

Sunday School Lesson
Exodus 33:1-23
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Negotiating with God



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With this third character study on Moses in the Smyth-Helwys Formations series, we move to the experience at Mt. Sinai (= Mt. Horeb), and the period of time during their stay there. The basic thrust of this material stresses Moses' interaction with God to secure God's promise to go with them in their journey northward to Canaan. Otherwise, Moses knew they were doomed before they ever left Horeb.



This raises the curious issue of negotiating with God. Can one ever really get God to change His mind about His intentions? Various answers to this question have arisen over the centuries on either the yes or the no sides of possible answers. The issue isn't a clear cut yes or no, as presented in scripture.

Underneath the surface level discussion going on between God and Moses most of the way through these twenty-three verses is the unquestioned assumption of Moses that the Israelites were absolutely dependent on God's presence for their survival and for a successful entrance into the Land of Canaan. Without assurance of that divine presence, Moses knew they were walking into their death when they departed from Horeb. This may be one of the most important lessons to be learned from this study.

I Context

Once again, we will draw upon the detailed background study from the previous lesson on [Exodus 14:10-18](#). For greater details on the background you should consult this study at Cranfordville.com. Relevant materials from that study will be summarized here.

a. Historical

External History. Although it is very likely that various records, oral for sure, and probably written as well, were made of the experiences of the Israelites as they left Egypt and arrived at Mt. Sinai, the final compiling of the materials in the book of Exodus did not take place until the Babylonian Exile / Post-Exile eras several centuries later. Moses most likely supervised the creation of the earliest strata of this material, but unnamed scribes are responsible

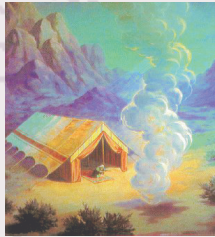
for its final shape that we know in the book.

Internal History. The sequence of events in this section of Exodus, chaps. 32-34, flows from the golden calf episode (chap. 32) to our passage that is followed by God's renewal of the covenant (chap. 34). The anger of God over the golden calf episode sets the tone for the dialogue between God and Moses in chapter 33. The resolution of His anger in the negotiated agreement with Moses then sets the

tone for covenant renewal in chapter 34.

b. Literary

Genre. The literary form of chapter 33 is that of an episodic narrative mostly in the form of short conversations between God and Moses. This conversation is interrupted with reports of Moses to the people. These trigger reactions mostly of repentance. These pure narrative units surface in vv. 4-6 and vv. 7-11. Verses 7-11 are intended to insert an explanation of how God communicated to Moses during this period.



Although not entirely clear, the conversations between God and Moses seem to take place in a [Tent of Meeting](#), which Moses moved from inside the camp to a place far away from the camp of the people. This structure and its relationship to the much more elaborate [tabernacle](#) is a subject of debate among OT scholars. D.W. Gooding summarizes one view in the [New Bible Dictionary](#) on “tabernacle”:

The tabernacle of the congregation (AV), more properly ‘tent of meeting’, as in RV, RSV: a small, provisional meeting-place of God and his people in use before the large tabernacle was built (Ex. 33:7–11). This tent of meeting was pitched outside the camp. Moses would enter it and the Cloud, marking the divine Presence, would descend and stand outside it at the door. In this the function of the tent resembled that of the cleft of the rock in which Moses was placed (Ex. 34:22–23), and that of the cave in which Elijah stood (1 Ki. 19:9–18), to be addressed by God while the glory of God passed by outside. The tabernacle, by



contrast, was erected in the midst of the camp, and the Cloud of glory rested not outside but inside it, so that at first Moses had to stay outside (Ex. 40:34–35).

At least in our passage the tent is pitched outside the camp.

Literary setting. The role of chapter thirty-three inside the book of Exodus is variously understood, but Walter Brueggemann has a very helpful assessment of it (*New Interpreter's Bible*, iPreach):

These three chapters [32-34] are crucially and peculiarly placed in the book of Exodus. According to scholarly consensus, they belong to the early sources of the book (JE), and so are a continuation of chaps. 19–24. Indeed, in the usual reading informed by critical scholarship, one reads directly from 24:18 to 32:11, skipping over the intervening materials of 25–31.

With a more recent accent on canonical reading, we must ask about chapters 32–34 in their immediate context, even when a conventional source analysis is accepted. Before chaps. 32–34 come 25–31, with the command for building the tabernacle. After chaps. 32–34 come 35–40, with the implementation of that command. Thus chaps. 32–34 disrupt the expected sequence of command (25–31) and performance (35–40). The sequence of command-disruption-implementation is likely an important and intentional theological arrangement.

Formally, the disruption of God's command is like the sequence of Genesis 1–2 (creation), 3–8 (sin), and 9:1-17 (new covenant). Exodus 32 is something like a paradigmatic break in the world intended by God for Israel. That formal sequence of creation, sin, and new covenant, however, may be further illuminated if one considers closely the relation between chaps. 25–31 and chap. 32. The most striking commonality is the figure of Aaron, who is authorized as the singular priest (chaps. 28–29), but who perverts Israel's faith in chap. 32. Thus it is possible that chaps. 32–34 present a polemic against the very Aaron so celebrated in 28–29, in favor of Moses' faith and leadership.

When we turn to 32–34 itself, we see again that an intentional design has been wrought in the material (helpfully discussed by Moberly).¹⁷⁴ These three chapters are likely made up of quite distinct materials. While chap. 32 concerns the offense of the calf, it has no particular relation to chap. 33. In like manner, the theophanic disclosure of 34:6-7, the resolve to make covenant (v. 10), and the proclamation of covenant law (vv. 11-26), likely reflect an old practice of covenant making that has no connection to broken covenant.

