

Exodus 31:12 – 34:35

^{31:12} The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ¹³ ‘But as for you, speak to the sons of Israel, saying, ‘You shall surely observe My sabbaths; for this is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the LORD who sanctifies you. ¹⁴ Therefore you are to observe the sabbath, for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it shall surely be put to death; for whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. ¹⁵ For six days work may be done, but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest, holy to the LORD; whoever does any work on the sabbath day shall surely be put to death. ¹⁶ So the sons of Israel shall observe the sabbath, to celebrate the sabbath throughout their generations as a perpetual covenant.’ ¹⁷ It is a sign between Me and the sons of Israel forever; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day He ceased from labor, and was refreshed.’ 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.

^{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.’ 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. 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. 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. 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.’ 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.'

^{32:30} 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. ^{33:1} 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 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 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.'

^{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. 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.’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.’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 Asherim¹⁴ – 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.

^{34:18} 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.’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.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,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.

Historical and Cultural Background

- *Israel’s Sin Echoes Humanity’s Fall:* There are many similarities to the original fall (Gen.3:1 – 12).
 - As Adam and Eve broke God’s command while God was on the mountain of Eden (Gen.2:10 – 14 indicates that Eden was a mountain because rivers diverge from it; Ezk.28:13 – 14 specifically calls Eden a mountain), Israel did the same here while God and Moses were on the mountain of Sinai (Ex.32:1).
 - As Eve ‘saw...took...ate’ (Gen.3:6), Israel ‘saw’ that Moses had been gone, Aaron ‘took’ their gold jewelry to make an idol, and they ‘ate and drank’ (Ex.32:1 – 6).
 - As Adam blamed another for tempting him (Gen.3:9 – 12), Aaron blamed others (Ex.32:1, 21 – 24).
 - As Adam and Eve corrupted their human nature, the Israelites are said to ‘have corrupted themselves’ (Ex.32:7).

- Like Adam and Eve, they internalized (drink) the object connected to their sin (Ex.32:20).
- As Adam and Eve saw their own nakedness and felt shame (Gen.3:9 – 11), Israel was naked ('out of control' in Ex.32:25), and made themselves shameful ('a derision').
- Just as God established sword-wielding angels to guard the sanctuary of Eden (Gen.3:24), the Levites join Moses as the new sword-wielding guardians of the sanctuary (Ex.32:25 – 29; cf. Num.3:40 – 51). The Levites play the role of the angels in Genesis 3, guarding the sanctuary and being men of sword and flame. (Just as three thousand are slain here, at a scene of covenant failure, three thousand are 'pierced to the heart' at Pentecost in Acts 2:37 – 41 when they receive Jesus and the Spirit, thereby entering the new covenant centered on Christ).
- As the result of the fall, God could not dwell fully with Adam and Eve; the same is true here, as YHWH left the camp and used the 'tent of meeting' until the tabernacle was built (Ex.33:7 – 11).
- *God's Promise to Abraham and Sarah:* What binds God to Moses and the people? Back in Genesis 12, God had made a promise to Abraham, that through him and his wife Sarah and their heirs, God will renew the creational blessing on all the families of the world (Gen.12:1 – 3). In short, through them, God would undo the sin of Adam and Eve.
- *The Heart of the Pentateuch:* This is the chiastic center of the entire Pentateuch, the five books of Moses. See my analysis here: <http://nagasawafamily.org/article-pentateuch-chiasm.pdf>.

Questions

1. What are the major themes here?
 - a. Israel's obstinacy, human sin
 - b. God's anger toward sin
 - c. Moses' mediation, make atonement for your sin
 - d. God is jealous for His people, not of His people
2. At first, how does God speak about the people? God verbally distances Himself from the people. Speaking to Moses, He calls them 'your people': ^{32:7} 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... 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.'
3. How does Moses talk about the people with God?
 - a. Moses pushes back. He says to God that the people are 'Your people': ^{32:11} 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 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.'
 - b. Does it work? Yes, according to the narrator: ^{32:14} So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to **His people**.
 - c. The covenant has now changed. Moses always represented the people in their relationship with YHWH. But now, Moses as the sole mediator, through his refusal to give up on the people, is the only means by whom they have a relationship with YHWH at all.
 - d. It is important that we recognize the play of personal pronouns. YHWH no longer seems to recognize any direct relationship to them. Rather, he deals only with Moses. Moses intercedes for the people so that they are not destroyed.
4. But then God distances Himself from the people again, doesn't He? He sounds less committed to Israel as they enter the promised land.
 - a. God promises to send his Presence with Moses and to give Moses rest, but not the people in general (Ex.33:14): ^{33:12} 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.'
 - b. Hence, Moses persists and YHWH relents, promising to accompany the people and to establish his Presence among them again. But then God says he will send 'an angel.' This is not the same as His full 'presence': ^{32:34} 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. ^{33:1} 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.'
 - c. Throughout this account, we see Moses play the role of mediator, like Abraham did for Lot. He is participating in God's 'divine council,' as it were.

