

OpenTheo

Exodus 23-24



Exodus - Steve Gregg

Exodus 23-24 serves as a guide to apply the Ten Commandments to daily living. The passage discusses the importance of honesty, impartial justice, and worshipping Yahweh God only. Additionally, it introduces the Sabbath year principle and the concept of festival celebrations. The chapter ends with Moses receiving instructions on building the tabernacle, which will be described in detail in the following chapters. Steve Gregg provides commentary on the events described and discusses the idea of theophany, where people saw physical manifestations of God in visions.

Transcript

All right, we'll pick up at Exodus chapter 23. Remember that Exodus chapters 21 and 22 and 23 are what we call the Book of the Covenant. And it's made up of various statutes and judgments that God made about certain case law, basically.

The Ten Commandments stated the broad principles of ethics and morals and justice and piety. But these chapters are envisaging specific scenarios. In this case, here's what has to be done so that the application of the principles in the Ten Commandments would be able to be particularized to everyday living.

And so in chapter 23, you should not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. Now that, of course, is talking about you should not bear false witness, a false report against somebody.

It says you should not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness. This would especially affect people like, let's say, the witnesses who stood up against Naboth. When Jezebel wanted to take his vineyard from him and he wouldn't give it up, he wouldn't sell it.

And so she hired false witnesses in his town to testify that they'd heard him blaspheme so he'd be put to death. And so that'd be a case like this. Those false witnesses conspired together with the wicked to bring a false witness against him.

You should not follow a crowd to do evil, nor shall you testify in a dispute so as to turn

aside after many to pervert justice. In other words, you have to be honest, even if everybody else in court is saying the opposite of what you're saying, even if they're all lying. I think of the Nuremberg trials, how the Nazi war criminals were brought to trial in Nuremberg.

And one after another, the witnesses of the defendants, when they're confronted about the war crimes and the heinous things that were done to the Jews, they said again and again, well, we were we didn't know the extent of it. We weren't aware of what was going on in the death camps. In some cases, they first said they were only following orders and so forth.

And they were all defending themselves, trying to all tell the same story. And then one of them, one of them. On somebody, I forget his last name, he got up and he said, we didn't know what was happening.

You know, we are responsible for what we did. And, you know, his testimony just changed the whole color of the proceedings, because obviously the ones who are saying we didn't know would be expected to say that if they were lying. But he wouldn't be expected to lie and say we didn't know.

Obviously, he stood against the testimony of the whole crowd. That was testifying the opposite way from from him. And he told the truth.

And it says, you shall you know, you should you shall not testify in a dispute so as to turn aside after many to pervert justice. And you shall not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute. Now, that's interesting, because we're also going to find it's it's forbidden to show partiality to a rich man.

But the courts would more often show partiality to the rich than to the poor, because the rich could bribe them. And that's how often the courts did. Injustice was by the rich people who were in the wrong, actually bribing the judges to rule in their favor and the poor man who could not bribe the judge would just be victimized.

And that is forbidden many times in the law, that kind of thing, you know, allowing the rich to run things and to exploit the poor that way. But it's not very often we find this kind of commitment. You shall not exploit judgment on the side of the poor either.

That is, you're not supposed to change your verdict because you have compassion on the man being poor. If he's a criminal, nor if he's a rich man, a man's economic circumstances have nothing to do with the justice of justice. And although you might be inclined to go with the rich because they can benefit you or with the poor because you pity him, you need to be blindly just blindly just in your decrees.

Verse three, you should not show partiality to a poor man in his dispute. And verse six is the other side of that. You should not pervert the judgment of your poor in his dispute.

That is, you should not give him less than justice because he's poor. But you also should not give him favoritism in because he is poor. His poverty should have nothing to do with the justness of his cause.

And that's directed to the judges, not to pervert judgment one way or the other in favor of or against the poor. If you meet your enemy's ox or his donkey going astray, verse four, you shall surely bring it back to him again. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under his burden and you would refrain from helping him, you shall surely help him with it.