These materials have now been formed, as Moberly shows, into a new configuration around a pattern of sin (32), dialogue and negotiation (33), and new covenant (34). When arranged in this way, the materials are not simply concerned with a moment of crisis in Israel's past, but make a remarkable theological statement that has continuing force and significance. Yahweh has a will, capacity, and yearning for the restoration of broken covenant with Israel. This new beginning, which is enacted in chap. 34, is made possible (or necessary) because of the fierce insistence of

Moses. In the assertion of 33:19, in the self-disclosure of 34:6-7a, and in the answer to the petition in 34:10, Israel receives an articulation of God's fierce, unwarranted graciousness, in the face of a profound act of disobedience. This is precisely the theological conclusion that would be most important to the exilic makers of canon. Put another way, the exile is exactly such a context of violation and brokenness that requires a fresh gift of Yahweh's mercy.¹⁷⁵

In the end, we can appropriate this assertion of Yahweh's unfettered graciousness in two ways. If read critically, i.e., according to source analysis, the relation of Sinai is reconstituted on a firmer basis. If read canonically (as the book stands), even Aaron's way-

wardness does not preclude the miracle of fidelity and presence. Either way, the final form of the text shows that Israel's future depends on Yahweh's inordinate fidelity.

Thus our passage represents a bridge between broken covenant and renewal of it. Moses' role is that of bridge builder, perhaps in contrast to Aaron who as the chief priest failed to mediate between God and the people in the matter of the golden calf. But also this text highlights the leadership capabilities of Moses as a spokesman both from the people to God and from God to the people.

II. Message

Literary Structure. Given the dialogical nature of this episode, the passage breaks down into three literary units: 1) vv. 1-6, God's expression of anger; 2) vv. 7-11, the Tent of Meeting between God and Moses; 3) vv. 12-23, Moses and God negotiate out a resolution to His anger. We will follow this understanding of structure, based on literary analysis.

a. Divine Anger, vv. 1-6

LXX

καὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν πορεύου ἀνάβηθι ἐντεθεῖν σὺ καὶ ὁ λαὸς σου οὓς ἐξήγαγες ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου εἰς τὴν γῆν ἣν ὤμοσα τῷ Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ λέγων τῷ σπέρματι ὑμῶν δώσω αὐτήν ² καὶ συναποστελῶ τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου καὶ ἐκβαλεῖ τὸν Ἀμορραῖον καὶ Χετταῖον καὶ Φερεζαῖον καὶ Γεργεσαῖον καὶ Εὐαῖον καὶ Ἰεβουσαῖον ³ καὶ εἰσάξω σε εἰς γῆν ῥέουσιν γάλα καὶ μέλι οὐ γὰρ μὴ συναναβῶ μετὰ σοῦ διὰ τὸ λαὸν σκληροτράχηλόν σε εἶναι ἵνα μὴ ἐξαναλώσω σε ἐν τῇ ὁδοῦ ⁴ καὶ ἀκούσας ὁ λαὸς τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ ποιηρὸν τοῦτο κατεπένησαν ἐν πενθικοῖς ⁵ καὶ εἶπεν κύριος τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ ὑμεῖς λαὸς σκληροτράχηλος ὁρᾶτε μὴ πληγῆν ἄλλην ἐπάξω ἐγὼ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐξαναλώσω ὑμᾶς νῦν οὖν

NASB

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." 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

NRSV

1 The Lord said to Moses, "Go, leave this place, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, and go 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 Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 3 Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, or I would consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people." 4 When the people heard these harsh words, they mourned, and no one put on ornaments. 5 For the Lord had said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, "You are a stiff-necked

NLT

1 The LORD said to Moses, "Now that you have brought these people out of Egypt, lead them to the land I solemnly promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I told them long ago that I would give this land to their descendants. 2 And I will send an angel before you to drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. 3 Theirs is a land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not travel along with you, for you are a stubborn, unruly people. If I did, I would be tempted to destroy you along the way." 4 When the people heard these stern words, they went into mourning and refused to wear their jewelry and ornaments. 5 For the LORD had told Moses to tell them, "You

ἀφέλεσθε τὰς στολὰς τῶν
δοξῶν ὑμῶν καὶ τὸν κόσμον
καὶ δεῖξω σοι ἃ ποιήσω
σοι ⁶ καὶ περιείλαντο οἱ
υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ τὸν κόσμον
αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν περιστολὴν
ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους τοῦ Ἥωρηβ



Notes:

These beginning verses largely introduce God's reaction to the golden calf mess described in [the preceding chapter](#). Moses had gone into the mountain to receive God's revelation for the children of Israel (24:12-31:17). "When God finished speaking with Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the two tablets of the covenant, tablets of stone, written with the finger of God. When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered around Aaron, and said to him, 'Come, make gods for us, who shall go before us; as for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him'" (Exod. 31:18-32:1). Aaron gave into their demand and cast an image of a calf out of gold for the people to use for worship (32:2-6). God informed Moses what was happening in the camp and indicated His desire to utterly destroy them (32:7-10). Moses convinced God to not carry out His intention and then went back to the camp to confront both Aaron and the people (32:11-34). "Then the Lord sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf—the one that Aaron made" (32:35).

Our passage begins with God speaking to Moses with instructions for the Israelites to break camp. The text is unclear about where this conversation took place. Up to this point Moses had gone into the mountain to speak with God. But the nature of vv. 7-11 suggests that this was one of the conversations with God that took place in the Tent of Meeting outside the camp of the people. The scary aspect is God's declaration that He will no longer accompany them on their trek to the Land of Canaan. This in spite of God promising to send "an

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.

people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, and I will decide what to do to you.' " 6 Therefore the Israelites stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

are an unruly, stubborn people. If I were there among you for even a moment, I would destroy you. Remove your jewelry and ornaments until I decide what to do with you." 6 So from the time they left Mount Sinai, the Israelites wore no more jewelry.

gel before you" who will offer protection for the Israelites. The reason God decided not to accompany them on this journey is that He was so angry with them that, were He present with them, He "would consume you on the way."

When this message was conveyed to the Israelites by Moses (vv. 4-6) they were told "now take off your ornaments and I [God] will decide what to do to you." Their reaction was "they mourned and no one put on ornaments." Various understandings of "ornaments" are possible. Brueggemann (NIB, iPreach) sees these as

... the ornaments as amulets or even figurines of gods such as are familiar from archaeological sites (cf. Hos. 2:13). This and the reference to Jacob's burying such

ornaments at Shechem before his pilgrimage to Bethel (Gen. 35:4) may point to a regular rite of renunciation corresponding to the divine claim to purity of worship in the sacrament of the covenant. The association of this with the problem of continuing presence, lit. "face," of God on leaving his cult place (vss. 15-16) has suggested to some scholars that originally the ornaments

were used in construction of the ark and that this account was omitted in favor of that in 25:10-22. Another theory is that later orthodoxy has suppressed here a genuine old tradition of their use in the making of a cult mask to be worn by Moses in communicating the divine oracle, later communicated through the ephod and sacred lots (see below on 34:29-35).

