

The Torah and the Author's Intent

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MAIN VERSES

[Exodus 32:14](#) · [2 Timothy 3:16](#) · [Exodus 34:6](#) · [Numbers 1](#) · [Romans 6:3-7](#) · [Romans 8:11](#)

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love. A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God. Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home.

Hi everybody. So as the classes get dispersed, I am super excited about this week's message. And we're going to talk about the author's intent of the Torah.

Author's Intent

When the biblical authors were writing the Bible, how many of you guys know that they were not randomly writing down stuff? Now that may seem, well duh Matthew, we know that. They wrote down the things that they wrote down. I know. Do we realize that the things that were written down were intentional? Every word. When the authors of the Bible change the perspective, when they're writing a narrative like in the Torah and we're following Israel, when the perspective changes right then and there, do we realize it? When we read it and we ponder, why did they just change the perspective? Why did they just change focus onto this character? Why did they just change focus onto this battle? What is going on here?

And so we're going to discuss that a little bit today. This is one of my favorite topics on the history of the Bible and how the Bible was written. As a result of what we know about the writing of the Bible, we understand how we should read the Bible.

And so we've been on a journey through Exodus alongside Israel from being oppressed in Egypt, crossing through the Red Sea, from being called God's Segula at Mount Sinai, God's treasured possession and everything that goes along with that. And a few weeks ago, we learned that counting to 10 was a bit more complicated than we realized. I mean, did anyone ever realize that? How do you count the 10 commandments? We thought we knew. And last time, I think

we looked at Exodus. We talked about the horns that Moses had. Hopefully we can have some fun today as we explore some of the powerful metaphors that the biblical authors use to emphasize some of the most potent points in scripture.

Were you guys edified last week with Pete's message? This is a soapbox moment for me. I sure was, man. So it truly changes the way that you read the book of Gideon, right? Or the story of Gideon in Judges, right? Just amazing. So here at Founded in Truth, I'm so edified that we have such an awesome group of teachers here. And I'm thankful to be able to continue learning from one another for my own growth. Community is so vital. And that's something that we sometimes take for granted. Community is so vital. And that's a huge reflection on the Torah portions that we've been following and even this message series in Exodus.

Judging Israel in the Wilderness

Do you ever read the stories of Israel in the wilderness and kind of get judgmental about them? Like, totally, right? We get judgmental. Like, come on, guys. Why are you getting distracted? And here's my favorite word in the wilderness—again. Why are you getting distracted again? Come on, guys. You're really not going to be grateful for what God was doing?

Or maybe you get onto them and judge them for minimizing the efforts of leadership out in the wilderness, neglecting even the covenant bond that they had with each other. I get so judgmental because it's so easy to look at someone else and be like, yeah, never do that. And we too often look at their story with a high attitude as if we would never succumb to such attitudes in our own life. And I'm happy. I am happy that I've never allowed a rebellious attitude to overtake my life before. I mean, that's just one of those things that I celebrate. And I'm so happy that I've never become stagnant in my spiritual life. I mean, it's always been going up, just climbing my walk with God. Or I've never been ungrateful to God for the community that he's given me, the fellowship here, the blessings, the relationship he's given me. I'm so happy that I've never viewed my fellowship and my community as a minimal thing.

And the truth is the attitudes of the Israelites in the wilderness have never stopped transcending that time and place because it wasn't an issue with the wilderness that caused them to have these attitudes. It wasn't Moses that prompted Israel to have a rebellious attitude against leadership. It wasn't Shlomo snoring too loud in the tent next to them that prompted this minimizing of fellowship, community, and value. It was a condition of the heart.

That is why we do battle with those same temptations today. It wasn't a wilderness thing. It's a human heart thing. And so it's encouraging to read about the Israelites struggling with the same

things that we do today. But it's also a daunting reminder of what happens when we choose to lose focus on what is actually important.

