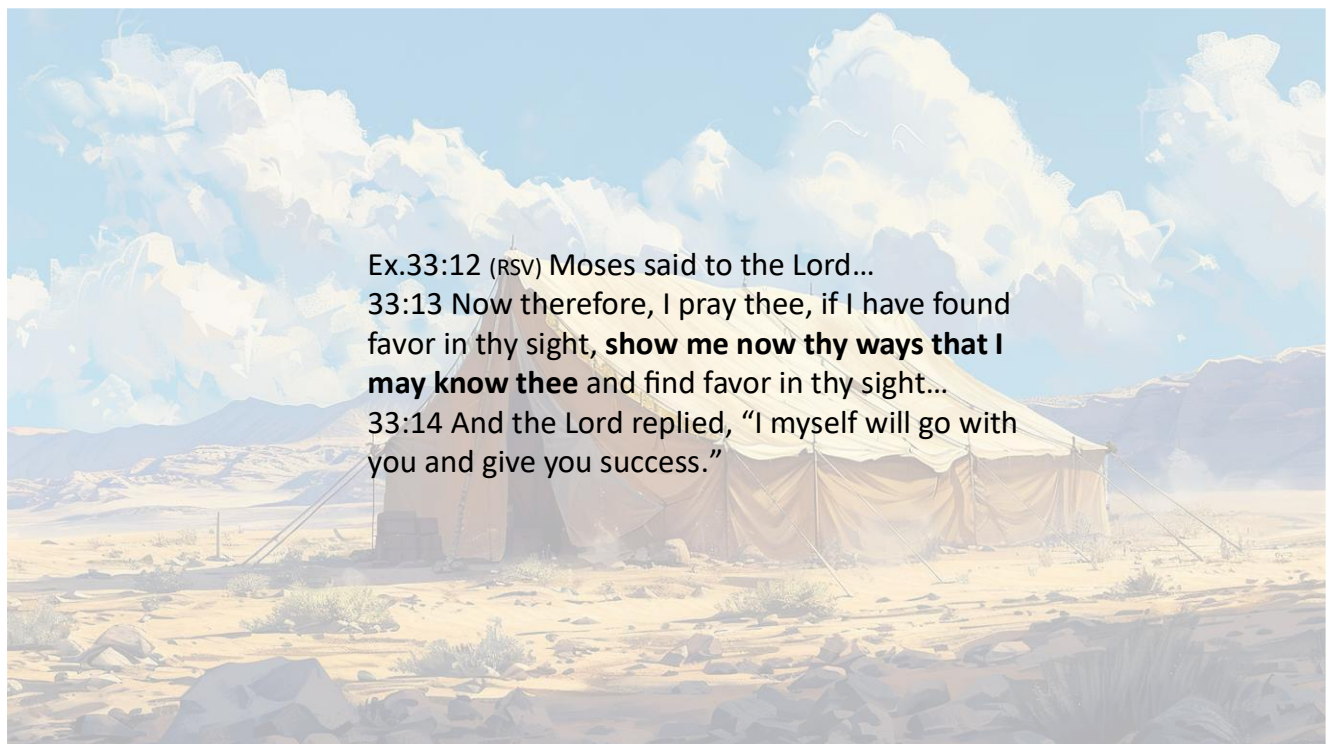
The one thing that I missed from this list is that nothing is recorded here about the results to Aaron for his part in the Golden Calf experience. When Moses was recounting Israel's history just before his death he said in Deut. 9:20, "And the Lord was angry enough with Aaron to destroy him, but at that time I prayed for Aaron too." Here in Exodus, Moses seems to be interested in listing the consequences to the nation and doesn't mention Aaron! Ellen White, says in *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pg 320, 323 "He [Aaron] was justly dealt with as the chief offender. ... But in answer to the earnest intercession of Moses, his life was spared; and in penitence and humiliation for his great sin, he was restored to the favor of God."

Today the first 6 results listed here in Exodus are often called "punishments," when they are really just a natural result that occurs when disregarding God's directions.

As to the last 3 results (7, 8, 9), they show God's character in marvelous technicolor. Even with such a display of rejection God still loved His creation, desired their redemption, and was determined to provide through them a Messiah for the healing of the nations.

In the re-acceptance of the stubborn, stiff-necked, uneducated, slaves, even though they had damaged themselves spiritually, God overlookd their rebellion and rejection and postponed the deserved consequence of death in the desert, instead He re-establishes the covenant with its promises of land, prosperity, and being the forbearers of the Messiah.

This is God turning an experience designed by Satan to destroy Israel, and to destroy God's plan, but which God turned into a powerful revelation of His love for His creation and His desire to live IN them. I wonder if Paul was thinking of this experience when he wrote Rom. 8:28. "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose."



