

# EXODUS 24; 28; 31–34

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## **Exodus 24:1–2**

The Lord asked Moses to come up to Mount Sinai to meet with Him. Moses was to bring the elders as well as Aaron and his sons Nadab and Abihu. Moses, however, was to be the only person to come near the Lord on the mountain—the others could witness Him only from a distance.

### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

## **Exodus 24:3–8**

Moses told the people of Israel all the words that the Lord had revealed to him. Under covenant, the people accepted those words. In order to show their commitment in honoring the covenant, they made sacrifices to the Lord at an altar that Moses had built.

Verse 4 is one of only three references in the book of Exodus to Moses's writing, or being commanded to write, the words of God (see also Exodus 17:14; 34:28). Verse 7 references the Book of the Covenant, which contains, in addition to the Ten Commandments (see 20:1–17), other law codes (see 20:22–23:33) that the Hebrews were expected to follow. Also, verse 8 makes reference to “the blood of the covenant.” Notice the similarity to Christ's statement at the Last Supper in Mathew 26:28: “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” The word “testament” in this context means “covenant.”

### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 24:9–11**

Moses, Aaron and his sons, and the elders went up to Mount Sinai. They all were able to see God.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 24:12–14**

Moses and Joshua went up Mount Sinai to receive the tablets of stone from the Lord. The Lord Himself had written the Ten Commandments on the tablets. Aaron and Hur took care of matters below while Moses was on the mountain.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 24:15–18**

While Moses was on the mountain, a cloud (representing the presence of God) covered it for six days. The seventh day, Moses was called into the cloud. The children of Israel themselves witnessed the glory of God on the mountain. The scene resembled a fire, again a symbol of God's presence. Moses was on the mountain, in God's presence, for forty days and nights.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 28**

In Exodus 28:1, Aaron and his sons were called to minister in the priest's office. They were to dress in holy garments while serving in the tabernacle. These holy garments are described in great detail in verses 4–43. Aaron and his sons were also to be anointed (with oil), consecrated (or dedicated for the purpose of being priests), and sanctified (or "made clean") (see verse 41).

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

## **Exodus 31:1–5**

Bezaleel was inspired by the Lord to assist in designing, building, and furnishing the tabernacle (or “tent of meeting”). In Exodus 25:8, the Hebrews were commanded to build this tabernacle—“Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.” See Exodus 25–30 for the details of furnishing it.

Note: Verse 1 of this chapter mentions that Bezaleel was the grandson of Hur. This Hur may or may not be the same Hur who, with Aaron, assisted Moses during the battle against the Amalekites (see 17:10). The Old Testament is not clear about whether this is the same person or not.

### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

## **Exodus 31:6–11**

Aholiab, whose father was from the tribe of Dan, was tasked to assist Bezaleel in building and furnishing the tabernacle and the ark of the testimony, also known as the ark of the covenant. Notice that different representatives of the tribes of Israel were involved in building these structures. Bezaleel’s grandfather, for example, was from the tribe of Judah.

The mercy seat, mentioned in verse 7, was the lid that was placed on top of the ark of the testimony. Exodus 25:17–22 gives more details about its construction and states its purpose: “And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat.” The laver, mentioned in chapter 31, verse 9, was a basin used for ritual washing of hands and feet before entering the tabernacle. It was placed on a “foot,” or pedestal. Exodus 30:18 describes it and its location in the tabernacle: “Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar.”

We see a reference to Aaron in chapter 31, verse 10. We already know from previous narrative in the book of Exodus that Aaron was Moses’s older brother. He and Moses together led the Hebrews out of Egypt. Aaron also assisted Moses during the battle with the Amalekites and accompanied Moses to Mount Sinai when Moses received the Ten Commandments. Both Moses and Aaron were from the tribe of Levi. Verse 10 identifies Aaron as “Aaron the priest [the High Priest].” His “cloths of service,” or holy garments, are described in detail in chapter 28.

### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 31:12–17**

The Lord commanded the Hebrews once again to keep the Sabbath day holy as a sign between them and God and so that “ye may know that I am the Lord that doth sanctify you.”

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 31:18**

After the forty days on the mountain (see Exodus 24:18), God gave Moses two tablets containing the Ten Commandments and other laws.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 32:1–4**

The children of Israel became impatient with Moses because he had been up on the mountain for such a long time obtaining the law from God. The people could not see Moses nor God. They approached Aaron, who was in charge at the base of the mountain (see Exodus 24:14), and demanded that he make them an idol—something that they could actually see. Having been in Egypt for many years, the people evidently remembered the sculpted images that the Egyptians worshipped. At Aaron’s request, the people collected gold earrings. Out of the melted gold, Aaron sculpted a calf (or bullock) for the people to worship. (The calf is sometimes referred to as the golden calf.) This was in stark contrast to the covenant that they had just made to not worship any graven (sculpted) images.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 32:5–6**