Yeshua and Relationships

Yeshua was all about relationships. Did you ever notice that? All about relationships. He never wanted to sit at a table and break bread alone. No. He always wanted to have a party of some sort surrounding him. Come on, guy. Tax collector? Tax collector, you've been doing some bad stuff around town, girl. Come on. Making other guests uncomfortable. Oh man, why is he letting her come to the table? Because he likes the company. He likes relationships. He likes fellowship. And he wants and did everything to make that happen.

See, when we come together in that presence, the abode of God's spirit is magnified. And we forget that. It isn't simply in some holy and on-your-face worship fashion that when we gather together in the name of Yeshua. No, when we come together in a spirit of grace and a spirit of kindness, when we come together as a fellowship community that promotes the fruit of the Spirit, that is exactly, I believe, that is exactly when the Spirit of Yeshua is present.

And I know the context of when Yeshua said, "Where two or more are gathered, I will be there." The context is conflict resolution in [Matthew 18](#). We take it out of context all the time. But I think it still applies. When we come together as a community and truly feel and embrace the sense of fellowship that is glued together with the love of Yeshua, I believe that that is when Yeshua is felt, that that is when Yeshua is seen, that that is when Yeshua is heard. Yeshua is here. I am with you.

It doesn't have to be, okay, guys, we're going to hold hands, all right? And guys, we don't lock fingers. We just lock wrists. Girls, we're going to hold hands and have this holy moment of prayer. Everyone close your eyes. And now, one, two, three, Yeshua is going to be here. If we close our eyes and meditate and have this really spiritual moment, I do believe Yeshua shows up at that moment. But I also believe Yeshua shows up when three guys are hanging out on a back porch, talking about life, laughing with each other, and understanding that they're covenant brothers in the name of Yeshua.

I think that's the same attitude that Yeshua had towards his disciples. And so when we gather here, what's so amazing is when you embrace one another and when you're grateful for having that person that sits beside you right now. And when you sit down in Oneg week and you're like, yeah, let's break bread together. That is a spiritual experience, a weighty moment of fellowship and covenant community. And that is where Yeshua is also felt and heard and seen.

Big soapbox for me.

The Mountain: Intersection of Heaven and Earth

So as we continue following Israel in the wilderness, we're going to pick up where we left off. And I hope to explore a bit about the character of the God that Moses has this face-to-face conversation with. So the setting here is Exodus chapter 34.

And so Israel has heard the Ten Commandments at Sinai, the Decalogue, right? They've agreed to them. We will be your people, [Exodus 24](#). They get blood splashed on them because that's just a great thing to do. It seals the covenant. Moses ascends the mountain to get these tablets. Comes back down from the mountain and Israel is worshiping the calf. Aaron's done. Yeah. And that whole thing gets sorted out. But Moses has to ascend the mountain a second time. And this time, he has to bring his own blank tablets for which God is going to write on them, which I always thought was kind of funny.

So I want you to imagine. I want you to imagine the emotion of going up on the mountain. Imagine if it was you. Or imagine if you were following Moses up the mountain. And the thing is, we've heard this story so many times that it almost loses its dramatic aura, right? But Moses is going up to the mountain to have this face-to-face, another face-to-face encounter with God.

And the thing about the mountain, why it's so significant, is in the Bible, you hear about high places and mountains all the time. High places were meant to represent the intersections of heaven and earth, if you will. The higher the place, the closer to heaven, the intersection. So the Bible starts out with this mountain garden where God walks in the cool of the day with mankind. You always see Abraham and the patriarchs going up on the mountains to make sacrifice and encounter with God, meet with God. Moses is up on the mountain. He encounters God with the burning bush. The temple is built up on Mount Moriah, so on and so forth.

Israel, we read later on in the story, Israel tries to fabricate their own intersections of heaven and earth on high places with idols. They start planting their own versions of Eden, trees up on high places to make a false Eden. Asherah is a tree worship, so on and so forth. So it's just interesting when you see mountains as the intersection of heaven and earth.

And Moses is going up this mountain, not for a hike, but he's going to stand at this intersection of the divine and the mortal. And he's going to speak to God again. That's the weight of the story that you should feel when you read about him climbing the mountain to speak with God.