But J. I. Durham (*Word Biblical Commentary*) sees a slightly different angle on this:

As an expression of their grief, the people do not wear any "ornamentation" or "festive dress" (צַדִּיק), and by this inclusion of yet another tradition of Yahweh's



terrible announcement and the people's abject grief, the compiler of this sequence provides an explanation of this symbol of the people's mourning and effectively doubles the impact of his narrative. Yahweh had told Moses to say to Israel, "You are an obstinate people" (this time with a plural "you," by contrast to the collective singular "you" of the similar statement of v 3), and to explain to them the awesome danger involved in his continued Presence with them, even "for a single moment." He had also instructed that they should divest themselves of any festive dress. In the context of the composite narrative, this latter instruction may be taken as an indication that an immediate expression of the people's grief was to become a permanent one, not least because their grief was to be a permanent one.

There is no reason to assume that the festive dress the people here put off was what they had put on for festivities at Sinai (so Beer, 156), nor is there any basis for the assumption that the ornamentation the people set aside here was used to make the Tent of Appointed Meeting mentioned in the verses that follow (7–11; cf. Driver, 358), or the Ark (Dibelius, *Lade Jahves*, 45–47; Davies, 238; cf. Haran, 262–65), and it is, of course, useless to see any discrepancy between this setting aside of festive dress and the call for special materials for the construction of the Tabernacle and its equipment and the sacral vestments of chaps. 25 and 35. The present text is concerned only with depicting Israel's profound mourning of the threatened loss of Yahweh's Presence and to express that grief has utilized a tradition, no doubt quite ancient, of mourning dress.

Regardless of the exact nature of the item, they symbolized an attitude which was completely inappropriate and thus were told bluntly to not wear them. According to v. 6 they did not wear them again, favoring the view that these items had religious symbolism oriented toward other deities.

The basis for God's pondering what to do with the Israelites was His accusation that they were "a stiff-necked people" (v. 3). [This graphic visual image](#) is used as a charge against the people in Exodus, and later these Israelites become the negative example for subsequent generations to avoid even into New Testament usage.

This image of being "stiff-necked" conveys a spirit

of rebelliousness, as J. A. Wharton (Interpreters Dictionary of the Bible, iPreach) describes:

A metaphor for rebellion and unteachableness, taken from the use of domestic animals for various kinds of work (עֶרֶב "neck," plus קָשָׁה "be hard" [in verb and noun forms]; σκληροτράχηλος). The ox "stiffens his neck" when he refuses direction, or "turns a stubborn shoulder" when offered the yoke (cf. Hos. 4:16; 10:11; Zech. 7:11-12; cf. Neh. 9:29).

The term typically describes Israel's rebelliousness against Yahweh during the wilderness wandering (Exod. 32:9; 33:3, 5; Deut. 9:13), which becomes a stereotype of apostasy (Jer. 7:26). Such rebellion consists in disobedience and idolatry (Exod. 32:9; Deut. 31:27), reversing the course of Yahweh's redemptive history (Neh. 9:16-17; Jer. 7:26). A chief characteristic of the "stiff-necked" is refusal to listen to the word of God delivered through the prophets (II Kings 17:13-14; II Chr. 36:12-13; Jer. 7:25-26; 19:15; cf. Ezek. 3:7; Zech. 7:11-12), which in Acts 7:51-53 is called "resist[ing] the Holy Spirit" (cf. Isa. 63:10). God's grace appears in sharp contrast to Israel's stubbornness in Exod. 34:9; Deut. 9:6; II Chr. 30:8; Neh. 9:16 ff. The opposite of this attitude is the transformation of the external forms of the covenant relationship (see CIRCUMCISION; COVENANT) into a profound inner motive of obedience (Deut. 10:16), in willing submission to Yahweh's will II Chr. 30:8).

What are possible connections of these verses to us today? Some come to mind immediately. It's still possible to "tick God off" with sinful actions and attitudes. Sin is still sin, even when God's people commit it. Being "on the inside" doesn't excuse rebellious actions. If anything, it makes them worse, because we should know better. Second, our sinfulness reduces God's ability to "walk with us" on the journey of discipleship. Sin pushes God's presence to the back burner and leaves us more on our own to cope with life. This is a recipe for disaster just as Moses recognized, along with the Israelites (v. 4). We need to be as smart as they were. By any term, sin is still rebellion and represents a deplorable pride and stubbornness against obeying God. The image of being "stiff-necked" at Sinai marked these Israelites forever as setting a negative example to be avoided at all costs. What a way to be remembered!

b. Talking with God, vv. 7-11

LXX

ἡ καὶ λαβὼν Μωυσεῖς τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ ἔπηξεν ἕξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς μακρὰν ἀπὸ τῆς παρεμβολῆς καὶ

NASB

7 Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the

NRSV

7 Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp; he called

NLT

7 It was Moses' custom to set up the tent known as the Tent of Meeting far outside the

ἐκλήθη σκηνή μαρτυρίου καὶ ἐγένετο πᾶς ὁ ζητῶν κύριον ἐξεπορεύετο εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς ἡνίκα δ' ἂν εἰσπορεύετο Μωυσῆς εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς εἰστίκει πᾶς ὁ λαὸς σκοπεύοντες ἕκαστος παρὰ τὰς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς αὐτοῦ καὶ κατενοοῦσαν ἀπιόντος Μωυσῆ ἕως τοῦ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν 9 ὡς δ' ἂν εἰσῆλθεν Μωυσῆς εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν κατέβαιναν ὁ στῦλος τῆς νεφέλης καὶ ἴστατο ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ ἐλάλει Μωυσῆ 10 καὶ ἑώρα πᾶς ὁ λαὸς τὸν στῦλον τῆς νεφέλης ἐστῶτα ἐπὶ τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς καὶ στάντες πᾶς ὁ λαὸς προσεκύνησαν ἕκαστος ἀπὸ τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνῆς αὐτοῦ 11 καὶ ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίω ὡς εἴ τις λαλήσει πρὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ φίλον καὶ ἀπελύετο εἰς τὴν παρεμβολὴν ὃ δὲ θεράπων Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς Ναυη νέος οὐκ ἐξεπορεύετο ἐκ τῆς σκηνῆς

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.