So this has to do with the treatment of your enemies. It's not saying your neighbor, but your enemy, the one who hates you. So love for your enemy that Jesus thought was not something Jesus made up.

It's even in the law. Jesus said, love your enemy, do good to them that hate you. And who persecute you and so forth.

Well, that's exactly what the law said to do. Jesus wasn't making up something new because if your enemy's ox or his donkey are going astray and it's presumed that you're, you know, the man who owns it is not aware of where it is. You could say, oh, that's Joe's ox.

I don't like him. I'm going to just let his ox go. No, he says you need to take it back to him.

You need to do him the favor of taking it back to him. And likewise, if his donkey is overburdened and you don't want to help it up, you should help it up anyway. You should do practical, helpful things for people, even if they're your enemies and they hate you.

Verse seven, keep yourself far from a false matter. Do not kill the innocent and righteous, for I will not justify the wicked and you shall take no bribe for a bribe blinds the discerning and perverts the words of the righteous. So obviously these commands are all given pretty much to the judges about how to adjudicate and to be just and not take bribes, not to condemn an innocent man, not to pervert justice favorably or unfavorably with reference to the poor.

Also, verse nine, you shall not oppress a stranger for, you know, the heart of a stranger because you were strangers in the land of Egypt. Six years, you shall sow your land and gather its produce. But the seventh year, you shall let it rest in life, follow that the poor of your people may eat and what they leave the beasts of the field may eat in like manner.

You shall do with your vineyard and also your olive grove. Now, this is the Sabbath year principle. We already have encountered the Sabbath day, but God extends it to Sabbath years as well.

The land itself was supposed to be given a rest on the seventh year so that it doesn't have to produce. Now, it would produce some because the previous year's harvest would have left some miscellaneous seeds that would have gotten covered over and would take root on their own the next year. But they were not to sow the seeds and burden the land and draw the nutrients from the land every single year.

They had to give the land a year of rest every seven years. And what did grow there, they should not harvest in the seventh year. They should leave it to the animals and to the poor together.

There were several provisions in the law made for the poor. For one thing, part of the tithe money was given to the poor. Also, there was a law that said the poor could glean in the fields after the harvest.

And after the vineyard gathering, that after the harvesters and the gatherers had gone through and collected the grain for the owner, they were supposed to, if they dropped grain and dropped some and left some behind, the poor were allowed to come and take what they wanted after the harvest. That's called gleanings. And they also had a law that if you were in Deuteronomy 24, if you're walking through somebody's field, you could pick grain and eat it or grapes in their vineyard.

You couldn't go in and harvest it and take it home with you. But if you were starving, you could at least eat in a neighbor's field. So there were a number of provisions made to make sure the poor had something, even if they were very poor.

Verse 12, six days you should do your work and on the seventh day you shall rest. That your ox and your donkey may rest and the son of your maid servant and the stranger may be refreshed. And in all that I have said to you, be circumspect and make no mention of the name of other gods, nor let it be heard from your mouth.

Now, I want to say this about the Sabbath real quickly here. We've seen the Sabbath command many times already. And I would point out that it says even your servants are not allowed to work on the Sabbath.

You're supposed to make sure your servants get a day free also. It's interesting because there are Sabbath keeping people who will go out to eat on the Sabbath. They won't cook, but they'll go out at restaurants and let their servants work for them.

But actually, if we should keep the Sabbath, then we should not pay other people to break the Sabbath. We obviously should put our money where our mouth is, that we don't let anyone or we don't actually encourage anyone to work on the Sabbath if we're supposed to keep the Sabbath. Now, as you know, I don't believe that the Sabbath law pertains in the New Testament, but many people do.

And it seems like if it does, then they shouldn't really use the services of anyone on the

Sabbath or else they're kind of violating what the command is. Now, about not mentioning the name of any other gods in verse 13, nor let it be heard from your mouth. Some people take that in a really strict way.

And they actually will not mention the name of false gods. In fact, they object to even calling the days of our week by their proper names, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc., because they embody the names of false gods. Sunday is the day of the sun, which was a god to the ancients who called Sunday the day to the sun god.