And the verses that follow are heavy in the narrative in the story. See, sometimes we make the mistake of dismissing the emphasis the biblical authors put on certain aspects of the story. This is what I was talking about a few moments ago. Sometimes we disregard the details. And maybe it's a disinterest in just amazing storytelling, or maybe it's because we don't fully appreciate what we're reading when we read it.

Dr. Carmen Imes, who I mentioned here the past few weeks, does a good job pointing out the need to remember that the authors of the Bible are selective in retelling events. The biblical authors were selective of what they included in the Bible. You have to be. Anyone ever written a story before? You have to be. Dr. Phil Long, in his book, *The Art of Biblical History*, demonstrates the same premise.

When watching a film—anybody love films? I love film. When watching a film, for example, the director is pointing the camera on a very specific thing to help you be engulfed by the story, so that hopefully you'll see that you are, in a way, part of the story as the audience.

Any C.S. Lewis fans in here? Everybody's a C.S. Lewis fan until they start reading C.S. Lewis books, right? And realize the very complicated theological positions that he had. *The Great Divorce*? Yeah, that was a great book. Oh, the implications.

So, *Chronicles of Narnia*. Who's a fan of *Chronicles of Narnia*? We love *Chronicles of Narnia*. It's like a kosher *Harry Potter*. We love it. And they made—true, they made movies based on this book series.

And at the beginning of the movie *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, I say movie because I never read the book. I saw some of the movie, but never read the book. There's this scene in the movie where Lucy and Edmund, and I think Eustace is the other guy. He's a little jerk. And they're in the room, right? They're in the room, and they're looking at a painting on the wall. And the painting is of a Narnian ship floating on these high waves, right?

And they're looking and Lucy's looking and the boys are bickering back and forth and she starts to see the waves begin to move in the painting. Anybody know the scene I'm talking about? And she's like, what in the world? Edmund, there's something wrong with this painting. And one of the waves crashes and water splashes out of the painting onto her face. Like they're in a room. Okay, something's up. Something's happening.

And the ship begins moving closer and closer. Another wave crashes and water pours out of the painting onto the floor. Okay, something's up. So Eustace grabs the painting, tries to take it off the wall and runs around. Water's pouring out on the floor. What do we do? What do we do?

Finally, the water gets to a point where it overtakes them, and they go beneath the waves of the water in their bedroom. And when they come back up, they're no longer in the house or the bedroom. They've now entered into the painting, and they see the ship that they saw in the painting. They've transitioned into the story.

You Were Meant to Be Engulfed

What I would like to submit to you is that this is the objective of every narrative author in history, including the men who were inspired by the Holy Spirit to write the Bible that we have and the narrative within the Bible. You were meant to be included and engulfed. And you were meant to feel the anger or the joy or the drama or the fear or the overwhelming blessing that the characters in the stories have. You were meant to be there with Moses as he ascended the mountain.

Sometimes we forget that every story is told in this manner. An artist, a writer, a painter all have a perspective they want to show you. And sometimes we just forget about the Bible. We open up the Bible with the same old verses, the same old story. Okay, Moses went up the mountain. We end up seeing the Bible more as an encyclopedia, as John Walton puts it. The divine encyclopedia that fell out of heaven and it contains all these details and facts about the universe. And that's about all we read when we open it up.

But when we actually read the Bible for what it says, we see a trajectory of the narrative and a trajectory of the literature that is inspired by God and meant to cultivate wisdom as we follow it through and meditate on it. And it's meant to cultivate wisdom in our lives so that we live out the kingdom of God on earth with a focal point and an orbit around this king named Yeshua.

Not Just a Divine Encyclopedia

Another way of putting it is the Bible was not written as security video camera footage. Because that's not the nature of writing, if you've ever written. You can't have all the details in a story, even if you're retelling a historical event like we see here. You can only portray your perspective. You can only have some of the details.

