

GOD the Deliverer

Focal Verses • Exodus 34:1-10

Aim For Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **LIST** God's attributes as revealed to Moses; **PRAISE** God for His love, mercy, and faithfulness; and **REFLECT** on God's love, mercy, and faithfulness.

In Focus

Miriam and Craig shared a mutual love for God and encouraged one another. Back when Miriam and Craig got married, like all couples, they had ups and downs. Yet, they purchased a home and had two children. Miriam was faithfully committed to her husband, Craig. When Craig's firm downsized, he was laid off even after 12 years as a partner! Miriam continued to work, care for the children, and encourage Craig that God had something wonderful for him and their family. Each week, Craig seemed more hesitant to attend church and Bible study with the family. He seemed more withdrawn. Even when Craig was hired at another firm on a good salary, he still didn't participate in church as much. He seemed to have fallen out of the habit, and just took on a heavier case load. Miriam didn't complain; she continued to praise God for His provisions. One Friday afternoon, Miriam was paying the bills. As she opened the mail, Miriam said, "Thank You, God, for Your provisions!"

Craig asked, "What is it?"

As she gave Craig the letter, Miriam said, "Our tax refund was adjusted—"

Before Miriam could finish, Craig said, "We're probably receiving less."

Miriam quickly responded, "No, there is an increase. Because He loves us, God is faithful to provide."

How do you remember God's faithfulness and keep hope in God when going through challenging times?

KJV

Exodus 34:1-10

1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.

2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount.

3 And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

4 And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the tablets of stone.

5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped.

9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O LORD, let my LORD, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiff necked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance.

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10 And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

NLT

Exodus 34:1–10

1 Then the LORD told Moses, “Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones. I will write on them the same words that were on the tablets you smashed.

2 Be ready in the morning to climb up Mount Sinai and present yourself to me on the top of the mountain.

3 No one else may come with you. In fact, no one is to appear anywhere on the mountain. Do not even let the flocks or herds graze near the mountain.”

4 So Moses chiseled out two tablets of stone like the first ones. Early in the morning, he climbed Mount Sinai as the LORD had commanded him, and he carried the two stone tablets in his hands.

5 Then the LORD came down in a cloud and stood there with him; and he called out his own name, Yahweh.

6 The LORD passed in front of Moses, calling out, “Yahweh! The LORD! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.

7 I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations.”

8 Moses immediately threw himself to the ground and worshiped.

9 And he said, “O LORD, if it is true that I have found favor with you, then please travel with us. Yes, this is a stubborn and rebellious people, but please forgive our iniquity and our sins. Claim us as your own special possession.”

10 The LORD replied, “Listen, I am making a covenant with you in the presence of all your people. I will perform miracles that have never been performed anywhere in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people around you will see the power of the LORD—the awesome power I will display for you.”

The People, Places, and Times

Mount Sinai. This is the highest mountain in Egypt. At 2,285 meters high, it is located in the south-central part of the Sinai Peninsula. The entire peninsula, 150 miles long, is located on the northwestern border of Saudi Arabia and is shaped like an inverted triangle. God made many revelations of Himself to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. There, He also gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. Sinai has been referred to as the “mountain of God” (Exodus 3:1) and “mount of the LORD” (Numbers 10:33).

Stone Tablets. The stone tablets, which are inscribed with the Ten Commandments, give insight into the nature of God. In anger, Moses destroyed the first set when he saw the Israelites committing idolatry. However, God was gracious to Moses and wrote the Ten Commandments again on another set of stone tablets. These stone tablets were stored in the Ark of the Covenant.

Background

For 400 years, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. They suffered from oppression and cruel treatment. God heard their prayers for help and called Moses to free them and show His power through miracles. God displayed His might by sending ten plagues to Egypt. Because of God’s help, the whole nation of Israelites escaped from Egypt. Pharaoh tried to bring them back, but God parted the Red Sea so they could escape safely.

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Then, the Israelites journeyed in the wilderness to Mount Sinai. While in the wilderness, the Israelites complained about the bitter (or salty) water. Moses prayed to God, and God made the water sweet (fresh). God promised to supply the Israelites' needs if they followed His commands. Exodus 19–20 records that God spoke to Moses, provided the Law, and made a covenant with the Israelites. God also instructed Moses to build a Tabernacle, which would be their special place for worship.

