

Dr. John Oswalt, Exodus, Session 15, Exodus 33-34 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Briefing Document, 4) Study Guide Quiz, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Oswalt, Exodus, Session 15, Exodus 33-34, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This is a transcript of a lecture by Dr. John Oswalt on Exodus 33-34. **The lecture focuses on God's revelation of himself to Moses and the Israelites**, exploring themes of **God's promise-keeping nature, the consequences of sin, and the importance of an intimate relationship with God**. Oswalt interprets the text through the lens of **human alienation from God**, arguing that the Exodus story is about restoring this relationship. He also **discusses the difference between the Tent of Meeting and the Tabernacle**, suggesting they represent different stages in the Israelites' spiritual journey. Finally, he **emphasizes the transformative power of knowing God's character**, illustrated by Moses' radiant face after encountering God's glory.

**2. 16 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Oswalt, Exodus, Session 15 – Double click icon to play in
Windows media player or go to the Biblicalelearning.org [BeL]
Site and click the audio podcast link there (Old Testament →
Pentateuch → Exodus).**



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3. Briefing Document: Oswalt, Exodus, Session 15, Exodus 33-34

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from Dr. John Oswalt's Session 15 on Exodus 33-34:

Briefing Document: Dr. John Oswalt on Exodus 33-34

Overview

This session focuses on Exodus 33-34, which Oswalt frames as a critical section within the larger unit of Exodus 25-40. This unit, he argues, is primarily concerned with God revealing his person, moving beyond earlier revelations of his power (Exodus 1-15), providence (16-18) and principles (19-24). The central problem being addressed in this section is the alienation of humanity from God, an issue more profound than mere physical bondage. The golden calf incident highlights this alienation, creating a need for God to re-establish a relationship. The emphasis is not on rules or structures, but on intimate relationship with the living God.

Key Themes and Ideas

1. **God's Promise-Keeping Character:** Despite the Israelites' sin of creating the golden calf, God remains true to his promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He declares that he will still lead them to the Promised Land. This demonstrates that God is not a "god of the now" like idols but exists in the past, present, and future.
 - *Quote: "He's the God who makes promises. He's the God who keeps promises. He's the God of the past, the present, and the future."*
1. **Sin and Fellowship with God:** God states, "I will not go with you because you are a stiff-necked people... I might destroy you on the way." This highlights that sin is not simply a minor issue for God; it creates a barrier to fellowship. The idea that one can live in sin and maintain fellowship with God is challenged. Oswalt reinforces that sin has consequences not just in this life, but that the impact of sin can affect multiple generations.
 - *Quote: "I think most of us, in fact, expect to live in sin and to have fellowship with God. The significant thing about Wesley's view is that he takes sin very seriously, that you cannot live in sin and have fellowship with God at the same time."*

1. **Mourning and Recognition of Sin:** The Israelites' act of removing their ornaments is interpreted not as a simple act of obedience, but as a visible recognition of their sin, their pride, and their rebellion against God. The ornaments, including those taken from Egypt, represent self-aggrandizement. Their removal is also connected to the earrings used to make the golden calf.
 - *Quote: "This is stripping themselves, I think, of their arrogance and pride and whatever. I think that's very probably correct, especially regarding the connection between the ornaments and the earrings."*
1. **The Tent of Meeting vs. The Tabernacle:** The temporary "tent of meeting" outside the camp, where Moses met with God face-to-face, is distinguished from the tabernacle to be built later, although the term "tent of meeting" will be later used to describe the tabernacle. The tent of meeting emphasizes intimate relationship with God, while the tabernacle focuses on the more structured practices of sacrifice, worship, and atonement. The key is that the purpose of both is to meet God.
 - *Quote: "The purpose of it all is to meet God. And if you forget that, then you've forgotten everything."*
1. **Longing for Intimacy with God:** The people's response of standing and worshipping at their tent entrances as Moses goes to meet God indicates a longing for a deeper, more personal relationship with Him. The story of the missionary Maurice Culver and the paramount chieftain illustrates this universal desire to commune directly with God.
 - *Quote: "I wonder if something of that sort is going on here. A longing, a longing. Could we ever know God like that? Mourning for their sin. A longing for intimacy with God."*
1. **Moses' Intercession:** Moses' prayer in verses 12-17 reveals his desire to know God's ways, not just for himself but for the sake of God's people. He understands that their identity and distinction as God's people depend entirely on God's presence among them, not merely on the land. He insists that the face of God be with them, not just an angel.
 - *Quote: "He's saying, Canaan without your face is no good. We've got your face here. So, if leaving here means we leave your face behind, we're not leaving. Better the desert with your face than Canaan without it."*