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 Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise and stand, each of them, at the entrance of their tents and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. 9 When 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 rise and bow down, all of them, at the entrance of their tent. 11 Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then he would return to the camp; but his young assistant, Joshua son of Nun, would not leave the tent.

camp. Everyone who wanted to consult with the LORD would go there. 8 Whenever Moses went out to the Tent of Meeting, all the people would get up and stand in their tent entrances. They would all watch Moses until he disappeared inside. 9 As he went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and hover at the entrance while the LORD spoke with Moses. 10 Then all the people would stand and bow low at their tent entrances. 11 Inside the Tent of Meeting, the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, stayed behind in the Tent of Meeting.



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Notes:

These verses seem to interrupt the thought flow of the narrative established in vv. 1-6 and resumed in verses 12-23. As might well be expected, considerable discussion about this has surfaced in scholarly discussions, as J.I. Durham (*WBC*) notes:

These verses are so strikingly different in both content and style from the dramatically arranged narrative composite that precedes and follows them that they have given rise to a wide variety of explanations concerning their origin, and above all their purpose in relation to their present setting. They have been attributed to both J (Newman, *People of the Covenant*, 63–71; possibly, says Noth, 254–55, though he favors a “special tradition” taken up by J) and also (more generally) to E (Beer, 156–59; Hyatt, 314–15), though not universally as a unity (cf. Beyerlin, *Sinaitic*

Traditions 112–26, who thinks E took over an old tradition and then reworked it). In fact, there is not enough clear evidence in Exod 33:7–11 to make a



“I fell down before the Lord.”—Deut. ix. 25.

firm source assignment.

The nature of verses 7-11 is to present a pattern of activity not just connected to this one episode. Most likely, this early, rather primitive “meeting house” served as the foundational model for the latter developed tabernacle. Thus the insertion of this pericope by the compilers of Exodus serves to “set the record straight” about how the tension between God and the Israelites was resolved. God wasn’t far off on a mountain; rather He was “outside the camp” that had been polluted by the willful rebellion of the Israelites. Yet, He was still accessible, although only through Moses’ mediation.

The people sensed that God was meeting with Moses when they saw the “pillar of cloud” descending and standing in front of the entrance of this tent. The proper reaction for them was to “rise and bow down, all of them, at the entrance of their tent.” Thus, reverence for the presence of God, even from a distance, was the norm. The nature of Moses’ meeting with God is depicted as “the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend.” For the ancient world, and the Old Testament even, to speak with deity as a human on friendship terms such as these was rather astounding. The Israelites, and even Moses subsequently, would not be permitted such

again. When the resolution was found, all that Moses would see was God’s back, not His face (vv. 21-23).

The end of this pericope notes that a young Joshua continuously served in this Tent of Meeting, although Moses came and went. We are provided some insight into the future successor of Moses at this early stage.

Connections to us? A few possibilities come to mind. Even though the Israelites rebelled God still remained accessible to them. To be sure, He was threatening to disassociate Himself completely with these rebellious people. But during this period, Moses could mediate their needs to God as a powerful representative. In a later NT text seeking to apply the model of the Israelites to Christians, [Heb. 4:15-16](#) admonishes us:

15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

The Israelites had Moses to stand between them and God, but we have one far greater, the great high priest Jesus himself.

c. Resolving trouble with God, vv. 12-23

LXX

¹²καὶ εἶπεν Μωϋσῆς πρὸς κύριον ἰδοὺ σύ μοι λέγεις ἀνάγαγε τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον σὺ δὲ οὐκ ἐδήλωσάς μοι ὃν συναποστελεῖς μετ’ ἐμοῦ σὺ δὲ μοι εἶπας οἶδά σε παρὰ πάντας καὶ χάριν ἔχεις παρ’ ἐμοί. ¹³ εἰ οὖν εὔρηκα χάριν ἐναντίον σου ἐμφάνισόν μοι σεαυτὸν γνωστῶς ἴδω σε ὅπως ἂν ᾧ εὔρηκῶς χάριν ἐναντίον σου καὶ ἵνα γινῶ ὅτι λαός σου τὸ ἔθνος τὸ μέγα τοῦ το ¹⁴ καὶ λέγει αὐτὸς προπορεύσομαι σου καὶ καταπαύσω σε ¹⁵ καὶ λέγει πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰ μὴ αὐτὸς σὺ πορεύῃ μὴ με ἀναγάγῃς ἐντεῦθεν ¹⁶ καὶ πῶς γνωστὸν ἔσται ἀληθῶς ὅτι εὔρηκα χάριν παρὰ σοί ἐγώ

NASB

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

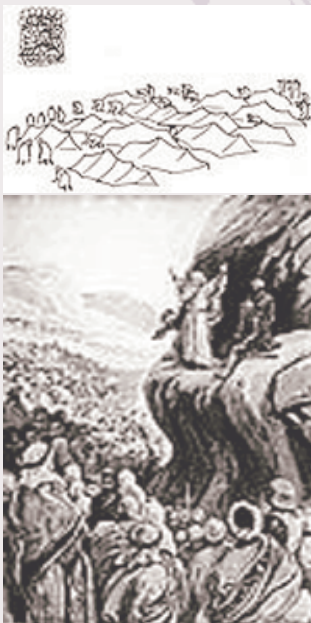
NRSV

12 Moses said to the Lord, "See, you have said to me, "Bring up this people"; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, "I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight." 13 Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." 14 He said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." 15 And he said to him, "If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from