During his long journey from Beersheba to Haran in search of a wife, Jacob felt weary and decided to rest in the wilderness near Luz, which is where our Scripture takes place. Meanwhile, Esau learned of the prohibition against marrying Canaanite women and attempted to gain favor with his father by marrying an Ishmaelite. However, this did not change Esau's situation.

At-A-Glance

1. God Instructs and Moses Obeys (Exodus 34:1-4)
2. The Attributes of God (vv. 5–8)
3. Renewal of the Covenant (vv. 9–10)

In Depth

1. God Instructs and Moses Obeys (Exodus 34:1-4)

God spoke to Moses and instructed him to carve two new stone tablets so that He could rewrite the Law. Despite the people's rebellion and Moses' anger, God did not allow these obstacles to prevent Him from communicating how they should live. Moses followed God's instructions and created two additional stone tablets.

In verses 2–3, God provided Moses with specific directives, including the exact time to come to Mount Sinai. Moses was instructed not to bring anyone with him, and no one was allowed to be seen near the mountain. Furthermore, neither flocks nor herds could graze in the vicinity of the mountain, as only Moses was permitted to approach God on this holy ground (v. 3).

2. The Attributes of God (vv. 5–8)

Exodus 33 describes how Moses asked to see the glory of God—His divine presence. However, anyone who saw God could not survive the experience. In response to Moses' request, God promised that Moses would see Him as He passed by (Exodus 33:23). After Moses climbed Mount Sinai, God descended in a cloud (Exodus 34:5). God had also caused a cloud to appear that guided the Israelites by day during their escape from Egypt (Exodus 13:21). Therefore, the pillar of cloud served as a visible sign of God's presence among His people.

As God passed by, He proclaimed His name and what it means. God revealed that He is the only Lord and God—loving, merciful, patient, compassionate, faithful, forgiving, and just. God blesses for generations and holds each generation accountable for sin. God declares He will hold each person accountable for their own sins rather than generational sin, even if there may be generational consequences for sinful decisions (see Jeremiah 31:29-30; Ezekiel 18:19-20).

The revelation God grants to Moses serves a purpose beyond that moment. When the Israelites are too scared to conquer the Promised Land, Moses intercedes for the people during their rebellion. He repeats this revelation and begs for forgiveness (Numbers 14:18-19). Moses appeals to God to forgive the people because God had said that He forgives. As believers, how should we use God's revelation of who He is to help both believers and non-believers?

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3. Renewal of the Covenant (vv. 9–10)

Moses continued to pray for the Israelites, asking God to show favor and forgive their rebellious nature. He acknowledged the people's tendency to disobey and openly confessed this fact, yet he still sought God's forgiveness. Moses recognized that without God's presence, the Israelites would be vulnerable to their enemies in the land. In response, God promised to enter into a covenant with Moses, assuring him that He would perform wonders before them and all the nations they would face in the Promised Land. Throughout this process, Moses remained dedicated to interceding for the people. Why do believers sometimes struggle to intercede for those who repeatedly sin?

Search The Scriptures

1. What happened to the first set of stone tablets that contained the Ten Commandments (Exodus 32:19)?
2. What did God require Moses to do before he met Him on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:1)?
3. What does it mean that God "passed by before" Moses (v. 6)?

Discuss The Meaning

1. Why was Moses unable to gaze upon the glory of God?
2. How is God's glory revealed to believers today?
3. How can sin affect generations in a family "to the third and fourth generation" (v. 7)?

Liberating Lesson

Many people around the world overlook the consequences of sin, rebellion, and transgressions against God's commands. This may stem from individuals prioritizing personal agendas over God's will. However, God expects His children to serve Him faithfully and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, resist the sinfulness prevalent in the world.

Application For Activation

Believers should understand God's attributes and His glory. It is important to pray for God's will, and His work to be evident in our words and actions. Therefore, ask God to lead, guide, and direct you as you remain committed to serving, obeying, and following Him. If you realize you have sinned against God, seek His forgiveness with a repentant heart.

More Light On The Text

Exodus 34:1–10

1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Hew thee two tables of stone like unto the first: and I will write upon these tables the words that were in the first tables, which thou brakest.