Aaron built an altar before the golden calf, and the next day the children of Israel offered burnt offerings to the calf and celebrated with a feast.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 32:7–10**

The Lord became aware of the idol worshipping and revelry that went on at the base of the mountain and wanted to punish the stubborn and rebellious people.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 32:11–14**

The Lord was extremely angry with the people at the base of the mountain because of their rebellious behavior. However, Moses became the mediator between God and the people and reminded the Lord that He had brought them safely out of Egypt and had made promises with their forefathers that their posterity would be multiplied. The punishment that the Lord was about to give would have broken His own promises. The Lord didn't punish the children of Israel and therefore gave them another chance to be obedient.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 32:15–16**

Moses also became aware of the revelry that was going on at the base of the mountain. He went back down the mountain, carrying the two holy tablets engraved with the Ten Commandments and the other laws God had given him.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 32:17–18**

Moses and Joshua had been up on the mountain together. They both came down to deal with the party that was going on among the people. The people were making a lot of noise; however, it was not the sound of praising God but the sound of rowdy singing.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 32:19–20**

As Moses entered the camp he saw the golden calf and the people’s revelry. Moses became angry and broke the two tablets of commandments and laws. By breaking the two tablets, Moses essentially nullified the covenants written upon them. Moses also destroyed the golden calf that the people had made.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 32:21–24**

Moses demanded that Aaron explain what had happened to the people while Moses was on the mountain. Aaron described everything about what led to the people making an idol, and he pleaded with the Lord that He not be angry because of it.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 32:25–29**

Moses separated those of the people that were “on the Lord’s side” from those that were not. The Levites identified themselves as being on the side of the Lord. Moses, per instructions from the Lord, ordered the Levites to slay those who still refused to repent and consecrate their lives to the will of the Lord.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 32:30–35**

Moses reminded the people of the sin that they had committed: idol worship. Moses then returned to God on the mountain and pleaded with Him to be merciful and to forgive the people. Moses was the mediator between God and his people and was willing to atone (Hebrew “cleanse” or “reconcile”) for his people’s sin if God did not forgive them. Moses was willing to have his own name removed from the “book which [God had] written.” Here Moses referred to the book of life (compare Luke 10:20, which explains that the names of the faithful are written in heaven). God, however, reminded Moses that everyone is responsible for their own sins; thus the names of the unrepentant would be removed from the book of life, not Moses’s.

Moses's "atoning" for his people is a symbol of Christ's own Atonement for all. It is also a symbol of Christ's coming and the day of judgment. The outcome of the judgment—whether our name will or will not be removed from the book of life—all depends on our individual responsibility to dedicate ourselves to God and rely on His grace.

After God's counsel with Moses, Moses was urged to go and further lead his people to the promised land. God would accompany Moses along the way.

***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

**Exodus 33:1–3**

Despite the incident with the golden calf, when the children of Israel rebelled and broke their covenants with God, the Lord allowed His people to proceed to the promised land. This promise was first made to Abraham and his descendants in Genesis 15:18: "The LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." The land was a gift from God to the children of Israel. It was located in Canaan and had many natural resources; it was a land "flowing with milk and honey." The Lord told Moses that an angel would accompany the children of Israel to the promised land, even though it was already inhabited by other peoples (some of them are listed in Exodus 33:2 and in Genesis 15). Those people would be driven out of the land, with the angel leading the way. The Lord told Moses that He would not go with them because His presence would destroy such a stubborn people.

***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

**Exodus 33:4–6**

The children of Israel heard the bad news that God would not accompany them on the remainder of their journey to the promised land. They mourned the news by removing their jewelry and other ornaments, things that represented their prosperity, things that were important to them. By mourning in such a manner, they showed the Lord that He was more important in their lives than worldly possessions. In Exodus 35:22, we read that the children of Israel also gave up their jewelry to contribute it to the building of the future tabernacle.

***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 33:7–11**

We will read more about the tabernacle later in Exodus: it would not be finished for many years (see Exodus 40). In the meantime, Moses set up a temporary tabernacle— a tent that he pitched outside the camp. When God was present in the temporary tabernacle, a cloudy pillar descended upon it. As we saw in prior chapters, the cloud represented the presence of God. Within the tabernacle, the Lord spoke with Moses face-to-face. Moses was a great example to his people. When Moses worshipped God, the people witnessed it, and they also worshipped.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 33:12–16**

Moses was still the mediator between his people and God. God had given the people the gift of a promised land, and He made the Hebrews His covenant people. In these verses Moses pleaded with God to reassure Him, despite the people's mistakes, that he and the Hebrews were still God's covenant people.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 33:17–19**

The Lord relented from what He had told Moses previously (that He would replace His presence with an angel along the way to the promised land [see verse 2]). The Lord still found favor with Moses, which He demonstrated by giving the children of Israel another chance at obedience. He would also accompany them on their journey to the land of promise. During the journey, the people would be able to witness God's glory.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 33:20–23**

The Lord told Moses that He would accompany the Hebrews on their journey. The people would be able to see God's glory and goodness; however, no one would be able to see God's face and survive. Witnessing the glory of God would be so powerful that God would have to protect Moses with His



hand and with the cleft of a rock. The well-known Christian hymn “Rock of Ages” makes reference to that image: “Rock of Ages, cleft for me; / Let me hide myself in thee.”<sup>1</sup>

**Source**

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

**Exodus 34:1–3**

Since Moses broke the first set of two tablets (see Exodus 32:19), nullifying the covenants written on them, the Lord instructed him to create another set. Moses was to go to the top of Mount Sinai the next day to meet with the Lord. No one was to come with him.

**Source**

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

**Exodus 34:4–7**

The Lord had made the first set of stone tablets (see Exodus 24:12). However, He instructed Moses to produce the second set since he had broken the first set out of anger for the children of Israel’s worshiping the golden calf. Moses chiseled two tablets from stone and took them up to the top of Mount Sinai to present to the Lord, who once again proclaimed His name and divine nature to Moses.

**Source**

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

**Exodus 34:8–9**

After the Lord proclaimed His divinity to Moses, Moses bowed and worshiped the Lord. After all that happened previously with the golden calf, the Lord was still satisfied with Moses. Moses pleaded with the Lord to accompany the children of Israel to the promised land and to pardon them for their stubborn ways.

**Source**

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<sup>1</sup> Augustus M. Toplady, “Rock of Ages,” in *Hymns* (Salt Lake City, UT: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1985), no. 111.

### **Exodus 34:10**

Despite the stubbornness of the children of Israel, the Lord had not given up on them. The Lord again made a covenant that He would perform marvelous and awesome works among the people.

#### ***Source***

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### **Exodus 34:11**

The Lord would continue to help the children of Israel to enter and settle in the promised land of Canaan. He would assist the people to drive out the current inhabitants, who practiced idolatry. The children of Israel had already practiced idolatry when they manufactured the golden calf. They did not need to be surrounded by idolatrous people in the promised land.

#### ***Source***

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### **Exodus 34:12–16**

The Lord warned Moses not to make any promises with the current inhabitants of Canaan to prevent the children of Israel from worshipping the Canaanite idols. In fact, the Lord instructed Moses to destroy all things in the promised land associated with idol worship. The Lord repeated the first commandment: “Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

#### ***Source***

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### **Exodus 34:17**

The Lord made reference to the second commandment: “Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.” This was relevant and timely, considering that the children of Israel had recently manufactured a golden calf to worship.

#### ***Source***

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### **Exodus 34:18–20**

The Lord told the children of Israel to remember that He helped them flee out of slavery. That Exodus began in the first month of the Hebrew calendar (the month of *abib*). The children of Israel were to celebrate that event each year at the Feast of Unleavened Bread. The Lord also reminded the people that the firstborn males of their livestock belonged to Him. Here we see symbolism of the Atonement of Christ, the Firstborn Son of God.

#### ***Source***

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

### **Exodus 34:21**

The Lord made reference to the fourth commandment: “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

#### ***Source***

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### **Exodus 34:22–26**

The Lord commanded the children of Israel to celebrate the yearly harvests. The Lord mentioned three particular feasts that were to be celebrated each year. These were considered holy days and were to remind the children of Israel of their prosperity and that the Lord redeemed them from Egyptian slavery. Verse 22 lists those three feasts: “the feast of weeks [the Feast of Unleavened Bread], of the firstfruits of wheat harvest [the Feast of the Harvest], and the feast of ingathering at the year’s end.”<sup>2</sup> In verses 24–26, the Lord mentioned the significance of these special feast days and also gave some instructions on how to celebrate them.

#### ***Source***

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### **Exodus 34:27–28**

While Moses was up on Mount Sinai with the two tablets, the Lord instructed him to write the new covenant, which the Lord dictated to him. The preceding verses of this chapter are the foundational words of the covenant. Notice that this time, Moses himself wrote the words on the tablets—God Himself had written the words on the first set of stone tablets. Moses was with God forty nights without food and water.

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<sup>2</sup> See also Exodus 23:14–16 for more concerning these feasts.

**Source**

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**Exodus 34:29–30**

Moses was up on Mount Sinai for forty days meeting with God before he came back down with the two tablets. After being on the mountain for so long in God’s presence, the glory of God shone on Moses’s face, which Moses did not realize. The light of that glory on his face was so intense that the children of Israel feared Moses and were hesitant to approach him.

**Source**

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

**Exodus 34:31–35**

The intensity of the light radiating from Moses’s face was so strong that Moses decided to wear a veil over his face when he spoke to the people. He told Aaron, the rulers, and eventually other people everything that God had commanded while he was on the mountain. Whenever Moses returned to God’s presence in the temporary tent tabernacle, he removed the veil.

**Source**

Book of Exodus Minute by W. Breitenstein

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