NLT

12 Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Take these people up to the Promised Land.' But you haven't told me whom you will send with me. You call me by name and tell me I have found favor with you. 13 Please, if this is really so, show me your intentions so I will understand you more fully and do exactly what you want me to do. Besides, don't forget that this nation is your very own people." 14 And the LORD replied, "I will personally go with you, Moses. I will give you rest – everything will be fine

τε καὶ ὁ λαὸς σου ἀλλ' ἢ συμπορευομένου σου μεθ' ἡμῶν καὶ ἐνδοξασθήσομαι ἐγὼ τε καὶ ὁ λαὸς σου παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ὅσα ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἐστίν· ¹⁷ καὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωϋσῆν καὶ τοῦτόν σοι τὸν λόγον ὃν εἶρηκας ποιήσω εὐρηκας γὰρ χάριν ἐνώπιόν μου καὶ οἶδά σε παρὰ πάντα· ¹⁸ καὶ λέγει δεῖξόν μοι τὴν σεαυτοῦ δόξαν· ¹⁹ καὶ εἶπεν ἐγὼ παρελεύσομαι πρότερός σου τῆ δόξῃ μου καὶ καλέσω ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου κύριος ἐναντίον σου καὶ ἐλεήσω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ καὶ οἰκτιρήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτίρω· ²⁰ καὶ εἶπεν οὐ δύνησῃ ἰδεῖν μου τὸ πρόσωπον οὐ γὰρ μὴ ἴδῃ ἄνθρωπος τὸ πρόσωπόν μου καὶ ζήσεται· ²¹ καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ἰδοὺ τόπος παρ' ἐμοί στήσῃ ἐπὶ τῆς πέτρας· ²² ἡνίκα δ' ἂν παρέλθῃ μου ἡ δόξα καὶ θήσω σε εἰς ὀπήν τῆς πέτρας καὶ σκεπάσω τῇ χειρὶ μου ἐπὶ σέ· ἕως ἂν παρέλθω· ²³ καὶ ἀφελῶ τὴν χεῖρα καὶ τότε ὄψῃ τὰ ὀπίσω μου τὸ δὲ πρόσωπόν μου οὐκ ὀφθῆσεται σοι.

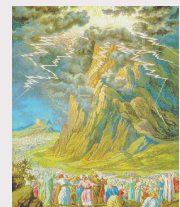


said to Him, "If Your presence does not go *with us*, do not lead us up from here. 16 For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the *other* people who are upon the 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." 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." 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."

here. 16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth." 17 The Lord said to Moses, "I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." 18 Moses said, "Show me your glory, I pray." 19 And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, 'The Lord'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. 20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live." 21 And the Lord continued, "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; 22 and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; 23 then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen."



for you." 15 Then Moses said, "If you don't go with us personally, don't let us move a step from this place. 16 If you don't go with us, how will anyone ever know that your people and I have found favor with you? How else will they know we are special and distinct from all other people on the earth?" 17 And the LORD replied to Moses, "I will indeed do what you have asked, for you have found favor with me, and you are my friend." 18 Then Moses had one more request. "Please let me see your glorious presence," he said. 19 The LORD replied, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, 'the LORD,' to you. I will show kindness to anyone I choose, and I will show mercy to anyone I choose. 20 But you may not look directly at my face, for no one may see me and live." 21 The LORD continued, "Stand here on this rock beside me. 22 As my glorious presence passes by, I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed. 23 Then I will remove my hand, and you will see me from behind. But my face will not be seen."



Notes:

Important here is to note that the narrative, begun in 32:1, and interrupted in 33:7, resumes taking the story to its climatic point.

This pericope revolves entirely around a dialogue between Moses and God, with God having the last word in the conversation. Its structure is as follows:

Moses said: vv. 12-13

God replied: vv. 14

Moses said: vv. 15-16

God said again: v. 17

Moses said: v. 18

God replied: v. 19

God continues: v. 20

God continues: vv. 21-23

Clearly this conversation is dominated by God, who both responds to Moses' pleas for the people, but also lays out His intention to continue accompanying the Israelites on their journey to Canaan. We will take Moses' words as the organizing key to our study.

1) Moses said (vv. 12-13): *See, you have said to me, "Bring up this people"; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, "I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight." 13 Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.* Moses reminded God of His word given to Moses while in Egypt. He pleads for God to not abandon the people since they belong to God. On the basis of Moses' friendship with God he intercedes in behalf of the people.

God's response (v. 14): *He said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."* God replied that He would accompany the Israelites to Canaan after all. God indicates that He will quiet Moses' anxiety ("I will give you rest") first created in 33:1 with the warning that God would not Himself accompany the Israelites beyond Sinai.

2) Moses said (vv. 15-16): *"If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth."* At first glance it seems as though Moses didn't hear what God had said. But Moses' words here recap his first statement in vv. 12-13. The additional insight is the affirmation of how intense his longing is for God's presence to accompany them to Canaan. The first statement "*this nation is your people*" is now expanded to an affirmation that God's presence will provide confirmation to others of the people as the people of God.

God's response (v. 17): *"I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."* God grants Moses' request and affirms His friendship with Moses. This friendship, the source of His favor, is the basis for granting Moses' request. Durham (*WBC*) provides this eloquent summary:

It is a brilliantly arresting conclusion to a magnificent narrative sequence, dazzlingly effective in its brevity, masterfully bold in its presentation of a Yahweh who is so secure that he does not mind being upstaged by his own servant Moses. This answer is the most convincing possible testimony of the favor in which Yahweh holds Moses, as Yahweh proceeds immediately to say. And this answer, in turn, sets the stage for the next component of the narrative sequence, in which, in a passage unique in the OT, Yahweh describes himself and Moses falls prostrate in worship.

God grants to Moses the status of "friend" that had great significance in the ancient world. Remember James' declaration about Abraham ([James 2:23](#)): "he [Abraham] was called the friend of God."

3) Moses said (v18): *"Show me your glory, I pray."* Moses sought immediate confirmation of God's promise by a demonstration of His powerful presence. Not the first time that Moses has made such a request; see [Exodus 3:7-4:23](#). In the wilderness calling of Moses to go to Egypt, Moses had wanted proof of God's presence to accompany him.