1. **God's Goodness, not His Glory:** God denies Moses' request to see his glory, stating, "No man can see my face and live," but he promises to reveal his goodness and character instead. This underscores that it's not the divine essence that humans can apprehend but God's moral character. This character is fully described when God proclaims his name and passes before Moses, emphasizing compassion, grace, love, faithfulness, and forgiveness.
 - *Quote: "I will not show you my glory, but I will show you my goodness. That is his character."*
1. **Consequences of Sin and God's Forgiveness:** The description of God's character includes the statement that he "does not leave the guilty unpunished" and that he punishes the children for the sins of the parents. Oswalt stresses that this is not arbitrary punishment but rather speaks to the consequences of sin, and the impact of sin that persists even after forgiveness.
 - *Quote: "There are consequences for sin. That forgiveness cannot change."*
1. **Moses' Atonement and God's Unilateral Covenant Renewal:** Moses bows in worship and intercedes for the people's forgiveness, asking God to take them as his "special possession". In response, God unilaterally renews the covenant, emphasizing his commitment to his people despite their repeated failures.
 - *Quote: "God unilaterally renews the covenant. The Sinai covenant in chapters 20 to 24 is a bilateral covenant. The people say we'll do this, and God says, I'll do that. Here, it is unilateral. God says I will do this."*
1. **Radiant Face as a Result of Meeting with God:** Moses' face becomes radiant after encountering God, symbolizing the transformative power of intimate relationship with the divine. This mirrors the idea that those who spend time with God begin to reflect his character and presence.
 - *Quote: "He saw God's face, and as a result, his face became radiant. He saw God's face and something of that translated to his face."*

Implications for Christian Life

- True Christian life is not about adherence to religious forms or rituals but about an intimate, face-to-face relationship with God, much like that of Moses.
- The reality of God's presence in believers' lives should be the distinguishing factor, not just religious practices.

- God's forgiveness does not erase the consequences of sin, making it important to consider the impact of choices.
- There is a need for a genuine desire to know God's ways, character and will, rather than seeking blessings without investment of time and self.
- Christians are called to have such an intimate relationship with God that it changes the flavour of the world around them.
- Heaven is about the face of God, not merely about its comforts.

Conclusion

Dr. Oswalt emphasizes that Exodus 33-34 is a pivotal passage that reveals God's desire for an intimate, personal relationship with his people. It highlights the seriousness of sin, the need for genuine repentance, and the transformative power of encountering God face-to-face. The passage invites a shift from religious routine to a heartfelt longing for intimacy with God, recognizing that this is the essence of Christian faith.

4. Study Guide: Oswalt, Exodus, Session 15, Exodus 33-34

Exodus 33-34 Study Guide

Quiz

Instructions: Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. According to Oswalt, what are the three things God reveals in Exodus 1-24 and what does he reveal in Exodus 25-40?
2. What does Oswalt suggest is the ultimate human problem addressed in Exodus and what is the true purpose of the exodus?
3. When God tells Moses to lead the people to the promised land in Exodus 33, why does He initially say that he will not go with them?
4. What is the significance of the Israelites removing their ornaments in Exodus 33?
5. What is the "tent of meeting" described in Exodus 33:7-11 and how does it differ from the tabernacle?
6. What does Oswalt suggest is the ultimate purpose of the Tabernacle and what is its purpose if not to offer cheap sacrifices?
7. What does Moses request of God in Exodus 33:18 and how does God respond?
8. What attributes of God are proclaimed in Exodus 34:6-7 and what is their significance?
9. How does Oswalt interpret the statement that God "punishes the children and their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation" and what is the context of that statement?
10. What happened to Moses' face after being in the presence of God and what is the significance of this event?

Quiz Answer Key

1. In Exodus 1-15, God reveals his power; in 16-18, his providence; and in 19-24, his principles. According to Oswalt, in chapters 25-40, God reveals his person.
2. Oswalt asserts that the ultimate human problem is alienation from God, and the true purpose of the exodus is to restore the relationship between God and his people. He desires a relationship with us more than anything else.