Monday is named after the moon, the moon god. Thursday is named after Thor, for example, the Norse god. And the month of our year are also named after gods in many cases.

A lot of them are named after pagan gods. And so there are Christians who refuse to use these names. They go by what the Bible uses the first day of the week, second day of the week, third day of the week, instead of Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, etc.

Or Saturday, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday. I think this is an unnecessary policy because God is not saying that it's wrong to ever mention it. It sounds like he is, but it can't be because the prophets themselves often mention Molech and Baal and so forth.

And the biblical writers mentioned these names of these gods. When God says, don't let them be heard on your mouth, he's talking about, I believe he's talking about when you're taking oaths, not to swear in the name of other gods. God wants them to swear in his own name, not that not the names of other gods and not to speak of these other gods as if they are real gods.

But just uttering their names is not really, I think, what is forbidden here, because the Bible writers themselves mention the names of other gods frequently and the prophets do. Verse 14, three times you should keep the feast to me in the year. You should keep the feast of unleavened bread.

You shall eat unleavened bread seven days as I commanded you at the time appointed in the month of Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. None shall appear before me empty. They have to bring sacrifices before God during these feasts and the feast of harvest, the first fruits of your labors, which you have sown in the field and the feast of ingathering, which is at the end of the year when you have gathered the fruit of the labors of your field.

Now, these feasts are known by various names and they are listed as three occasions, three festivals, quite frequently in the in the penitentiary to find repetition of the obligation to keep these three festivals in the year. But they're not always called the same names. For example, here are the feasts of unleavened bread.

The first of them is also the same feast called the Passover. And although Passover was

technically a single day followed by a seven day feast of unleavened bread, the whole week is sometimes called the Passover week and the feast of Passover. In some passages, the feast of harvest is Pentecost here and here is called the feast of harvest.

But it's sometimes called the feast of Pentecost, which means Pentecost is a 5050 days after Passover is the day of Pentecost. And so it's also called the feast of harvest. And then there's the feast of the ingathering, which is really the feast of tabernacles, which is at the end of the growing season when the the fruits were ripe and they gathered them in.

The harvest was the grains and that was early in the summer. They harvested those. But late in the summer, they harvested the fruit.

And so they had these different. Gathering and each one was a week long and says three times in the year, all your mail shall appear before the Lord God. Verse 17, verse 18, you should not offer the blood of my sacrifice with leavened bread, nor shall the fat of my sacrifice remain until morning.

The first of the first fruits of your land, you shall bring into the house of the Lord, your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk. Now, these are just a number of apparently miscellaneous ceremonial things related to ceremonial worship.

They were to bring their first fruits of their of their harvest to the Lord and present it to God there. That would just be a sampling of their harvest that was yet to come. And they'd give that to God at the temple that would be used for the priests to eat.

And the Levites, the statement about not boiling a young goat in its mother's milk is actually something that is repeated a number of times. I think a couple of times in Deuteronomy, if I'm not mistaken. And it's not clear exactly what the issue was here, but almost all commentators believe that it's a reference to a pagan practice.

That was perhaps the Canaanites were accustomed to boiling a baby goat in its mother's milk itself. Seems something like a perversion of nature. And maybe that's why they did it, because, you know, obviously, the mother's milk is made for nourishing the baby goat.

And actually boil the goat in its mother's milk. It seems just like a just a twisting of the purpose of that mother's milk, obviously. And it's sort of it might have been done sort of as a perversion of nature on purpose by the pagans.

But whatever the reason was, God didn't have Israel do that, wouldn't permit them to do that. And it is the basis for the modern Jewish practice. This command, which is found, as I say again, elsewhere in the penitent is the basis for the modern practice of Jews not to eat milk and meat in the same meal.

That is, for example, that an observant Jew cannot eat a cheeseburger because there's

meat and dairy product cheese in it. And they will not have the two in the same meal. Obviously, that's going much farther than this command.