God's responses (vv. 19-23): **And he** [God] **said**, *"I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, "The Lord"; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. 20 But," he* [God] **said**, *"you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live." 21 And the Lord continued*, *"See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; 22 and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; 23 then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen."* This threefold response actually sets up the theophany described in [34:1-8](#) where God showed Moses His presence in overpowering ways. God is available but He is always hidden. We can communicate with Him, but it always is on the basis of reverence and respect. Moses needed this affirmation, just as Elijah would need a similar one at the same location centuries later ([1 Kings 19:9-13](#)).

What a wonderful promise of God's presence to His people, and their leaders. Through Jesus we have full access to this same God. Our reaction? Moses' reaction to God's glory: *"And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped"* ([Exod. 34:8](#)).

LXX

ἰκαὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν πορεύου ἀνάβηθι ἐντεῦθεν σὺ καὶ ὁ λαὸς σου οὓς ἐξήγαγες ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου εἰς τὴν γῆν ἣν ὤμοσα τῷ Αβρααμ καὶ Ἰσαακ καὶ Ἰακωβ λέγων τῷ σπέρματι ὑμῶν δώσω αὐτήν ² καὶ συναποστελῶ τὸν ἄγγελόν μου πρὸ προσώπου σου καὶ ἐκβαλεῖ τὸν Ἀμορραῖον καὶ Χετταῖον καὶ Φερεζαῖον καὶ Γεργεσαῖον καὶ Εὐαῖον καὶ Ἰεβουσαῖον ³ καὶ εἰσάξω σε εἰς γῆν ῥέουσαν γάλα καὶ μέλι οὐ γὰρ μὴ συναναβῶ μετὰ σοῦ διὰ τὸ λαὸν σκληροτράχηλόν σε εἶναι ἵνα μὴ ἐξαναλώσω σε ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ ⁴ καὶ ἀκούσας ὁ λαὸς τὸ ῥῆμα τὸ ποιηρὸν τοῦτο κατεπένησαν ἐν πενθικοῖς ⁵ καὶ εἶπεν κύριος τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ ὑμεῖς λαὸς σκληροτράχηλος ὁρᾶτε μὴ πληγῆν ἄλλην ἐπάξω ἐγὼ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς καὶ ἐξαναλώσω ὑμᾶς νῦν οὖν ἀφέλεσθε τὰς στολὰς τῶν δοξῶν ὑμῶν καὶ τὸν κόσμον καὶ δεῖξω σοι ἃ ποιήσω σοι ⁶ καὶ περιείλαντο οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ τὸν κόσμον αὐτῶν καὶ τὴν περιστολήν ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄρους τοῦ Χωρηβ ⁷καὶ λαβῶν Μωυσεῖς τὴν σκηνὴν αὐτοῦ ἔπηξεν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς μακρὰν ἀπὸ τῆς παρεμβολῆς καὶ ἐκλήθη σκηνὴ μαρτυρίου καὶ ἐγένετο πᾶς ὁ ζητῶν κύριον ἐξεπορεύετο εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς ⁸ ἡνίκα δ' ἄν εἰσεπορεύετο Μωυσεῖς εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν ἔξω τῆς παρεμβολῆς εἰστίθει πᾶς ὁ λαὸς σκοπεύοντες ἕκαστος παρὰ τὰς θύρας τῆ

NASB

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." 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*. 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

NRSV

1 The Lord said to Moses, "Go, leave this place, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, and go 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 Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 3 *Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey; but I will not go up among you, or I would consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people." 4 When the people heard these harsh words, they mourned, and no one put on ornaments. 5 For the Lord had said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, "You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, and I will decide what to do to you." 6 Therefore the Israelites stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward. 7 Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp; 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 Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the

NLT

1 The LORD said to Moses, "Now that you have brought these people out of Egypt, lead them to the land I solemnly promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I told them long ago that I would give this land to their descendants. 2 And I will send an angel before you to drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites. 3 Theirs is a land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not travel along with you, for you are a stubborn, unruly people. If I did, I would be tempted to destroy you along the way." 4 When the people heard these stern words, they went into mourning and refused to wear their jewelry and ornaments. 5 For the LORD had told Moses to tell them, "You are an unruly, stubborn people. If I were there among you for even a moment, I would destroy you. Remove your jewelry and ornaments until I decide what to do with you." 6 So from the time they left Mount Sinai, the Israelites wore no more jewelry. 7 It was Moses' custom to set up the tent known as the Tent of Meeting far outside the camp. Everyone who wanted to consult with the LORD would go there. 8 Whenever Moses went out to the Tent of Meeting, all the people would get up and

ς σκηνης αὐτοῦ καὶ κατενοῦσαν ἀπιόντος Μωυσῆ ἕως τοῦ εἰσελθεῖν αὐτὸν εἰς τὴν σκηνήν ⁹ ὡς δ' ἂν εἰσηλθῆν Μωυσῆς εἰς τὴν σκηνήν κατέβαινε ὁ στῦλος τῆς νεφέλης καὶ ἴστατο ἐπὶ τὴν θύραν τῆς σκηνης καὶ ἐλάλει Μωυσῆ ¹⁰ καὶ ἑώρα πᾶς ὁ λαὸς τὸν στῦλον τῆς νεφέλης ἐστῶτα ἐπὶ τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνης καὶ στάντες πᾶς ὁ λαὸς προσεκύνησαν ἕκαστος ἀπὸ τῆς θύρας τῆς σκηνης αὐτοῦ ¹¹ καὶ ἐλάλησεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν ἐνώπιος ἐνωπίω ὡς εἴ τις λαλήσει πρὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ φίλον καὶ ἀπελύετο εἰς τὴν παρεμβολήν ὃ δὲ θεράπων Ἰησοῦς υἱὸς Ναυη νέος οὐκ ἔξεπορεύετο ἐκ τῆς σκηνης ¹²καὶ εἶπεν Μωυσῆς πρὸς κύριον ἰδοὺ σὺ μοι λέγεις ἀνάγαγε τὸν λαὸν τοῦτον σὺ δὲ οὐκ ἐδήλωσάς μοι ὃν συναποστελεῖς μετ' ἐμοῦ σὺ δέ μοι εἶπας οἶδά σε παρὰ πάντας καὶ χάριν ἔχεις παρ' ἐμοί ¹³ εἰ οὖν εὔρηκα χάριν ἐναντίου σου ἐμφάνισόν μοι σεαυτὸν γνωστῶς ἴδω σε ὅπως ἂν ὦ εὔρηκώς χάριν ἐναντίου σου καὶ ἵνα γινῶ ὅτι λαὸς σου τὸ ἔθνος τὸ μέγα τοῦ το ¹⁴ καὶ λέγει αὐτὸς προπορεύσομαί σου καὶ καταπαύσω σε ¹⁵ καὶ λέγει πρὸς αὐτὸν εἰ μὴ αὐτὸς σὺ πορεύῃ μὴ με ἀναγάγῃς ἐντεῦθεν ¹⁶ καὶ πῶς γνωστὸν ἔσται ἀληθῶς ὅτι εὔρηκα χάριν παρὰ σοί ἐγώ τε καὶ ὁ λαὸς σου ἀλλ' ἢ συμπορευομένου σου μεθ' ἡμῶν καὶ ἐνδοξασθήσομαι ἐγώ τε καὶ ὁ λαὸς σου παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ὅσα ἐπὶ τῆ