3. God says he will not go with them because they are a "stiff-necked people" and he will not remain in the midst of sin. This is a response to the golden calf incident where God makes a distinction between his righteousness and their sinfulness.
4. The Israelites' removal of their ornaments represents a recognition of their sin, a stripping of arrogance and pride. It symbolizes their mourning over what they have done and a return to God. The ornaments are connected to the idolatry of the golden calf.
5. The tent of meeting was a temporary structure outside the camp where Moses met with God face-to-face during the interim before the tabernacle was built. The tabernacle is more involved and includes ritual sacrifices while the tent of meeting is primarily focused on face-to-face conversations with God.
6. The ultimate purpose of the tabernacle is to meet with God and restore fellowship. The tabernacle is not primarily about rituals or sacrifices; it is meant to facilitate a relationship with the Lord and a constant reminder of his presence with his people.
7. Moses asks God to show him His glory, but God responds that he can only show Moses His goodness. God clarifies that no one can see his divine essence (his face) and live; instead, he will reveal his character.
8. God is proclaimed as compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. These attributes demonstrate God's mercy and willingness to forgive and offer redemption even after the golden calf incident.
9. Oswalt interprets the statement about punishing children as referring to the consequences of sin rather than direct, arbitrary punishment. It highlights the enduring impact of sinful actions on future generations. For example, if a parent is an alcoholic, their children will be affected by the sin of the parent, even if the parent later finds God.
10. After being in the presence of God, Moses' face became radiant. This event symbolizes the transformative power of encountering God and how time spent with him changes a person's character.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the significance of the golden calf incident in Exodus 32-34. How does this event highlight the tension between God's holiness and humanity's sinfulness, and how does it lead to a deeper understanding of God's character?
2. Compare and contrast the concepts of the "tent of meeting" and the tabernacle in Exodus 33. What does each structure represent in the context of the Israelites' relationship with God, and what do they teach about the purpose of worship?
3. Analyze Moses' role as an intercessor in Exodus 33-34. How does his relationship with God evolve during this period, and what does his intercession reveal about the nature of prayer and seeking God's presence?
4. Explain the significance of God's self-revelation in Exodus 34:6-7. How do these verses describe the character of God and how do they influence the subsequent history of Israel, according to Oswalt?
5. Explore the concept of "God's face" in Exodus 33-34 and its implications for Christian life. How does the idea of encountering God's presence impact our understanding of salvation and our purpose on earth?

Glossary of Key Terms

- **Alienation:** The state of being estranged or separated from a person, group, or thing. In the context of Exodus, it refers to the separation between humanity and God.
- **Bilateral Covenant:** An agreement between two parties where both sides have obligations. The Sinai covenant in chapters 20-24 is considered bilateral.
- **Face of God:** The literal Hebrew word used for "presence." The expression refers to an intimate, personal encounter with God and his character.
- **Hesed:** A Hebrew word often translated as "steadfast love," "loving-kindness," or "covenant faithfulness." It describes God's deep and enduring love for his people.
- **Intercession:** The act of pleading or making requests on behalf of others. Moses acts as an intercessor for the Israelites.
- **Ornaments:** In this context, refers to the jewelry worn by the Israelites. Their removal represents a recognition of their sin, repentance, and humility.
- **Providence:** God's foreknowledge and active involvement in the world. In Exodus, God's providence is seen in the ways he cares for and provides for the Israelites.
- **Stiff-necked:** A term used to describe the Israelites' stubborn and rebellious nature, unwilling to submit to God's will and often compared to a stubborn animal.
- **Tabernacle:** A portable sanctuary where the Israelites worshipped God. It includes the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies and represents God's presence among his people.
- **Tent of Meeting:** A temporary structure outside the camp where Moses met with God face-to-face, acting as a precursor to the tabernacle.
- **Unilateral Covenant:** An agreement where only one party makes promises and has obligations. The renewed covenant in Exodus 34 is described as unilateral because God makes the promises alone.

