

Show Me Your Glory

Lessons from the Life of Moses

Lesson 11

Exodus 32

Day One: The Talk from Heaven

Have you ever had a life-changing encounter with God? Has time ever come to a screeching halt while you were face down in His presence? If so, it was probably a moment when nothing else seemed to matter and you were completely oblivious to everything and everyone, existing only for that moment. Moses and the nation of Israel experienced such a pause when God spoke the Ten Commandments from Mt. Sinai: *“You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven”* (Exodus 20:22).

While the people stood afar off (Exodus 20:21), Moses drew near and received God’s Law—His judgments—concerning the altar, servants, meting out justice, animal control, property rights, ceremonies, Sabbaths, and feasts. God also promised to send the Angel of His Presence *“to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared”* (Exodus 23:20). God himself would drive out the enemies of Israel a little at a time until they grew in strength and inhabited the land of their inheritance.

To understand for yourself the full extent of God’s care and concern for Israel, take a moment now to make yourself comfortable and prepare to do some reading through this lesson! Today read through Exodus 21-24. The focus of our attention for the purpose of study will be Exodus 24.

1. When Moses came down the mountain and told the people all that God had said, how did the people respond? v. 3

Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord. Early the next morning he built an altar at the foot of the mountain and the young men offered sacrifices and peace offerings. He sprinkled the altar with blood and then read the Book of the Covenant to the people.

2. What, again, was their response? v. 7

When they uttered these words, Moses sprinkled some of the blood on the people to symbolize their binding agreement with God. Moses returned part way up the mountain accompanied by Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel (v. 9).

3. Describe what they saw and did there. vv. 10–11

4. God called Moses to go further up the mountain and remain there for a time. Who accompanied Moses part of the way? v. 13
 - a. Whom did Moses leave in charge of the people?
 - b. What instructions were they given? v. 14

Verse 16 says that the glory of the Lord rested—*settled*—on the mountain, covering it for six days.

5. What happened on the seventh day? v. 16
 - a. Describe what the children of Israel saw at that moment. v. 17
 - b. How long did Moses remain on the mountain with God? v. 18

Heartbeat . . . “ . . . Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold to obey is better than sacrifice . . . ”
1 Samuel 15:22

Day Two: Blueprints for the Tabernacle

Imagine, once Moses entered the cloud on Mt. Sinai he was not seen again for a period of forty days and nights! What must the people have begun thinking after all that time had passed? While there in God’s presence, Moses received all the instructions from the Lord regarding the tabernacle and its furnishings (Exodus 25-31). It was an in depth lesson in God’s school of obedience.

Once again, settle in, get comfortable and prepare to do some more reading about this amazing *talk from heaven*. As you follow along, recap the highlights of what you find in these remarkable chapters.

Read chapters 25–31 of Exodus. Briefly summarize in a sentence or two the most significant point you glean from the commands issued to Moses concerning the sacred ordinance of worship.

Exodus 25:1–40 *The Offerings for the Sanctuary; Furniture for the Tabernacle*

Exodus 26:1–37 *The Tabernacle*

Exodus 27:1–21 *The Altar; Courtyard; and Sacred Oil*

Exodus 28:1–43 *The Priestly Garments*

Exodus 29:1–46 *The Consecration of the Priests; Daily Offerings*

Exodus 30:1–38 *The Altar of Incense*

Exodus 31:1–18 *The Call to Build; The Sabbath Law*

Selah . . .

The time it has taken you to read and record the prominent points of these chapters highlights the importance God places on minute details as well as the priority of prayer and worship in His estimation. Every detail that went into the building of the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle was dictated by God, who gave the pattern to Moses on the mountain when he was in *closest communion* with Him.

- ❖ Looking back to Exodus 25:9 and 40, how does God emphasize this priority?

- ❖ Contrast the Old Testament rules of worship with that of your own practice of worship today. Is worship a priority in your life?

- ❖ Give an example of how *you* are following the pattern God showed *you* when you were in closest communion with Him?

Day Three:

The Golden Calf

We've witnessed God drawing near to His people on Mt. Sinai and Israel affirming their covenant relationship. We've listened in on the *talk from heaven* as Moses received the Ten Commandments and the *blueprints* for the Ark of the Covenant and the Tabernacle (the actual construction takes place in chapters 35–40). Now we're about to witness one of the lowest and saddest moments in Israel's history. It is here that Moses rises as more than a leader of his nation; he becomes *intercessor* for his people, pleading for their very lives.

Read Exodus 32:1–35. Today our focus will be verses 1–14.

1. As Moses delayed coming down from the mountain, the people grew impatient. What did they do next? How did they justify their actions? v. 1
2. Sensing the direction the people were going, what did Aaron suggest? vv. 2–3
 - a. What does this suggest to you about Aaron's character?
 - b. Since he was officially the man in charge, what should he have done?