But that's what the rabbis did. They went much further than the command. They took the commands of God and they built a hedge around the law.

Simply the practice of boiling a goat in its mother's milk, that's all that's forbidden. But now they won't even drink milk or eat dairy products at the same meal with with meat. And that is a current Jewish practice based on this.

But obviously, a strange one not called for by the law itself. Verse 20, Behold, I send an angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared. Beware of him and obey his voice.

Do not provoke him, for he will not pardon your transgressions. For my name is in him. Now, most Christian scholars believe this is a theophany or a Christophany, this angel that traveled with them ahead of them, because he said, if you provoke him, he will not pardon your transgressions, indicating that he actually has authority to pardon them.

But he won't. And he says, my name is in him, which seems to mean his authority. It could just be a high ranking angel, of course.

But many people think this is a reference to a Christophany, a Christ going before them. And it is referring, of course, to the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. The angel of order is considered to be in that visible pillar as as they follow it around.

But if you indeed obey his voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries. For my angel will go before you and bring you into the into the Amorites and Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. And I will cut them off.

You shall not bow down to their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their works. But you shall utterly overthrow them and completely break down their sacred pillars. So you shall serve Yahweh, your God, and he will bless your bread and your water, and I will take sickness away from the midst of you.

No one shall suffer miscarriage or be barren in your land. I will fulfill the number of your days. Now, I don't think Israel ever experienced these benefits because I don't think they ever were obedient to this command.

They had brief seasons of obedience, but not very many. And during those times when they obeyed, perhaps these things are true. Perhaps they didn't get sick, didn't have miscarriages.

But most of the time they were not obedient. And so these promises would not

necessarily apply to them on those occasions. So verse 27, I will send my fear before you.

I will cause confusion among all the people to whom you come. And I will make all your enemies turn their backs to you. And I will send hornets before you, which shall drive out the Hivites, the Canaanites and the Hittites from before you.

Now, these hornets in Deuteronomy chapter six, God points out that he had, in fact, done that. Or Moses points out that God had sent hornets before them in the actual description of the. I'm sorry, it says that God will send them, excuse me, but the actual description of Joshua and the conference line does not ever mention the hornets.

But we have to assume that they were sent because God said they would be. And so in addition to the Canaanite armies, I mean, the Israeli armies against the Canaanites, the Canaanites were driven out by hornets as well. I will not drive them out from before you in one year, lest the land become desolate and the beast of the field become too numerous for you.

The idea is that if the Israelites conquered the land too quickly, they couldn't their numbers, couldn't fill the land adequately. And therefore, a lot of the land would go untended. And it would become desolate, then they'd have a harder job farming it later if they conquered just some cities.

Gradually, they could take over those farmlands, you know, one by one. And then whatever cities they hadn't conquered, the people in those cities would still be tending their own farms. So the land would be not given over to animals and to weeds and things like that.

So he's going to let them take over the land in the at the rate that they can occupy it. Accurate, you know, adequately. He says, little by little, I will drive them out from before you until you have increased and you inherit the land and I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the Sea of the Philistines, that'd be the Mediterranean and from the desert to the river.

Not sure which desert actually he has in mind here. Sometimes the borders of the land are given in very different terms. The river could be the river Euphrates in all likelihood, but the desert probably means the Negev, I suppose, the southern boundary, I would think the Negev was the southern desert area in Palestine.

He says, and for I will deliver the inhabitants of the land into your hand and you shall drive them out before you. You should make no covenant with them, nor with their God. They shall not dwell in your land, lest they make you sin against me.

For if you serve their God, it will surely be a snare to you. Now, this is the reason that God did not allow them to leave the Canaanites alive in the land. Of course, the Israelites

did not fully obey and they didn't kill all the Canaanites.

They didn't do all that God said to do. And it turned out just the way God said it would turn out. The Canaanites continued to worship their false gods, allured the Israelites into worshipping those gods.

And that wasn't good for Israel because God had to drive them out of the land, as he said he would. So God knew what he was talking about. Israel had good laws, but they didn't have good hearts.