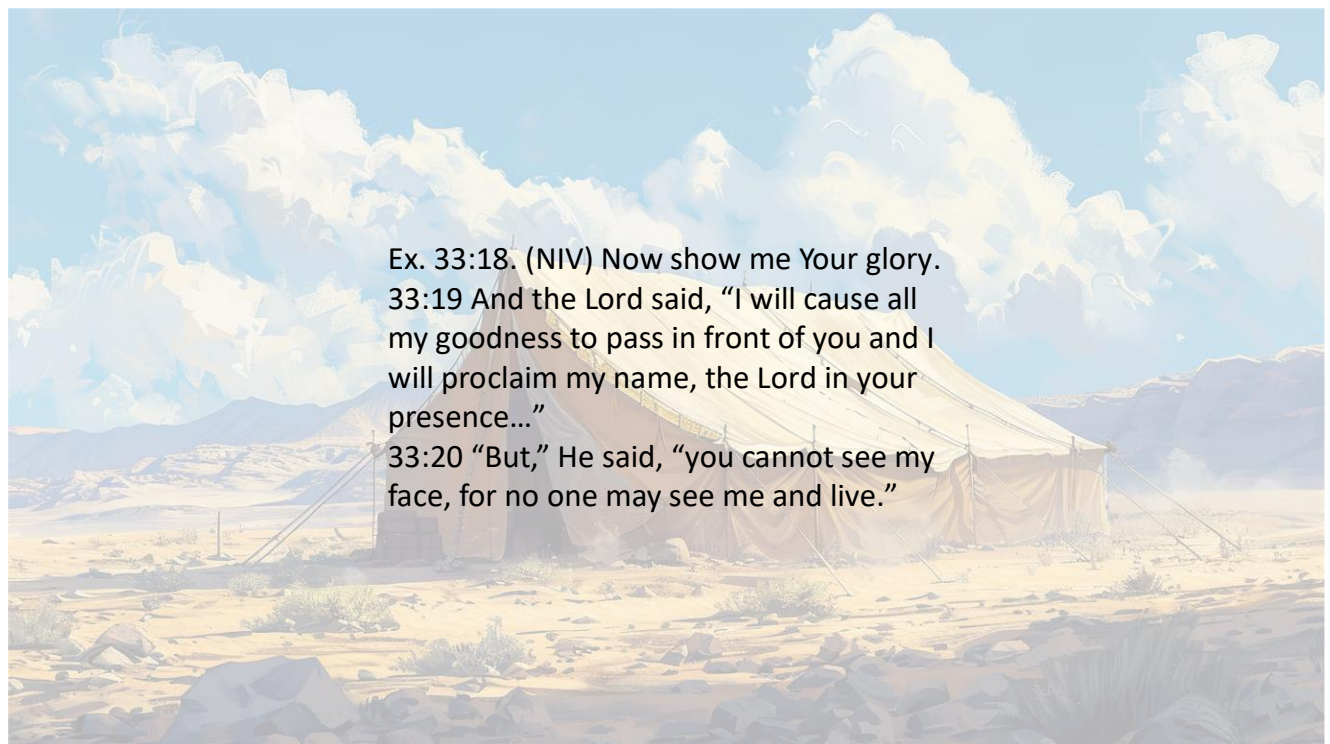
Result number 7 on our list is found in Ex. 33:13 "Show me Thy ways." The Hebrew word for "ways" is figuratively used as a course of life or the motives for actions, or what is it that God really wants.

Moses's desire to "know thee" is more than just an intellectual knowledge—this word "know" is used Biblically to describe the relationship between a husband and wife, an intimate knowledge and understanding and desire to please the other.

In verse 14 God's reply is very Interesting. God reads Moses' heart and answers his heart not his question, "I myself will go with you and give you success." This is just the assurance that Moses wants and needs. God won't abandon him or Israel to die in the desert.

You will notice that I've used the RSV here because it uses the word "success" whereas most translations say that God will give them "rest." God doesn't promise laziness He promises hard work and success in settling in the land, raising families and establishing a flourishing nation, **IF** they trust Him enough to follow His directions.

It is not until God answers Moses' next question that He Describe His own character, that is His name.



Result number 8. Moses re-asks his question, just using different words, "Now show me Your glory." And God finally agrees to answer Moses' question. **But** there are some conditions:

Moses must go up Mt. Sinai again, alone, for the mountain will be off limits to the Israelites and their cattle, and this time he must bring with him two tablets which he has carved out of stone.

And then when he has climbed up the mountain God will hide him in a cleft of the rock with His hand and he will only be able to see God's backside while God proclaims His name, that is to say, He will describe His character. This experience of Moses is a unique experience for only here is God's character, His glory so clearly explained in human language.



Ex. 34:6, 7 (ESV)