Aaron realized the people were tired of waiting for Moses. What they really wanted was a "visible god" to lead them. He collected all the gold brought to him (the bounty that was heaped upon the Israelites as they left Egypt) and fashioned a golden calf. This idol and what was about to take place was a violation of the second commandment.

3. In response to the newly formed image, what did the people declare? vv. 4–6
 - a. How did Aaron soon follow?
 - b. Describe what took place the next day.

Knowing the great sin the people were committing, God told Moses to "get down!" and see for himself the corruption throughout the camp.

4. These were God's people, yet how did He refer to them in verse 7?

God deliberately changed the possessive pronoun from “My” to “your,” indicating He was disowning the Israelites.

- a. List the sins they were guilty of in verses 7 and 8.
- b. How did God label these people? What did He mean by this? v. 9

- c. How did He intend to deal with them? v. 10

- d. What promise did He make to Moses?

Not only had God’s people corrupted themselves, they had turned aside *quickly* from Him! But God’s judgment moved the heart of Moses, and what follows is a beautiful portrayal of the power of love operating through prayer—God listened!

Look closer . . .

The “stiff-necked” Israelites had promptly turned away from the revealed truth they had heard and the sights they had witnessed. They would no longer bow to God’s authority, but had eagerly bowed and worshiped the golden calf. Contrast the faith of the people with the faith of Moses.

Verse 14 says that “*the Lord relented from the harm which he said He would do to His people.*” This does not mean that God changed—He is immutable (unchangeable)! God’s relenting is what is referred to as an *anthropomorphism*—a description of God in man’s terms that enables us to better understand that He does change His emotions and actions when He has good reason to do so, without changing His character or nature. There are numerous occasions in Scripture where we see Him relenting, usually based upon one or more of the following grounds: personal intercession; people repenting; His own compassion and mercy.

Selah . . .

How about you? When you can no longer detect God’s nearness or He delays His answer to you, are you quick to turn away or does your faith become stronger?

Day Four:

Moses the Intercessor

Read Exodus 32:15–35.

Carrying the tablets God had given him during those forty days and nights, Moses descended, meeting up with Joshua who was positioned lower down the mountain.

Joshua was within hearing distance of the commotion and thought war had broken out; but Moses heard the sounds of singing and celebration.

1. What information are you given about the tablets from verses 15 and 16?
2. As Moses came near the camp and could see what was going on . . .
 - a. What did he do with the tablets? v. 19
 - b. What did he do with the golden calf? v. 20
3. When Moses turned to his brother, what penetrating question did he ask? v. 21
 - a. What were Aaron's excuses? vv. 22–24
 - b. What decision did Moses immediately force upon the people? vv. 25–26
 - c. What was the outcome that day? vv. 27–28

Moses rebuked the people for turning away, and sought God for their forgiveness. He ascended the mountain to confess their sin and intercede for them (v. 31).

4. Amazingly, to what extent was Moses willing to go on their behalf? vv. 31–32

The book referred to here is the *Book of Life* (see Daniel 12:1–2 and Revelation 20:12). It contains the names of God's children of all ages from all walks of life. To be blotted out of the book means to be cut off from God and delivered over to eternal death. Though God will hold every person accountable for their thoughts, attitudes, and actions, no true child of God need ever fear that their name will be blotted out—it is eternally etched there!

5. What lesson did the Lord have for Moses? v. 33
 - a. What does God recommission Moses to do and with what promise? v. 34

The plague mentioned in verse 35 would be fulfilled at a later date. For now, God wanted Moses to know that the destiny of each individual rests on his or her own faith in Him. Have you made that determination for yourself yet? If you would like *your name*

forever etched in the Book of Life, just bow your heart and ask God to forgive your sin in the name of Jesus and fill you with His eternal Spirit!

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Five: Praying with Purpose

Selah . . . Be still and consider how to *work out* in your daily life what God has *worked into* your heart through your study of His Word. Then pray each aspect through.

❖ **A Point Pondered:** Is there an example from the lesson or a truth from Scripture that has taken on a new meaning this week? Please note it below.

❖ **A Path Pursued:** Knowledge must be applied in order to make a difference. Name one thing you can act upon in obedience to the Holy Spirit's leading.

❖ **A Promise Possessed:** If God has spoken a particular verse or word of hope to your heart, write it down and pray it back to Him.

❖ **A Praise Proclaimed:** God loves to hear you praise Him! What aspect of God's character particularly blessed you this week? Will you praise Him today?

❖ **A Prayer Presented:** Write out the most pressing request on your heart and lift it to the Lord.

Other requests:

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Notes