They were just people. They were fallen men. They didn't have a new heart and a new spirit, such as the New Covenant promises.

And therefore, they were vulnerable to the influence of the wicked around them. That's not quite the same for us under the New Covenant, because although we have to be careful about the influence of the wicked in our culture, we do have inward changed hearts. We have a new heart.

We have the spirit of God. We can confront the culture and not have to be isolated from them. We don't have to kill them off so that they don't corrupt us.

We can live in their neighborhoods. We can work in shops with them and we can associate with them without being corrupted. At least we should be able to.

I agree that some people who call themselves Christians do get corrupted by hanging out with the wrong kind of people, but that raises questions about those particular Christians, whether they are really walking in the spirit or not, because if you walk in the spirit, you should be able to have positive influence on the unbelievers rather than the other way around. And now chapter 24. Now, he said to Moses, Come up to Yahweh, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu.

Now, Nadab and Abihu are the older two sons of Aaron. And seven of the elders of Israel and worship from afar and Moses alone should come near to Yahweh, but they shall not come near for they nor shall the people come up with you. So Moses went up and down the mountain quite a bit to Yahweh and this occasion to bring some others with you, bring Aaron, his two oldest sons and 70 of the elders of Israel.

They can't come all the way up like you can. They have to worship me from afar. But I want them to come up the mountain.

I want the rest of people to stay away from the mountain. And it says, So Moses came and told the people all the words of Yahweh and all the judgments and all the people answered with one voice and said all the words which the Lord has said we will do. Now, this is the second time they've said that essentially when he called them to enter into covenant with Yahweh in chapter 19.

The people said essentially the same thing. It says in chapter 19, verse eight, then all the people answered together, said all that the Lord has spoken, we will do. So now they say the second time and they will say it a third time.

These three times basically where they're feeling their commitment in the covenant. And Moses wrote all the words of Yahweh and he rose early in the morning and built an altar at the foot of the mountain. That must be the urban altar that was spoken of earlier at the end of chapter 20.

And he rose early in the morning, built an altar at the foot of the mountain and 12 pillars, according to the 12 tribes of Israel. So he put up 12 pillars to represent the 12 tribes of Israel. And he sent young men of the children of Israel who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the Lord.

Then Moses took half the blood and put it in basins and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant. That's what these chapters we just read are called.

And read in the hearing of the people and they said, all that the Lord has said, we will do and be obedient. So that's the third time they said this. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, behold, the blood of the covenant, which the Lord has made with you, according to all these words.

Now, the wording there, this is the blood of the covenant. Was echoed by Jesus, as you will probably remember, in Luke chapter 22, when he took communion with his disciples in the Last Supper. Luke 22 and verse 20, Jesus says, likewise, he also took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you.

I said, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. And Moses said, this is the blood of the covenant. When he sprinkled on people, covenants are sealed with blood.

And so Jesus made it very clear that he was sealing the new covenant with his disciples in the upper room. As Moses had done with the people on this occasion. Exodus 24, 9 says, then Moses went up also Aaron, Nadab and Abihu and the 70 of the elders of Israel.

And they saw the God of Israel. And there was under his feet, as it were, a paved work of sapphire stone. And it was like the very heavens in its clarity.

But on the nobles of the children of Israel, he did not lay his hand. So they saw the God, they saw God and they ate and drank. Now, this is a feast that these elders and the priests, the future priests and Moses went up to see and they saw God.

But what did they see? Now, there's many places in the Bible that indicate that you can't see God and that, in fact, that no one can see God. Even Moses was forbidden to see God's face, as you might remember, in the 33rd chapter of Exodus. In Exodus 33, verse

18, Moses said to God, please show me your glory.

Then God said, I will make all my goodness to pass before you. I'll proclaim the name of Yahweh before you. I will be gracious to him.

I will be gracious. I will have compassion on whom I love compassion. But he said, you cannot see my face for no man shall see me and live.