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.

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

people would rise and stand, each of them, at the entrance of their tents and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. ⁹ When 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 rise and bow down, all of them, at the entrance of their tent. ¹¹ Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then he would return to the camp; but his young assistant, Joshua son of Nun, would not leave the tent.

¹² Moses said to the Lord, "See, you have said to me, "Bring up this people"; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, "I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight." ¹³ Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people." ¹⁴ He said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." ¹⁵ And he said to him, "If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. ¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us?"

stand in their tent entrances. They would all watch Moses until he disappeared inside. ⁹ As he went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and hover at the entrance while the LORD spoke with Moses. ¹⁰ Then all the people would stand and bow low at their tent entrances. ¹¹ Inside the Tent of Meeting, the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. Afterward Moses would return to the camp, but the young man who assisted him, Joshua son of Nun, stayed behind in the Tent of Meeting.

¹² Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Take these people up to the Promised Land.' But you haven't told me whom you will send with me. You call me by name and tell me I have found favor with you. ¹³ Please, if this is really so, show me your intentions so I will understand you more fully and do exactly what you want me to do. Besides, don't forget that this nation is your very own people." ¹⁴ And the LORD replied, "I will personally go with you, Moses. I will give you rest – everything will be fine for you." ¹⁵ Then Moses said, "If you don't go with us personally, don't let us move a step from this place. ¹⁶ If you don't go with us, how will anyone ever know that your

ς γῆς ἐστίν ¹⁷ καὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν καὶ τοῦτόν σοι τὸν λόγον ὃν εἴρηκας ποιήσω εὔρηκας γὰρ χάριν ἐνώπιόν μου καὶ οἶδά σε παρὰ πάντα ¹⁸ καὶ λέγει δεῖξόν μοι τὴν σεαυτοῦ δόξαν ¹⁹ καὶ εἶπεν ἐγὼ παρελεύσομαι πρότερός σου τῆ δόξῃ μου καὶ καλέσω ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου κύριος ἐναντίον σου καὶ ἐλέησω ὃν ἂν ἐλεῶ καὶ οἰκτιρήσω ὃν ἂν οἰκτίρω ²⁰ καὶ εἶπεν οὐ δυνήσῃ ἰδεῖν μου τὸ πρόσωπον οὐ γὰρ μὴ ἴδῃ ἄνθρωπος τὸ πρόσωπόν μου καὶ ζήσεται ²¹ καὶ εἶπεν κύριος ἰδοὺ τόπος παρ' ἐμοί στήσῃ ἐπὶ τῆς πέτρας ²² ἡνίκα δ' ἂν παρέλθῃ μου ἡ δόξα καὶ θήσω σε εἰς ὀπήν τῆς πέτρας καὶ σκεπάσω τῇ χειρί μου ἐπὶ σέ ἕως ἂν παρέλθω ²³ καὶ ἀφελῶ τὴν χεῖρα καὶ τότε ὄψῃ τὰ ὀπίσω μου τὸ δὲ πρόσωπόν μου οὐκ ὀφθῆσεται σοι

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." 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." 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."

In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth." 17 The Lord said to Moses, "I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name." 18 Moses said, "Show me your glory, I pray." 19 And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, 'The Lord'; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. 20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live." 21 And the Lord continued, "See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; 22 and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; 23 then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen."

people and I have found favor with you? How else will they know we are special and distinct from all other people on the earth?" 17 And the LORD replied to Moses, "I will indeed do what you have asked, for you have found favor with me, and you are my friend." 18 Then Moses had one more request. "Please let me see your glorious presence," he said. 19 The LORD replied, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will call out my name, 'the LORD,' to you. I will show kindness to anyone I choose, and I will show mercy to anyone I choose. 20 But you may not look directly at my face, for no one may see me and live." 21 The LORD continued, "Stand here on this rock beside me. 22 As my glorious presence passes by, I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed. 23 Then I will remove my hand, and you will see me from behind. But my face will not be seen."