In the Garden of Eden story, we have no idea what the tigers were doing when Eve was chowing down on the apple. We have no idea. We have no idea what they were serving for lunch when they were building the Tower of Babel. Why not? Why don't we know what they were serving for lunch when they were building the Tower of Babel? Anybody? Why don't we? Because it

doesn't matter. It's not a relevant part of the story. Did Jacob and Esau ever learn to paint with each other? We have no idea what the whole picture is because it's impossible to know.

But what we do have is what the authors choose to include. And what they include are specific perspectives, like a director running the camera to focus this and then that. Matt, why is this so important? Because if we understand there is a point to the story being told, that it's not just a bunch of random verses telling random events with random details like an encyclopedia, then we can see what the author is truly trying to show us and what's important to them. The people inspired to write these things.

Selecting What to Show

A great example—this is going to be so overly simple. And I get excited about changing the perspective of the Bible. So if you already know this, fine. A great verse to illustrate this is [Exodus 32, 14](#).

Moses is petitioning on behalf of Israel for God not to wipe them out. You know the story. And after the golden calf, and I think you'll appreciate this. So Moses is petitioning, remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants. Verse 14. I love this. Okay, so Matt, what's so special about this verse?

A transition takes place in the scene. Did you notice? This is no longer a first-person perspective where you're standing and looking and hearing Moses and standing there talking to God. God, don't do this, don't do this. No. The perspective changes to a narrator talking. So I want you to imagine Morgan Freeman reading verse 14. You see what I'm saying? You're no longer in the. The author chose to change the perspective from a first-person back to like a scene out of Shawshank Redemption or something. This is the perspective change, taking you from front row to an overhead view.

And I know some of you may be thinking, well, duh. But many of us never stop to grasp this small detail. How incredible it is that God inspired this author to change the perspective right here.

The Painter's Perspective

One example I saw to illustrate this point, and this is where I get to be nerdy, is Jack Louis David's painting of the death of Socrates. And I think I have the picture up here. Yeah.

So Socrates, 4th century, famous philosopher. He caused a lot of issues in the courts. They accused him of disrupting society with his teachings, his stoicism, and so on and so forth. Long story short, they vote that he should be put to death for his involvement with creating a rift in society through his influence. And so, his death penalty—if you know some history—he had to drink some poison, hemlock, okay?

And the story is amazing because he just walked back there. His final moments of drinking the poison, he used as a final lesson for his disciples. He's like, no, this is fine. This is everything I've been talking about. Why are you worrying about this? Believed in a mortal soul, boom. Asked if he could toast the poison to somebody. Just amazing. Yeah, would have been a great TV show.

So here's the scene. And these are the final moments according to this French painter. And he's surrounded by all of his disciples, closest disciples. And now Plato.

Plato was an Athenian philosopher who was one of the closest students that Socrates had. Now the reason why we know about his death is because this is something that Plato wrote about. Plato interviewed all of the witnesses and he wrote an account, very detailed account, of how his death took place. Right up to the details of his legs going numb and then passing away. The thing is, Plato was not there. Everybody say, Plato wasn't there.

But David, the painter, puts Plato over at the foot of the bed, mourning, dissatisfied with the conclusion that his close friend is about to die. That's the older guy at the edge of the bed there. Plato loved his friend Socrates, his mentor. In his overview of how the death took place, his final line was, "This was the end of our friend, the best, wisest, and most upright man of any type that I have ever known." And so David, the artist here who painted this picture, he includes Plato sitting at the foot of the bed engulfed with the scene, despite him never actually being there.

Now I have a question. Was David the painter, the artist here?

Was he lying to us? Is he lying by putting Plato at the scene? Is he fabricating history? Maybe—unless we're not seeing the painting correctly from the perspective we need to look at it. See, David was a master painter and he understood that perspective was everything. So here we see Plato disturbed, mourning with sadness.