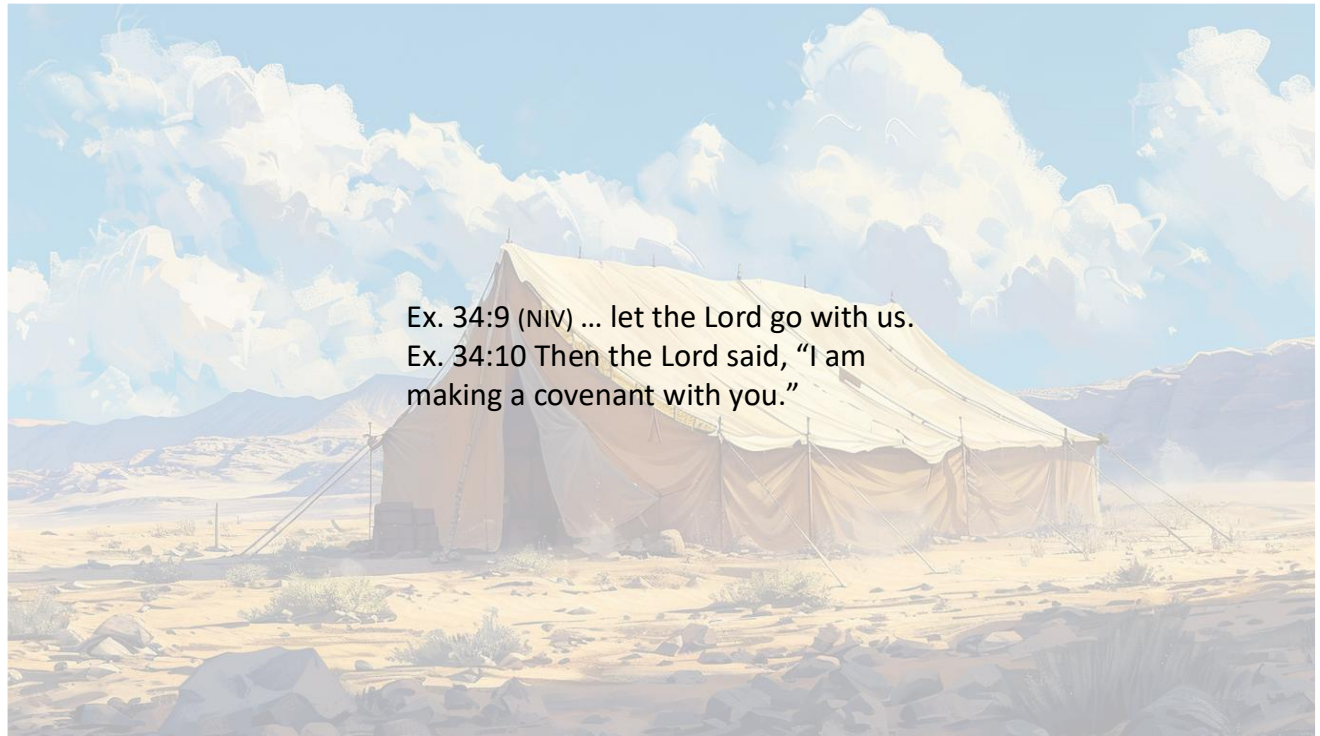
The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord , a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness. Keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, **but** who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on their children and their children’s children to the third and fourth generation.”

Now remember we are in the O.T. where God is often thought of jealously judging, punitively punishing, and dastardly discriminating. Yet here we find the most complete elucidation and simple, concise description of who God is and why we should trust Him with our lives just as Moses did. And of course, in the N.T. we have the perfect example of Jesus who in His humanity trusted God implicitly just as Adam and Eve could have and should have.

Because in the O.T. names often indicated character just as the name Jacob meant deceiver and it was changed to Israel, so Moses wanted to know God’s “name” His ”character” His “reputation.” The answer wasn’t simple. There is no single word in any human language that encompasses God’s character. So God says you may call me “Lord” but my character is like this and then He enumerates 10 of His qualities. BTW. Notice that missing from this list of God’s characteristics are words like: punisher, vindictive, arbitrary, autocratic, or discriminatory. But then neither are the words creator, truthful or even trustworthy included.

Make no mistake, being loving, faithful and forgiving doesn’t make God a pushover! There is a **“But.”** God does postpone the ultimate destiny of a deserved eternal death, that is non-existence, **but** not until each person has definitely, publically chosen to either rebel or to trust Him. Meanwhile the other natural consequences of sin will affect our lives.

It is an involved answer to a simple question.



Ex. 34:9 (NIV) ... let the Lord go with us.
Ex. 34:10 Then the Lord said, "I am
making a covenant with you."

This is the ninth and last result of Israel's worship of the Golden Calf. God exhibits His character by re-establishing the broken covenant. This is a huge relief to Moses and the Israelites who were anxiously awaiting God's response.

Can you picture yourself at the foot of the mountain awaiting the outcome of this conversation? Were they going to suffer their just desserts and die in the desert or would God re-establish their covenant? Moses returned with the good news, That God was entirely different than the gods of Egypt and He was anxious to re-establish the covenant. That was the proper time to put on their jewelry and celebrate God's goodness. We just don't know how Israel responded, except for one more recorded incident.

Ex. 34:29-35 (NIV) When Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of the Testimony in his hands, he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the Lord.



Scripture records that when Moses returned his face shown so brightly the Israelites couldn't stand it and asked him to cover his face, which he did. This was incontrovertible evidence that Moses had talked to God and was telling the truth.

Today's lesson teaches us that rebelling against God brings both immediate physical and spiritual consequences. It also affects our eternal future. However, God has delayed the ultimate destiny we deserve — eternal non-existence — and, in His mercy, He offers a way for our minds, that is our characters, to be transformed. Thus, He restores our relationship with Him and gives us eternal life.