

Exodus
August 19, 2007
Chapter 34

I. New Commandments

Ex 34:1-3

34:1 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." NIV

Verse 1 While Moses continues to implore the LORD not to leave the Israelites, it is clear that He is already starting the healing the process. While the covenant is renewed, it is not necessarily just like the first one. The point is not that the LORD has learned something or changed, or even that the Israelites have changed, however the Israelites have learned something more about their own nature. Since the LORD knows that, He adjusts His covenant somewhat so that His ultimate ends are met.

Verse 3 Obviously, this is part of God's holiness desires. In addition, the experience is to be for Moses only.

II. God's Nature

Ex 34:4-7

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. 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 fathers to the third and fourth generation." NIV

Verse 4 We see Moses obeying the LORD fully. This is important if we want to understand God more fully.

Verse 5 Remember that the LORD is keeping His essence invisible to Moses until after He has passed by.

Verse 6-7 This contains the 13 attributes according to the ancient Rabbis:

ORIGINAL ATTIBUTES	TODAY'S JEWISH ATTIBUTES
1. YHWH	Adonai
2. YHWH (repetition)	Adonai
3. El (not Elohim)	God
4. Full of compassion	Full of compassion
5. Slow to anger	Slow to anger
6. Gracious	Gracious
7. Abounding in loving kindness	Abounding in kindness

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|-----|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 8. | and faithfulness/truth | and faithfulness/truth |
| 9. | Extending loving kindness | Extending kindness |
| 10. | Forgiving iniquity | Forgiving iniquity |
| 11. | transgression | transgression |
| 12. | and sin | and sin |
| 13. | Bringing punishment | Granting pardon/bringing cleansing |

The following are the meaning:

Lord:

The Tetragrammaton YHWH appears without its own vowels, and its exact pronunciation is debated (Jehovah, Yehovah, Jahweh, Yahweh). The Hebrew text does insert the vowels for *adonay*, and Jewish students and scholars read 'adonay whenever they see the Tetragrammaton. This use of the word occurs 6,828 times. The word appears in every period of biblical Hebrew. (from Vine's) The repetition of it indicates its importance, e.g. Lord of Lords, or a double portion of the Lord's essence thereby displaying his true essence.

God:

This is *El*, rather than the more common *Elohim*. When *El* is used, God's power is typical evident.

Compassionate:

HAVE COMPASSION, BE MERCIFUL: *rachum* ^7349^, "compassionate; merciful."
 (from Vine's) Describes deep love, usually of a superior for an inferior, rooted in the word bond.
 (from Jonah and Nahum by John R. Kohlenberger III)

Gracious:

GRACIOUS, SHOW FAVOR: (*channun*) "gracious." (from Vine's)
 Closely related to compassion. Compassion and gracious are coupled 10 times in the OT, seven of which are a direct quote of this verse.

Slow to Anger:

'arek and 'ap. Translated as longsuffering in the KJV.
 "It emphasizes that Yahweh withholds His judgment on sin, 'suffering long' or patiently enduring as He gives sinners the opportunity to repent. But as the following lines confirm, longsuffering is both gracious and judgmental. For though the wicked are given time to repent and receive grace instead of anger, those who do not turn have had time to heap up even more judgment for themselves (cf. Matt. 11:20-24) (from Kohlenberger)

Love (LOVING-KINDNESS):

(*Checed*) "loving-kindness; steadfast love; grace; mercy; faithfulness; goodness; devotion." This word is used 240 times in the Old Testament, and is especially frequent in the Psalter. The term is one of the most important in the vocabulary of Old Testament theology and ethics. (from Vine's)

Faithfulness:

BELIEVE, TO (*emet*), "truth; right; faithful." This word appears 127 times in the Bible. The Septuagint translates it in 100 occurrences as "truth" (*aletheia*) or some form using this basic root. In <Zech. 8:3>, Jerusalem is called "a city of truth." Elsewhere, *emet* is rendered as the word "right" (*dikaios*) "Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly..." <Neh. 9:33>. Only infrequently (16 times) is *emet* translated "faithful" (*pistis*), as when Nehemiah is described as "a faithful man, and feared God above many" <Neh. 7:2> (from Vine's)

Thousands:

Probably refers to thousand generations.