And it makes you wonder. It makes you wonder. Perhaps David painted this image with the intent of showing a historical picture of the death of Socrates. And he added Plato in just to make the mourning and sadness more engulfing or immersive. What's at the bottom of Plato's

feet? Looks like a quill and some ink and a scroll. He's writing something. Could it be that this is not a painting of Socrates' death at all? This is a painting of Plato writing about the incident from eyewitnesses and bearing the images and retelling the story in his own head. You see it? Does this change the perspective? Did David lie to us in this perspective of his painting? Not at all. He's a genius. I don't know if that was the intent of David, but I find it fascinating.

Colors and Symbolism

A couple of things here as we're noticing. So you notice all the vibrant colors come to a peak in the middle. And I want you to find the reddest red, the darkest crimson red in the painting. Where do you see it? You see it in the gentleman right here. And what's he carrying? The poison, right? The peak of death. I also want you to notice the colors of the clothing on Socrates. The kind of white off-white. Who else is wearing that same color? Plato. There's a connection there, right? Just find these things neat. Because it's more than simply a painting. There's a perspective.

So you see this nice young lady in the far left corner waving at you? This was Socrates' wife. I don't know why she's waving, but David thought it would be kind of neat to have her like, "See ya, I'm leaving," and heading up the stairs. I don't know. I love this painting because of the emotion and the perspective that it has. It draws you into the scene. It draws you into Plato's life and his agony sitting there.

Another thing: when Plato wrote the overview of Socrates' death, he was much younger. So for some reason, David paints him as a withered old man here mourning. His brain has reached capacity with sadness. The biblical authors had a perspective they wanted to show you. And when you read the scriptures, understand what you're reading was selective, described with specific phrases, in a certain way for a reason. You can retell an event a thousand different ways. And here is a specific way that we're told this event, at Mount Sinai.

Every Word in the Bible is Important

I guess all of that being said, if you're going to walk away today, I want you to say that Matt told us that every word in the Bible is important. So I say all this to build up these verses right here, [Exodus 34](#).

This is where Moses has this face-to-face encounter with God. And it's Moses and it's God and who else is there right now? Who else is there? It's a trick question. You are. You are. Verse 1. When I was reading that, were you imagining being there? Maybe we just saw, and maybe all

the images were being painted. You're right there. It's a powerful scene in the story. Also notice how God speaks of himself in third person. Do you notice that? The Lord said, the Lord, the Lord, a merciful God. It's neat because this happened several times in the Hebrew Bible where God speaks to himself like a third person. It's just neat.

God Describes His Own Character

But here God describes his own character. And as the reader, you're at the scene on the mountain with Moses hearing this. A God that's merciful, gracious. A God that's slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love. A faithful God. A God that forgives iniquity, transgressions, and sins. The three categories of rebellion against God in the Torah. He forgives them all. Transgressions are intentional sins. You can't even bring an offering for a transgression. It's not purged from the face of the tabernacle until Yom Kippur. But God forgives them. This is the character of the God that we serve. Do you realize that?

In the story being told, this is not simply being told to Moses. It's being told to you. And so when I read that, I'm overwhelmed with emotion because if it's also written to me and I'm supposed to be there and understanding in a very real way the character of my God, where are you in your life right now where you forgot that God is merciful and gracious? Like, what areas in your life have you forgotten that? Where are you in your life where you need to be reminded that God is slow to anger? He's patient. He's patient. He is waiting.

Do you need to be reminded of how faithful our God is? Bounding in love for you. Where are you at today? Because the author here hopes to bring you to the mountain to hear these words. Not as close to God as you can be. Is there sin in your life? Iniquity? Rebellion against the Father? Guess what? He forgives. Maybe you're struggling with something in your life that you're intentionally inviting in place of God and his kingdom. Transgressions. He forgives those who run to Him. Be engulfed with this picture here. I am abounding in love. I forgive transgressions. So potent.

He is a just God visiting the guilt upon generations of generations. He is a God of mercy and justice. Do you believe this? Of course we do. We believe this, yeah. So did Moses. And do you know what he does? He bows down.

Inviting God Down

But look here. Moses does not simply say, okay, you're awesome, God. Like, this is awesome. Moses doesn't sit there and say, great, I love your character, and leave satisfied with this

mountaintop experience. No, look, look what Moses does in the latter part of the section here. Moses invites God to come down off the mountain and dwell in the midst of the people.

