

Two Tablets Replaced and the Covenant Renewed

Exodus 34

Outline

- 1-9 | God appears to Moses and rewrites the law on the stone tablets
- 10 | God renews the covenant, promising to perform miracles for the people
- 11-17 | God commands the people to worship only Him and to tear down the idols of the people of the land promised to Abraham and to not intermarry with them
- 18 | Feast of Unleavened Bread in month of Abib (July/August)
- 19-20 | All the male firstborn of men and cattle are to be redeemed
- 21-24 | Sabbath; Feast of Weeks (Firstfruits); Feast of Ingathering; Males are to sacrifice 3 times each year
- 25 | No blood with the sacrifice; Passover sacrifice must be all eaten before morning
- 26a | First of Firstfruits belong to God
- 26b | Can't boil a young goat in its mothers milk
- 27-28 | Moses spends another 40 days and nights with the Lord receiving the law

Reflections

Moses is told to prepare two stone tablets to replace the ones he destroyed earlier and to bring them up again on the mountain so that God can record His covenant with the people of Israel. So Moses does this and spends another 40 days and nights on the mountain while God inscribes the law onto the two tablets.

In verses 6-7, God describes Himself with a series of statements.

1. The LORD, the LORD God
2. Compassionate and gracious
3. Slow to anger
4. Abounding in lovingkindness and truth
5. Who keeps lovingkindness for thousands
6. Who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin
7. Yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished
8. visiting the iniquities of the fathers on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generations

IVP Bible Background Commentary¹ notes that this is in response to Moses asking "to 'know' God's ways," and that similar lists are repeated in the Old Testament forming "a sort of confessional statement."

Exodus 34:6-7 NASB Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; 7 who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."

Numbers 14:18 NASB 'The LORD is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations.'

Nehemiah 9:17 NASB "They refused to listen, And did not remember Your wondrous deeds which You had performed among them; So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But You are a God of forgiveness, Gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness; And You did not forsake

1 Walton, John H. et al. *IVP Bible Background Commentary*. InterVarsity Press; e-Sword, 2000.

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them.

Psalms 86:15 NASB But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth.

Psalms 103:8 NASB The LORD is compassionate and gracious, Slow to anger and abounding in lovingkindness.

Psalms 145:8 NASB The LORD is gracious and merciful; Slow to anger and great in lovingkindness.

Joel 2:13 NASB And rend your heart and not your garments." Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil.

Nahum 1:3 NASB The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, And the LORD will by no means leave the guilty unpunished. In whirlwind and storm is His way, And clouds are the dust beneath His feet.

Moses's response to this self-revelation of God, he "made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship."

This idea of lovingkindness (Heb. *chêsêd*) is central to all of the Old Testament revelation and is best displayed in Psalm 136, where the phrase "For His lovingkindness is everlasting" is repeated 26 times. The Complete Word Study Dictionary² notes, "The psalmist made it clear that God's kindness and faithfulness serves as the foundation for His actions and His character: it underlies His goodness." Rather than completely destroying all of the people He agrees to re-establish His covenant with them, yet choosing to punish the guilty (about 3,000 at the hand of the Levites, Exodus 32:28) and that would have an impact on their descendants for three or four generations, most of whom were probably alive at the time of the incident of the golden calf.

I would encourage you to take some time to read through Psalm 136 one verse at a time and meditate (or chew on) what the psalmist is writing about in each verse. Then take a moment and consider doing the same thing as you reflect on your life and the events that have taken place. Hopefully you will see that the Lord's lovingkindness is everlasting.

Lord God, compassionate and gracious, You alone deserve our worship and praise. I pray that we never forget Your lovingkindness that has been displayed through the ages and that the generations that come after us will look and see that You are good and worthy of our praise. May Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Key Words: Old Testament, Torah/Pentateuch, Exodus. Commandments, Covenant, Lovingkindness, Glory of the Lord, Cloud

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2 Zhodiates, Spiro, Warren Baker, and Gene Carpenter. *The Complete Word Study Bible and Dictionary*. e-Sword, 1993.