5. FAQs on Oswalt, Exodus, Session 15, Exodus 33-34, Biblelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Exodus 33-34 Based on Dr. John Oswalt's Lecture

1. **What is the primary problem God is addressing in Exodus 25-40, and how does the golden calf incident fit into this?** The primary problem God is addressing is human alienation from the Creator, not merely physical bondage or theological darkness. The golden calf incident highlights the people's desire to control their own spiritual destiny and create a god in their own image, further demonstrating their alienation from God and their lack of understanding of his true nature and purpose. It showcases humanity's tendency to seek immediate gratification rather than waiting for God's plan and provision. This directly contrasts God's desire to be in an intimate relationship with them.
2. **Why does God initially say he won't go with the Israelites, and what changes his mind?** God initially declares he won't accompany the Israelites because of their "stiff-necked" nature, indicating their rebellion and sinfulness, specifically the golden calf incident. He makes it clear that sin has consequences that affect the relationship between God and humanity. The idea is that God cannot dwell in close fellowship with a sinful people who are actively choosing rebellion and distrust. God's decision changes because of Moses' intercession and his heartfelt desire for God's presence. Moses' willingness to know and follow God's ways, not just his blessings, creates an opportunity for renewed intimacy. Ultimately, Moses' plea reflects his understanding that God's presence is the defining characteristic of their identity and purpose.
3. **What is the significance of the Israelites removing their ornaments in Exodus 33?** The removal of ornaments represents the Israelites' recognition of their sin and their willingness to shed their arrogance and pride. These ornaments, often of Egyptian origin, symbolize their past allegiances and their attempt at self-aggrandizement. By removing them, they are acknowledging their broken relationship with God and demonstrating an element of mourning and repentance for their actions in creating the golden calf. It is a visual act of humbling themselves, which is a step toward reconciliation. It also serves as a reminder that their possessions and abilities are gifts from God to be used for His purposes, not self-gratification.

4. **What is the difference between the "tent of meeting" and the tabernacle, and why is this significant?** The "tent of meeting" was a temporary structure set up outside the camp where Moses met with God face to face during a six month interim period before the tabernacle was built. In contrast, the tabernacle was a more elaborate structure to be placed at the center of the Israelite camp. The tent of meeting represented a more intimate, direct encounter with God, while the tabernacle involved a more ritualized and communal experience focused on sacrifice, worship, and atonement. The tent served to remind the people that the rituals of the Tabernacle are not the end but the means to encounter God.
5. **What does the interaction between Moses and God in Exodus 33:12-17 reveal about the nature of a genuine relationship with God?** This interaction reveals that a genuine relationship with God is centered on seeking to know God's ways and His character, not just His blessings. Moses desires to understand God and to please Him out of love, not just for personal gain. He recognizes that God's presence is what distinguishes Israel, not their possessions or their strength. He emphasizes that a true relationship with God is essential to fulfilling their purpose and identity. He asks for God's presence rather than merely an angel, highlighting the desire for a personal, intimate relationship with God.
6. **What does God reveal about his character in Exodus 34:6-7?** God reveals himself as compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, forgiving wickedness, rebellion, and sin. These characteristics are the very core of His nature. However, God also declares that He does not leave the guilty unpunished, but that He punishes the consequences of sin even to the third and fourth generation. This emphasizes that God's forgiveness does not erase the natural consequences of sin. He presents an image of a God who is not a short-tempered, capricious being, but one who is profoundly loving and patient.
7. **How does Moses' reaction to God's self-revelation in Exodus 34 show true repentance and faith?** After hearing God's self-revelation, Moses immediately bows in worship and intercedes for the people, acknowledging their stiff-necked nature. Rather than focusing on their faults, he asks God to forgive their wickedness and sin and to take them as His special possession. This indicates that he has truly understood God's character and the depth of the people's sin. His request shows his faith in God's grace and his hope for restoration of the covenant. He expresses a willingness to rely on God's mercy rather than on human worthiness.

8. **What is the significance of Moses' radiant face after seeing God's "back," and how does it connect to the Christian life?** Moses' radiant face signifies that being in God's presence changes a person. It reflects the transformative power of an intimate relationship with God and the sharing of His glory. It connects to the Christian life because it represents the goal of every believer: to be transformed into the image of Christ through constant fellowship with Him. It also illustrates the idea that the essence of the Christian life is not simply going to heaven, but having the face of God here and now, as a part of our everyday lives. This radiant face also serves as a witness to God's presence and power in believers' lives, drawing others to Him.