- d. This is why the glory of God in Ex.33:18 – 23 is so significant: When YHWH's glory passes before Moses, unveiled by the cloud, it becomes the sign and assurance that YHWH would indeed restore his relationship to his people and be visibly present among them once again.
5. At this point YHWH renews the covenant with Moses and with Israel, taking back his people to himself. As Moses intercedes, the sin of Israel is pardoned, the covenant is declared again, and the people restored. However, in the renewed covenant, Moses plays the role of mediator, more than just the role of representative. The covenant is made with the people who ally themselves with Moses, not with the people as a general group. For this reason, it is very appropriate to speak of this as the Mosaic covenant: outside of allegiance to Moses there was no ordinary hope of covenant membership.
6. Notice who wrote the Ten Commandments?
 - a. The first time, God did: ^{32:16} The tablets were God's work, and the writing was God's writing engraved on the tablets.
 - b. The second time, Moses did: ^{33:27} 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.
 - c. Why the shift? Because the first time around, God made His commands known directly to the people, with Moses carrying the tablets. But the second time around, God made His commands known directly to Moses, who writes on the tablets.
7. Notice the shift between the first and the last sections?
 - a. Ex.31:12 – 18 stresses the Sabbath, which is from the Genesis creation (Gen.1:28 – 31)
 - b. Ex.34:18 – 26 stresses the Passover, Pentecost (Weeks), and Ingathering. Those are the festivals at which the covenant with Moses on behalf of Israel is remembered and renewed. The reason why these three festivals are situated as an echo of the creation is because Israel saw itself as covenanted with God for the sake of the whole creation, and eventually to renew the creation. Those are the times when Israel would gather before God at the sanctuary. So, God's covenant with Moses (stressed in Ex.34:27 – 35) was on behalf of Israel, and therefore on behalf of the whole creation.
8. Notice that God describes Himself in Exodus 34:6 – 7?
 - a. This is an important confessional truth that gets repeated over and over in Scripture. Here are the places that this phrase is said again:
 - i. Nehemiah 9:17
 - ii. Psalm 86:15
 - iii. Psalm 103:8
 - iv. Psalm 111:4
 - v. Psalm 116:5
 - vi. Psalm 145:8
 - vii. Joel 2:13
 - viii. Jonah 4:2
 - ix. John 1:18, 'full of grace and truth'
 - b. What happens when Israel goes against God? As in this section, God can eventually get angry, even though He is slow to. And He will punish the guilty.
 - i. Dietrich Bonhoeffer called Jesus 'the law of the real.' Jesus defines humanity his way. In other words, in a sense, he takes our humanity away from us, so that we won't define it the way we want. He gives his humanity back to us for us to receive.
 - ii. Why does God visit the iniquity of parents on their children and grandchildren? Is that fair? Does that mean He punishes later generations, too? Well, this did happen at the exile, when Babylon came in to take Israel captive. The Babylonian captivity lasted for 70 years, so if one generation = 20 years, it is 3.5 generations. That is the only incident that I can recognize where God did this.
 - iii. Is it a contradiction that God forgives sin, yet punishes the guilty? Isn't forgiveness manifested by not punishing? Apparently not. Forgiveness of sin is shown in God saying to Israel, 'You're mine no matter what, even the sins you commit will not break my covenant love for you.' In that sense, forgiving sin is about restoring the relationship.
 - c. In what sense is God compassionate and gracious, and restoring of the relationship He has with people?

- i. In the immediate passage, God didn't give up on Israel after the golden calf incident. In a sense, Israel at Sinai was the bride who not only deserted her groom at the altar. She had an affair with someone else on the wedding day. God persevered.
 - ii. He takes up Moses as the representative of Israel. He makes a covenant with Moses which will benefit the rest of Israel.
 - iii. But Moses will fail, too. Ultimately, God comes on the human to God side of the covenant relationship. As Jesus, God became human to be the true Israel, to give back to the Father the perfect human response.
- 9. Why does Moses veil his face?
 - a. To hide the glory of God from the people, because they had turned aside from God.
 - b. Moses was showing that the glory by which God wanted to be face to face with people was hidden from them. Much as a veil had been drawn between the garden of Eden and the rest of the creation. Much as God was coming in veiled form in the Tabernacle to dwell with the people.
 - c. Note 2 Corinthians 3:7 – 18, where Paul says, ⁷ But if the ministry of death, in letters engraved on stones, came with glory, so that the sons of Israel could not look intently at the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, fading as it was, ⁸ how will the ministry of the Spirit fail to be even more with glory? ⁹ For if the ministry of condemnation has glory, much more does the ministry of righteousness abound in glory. ¹⁰ For indeed what had glory, in this case has no glory because of the glory that surpasses it. ¹¹ For if that which fades away was with glory, much more that which remains is in glory. ¹² Therefore having such a hope, we use great boldness in our speech, ¹³ and are not like **Moses, who used to put a veil over his face so that the sons of Israel would not look intently at the end [telos] of what was fading away.** ¹⁴ But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted, because it is removed in Christ. ¹⁵ But to this day whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their heart; ¹⁶ but whenever a person turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.
 - d. Illus: In the myth of Cupid and Psyche, Psyche cannot see Cupid face to face, despite the fact that they love one another. Now the reason for that distance, in the Greek myth, is because he is a god and she is mortal, and that's just a rule imposed on them. But in the biblical story, we cannot see God face to face because our eyes are sick. It's like when your eyes are dilated. There was a time when I had to get my eyes dilated to test my vision. When I walked out of the doctor's office, everything hurt. I squinted and could barely find my way to car, it hurt so much. It wasn't even a sunny day, either! It was just cloudy and gray. But in a deeper sense, we cannot look at God because of the corruption of sin in us, and the choices we have made to further damage our eyes and ourselves. But Jesus turned human nature back to the Father by the Spirit, and saw the Father face to face. So now, when we are in Christ by faith, we can see the face of Christ and thereby see the Father face to face.
 - e. Application: Starting to *see* God
 - i. Me exploring Jesus, comparing to the Buddha statue
 - ii. Hudson Taylor, the pioneer missionary to China, used to recite this poem to himself every day:

Lord Jesus, make Thyself to me
 A living, bright reality;
 More present to faith's vision keen
 Than any outward object seen;
 More dear, more intimately nigh
 Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie.