

Exodus 24, 31-34 Podcast notes

Exodus 21.1-24.18: The Book of the Covenant - The Laws

1. Civil and criminal matters, The Covenant Code – Ex. 21.2—23.19.¹

¹ Ex. 21.1-23.19 is a law code known as **The Covenant Code** and was originally a separate, independent document, but was used by the Elohist as part of his work. See: Friedman, *Sources*, p. 154. Two codes (or possibly fragments of codes) have been identified in the Hebrew Bible: **The Covenant Code (CC)**, found in chapters 21 and 22 of Exodus and **The Deuteronomistic Code (DC)**, scattered over chapters 15–25 of Deuteronomy, with the main concentration in chapters 21 and 22. (*A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, edited by Raymond Westbrook, Volume One, Brill, 2003, p. 9.) Biblical scholar Albrecht Alt published an analysis of the Covenant Code in 1934 which focused on the distinction between casuistic and apodictic law. (Raymond Westbrook, "What is the Covenant Code?" in *Theory and Method in Biblical and Cuneiform Law: Revision, Interpolation and Development*, ed. B.M. Levinson (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 16.) The Covenant Code comprises mostly of [case law](#) (often in the form of an "if-then" statement, in which specific situations are addressed), as for example Exodus 21.28, "If an ox will gore a man or woman and they die, the ox shall be stoned..." [Apodictic laws](#) (characterized by absolute or general commands or prohibitions, as in the Ten Commandments) on the other hand, also appear in the Covenant Code, for example in Exodus 21.17, "Whoever curses father or mother shall be put to death." Albrecht Alt claimed, though some scholars disagree, that the apodictic laws were a feature only found in Israelite codes (Westbrook, p. 16). Scholars do, however, agree that the contrast between the apodictic and case laws can give us clues as to how multiple sources of law were edited together into the Covenant Code, although there remain disagreements over the precise details.

Tikva Frymer-Kenski states that three distinct bodies of law codes exist in the Pentateuch: "The Pentateuch contains **three distinct legal corpora**: the **Book of the Covenant** (Exod. 20:22–23:19), the **laws of Leviticus-Numbers 11**, and the **Deuteronomistic laws** (Deut. 12–26). These collections have a long antecedent tradition in the ancient Near East, a tradition that goes back to the southern Mesopotamian law "codes" from Sumer and Babylon. Like those collections, the biblical ones are not "codes" in the sense of legislation but rather represent the jurisprudence of the day: **the best possible legal scenarios presented** as a combination of pronouncements and case law" (*A History of Ancient Near Eastern Law*, p. 976-977.)

It is important to note the likelihood that these laws in the Covenant Code had an earlier source. Without going into too much detail here, I would refer those interested parties to read David Wright's material on the subject. He explained: "**The biblical text imitated the structure of this Akkadian text and drew upon its content to create the central casuistic laws of Exodus 21:2–22:19**, as well as the outer sections of apodictic law in Exodus 20:23–26 (along with the introduction of 21:1) and 22:20–23:19.2 **This primary use of the Laws of Hammurabi was supplemented** with the occasional use of material from other cuneiform law collections and from native Israelite-Judean sources and traditions. **The time for this textual borrowing was most likely during the Neo-Assyrian period**, specifically sometime **between 740 and 640 BCE**, when Mesopotamia exerted strong and relatively continuous political control and cultural sway over the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, and a time when the Laws of Hammurabi were actively copied in Mesopotamia as a literary-canonical text. The Covenant Code also appears to be a unified composition, given the influence of Hammurabi's laws throughout, the thematic integrity resulting from this, the unique scribal talents and interests necessary for the text's composition, and its temporal proximity to the basic laws of Deuteronomy, which depend on the Covenant Code's laws and date not much later, probably to the latter half of the seventh century. Moreover, because the Covenant Code is largely a creative rewriting of Mesopotamian sources, it is to be viewed as an academic abstraction rather than a digest of laws practiced by Israelites and Judeans over the course of centuries. Its selective character and the manner in which it reshapes the political and theological landscape of the Laws of Hammurabi, in fact, make it appear to be preeminently an ideological document, a response to Assyrian political and cultural domination." David Wright, *Inventing God's Law: How the Covenant Code of the Bible Used and Revised the Laws of Hammurabi*, Oxford University Press, 2009, p. 3-4.

- a. Slave law – Ex. 21.2-11.²
- b. Three capital offenses – Ex. 21.12-17.
- c. Bodily injury inflicted by persons – Ex. 21.18-27.
- d. Killer beasts – Ex. 21.28-30.
- e. Damage to livestock – Ex. 21.33-36.
- f. Theft – Ex. 22.1-4.
- g. Crop damage – Ex. 22.5-6.
- h. Guardianship of another’s movables or livestock – Ex. 22.6-15.
- i. The Law of seduction – Ex. 22.16-17.
- j. Prohibition of sorcery – Ex. 22.18.
- k. Prohibition of bestiality – Ex. 22.19.
- l. Prohibition of apostasy – Ex. 22.20.
- m. Concern for the poor, widows, strangers – Ex. 22.21-27.
- n. Duties to God – Ex. 22.28-31.
 - i. Ex. 22.31 says, “Neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.”³ Note that the wicked “eat the carcasses of beasts” due to their wickedness in Ether 9.34.
- o. Judicial Integrity – Ex. 23.1-3.
- p. Humane treatment of your enemy – Ex. 23.4-5.
- q. A series of other laws – Ex. 23.6-9.
- r. Agricultural law – Ex. 23.10-13.
- s. Religious calendar – Ex. 23.14-17.
- t. Do not cook a kid in its mother’s milk – Ex. 23.18-20.⁴
- u. A renewal of the Divine Promises – Ex. 23.20-33.
 - i. “thou shalt utterly overthrow them, and quite break down their **images**” – Ex. 23.24. Hebrew **מצבה** *matsevah* derives from the stem נצב *n-ts-v*, “to stand.” It denotes a single, upright slab of stone. Believed to be the repository of a divinity or spirit, it was often used as a cultic object and was therefore considered by Israelite religion to be idolatrous.”⁵

Exodus 24: The Ratification of the Covenant with God (Ex. 24.1-15a = E, 24.15b = P)

1. The People Agree to the Covenant – Ex. 24.1-11.
 - a. Moses tells the people “all the words of the Lord” and they all agree – Ex. 24.3.

² For more on the slave laws in the Hebrew Bible, their similarities and differences, see: [Slave Laws in the Old Testament](#).

³ "ובשר בשדה טרפה לא תאכלו; לכלב תשליכו אתו" And the flesh in the field that is torn by wild beasts (טרפה) you are not to eat, to the dogs will you throw it away."

⁴ This helps explain the prohibition of mixing all meat and milk at meals (meaning all dairy products). Sarna, p. 147.

⁵ Sarna, p. 148. I find this very interesting, for the very reason that this is what the early Patriarchs in Genesis were doing. For example, in Genesis 35.14 we read that “Jacob set up a pillar (מצבה - *matsevah*) in the place where he talked with him, even a pillar of stone: and he poured a drink offering thereon, and he poured oil thereon.” I would argue that some of the prohibitions in the Mosaic laws directly contradict the visionary men of earlier times of the Hebrew Bible, this being one important example.

- b. Moses builds “twelve pillars” and an altar under the mountain – Ex. 24.4.⁶
- c. Sacrifices are made, Moses sprinkled (קָרַךְ) the blood upon the altar and upon the people – Ex. 24.5-8.
- d. Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel see God and eat and drink with him – Ex. 24.9-11.⁷
 - i. “They saw the God of Israel” – Ex. 24.10. וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל⁸

⁶ וַיִּבֶן מִזְבֵּחַ תַּחַת הַהָר וּשְׁתַּיִם עֶשְׂרֵה מִצְבָּה ⁶ “And he built an altar (מִזְבֵּחַ) under the mountain, and twelve מִצְבָּה *matsevah* – pillars” (Ex. 24.4). Note the interesting conflict here regarding these things. I would argue that it isn’t the *matsevah* that are at issue, rather, it is how they are used and what god is being worshipped.

⁷ This eating and drinking is the covenant meal that the Saints will one day partake of (D&C 27). This meal is also mentioned in **Revelation 19** when it says, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God” (Revelation 19.7-9).

“Μακάριοι οἱ εἰς τὸ δεῖπνον τοῦ γάμου τοῦ ἀρνίου κεκλημένοι” – “In the state of the Gods (blessed) are they that are called into the marriage **feast** of the Lamb!”

⁸ וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל literally translated reads as “And they saw the God(s) of Israel.” This is a simple statement in the Hebrew, with the exception of אֱלֹהֵי, the plural added to “God,” but translators make this singular. Sarna states that “Maimonides maintains that seeing God refers not to perception by the sense but to perception by the intellect.” Sarna, p. 153.

“There are many places in the Bible where that are statements or implications that mortals cannot see God and live. The most notable statements are in Exodus 33.20, John 1.18, 1 John 4.12, and 1 Timothy 6.15–16. These passages stand in opposition to other KJV passages it is declared that Moses and seventy elders saw God (Ex. 24.9–10) or that Moses saw God ‘face to face’ (Ex. 33.11) or that God was seen by Isaiah (Isa. 6.1) or Abraham (Gen. 18.1) or Jacob (Gen. 32.30) and a host of others. The Joseph Smith Translation works to find ways to explain these paradoxes by interweaving conceptions that are missing in many of these texts.

“For example, in Exodus 33.20 the declaration is made to Moses that he cannot see the face of God, ‘for there shall no man see me, and live.’ The JST explains it more fully: ‘Thou canst not see my face at this time ... **And no sinful man hath at any time, neither shall there be any sinful man at any time**, that shall see my face and live.’ (JST Ex. 33.20.) The clarification is that it is sinful men who cannot see God, but this does not prohibit the righteous from such an encounter, if it is according to the will of God.

John 1.18 says “θεὸν οὐδεὶς **πώποτε** τεθέαται,” which translated is “No one has seen God **at any time, ever**.” The rest of the verse reads as follows, “If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.” The JST expounds upon this verse by declaring that ‘No man hath seen God at any time, **except he hath borne record of the Son; for except it is through him no man can be saved**’ (JST John 1.19). This means that whenever anyone has had contact with the Father, the Father has borne record to him of the Son. This is congruent with the events in Matthew 3.17 after the baptism of Jesus; in Matthew 17.5 on the Mount of Transfiguration; in 3 Nephi 11.7 at the appearance of the resurrected Lord to the Nephites; and in Joseph Smith’s first vision. **In each of these examples, the Father testified of the Son.**

1 John 4.12 reads, ‘No man hath seen God at any time,’ the JST adds ‘except them who believe.’ 1 Timothy 6.15–16, which states that God is ‘dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see,’ the JST explains: ‘Whom no man hath seen, nor can see, unto whom no man can approach, only he who hath the light and the hope of immortality dwelling in him.’

2. Moses receives the tables of stone – Ex. 24.12-18.
 - a. “I will give thee tables of stone!” – Ex. 24.12.
 - b. Moses “went into the mount of God” – Ex. 24.13.
 - c. “Tarry ye here for us (Moses and Joshua) until we come again” – Ex. 24.14.
 - d. Moses went up into the mount... God calls him on the seventh day... glory of God... devouring fire... Moses was in the mount forty days and nights – Ex. 24.15-18.
 - i. וַיִּשְׁכֵּן כְּבוֹד יְהוָה עַל־הַר סִינַי - Ex. 24.16 “And the **glory** (*kavod*) of the Lord abode (*sh-k-n* “to tent”) upon Mount Sinai.”⁹
 - ii. “A paved work of a sapphire stone” – Ex. 24.10.¹⁰

The Tabernacle: Exodus 25.1-31.17; 35.1-40.38. (The Tabernacle Instruction = P)

1. “In order that they would have a centerpiece for their worship and activity, the Lord instructed Moses to build a tabernacle. The tabernacle was a forerunner of the temple, made portable so they could easily carry it with them.”¹¹

Robert J. Matthews explains: “In each of these scriptures there is a clarification which removes the contradiction that exists in all other Bibles. To these clarifications we can also add Moses’ explanation as to why he was able to survive the presence of God: ‘But now mine own eyes have beheld God; but not my natural, but my spiritual eyes, for my natural eyes could not have beheld; for I should have withered and died in his presence; but his glory was upon me; and I beheld his face, for I was transfigured before him.’ (Moses 1:11.) “Without these explanations and restorations to the text that are available only from the JST, biblical statements about whether or not man has ever seen God would remain hopelessly in contradiction.” Robert J. Matthews, [“Plain and Precious Things Restored,” *Ensign*, July 1982](#), 19–20.

⁹ Kavod כְּבוֹד can mean “weight,” or “glory,” and well as “splendor or copiousness.” honour, splendour, glory, of external condition and circumstances: Of men, of things, of honor, dignity or position, or reputation and character, or glory. See Brown-Driver-Briggs H3519. *Shakan* שָׁכַן can mean “to settle down, abide, dwell, tabernacle or tent.”
¹⁰ וַתַּחַת רַגְלָיו כְּמַעֲשֵׂה לִבְנֵת הַסְּפִיר “And under his feet like a work of bricks of lapis lazuli” (Ex. 24.10). In the vision of Ezekiel 1.26 and 10.1, God’s throne is made of this material. The decorative uses of lapis lazuli is mentioned in Ugaritic literature. Sarna, 153. I see this color as identifying God’s realm being “above the firmament” which hold back the cosmic waters. God is above the sea of chaos. Psalm 29 states, “The voice of the LORD is upon the waters: the God of glory thundereth: the LORD is upon many waters” (Ps. 29.3).

¹¹ Elder L. Tom Perry, [“We Believe All That God Has Revealed,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*](#), Nov. 2003, 87. We must talk with our loved ones of the temple! The following from Elder Bednar may be useful here:

Indeed, temple preparation is most effective in our homes. But many Church members are unsure about what appropriately can and cannot be said regarding the temple experience outside of the temple. President Ezra Taft Benson described why this uncertainty exists: “The temple is a sacred place, and the ordinances in the temple are of a sacred character. Because of its sacredness we are sometimes reluctant to say anything about the temple to our children and grandchildren. As a consequence, many do not develop a real desire to go to the temple, or when they go there, they do so without much background to prepare them for the obligations and covenants they enter into. I believe a proper understanding or background will immeasurably help prepare our youth for the temple ... [and] will foster within them a desire to seek their priesthood blessings just as Abraham sought his.” Two basic guidelines can help us achieve the proper understanding emphasized by President Benson. **Guideline #1:** Because we love the Lord, we always should speak about His holy house with reverence. We should not disclose or describe the special symbols associated with the covenants we receive in sacred temple ceremonies. Neither should we discuss the holy information that we specifically promise in the temple not to reveal. **Guideline #2:** The temple is the house of the Lord. Everything in the temple points us to our Savior, Jesus Christ. We may discuss the basic purposes of and the doctrine and principles associated with temple ordinances and covenants. Elder David A. Bednar, [“Prepared to Obtain Every Needful Thing,”](#) April 2019.

2. The altar of sacrifice – Ex. 27.1-8; 30.18.
3. The Laver (water basin) – Ex. 30.17-21.
4. The Tabernacle.¹²
5. The Table of Shewbread – Ex. 25.23, 29-30; 26.35.
6. The Candlestick – Ex. 25.31-32, 37-40; 26.35.
7. The Altar of Incense – Ex. 30.1-8.
8. The veil¹³ separating the Holy Place from the Holy of Holies – Ex. 26.31-35; Hebrews 10.19-22.¹⁴
9. The Holy of Holies¹⁵ *qodhesh ha-qodhashim* קֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוֹשִׁים¹⁶
10. The ark of the covenant – Ex. 25.10-22; 37.1-9.¹⁷

¹² The tent or tabernacle stood in a court 100 cubits by 50, surrounded by a fence ([Ex. 27.18](#)) five cubits high, composed of pillars and hangings of fine white linen. The entrance toward the east was 20 cubits wide ([Ex. 27.16](#)) and was closed by a screen of linen of four different colors on four pillars.

¹³ A curtain separated the Holy of Holies from the Holy Place. This curtain, known as the “veil,” was made of fine linen and blue, purple and scarlet yarn. There were figures of cherubim (angels) embroidered onto it. Cherubim, servants of God, were in the divine presence and symbolized God’s power and majesty. They also guarded the throne of God, as well as the Tree of Life in the Genesis account of Adam and Eve’s fall. The Book of Hebrews states that the veil is “the flesh of Christ”: “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh” (Hebrews 10.19-20).

¹⁴ A significant event occurred in the Temple when Jesus Christ died on the cross. Mark 15.37-38 informs us that when He died, “Jesus uttered a loud cry, and breathed His last. And the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom” (see also Matthew 27.51). Luke says, “The veil of the temple was torn in two” (Luke 23.45). The Veil was rent, demonstrating through symbol that Jesus has now made it possible for us to come back into the presence of God, and with him, partake of eternal life and exaltation.

¹⁵ The oracle (*debir*) in Solomon’s temple is described as a cube of 20/20/20 cubits. See: 1 Kings 6.20.

¹⁶ See Exodus 26.33. Many scholars agree that the Holy of Holies of the Tabernacle in the wilderness was a 10/10/10 cubit cube.

¹⁷ “The ark of the covenant was a chest, or box, of shittim wood overlaid with gold. It was approximately three feet nine inches long, two feet three inches wide, and two feet three inches high. Staves, or poles, on both sides allowed the priests to carry it without actually touching the ark itself. Inside, the tablets of the law given to Moses on Mount Sinai were placed (see [v. 16](#)). Hence, it was called the ark of the testimony or ark of the covenant. Later, a pot of manna and Aaron’s rod, which miraculously bloomed, were also placed inside the ark (see [Hebrews 9.4](#)). The ark was placed inside the inner room of the tabernacle known as the most holy place, or Holy of Holies. The ark was viewed with the greatest reverence by the Israelites, and prayers were recited before it was moved or placed in position (see [Numbers 10:35–36](#)).

“The lid, or covering, for the ark is described in [Exodus 25.17–22](#). The King James Version translates the Hebrew word *kapporeth* (which means ‘seat of atonement’) as ‘mercy seat.’ The covering was made of solid gold and on it were formed two cherubim with wings which came up and overshadowed the lid or mercy seat.

“The word *cherubim* usually refers to guardians of sacred things. While the exact meaning of the word is not known, most scholars agree that these cherubim represented ‘redeemed and glorified manhood’ or ‘glorified saints and angels’ (Wilson, *Old Testament Word Studies*, s.v. ‘cherubim,’ p. 75). Since Latter-day Saints do not believe that angels have wings, as they are often shown in religious art, the commandment to form wings on the cherubim may raise some questions. Another revelation indicates, however, that wings symbolically represent the power to move and to act (see [D&C 77.4](#)). Between these cherubim on the mercy seat, God told Moses, He would meet with him and commune with him. Latter-day revelations state that angels stand as sentinels guarding the presence of God (see [D&C 132.19](#)).

Exodus 32-33: The Golden Calf Episode (Ex. 32-33 = E)

1. Understanding that this story comes from the north is vital to understanding the roles Aaron and the Levites play in the narrative.¹⁸
2. The Construction of the Golden Calf – Ex. 32.1-6. עֲגֹל ¹⁹
 - a. What could this animal symbolize?²⁰

“The blood of the lamb of Jehovah was sprinkled upon the mercy seat during the sacred day of Atonement. ... Paul and John both spoke of Jesus as being ‘the propitiation’ for our sins (see [1 John 2.2](#); [4.10](#); [Romans 3.25](#)). ... “Clearly, then, the ark of the covenant was one of the most significant features of the tabernacle, both in its importance to ancient Israel and also in its symbolic significance” *Old Testament Student Manual: Genesis–2 Samuel*, 3rd ed. [Church Educational System manual, 2003], p. 148.

Elder McConkie wrote, “On top of the ark rested the mercy seat, a cover of pure gold, symbolizing to the mind that because of the atonement yet to be wrought, repentant souls would find mercy before the eternal throne. The mercy seat, serving as it were as the throne of God, was a symbol of his forgiveness and of his goodness and grace in providing mercy through his atonement. Once each year on the Day of Atonement, the high priest entered the Holy of Holies, thus testifying anew to all the people that mercy might be theirs through the great propitiatory sacrifice that was to be. And the two cherubim—overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings—bore record that the ark itself was the very throne of God set up among his people and that Jehovah did in fact dwell in his house and was among them.” *The Mortal Messiah: From Bethlehem to Calvary*, 4 vols. Deseret Book, 1979-1981, 1: 101.

¹⁸ Richard Friedman explains this in [Who Wrote the Bible?](#) He clarifies that the person who crafted E, the northern text of the Hebrew Bible (what I propose was on the Plates of Brass) was a Levitical priest from Shiloh, and probably descended from Moses. These same northern priests were deposed by the northern kingdom when Jeroboam established cultic centers at Dan and Bethel and did not appoint these priests to positions of authority. Friedman writes, “The symbol of their exclusion in Israel was the *golden calves*. **The symbol of their exclusion in Judah was Aaron.** Someone from that family, the author of E, wrote a story that said that soon after the Israelite’s liberation from slavery, they committed heresy. What was the heresy? They worshiped a *golden calf*! Who made the golden calf! *Aaron*! The details of the story fall into place. Why does Aaron not suffer any punishment in the story? Because no matter how much antipathy the author may have felt toward Aaron’s descendants, that author could not change the entire historical recollection of his people. They had a tradition that Aaron was an ancient high priest. The high priest cannot be pictured as suffering any hurt from God because in such a case he could not have continued to serve as high priest. Any sort of blemish on the high priest would have disqualified him from service. The author could not just make up a story that the high priest had become disqualified at this early stage.” Friedman, [Who Wrote the Bible?](#) Harper One, 1987, p. 72. See also: [The Golden Calf, Moses, Aaron, and the Northern Priests of Israel.](#)

¹⁹ As [Rashbam](#) (Samuel ben Meir, after his death was known as “Rashbam”, a Hebrew acronym for: Rabbi Shmuel Ben Meir. 1085-1158 CE) notes, the people cannot be so foolish as to believe that the resultant image is the God who had brought them out of Egypt. **They must view either as an image that represents Him and will attract His Presence or as a pedestal on which he will stand invisibly.** *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 174.

²⁰ One of the names for the God of Israel is the עֲבִיר יְקֹבֶה *abiyr Ya-acov* “Mighty God of Jacob” (Genesis 49:24), translated the “mighty God of Jacob” in the KJV. The original meaning of the root may have been “mighty” or “powerful,” but it is also the name of an animal. The cognate in Ugaritic (a language closely related to Hebrew) is *ibr* and means “bull.” (Paul Hoskisson, [Aaron’s Golden Calf](#), *BYU Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 1, 2006, p. 379. See also: Cyrus Gordon, *Ugaritic Textbook*, Analecta Orientalia 38, revised reprint (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1998), Glossary 2664. It should be noted that this calf or bull-calf did not represent Jehovah, but could have been a symbol for Jehovah (Hoskisson, p. 380). See: [What is going on with the Golden Calf in Exodus 32?](#) In the ANE (Ancient Near East), gods were often pictured standing on the back of a bull or animal. The bull was the throne or pedestal for the god. (R.W.L. Moberly, *At the Mountain of God: Story and Theology in Exodus 32-34*, p. 65. See also:

- b. “These be thy gods, O Israel!” – Ex. 32.4. אֱלֹהֵיךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל ²¹
3. God’s Anger and Moses’ intercession – Ex. 32.7-14.
 - a. God, “I will kill them all!” Moses, “If you do this, what will the Egyptians say about you?” – Ex. 32.10-13.
4. Moses Wrecks the Tablets and the Calf – Ex. 32.15-20.
 - a. “Moses’ anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands and brake them” – Ex. 32.19.²²
5. Aaron’s Defense: “They gave me the gold, and out came this calf!” – Ex. 32.21-24.²³
6. The Children of Levi rise up – Ex. 32.25-29.
 - a. “The children of Levi” killed “about three thousand men” – Ex. 32.28.²⁴
7. Moses’ Second Intercession – Ex. 32.30-35.
8. The Withdrawal of God’s Presence – Ex. 33.1-6.
9. Moses’ status – Ex. 33.7-11.
10. Moses speaks with God – Ex. 33.12-23.

Exodus 34: A Renewal of the Covenant (Ex. 34.1b-28 = J, 34.29-35 = P)

1. Preparatory Measures – Ex. 34.1-3.
 - a. “Hew thee two new tables of stone!” – Ex. 34.1.²⁵

John Walton, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*, p. 368.) I (Mike Day) propose that Aaron was doing that which he had seen others in the ANE do, he was fashioning a throne for Jehovah!

²¹ Why do the people say “*These* are your gods, Israel ...” when there is only one calf? Why do they say “... that brought you up from the land of Egypt” when the calf was not made until they were out of Egypt? The answer seems to lie in the account of King Jeroboam in the book of 1 Kings. It states there that when Jeroboam made his two golden calves he declared to his people, “Here are your gods, Israel, that brought you up from the land of Egypt.” The people’s words in Exodus are identical to Jeroboam’s words in 1 Kings. It would be difficult for us to trace the textual history of these two passages now, but at minimum we can say that the writer of the golden calf account in Exodus seems to have taken the words that were traditionally ascribed to Jeroboam and placed them in the mouths of the people. This made the connection between his golden calf story and the golden calves of the kingdom of Israel crystal clear to his readers. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?* p. 73. See also: [The Golden Calf, Moses, Aaron, and the Northern Priests of Israel](#).

²² **Why did the writer picture Moses as smashing the tablets of the Ten Commandments? Possibly because this raised doubts about Judah’s central religious shrine.** The Temple in Judah housed the ark that was supposed to contain the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. According to the E story of the golden calf, Moses smashes the tablets. That means that according to the E source the ark down south in the Temple in Jerusalem either contains unauthentic tablets or no tablets at all. Ibid, emphasis added.

²³ Some see here evidence for a version of the story in which the calf was created supernaturally (which supports the view that the story was originally an approving one), like the Ugaritic myth that tells how Baal’s palace was built by simply firing silver and gold for six days. See: D. Pardee in W.W. Hallo and K.L. Younger, [The Context of Scripture, vol. 1:261](#). *The Jewish Study Bible (Second Edition)* also cites Midrashim that describe how the Tabernacle and Solomon’s Temple “built themselves.”

²⁴ Why did the writer of E picture the Levites as acting in bloody zeal? He was a Levite. He wrote that Aaron had acted rebelliously while the other Levites alone acted loyally. Moses tells the Levites there that they have earned blessing by their actions. The story thus denigrates the ancestry of the Jerusalem priests while praising the rest of the Levites. Friedman, *Who Wrote the Bible?*, 73.

²⁵ We connected these ideas to the things expressed in D&C 84 as we went through the podcast. We also discussed how the Book of Mormon is itself a living witness of future things to come. More will come. This is a type for Jesus: we have his words, but he will come again. We will see him. The Book of Mormon is an invitation. As we read it, we see more. We are invited to a space of holiness. As Elder Maxwell wrote: Thus the Book of Mormon...is like a vast

2. The character of God – Ex. 34.4-9.²⁶
3. True versus False worship – Ex. 34.10-26.²⁷
 - a. No other god! – Ex. 34.14.
 - b. Do not go “whoring after their gods!” – Ex. 34.15-16.
 - c. “Go up to appear before the Lord thrice in the year!” – Ex. 34.24.
 - d. “Do not seethe a kid in his mother’s milk” – Ex. 34.26.²⁸
4. Epilogue: Moses’ status as a prophet of God.
 - a. “He wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments” – Ex. 34.28.
 - b. “The skin of his face shone” – Ex. 34.30, 35.²⁹
 - c. “He put a vail on his face” – Ex. 34.33.

mansion with gardens, towers, courtyards, and wings. There are rooms yet to be entered, with flaming fireplaces waiting to warm us....Yet we as Church members sometimes behave like hurried tourists, scarcely venturing beyond the entry hall.” Neal A. Maxwell, [Not My Will, But Thine](#), p. 33.

²⁶ In Jewish tradition these verses (6-7) are called the Thirteen Attributes of God and play a prominent role in the Jewish liturgy, where they are recited aloud in the synagogue on festivals and other holy days. Sarna, p. 216.

²⁷ Friedman asserts (*Sources*, p. 179) that Exodus 34.14-26 is the J text of the Ten Commandments. He writes, “This is absolutely explicit in verses 27-28: “Write these words for yourself, because I’ve made a covenant with you and with Israel based on these words’... And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.” The first two commandments and the Sabbath commandment have parallels in the other versions of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5), though the wording is different. The other seven commandments here are completely different.

²⁸ See also Exodus 23.18-20.

²⁹ קָרַן עוֹר פָּנָיו בְּדַבְּרוֹ אֵתוֹ "the skin of his face shone while he talked with him" – Exodus 34.29. The traditional meaning given here is favored by the context and by Habakkuk 3.4 in which *karnayim*, “rays of light,” appears in parallelism with “a brilliant light.” This reference relates to God, and numerous biblical passages bear witness to a widespread, poetic notion of God being enveloped in light. Moses’ radiance is a reflection of the divine radiance... *keren* is the usual word for horn. It subtly emphasizes that the true mediator between God and Israel was not the fabricated, lifeless image of the horned animal, as the people thought, but the living Moses. The association of *karan* with *keren* gave rise to the mistaken notion that Moses grew horns- even though the text speaks not of his head but of “the skin of his face.” The rendering of *karan* by *cornuta* in the Vulgate translation, based on the commentaries of Jerome (ca. 347-419 CE), helped foster the error, and a horned Moses later became the familiar figure in art from the eleventh century on. The most famous such portrayal is, of course, [Michelangelo’s at San Pietro in Vincoli, Rome](#). Sarna, p. 221.