And the Lord said, here is a place by me. You shall stand on the rock. So it shall be while my glory passes by that I will put you in the cleft of the rock.

I will cover you with my hand while I pass by. Then I will take away my back, my hand, and you shall see my back. But my face shall not be seen.

Now, in verse 20, God said, no one can see me and live, but he's very clear. He means my face. We saw in an earlier class that in the book of Numbers, in chapter 12, God said that Moses sees the form of the Lord.

In Numbers 12, 8 says, I speak with him face to face, which apparently means as a figure of speech, because Moses couldn't see his face even plainly and not in dark things. And he sees the form of the Lord. So Moses actually did see some form or shape of the Lord on a regular basis when he went up to meet God, but he couldn't see God's face.

We said no one can see that and live. Even Moses can't. And in John, chapter one, there is a verse that many people think about and think there's a contradiction between this and what we're currently reading in Exodus 24, because in John, chapter one, in verse 18, it says no one has seen God at any time.

The only begotten son who is in the bosom of the father, he has declared him. It also says that in 1 John, 1 John says no one has seen God at any time. But if we love one another, God dwells in us, it says.

Now, if no man has seen God at any time, is there a contradiction here in chapter 24 of Exodus verse 11? It says they they saw the God of Israel, actually it's verse 10. And thus we come to the issue of what it means to see God in the Bible. Because God is invisible.

And yet there are many people who have been said to see God, not just these men on this occasion. Isaiah said in Isaiah six, in the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord and his train filled the temple. And so Isaiah saw the Lord.

And others have seen the Lord. In fact, the Bible says that the word was made flesh and we beheld his glory. He lived among us and we beheld his glory.

John said, saw Jesus glory, who is God. There's a lot of different ways that God is seen. In fact, Jesus said, bless her to the pure in heart, they shall see God.

What's it mean? Well, apparently God's glory. Unfiltered and unveiled has never been seen by any human being. The closest that any Old Testament person got was apparently Moses, who saw God's backside, but couldn't see his face.

That's when God said, show me your glory. And God said, I can't show you my face. I'll let you see my backside after I've gone by.

That's apparently a lesser glory. Even Moses couldn't see the unveiled, unfiltered glory of God. Even the disciples did not.

Although it says the word was made flesh and we beheld his glory. They he says we beheld it as of the glory of an only begotten son of a father. That is, it was a reflective glory, just like a son reflects his father's image.

Somewhat bears his father's image. So we saw the glory of God reflected in Jesus, but not unveiled. It was in the veil of Christ's flesh that that glory was seen.

And in the Old Testament, people saw God a number of ways. We've already encountered theophanies. A theophany was apparently an appearance of God.

That's what the word theophany means, an appearance of God. But it was in a human like form or even in the pillar of cloud. God was in that or in the burning bush.

These are all theophanies where God appeared. But, of course, some visible representation of God was being made that isn't really seeing God full on. It's probably a lot like when people saw the glory of God in Jesus, that it was the glory was veiled in the human flesh.

Likewise, when a man wrestled with Jacob all night or walked in the fire furnished with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego or when Melchizedek met with Abraham. Those were probably cases where God was veiled in some kind of a human like flesh. Not an actual incarnation, but nonetheless inside of a body so that his glory was not seen.

Likewise, in the pillar of cloud, he was inside the cloud. They couldn't really see him. And then there were people besides theophanies, there's people who saw God in visions.

And a vision is probably not looking directly at God. When Isaiah said, I saw the Lord, it's clear he was having a vision of God. And there's lots of people had visions about Ezekiel, had a vision of God on his chariot thrown in Ezekiel chapter one.

Zechariah had visions where he saw God. But a vision is sort of like a dream. Only you're awake when you have it.

Now you might have a dream about God. It might even be a dream that God gives you about himself. And so you could say you kind of see him as one of the characters in the dream, but you're not really seeing God, you're having a dream.

There's something being brought to your consciousness, which is visual in nature. But it's not really God that you're seeing. It reminds me sometimes of watching a, let's say, watching a live football game on television.