Here, Moses doesn't want the relationship to stop with this climactic emotional mountaintop experience. Moses doesn't want it to stop. He wants a transforming relationship where God is in the midst of his people. God, if you found favor, favor in your eyes, come down from the mountain. Come down from this high place that represents the basement of heaven. Come down to us. Dwell with us. Travel in our midst. We can't do this without you. Will you come to us?

See, sometimes as believers, we love the mountaintop experience, right? We love some mountaintop experience. We love the experiences with God that are, man, like, we love coming to church. We love the worship. We get to raise our hands. This is good. Meditate solely on God in a corporate atmosphere. Man, this is so good. Isn't worship good? Mountaintop experience. Maybe it's at home. You have a prayer time where you meditate. So good. We love it when God comes through in our life and our prayers are answered. So we dance with praises, mountaintop experience. And then we come down from the mountain and leave God up there.

Have you invited God to dwell in the midst of your everyday life? These are the reflections of the author here. They're not just random facts that are thrown in the Bible. Have you invited God to dwell in the casual moments of your life? To meet you when you wake up, brushing your teeth. I don't want God there with me. No, casual moments, engulfing. How about when you drive to work? I don't want God with me in rush hour traffic. No, no. Do you want God in your everyday, to dwell in your midst?

God's Marvels and Transformation

Maybe when you get to work, have you invited God to consume the parts of your life that you would be ashamed to offer? Because see, there are stipulations of God coming down to the camp, and they had to change a few things. All right, we've got this tabernacle. This is going to be great. Oh, those shovels, you're going to have to start using them outside the camp now. There's little things that you have to modify in your life if God isn't going to remain on the mountain. But the issue is most of us have never invited him down. We're satisfied with the temporary mountaintop experiences. See, here Moses was not. And God agrees.

[Exodus 34](#), 10 here. And he said, "Before all your people, I will do marvels such as has not been created in all of the earth or in any nation. And all of the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you." Look how excited God

is about, yes, I'm gonna come down there and I'm gonna rock their world and they're gonna be amazed and there are gonna be changes and I will be their God. They're gonna be my people and we're gonna go do this mission of implementing the kingdom of God to all nations and being a light to all the earth. We're gonna do it. I will come down and you will see these amazing things. Everyone's going to see it.

The story here is not only projecting what will come, it's also meant to be a reminder of the people later on. This is a testimony of the God that came down from the mountain. Now, when Moses came down from the mountain, his face was radiant. That's good. Shiny. No horns. Okay, horns. His face was radiant, shining.

His Face Was Radiant

When you encounter the living God, seeing him as he truly is, you not only begin seeing who you are, but you begin to realize whose you are. And when you live a life with that realization, you cannot help but be seen as Moses was when coming down from the mountain.

See, sometimes, sometimes it scares people. You ever met anyone that has been so on fire for God, it made you uncomfortable? Oh yeah, them. Yeah. Throw a sheet over their head. They scared me.

Now, before we move on, I want to show you how cool the authors of the Bible were. Metaphor. Metaphor. Metaphor is a beautiful, beautiful thing. Everybody say metaphor. Wonderful. Metaphors are figures of speech that typically include an object that is not literally applicable in the sentence or phrase in which it's used.

Metaphor's Power in Scripture

So I like to wake up at 4 a.m. during the week and get some running done and do all this good stuff in the morning. Predictivity, right? If you also like to wake up early in the morning, you may be commonly referred to as an early bird. Early bird. Are you really a bird? Because that's weird. No, it's a metaphor. It's something that draws. So why is that significant? You're just an early riser. No, early bird. It brings much more passion and imagination to the conversation. Because when you walk outside at four or five o'clock in the morning in your neighborhood, it sounds like a rainforest out there. You ever notice that? Ch-ch-ch. It is crazy, but we never notice it during the day because there's too much going on. No one gets up that early. So you're being included in that wide awake, orchestrating with everyone else. You're part of that. All with something called a metaphor. It brings in that potent imagination.

