

## Israel Breaks the Covenant (c. mid July 1446 BC)

Exodus 31:18–32:35

### The Tablets of Testimony

31:18 When He had finished speaking with him upon Mount Sinai, He gave Moses the two tablets of the testimony, tablets of stone, written by the finger of God.

### The Golden Calf

32:1 Now when the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people assembled about Aaron and said to him, “Come, make us a god who will go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.” [\[Acts 7:39–41\]](#)

2 Aaron said to them, “Tear off the gold rings which are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring *them* to me.”

3 Then all the people tore off the gold rings which were in their ears and brought *them* to Aaron.

4 He took *this* from their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool and made it into a molten calf; and they said, “This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

5 Now when Aaron saw *this*, he built an altar before it; and Aaron made a proclamation and said, “Tomorrow *shall be* a feast to the LORD.”

6 So the next day they rose early and offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play. [\[1 Cor 10:7\]](#)

### Yahweh’s Anger and Moses’ Intercession

7 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, “Go down at once, for your people, whom you brought up from the land of Egypt, have corrupted *themselves*.

8 They have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them. They have made for themselves a molten calf, and have worshiped it and have sacrificed to it and said, ‘This is your god, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt!’”

9 The LORD said to Moses, “I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people.

10 Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation.”

11 Then Moses entreated the LORD his God, and said, “O LORD, why does Your anger burn against Your people whom You have brought out from the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?

12 Why should the Egyptians speak, saying, ‘With evil *intent* He brought them out to kill them in the mountains and to destroy them from the face of the earth’? Turn from Your burning anger and change Your mind about *doing* harm to Your people.

13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants to whom You swore by Yourself, and said to them, ‘I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heavens, and all this land of which I have spoken I will give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.’”

14 So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people.

### Moses Breaks the Tablets of Testimony

15 Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets which were written on both sides; they were written on one *side* and the other.

16 The tablets were God’s work, and the writing was God’s writing engraved on the tablets.

17 Now when Joshua heard the sound of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, “There is a sound of war in the camp.”

18 But he said,

“It is not the sound of the cry of triumph,  
Nor is it the sound of the cry of defeat;  
But the sound of singing I hear.”

19 It came about, as soon as Moses came near the camp, that he saw the calf and *the* dancing; and Moses’ anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them at the foot of the mountain.

20 He took the calf which they had made and burned *it* with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it over the surface of the water and made the sons of Israel drink *it*.

### Moses Confronts Aaron

21 Then Moses said to Aaron, “What did this people do to you, that you have brought *such* great sin upon them?”

22 Aaron said, “Do not let the anger of my lord burn; you know the people yourself, that they are prone to evil.

23 For they said to me, ‘Make a god for us who will go before us; for this Moses, the man who brought us up from the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’”

24 I said to them, ‘Whoever has any gold, let them tear it off.’ So they gave *it* to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf.”

### **The Levites Kill the Ringleaders**

25 Now when Moses saw that the people were out of control—for Aaron had let them get out of control to be a derision among their enemies—

26 then Moses stood in the gate of the camp, and said, “Whoever is for the LORD, *come* to me!” And all the sons of Levi gathered together to him.

27 He said to them, “Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘Every man *of you* put his sword upon his thigh, and go back and forth from gate to gate in the camp, and kill every man his brother, and every man his friend, and every man his neighbor.’”

28 So the sons of Levi did as Moses instructed, and about three thousand men of the people fell that day.

29 Then Moses said, “Dedicate yourselves today to the LORD—for every man has been against his son and against his brother—in order that He may bestow a blessing upon you today.”

### **Yahweh’s Punishment**

30 On the next day Moses said to the people, “You yourselves have committed a great sin; and now I am going up to the LORD, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.”

31 Then Moses returned to the LORD, and said, “Alas, this people has committed a great sin, and they have made a god of gold for themselves.

32 But now, if You will, forgive their sin—and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!”

33 The LORD said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.

34 But go now, lead the people where I told you. Behold, My angel shall go before you; nevertheless in the day when I punish, I will punish them for their sin.”

35 Then the LORD smote the people, because of what they did with the calf which Aaron had made.

## **Moses Entreats Yahweh to Go With Israel (c. mid July 1446 BC)**

Exodus 33:1–17

### **Yahweh Refuses to Personally Accompany Israel to Canaan**

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, “Depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your descendants I will give it.’