1 וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵּךְ עִלָּה מִזֶּה אֶתְּהַ
 וְהָעָם אֲשֶׁר הָעֵלִית מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי
 לְאַבְרָהָם לְיִצְחָק וְלַיַּעֲקֹב וְלֵאמֹר לְזֶרְעֶךָ אֶתְנַנְּהָ
 2 וְשִׁלַּחְתִּי לְפָנֶיךָ מִלֶּאֲדָ וְגִרְשִׁיתִי אֶת־הַכְּנַעֲנִי הָאֹמְרִי וְהַחֲתִי
 וְהַפְּרִזִי הַחֲוִי וְהַיְבוּסִי
 3 אֶל־אֶרֶץ זְבֹת חֶלֶב וּדְבַשׁ כִּי לֹא אֶעֱלֶה בְּקִרְבְּךָ כִּי
 עִם־קִשְׁה־עֲרֹף אֶתְהַ פֶּן־אֲכַלְךָ בַּדֶּרֶךְ
 4 וַיִּשְׁמַע הָעָם אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַרְעָ הַזֶּה וַיִּתְאַבְּלוּ וְלֹא־שָׁחוּ אִישׁ
 עֵדִיו עֲלָיו
 5 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֲמֹר אֶל־בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אִתְּם
 עִם־קִשְׁה־עֲרֹף רַגַע אֶחָד אֶעֱלֶה בְּקִרְבְּךָ וְכִלִּיתִיךָ וְעֵתָה
 הוֹרֵד עֲדִיךָ מֵעֲלֶיךָ וְאֲדַעַה מַה אֶעֱשֶׂה־לְּךָ
 6 וַיִּתְנַצְּלוּ בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־עֵדִים מִהָר חוֹרֵב
 7 וּמֹשֶׁה יָקַח אֶת־הָאֹהֶל וְנִטְה־לוֹ מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה הַרְחִק
 מִן־הַמַּחֲנֶה וְקָרָא לוֹ אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהָיָה כֹּל־מִבְּקֵשׁ יְהוָה
 יֵצֵא אֶל־אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד אֲשֶׁר מִחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה
 8 וְהָיָה כִּצְאֹת מֹשֶׁה אֶל־הָאֹהֶל יִקְוֹמוּ כֹּל־הָעָם וְנִצְבּוּ אִישׁ
 פֶּתַח אֹהֶלוֹ וְהִבִּיטוּ אַחֲרַי מֹשֶׁה עַד־בָּאוּ הָאֹהֶל
 9 וְהָיָה כִּבָּא מֹשֶׁה הָאֹהֶל יֵרֵד עִמּוֹד הָעֵנָן וְעִמּוֹד פֶּתַח
 הָאֹהֶל וְדַבֵּר עִם־מֹשֶׁה
 10 וְרָאָה כֹּל־הָעָם אֶת־עִמּוֹד הָעֵנָן עִמּוֹד פֶּתַח הָאֹהֶל וְקָם
 כֹּל־הָעָם וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ אִישׁ פֶּתַח אֹהֶלוֹ
 11 וְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פָּנִים אֶל־פָּנִים כַּאֲשֶׁר יִדְבֹר אִישׁ
 אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ וְשָׁב אֶל־הַמַּחֲנֶה וּמִשְׁרָתוֹ יְהוֹשֵׁעַ בֶּן־נּוּן נָעַר לֹא
 יָבוֹשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הָאֹהֶל ס
 12 וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה אֶל־יְהוָה רְאֵה אֶתְּה אֲמַר אֵלַי הַעֵל
 אֶת־הָעָם הַזֶּה וְאֶתְּה לֹא הוֹדַעְתָּנִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר־תִּשְׁלַח עִמִּי
 וְאֶתְּה אֲמַרְתָּ יִדְעִתִּיךָ בְּשֵׁם וְגַם־מִצְאֹת חֵן בְּעֵינַי
 13 וְעֵתָה אִם־נָא מִצְאֵתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ הוֹדַעְנִי נָא אֶת־דְּרָכְךָ
 וְאֲדַעַךְ לְמַעַן אֲמַצְא־חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְרָאָה כִּי עִמּוֹד הַגּוֹי הַזֶּה
 14 וַיֹּאמֶר פָּנִי יִלְכוּ וְהִנַּחְתִּי לְךָ

15 וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אִם־אֵין פְּנִיךָ הַלְכִים אֶל־תַּעֲלֵנוּ מִזֶּה
16 וּבַמָּה יוֹדָע אִפּוֹא כִי־מִצַּאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ אָנֹכִי וְעַמֶּךָ
הֲלֹא בְלִכְתֹּף עִמָּנוּ וְנִפְלִינוּ אָנֹכִי וְעַמֶּךָ מִכָּל־הָעַם אֲשֶׁר
עַל־פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה פ

17 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה גַם אֶת־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ
אֲעֲשֶׂה כִי־מִצַּאת חֵן בְּעֵינֵי וְאֲדַעְךָ בְּשֵׁם

18 וַיֹּאמֶר הֲרֵאנִי נָא אֶת־כְּבוֹדְךָ

19 וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכִי אֶעֱבִיר כָּל־טוֹבִי עַל־פְּנֶיךָ וְקִרְאתִי בְשֵׁם יְהוָה
לְפָנֶיךָ וְחִנֵּיתִי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲחֹן וְרַחֲמֵתִי אֶת־אֲשֶׁר אֲרַחֵם

20 וַיֹּאמֶר לֹא תוּכַל לִרְאֹת אֶת־פְּנֵי כִי לֹא־יִרְאֵנִי הָאָדָם וְחִי
21 וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הִנֵּה מְקוֹם אֲתֵּן וְנִצַּבְתָּ עַל־הַצּוּר

22 וְהָיָה בְּעֵבֶר כְּבֹדִי וְשָׁמַתִּיךָ בְּנִקְרַת הַצּוּר וְשַׁכַּתִּי כַּפֵּי
עֲלֶיךָ עַד־עֲבָרֶי

23 וְהִסְרֵתִי אֶת־כְּפֵי וְרֵאִיתָ אֶת־אֲחֵרֶי וּפְנֵי לֹא יִרְאוּ ס

Moses and God Talking (vv. 12-23)

A Teaching Aid

Reader One (Moses) (vv. 12-13):

See, you have said to me, "Bring up this people"; but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, "I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight." Now if I have found favor in your sight, show me your ways, so that I may know you and find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.

Reader Two (God) (v. 14):

My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.

Reader One (Moses) (vv.15-16):

If your presence will not go, do not carry us up from here. For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people, unless you go with us? In this way, we shall be distinct, I and your people, from every people on the face of the earth.

Reader Two (God) (v. 17):

I will do the very thing that you have asked; for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.

Reader One (Moses) (v. 18):

Show me your glory, I pray.

Reader Two (God) (vv. 19-23):

I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, "The Lord"; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But, [I also say], you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live. [Furthermore], See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.