Moses had already been with God on Mount Sinai once, during which God personally inscribed His commandments on two stone tablets. However, when Moses came down the mountain to deliver God's laws to the people, he found them engaged in idol worship. Unsurprisingly, "Moses' anger waxed hot" (Exodus 32:19). The real issue was not just the worship of the golden calf—though that was indeed egregious—but rather the fact that the Israelites had willingly agreed to God's covenant and then willfully broke it. God had promised to be their God, and they, in turn, would be His people, His "peculiar treasure" (Exodus 19:3–8). No one had forced them into this agreement; they had readily accepted it, especially after witnessing God's miraculous deliverance from the Egyptians, as well as His continuous guidance and provision in the wilderness. Despite their persistent grumbling and complaints, God still cared for their every need by providing manna and water, and even some of their desires, such as quail. He guided them day and night with pillars of cloud and fire, leading them to a place of freedom and safety.

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2 And be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount. 3 And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount; neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount.

Much as God had warned the people before giving Moses the first set of law tablets (Exodus 19:14-15), God warns Moses again that the entire mountain is holy and should be treated as such. Only Moses has completed and retained the ritual purification, or cleansing, needed for a sinful person to approach God. No other Israelite and certainly no animals were allowed near the mountain.

4 And he hewed two tables of stone like unto the first; and Moses rose up early in the morning, and went up unto mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him, and took in his hand the two tables of stone.

Moses follows God's instructions, demonstrating his dedication to God and his concern for the Israelites. Without God's Law, the Israelites would lack guidance on how to live faithfully and in a way that distinguishes them from the surrounding nations.

5 And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

God descends upon Sinai for the second time, surrounded by a cloud that later Jewish scribes came to refer to as the Shekinah glory—the same “thick cloud” that had enveloped Moses during his first trip up the mountain. This event was also accompanied by thunder, lightning, and a piercingly loud trumpet (19:16). While the Hebrew word 'anan (aw-NAWN) in its standard usage is “cloud,” in this context, it signifies God's presence. This is evident in phrases like “cloud of the LORD” (40:38) and “glory of the LORD” (16:10), which indicate a direct association with God.

6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.

God refers to Himself as “the LORD, the LORD God.” This repetition of names serves to convey endearment and capture a person's attention (see Genesis 22:11, Exodus 3:4, and 1 Samuel 3:10). Similarly, Elisha uses repetition when saying “my father, my father” at the departure of Elijah (2 Kings 2:12, 13:14). God is gracious and compassionate. He shows mercy and grace to those who turn back to Him (Exodus 20:6). He is longsuffering, which is derived from two Hebrew words: 'arek (aw-RAKE), meaning “long,” and 'ap (AF), which means “nose” or “anger.” Together, these words can be read as “long-suffering” and as “long of nose.” In a popular 19th-century children's story, there is a wooden character named Pinocchio who wishes to become a real human boy. One of his challenges is lying, and each time he lies, his nose grows a little longer. However, with God, a long nose does not signify a lie; instead, it represents His increasing patience toward a stubborn humanity.

7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation.

This verse does not indicate that God reserves His kindness solely for those who obey His commands. Instead, His kindness extends beyond those who comply and includes the rebellious as well. The notion of visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and even upon the third and fourth generations, does not mean there's an indefinite curse on the people (Ezekiel 18:20). Instead, it suggests that if a generation persists in sin, they will continue to face consequences. It is also a warning to the head of the household. If the family patriarch or matriarch sins, that sin could affect everyone in the household, which in those days would usually include multiple generations under one roof.

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But God is not looking to punish His children. He is looking for ways to be merciful. God forgives those who genuinely repent of their sins and does not punish individuals for actions they have not committed.

8 And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. 9 And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O LORD, let my LORD, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance. 10 And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee.

Moses humbly bows down before God, recognizing that God is greater than he is. This act of worship emphasizes that worship should focus on God rather than on the individual. Once again, Moses intercedes for the people, asking God to accompany them and forgive them, despite their tendencies to rebel and resist Him. He requests that God take them as His inheritance, a promise that God had already made. God reaffirms that He is still with His people, despite their rebellion. He promises to establish a covenant and perform marvels (Heb. pala', paw-LAW), which can also mean "wonders," "great," "difficult," and "miracles," before them. The people will witness these marvels, which have never occurred on earth before. Even the other peoples living in Canaan will see the unmistakable power of God.

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Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Genesis 25–26

Psalm 7:10-17

TUESDAY

Genesis 27–29

Psalm 8

WEDNESDAY

Genesis 30–31

Psalm 9:1-10

THURSDAY

Genesis 32–34

Psalm 9:11-20

FRIDAY

Genesis 35–37

Psalm 10:1-11

SATURDAY

Genesis 38–40

Psalm 10:12-18

SUNDAY

Genesis 41–42

Psalm 11