Wickedness (INIQUITY)

(*awon*), "iniquity; guilt; punishment." This noun, which appears 231 times in the Old Testament, is limited to Hebrew and biblical Aramaic. The most basic meaning of *awon* is "iniquity." The word signifies an offense, intentional or not, against God's law. This meaning is also most basic to the word *chatta't*, "sin," in the Old Testament, and for this reason the words *chatta't* and *awon* are virtually synonymous; "Lo, this [the live coal] hath touched thy [Isaiah's] lips; and thine iniquity [*awon*] is taken away, and thy sin [*chatta't*] purged" <Isa. 6:7>. (from Vine's) (Not doing what God wants)

Rebellion:

pesha is a term used in biblical and secular literature of covenant violation between nations, thus violation of Yahweh's covenant. (from Kohlenberger) It appears 93 times in the Bible. (Rebelling against God)

Sin:

an offence (sometimes habitual sinfulness) (from Strong's); hatta'a is the standard word for the category of unright behavior (from Kohlenberger) (Doing what we want to do rather than what God wants)

Punishing:

"Punishing the children for the sin of the fathers" does not mean that one will be punished because your father sinned. It does mean that the sin of the fathers affect their children. The child has a tendency to repeat the same sin; then the child will be punished for that sin, whether learned from a parent or from somewhere else. Of course, the punishment of the father can also affect his children as well.

III. Knowing God

Ex 34:8-9

8 Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. 9 "O Lord, if I have found favor in your eyes," he said, "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." NIV

Verse 8 We want to put God in a box so that we can understand and therefore control Him. In their way the Israelites tried this when they made the Golden Calf idol. While confused and at this point with no evil intent (that I can see in the text), Moses wants to do the same thing in His way. He wants to understand God better...which is good...but part of the reason that he wants it is because God has surprised and shocked him. He wants to understand God more so that he will not be surprised and shocked again. Yet, when He gets a small glimpse of God, he knows how inadequate he is. He understands God better when he learns that he cannot fully understand God or know where He is going.

Verse 9 After the worship, Moses does again press the desire for God to be reconciled with the people.

IV. Covenant Renewed

Ex 34:10

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. NIV

Verse 15 Despite the rejection of God's offer in Chapters 19/20 and the sin of Chapter 32, the Israelites are still going to be the God's special covenant people; this shows how little that the Israelites deserved such exalted treatment. In a

sense, it is almost like the sin did not occur. However, it did occur, and the Israelites have been affected by it and the resulting judgment.

From verses 16 to 28, we see a partial restatement of the covenant. Some of the earlier rules are restated and even elaborated. Presumably, these are one that God thought that the Israelites needed particularly. We might divide these into two broad categories: Worshipping of false gods and keeping the festivals/worship. These restated/additional regulations were in addition to the original Ten Commandments, which were written on the stones. The “he” in verse 28 should refer to God, but is ambiguous.

V. God Grants a Request

Ex 34:29-35

29 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. **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. NIV

Verse 29 The radiance also displayed to the Israelites that he had been with God...basically reasserting his authority. When we interact with God, we are changed in a way that others can see. We might not have a radiant face such as Moses, but people should still be able to tell.

Verse 30 We do not really know how Moses' face shined. Perhaps, it pulsed, as one commentator (Stuart) speculated.

Verse 30 Why were the people afraid?

Verse 32 In the next chapter, the commands will be read to them.

Verse 35 Apparently, the people did not understand fully the radiance on Moses face and were afraid of it. Moses wore a mask to keep the people from being afraid except he spoke God's direct words. Paul uses this veil situation as a steppingstone for making a point in 2 Cor 3:12-18:

12 Therefore, since we have such a hope, we are very bold. **13** 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. **14** 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. **15** Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. **16** But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. **17** Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. **18** And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. NIV

Paul teaches three things:

1. The veiled glory of the OT versus the unveiled glory of the NT.
2. The veil represents the veil on the heart of the Jews.
3. Unveiled vision given to believers by the Spirit.