2 I will send an angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite.

3 *Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, because you are an obstinate people, and I might destroy you on the way.”

### **The People Obey Yahweh and Mourn in Genuine Repentance**

4 When the people heard this sad word, they went into mourning, and none of them put on his ornaments.

5 For the LORD had said to Moses, “Say to the sons of Israel, ‘You are an obstinate people; should I go up in your midst for one moment, I would destroy you. Now therefore, put off your ornaments from you, that I may know what I shall do with you.’”

6 So the sons of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb *onward*.

### **The Temporary Tabernacle—“Tent of Meeting”**

7 Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp.

8 And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent.

9 Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses.

10 When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent.

11 Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

### **Moses Entreats Yahweh to Personally Accompany Israel and Yahweh Agrees**

12 Then Moses said to the LORD, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people!’ But You Yourself have not let me know whom You will send with me. Moreover, You have said, ‘I have known you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.’

13 Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people.”

14 And He said, “My presence shall go *with you*, and I will give you rest.”

15 Then he said to Him, “If Your presence does not go *with us*, do not lead us up from here.

16 For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the *other* people who are upon the face of the earth?”

17 The LORD said to Moses, “I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name.”

## Yahweh Renews the Covenant (c. late July – August 1446 BC)

Exodus 33:18–34:35

### Moses Asks To See Yahweh’s Glory

33:18 Then Moses said, “I pray You, show me Your glory!”

19 And He said, “I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion.” [\[Rom 9:14–15\]](#)

20 But He said, “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!”

21 Then the LORD said, “Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand *there* on the rock;

22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by.

23 Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen.”

### Yahweh Takes the Initiative to Renew the Covenant

34:1 Now the LORD said to Moses, “Cut out for yourself two stone tablets like the former ones, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the former tablets which you shattered.

2 So be ready by morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai, and present yourself there to Me on the top of the mountain.

3 No man is to come up with you, nor let any man be seen anywhere on the mountain; even the flocks and the herds may not graze in front of that mountain.”

4 So he cut out two stone tablets like the former ones, and Moses rose up early in the morning and went up to Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and he took two stone tablets in his hand.

### Yahweh Passes Before Moses

5 The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD.

6 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.”

### Moses Worships and Repeats His Request for Yahweh’s Presence

8 Moses made haste to bow low toward the earth and worship.

9 He said, “If now I have found favor in Your sight, O Lord, I pray, let the Lord go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your own possession.”

### The Renewal of the Covenant

10 Then God said, “Behold, I am going to make a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of the LORD, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to perform with you.

11 “Be sure to observe what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite.

12 Watch yourself that you make no covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, or it will become a snare in your midst.

13 But *rather*, you are to tear down their altars and smash their *sacred* pillars and cut down their Asherim

14 —for you shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God—

15 otherwise you might make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land and they would play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and someone might invite you to eat of his sacrifice,

16 and you might take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters might play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons *also* to play the harlot with their gods.

17 You shall make for yourself no molten gods.

18 “You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the

appointed time in the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you came out of Egypt.

19 “The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me, and all your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep.

20 You shall redeem with a lamb the first offspring from a donkey; and if you do not redeem *it*, then you shall break its neck. You shall redeem all the firstborn of your sons. None shall appear before Me empty-handed.

21 “You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest; *even* during plowing time and harvest you shall rest.

22 You shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, *that is*, the first fruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.

23 Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.

24 For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before the LORD your God.

25 “You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread, nor is the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover to be left over until morning.

26 “You shall bring the very first of the first fruits of your soil into the house of the LORD your God. “You shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

### **The Covenant in Writing**

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 So he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

### **Moses’ Shining Face**

29 It came about when Moses was coming down from Mount Sinai (and the two tablets of the testimony *were* in Moses’ hand as he was coming down from the mountain), that Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because of his speaking with Him.

30 So when Aaron and all the sons of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him.

31 Then Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the rulers in the congregation returned to him; and Moses spoke to them.

32 Afterward all the sons of Israel came near, and he commanded them *to do* everything that the LORD had spoken to him on Mount Sinai.

33 When Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face.

34 But whenever Moses went in before the LORD to speak with Him, he would take off the veil until he came out; and whenever he came out and spoke to the sons of Israel what he had been commanded, [cf. [2 Cor 3:7–18](#)]

35 the sons of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses’ face shone. So Moses would replace the veil over his face until he went in to speak with Him.

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