And or watching the president give a speech on television. If you watch the president give the State of the Union speech on television and the next day, someone said, oh, did you see the president give his speech? You could say, yeah, I saw that. I saw him, I heard him.

But you really didn't because he was in Washington, D.C. and you're in Washington state and you didn't see him. You saw an image of him on the screen. You saw a vision of him.

It was as good as seeing him because it was a correct representation of what he looks like and what he was doing. But you weren't in his presence looking at him personally. You were not that intimate.

You were watching a visual portrayal on a screen. And I think that's what a vision is like visions of God. They see God in a sense, but not in a sense of seeing him directly.

And so this idea of seeing God is it represents more than one kind of experience when the Bible speaks of it. In this case, when they saw the God of Israel, I think they probably saw a theophany, but it may have been only a vision, but they didn't see him up close like Moses did. They were somewhat in a distance.

And it says in verse 11 that God did not lay his hand on them. That means he didn't kill them. Remember, it says in chapter 33 of Exodus and verse 20, no one can see my face and live.

Like if you see God, you got to die. And then the angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah and his wife, the parents of Samson in the book of Judges, and they didn't know who he was. But then he disappeared in a flame and they realized they'd seen God.

And Manoah said, oh, no, we're going to die because we've seen God. His wife said, no, I don't think so. I don't think he would have made those promises to us if we're going to die.

So I guess we're not going to die. But it was probably a theophany that they saw. But the idea that someone could see God and live was pretty noteworthy.

And so it says that they saw a God in some form, a theophany or a vision or something, but he didn't kill them. And so they had a feast, a ritual feast, probably of the sacrificial meat up there on the mountain. Then Yahweh said to Moses, come up to me on the mountain and be there.

And I will give you tablets of stone and the law and commandments which I have written

that you may teach them. Now, he's already told them the Ten Commandments verbally in chapter 20 out loud, but he has not given them in writing and he's going to write it down in stone. Actually, God's going to do this twice.

But at this point, God is going to create the tablets of stone and write on them. The second time, Moses is going to have to provide the tablets and God will write on but Moses breaks the first ones. So Moses rose with his assistant Joshua and Moses sent went up on the mountain to God or the mountain of God.

And he said to the elders, wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and her are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them.

Well, that was certainly an instance of misplaced trust there. Moses figured my brother Aaron, he'll be reliable. He can stand in for me.

He'll be he'll be the leader in my absence. And he obviously thought that Aaron would be good in that role. But it was mistaken because Aaron was easily led astray by the people and led the people astray thereby.

Verse 15, then Moses went up into the mountain and a cloud covered the mountain. So the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day, he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

The sight of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain 40 days and 40 nights.

Now, while he was up there, he received instructions about how to build the tabernacle and its furniture. And the next seven chapters pretty much are devoted to that description, as we shall see when we come to them. And after that, after this detailed instruction about the tabernacle is given, there is the event of the golden calf.

And so there's a little more action in this story. And from chapter 32 on for a few chapters. And and then when you come to chapter 35 to the end of the book, actually, you have the actual building of the tabernacle and much of the same detail, almost all the same detail is given again.

Now, if I were going to slavishly go verse by verse through the entire book of Exodus, we would go through all this detail for the next seven chapters and then we go through that detail again for the last five chapters. But I don't really think that's profitable. What I think we'll do is we'll cover all the chapters about the tabernacle, those that describe how it should be built and those that describe it being built, since they're pretty much the same thing.

All at once. So when we come back next time, we're going to actually skip over the

tabernacle instructions since they didn't actually build the tabernacle until the end of the book. And we'll just we'll skip over to the chapter 32 through 35, which is the incident with the golden calf.

And after that, they did build the tabernacle. And that's when we'll look at the description of everything. No sense looking at the description of it beforehand and then the description again after they build it.

So we will we're going to kind of skip over the tabernacle descriptions. Over to the next action of the story when we come back, after which we will go into all the detail necessary about the tabernacle.