Jesus is the bread of life. Is Jesus really a whole wheat filled, like filled with gluten loaf bread? Because that's what it says. And it's a powerful image used here because saying that Yeshua is the bread of life brings a whole lot more emotion than simply saying Jesus gives life. No, he's the bread of life. What does that mean? Bread, in the first century, bread was a big deal. It's the sustenance of life, the very thing that gives life, the very thing that if I'm starving about to die, if I eat, it vitalizes me, gives me energy and gives me life. This is who Yeshua is to us. That's brilliant.

My favorite, my favorite metaphor is in all scripture, [2 Timothy 3.16](#). All scripture is God breathe. I love that verse. Paul is brilliant when he uses this terminology because does God the Father have lungs? No, Yeshua says God the Father is a spirit. He doesn't have physical lungs. It's a metaphor. Why don't you just say all scripture comes from God? No, Paul's using this metaphor here to give potency to what he's saying. What comes from the lungs, God's lungs, the breath of life, the vitality of life, everything that is life-giving within the core of who our God is comes out. This is the scriptures. It's potent, right? I love it. It gives me goosebumps.

Another metaphor that is used here in [Exodus 34, 6](#), and we miss it because in the Hebrew it's never translated, is right here. And it's the two words that are translated slow to anger. Everybody say slow to anger. We understand what that means, right? It means that when your kid comes up to you and will not stop saying, mama, mama, mama, mama, mama, mama, mom, mom, mom, mom, mommy, mommy, mommy. Anybody? Oh, I felt the tension. You know what I'm talking about. Do you ever get to a point where you snap? Yeah, yeah, a couple of you, yeah. You're not slow to anger. You know what that means, slow to anger. So the two Hebrew words that's used in this phrase that's translated to slow to anger is arech afayim. Literally means big nose or big—it's a plural, long nostrils is what it means. It's a plural, so long nostrils. Big, big honker, big nose. This—that's what this—the Lord God has a big nose is what it says in the Hebrew. Now we could run with that and be like God has just a big nose. Or we could understand what the authors are trying to say. See, in their minds, what happens when you get mad? Does your blood pressure ever go up when you get mad? You're a bunch of liars. Has anyone ever been pushed to a point where they turn red and get flushed? Right? You get hot, you can feel the hot, right? You start, your breathing gets very heavy. Right? Oh, that wouldn't happen if you had a big honker, right? Because you could get more airflow in. Is that overly simplified? That's brilliant. Long nostrils. He has the capacity not to be overwhelmed with your stupidity. It's a beautiful metaphor, right? God is slow to anger. His long nostrils, he can take it. He's good, right? Do you understand why I get excited about the beauty of God's word in the language? It's just cool. It's so cool that for thousands of years, God inspired these

scriptures to come to us today so that we can get a potent visual of what the ancient world thought that is very real to us today when they said, no, our God has a capacity and patience for you messing up. So now, yeah, Bible's so cool.

God's Glory and Israel's Transformation

Moses invites God to travel with them and he agrees and leads them. And Israel is now moving forward. They're now identified with whose they are instead of who they are. And the glory of God's presence is revealed on Moses' face, and it's the same glory that appears in the tabernacle when it's built. In Exodus chapter 40, verse 34, it states that then the cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory that the Lord filled the tabernacle, and Moses wasn't even able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Leviticus actually puts it a different way in [Leviticus 9](#). It was exactly the type of response they were looking for when God's glory engulfed before them. This was a sign that the people... They understood that from this point forward, God had committed to traveling with them. The glory and the fire fell as a sign that God would travel in their midst with them. He would be with them wherever they went. It's the same thing that happened in [Acts 2](#), right? Same imagery? When the glory falls and God makes a commitment. Yes. So good.

And this is how Exodus is wrapped up. Israel receives their vocation. They're told whose they are. God is committed to traveling with them and leading them. And then we skip over. When we come to the book of Numbers, how many of you guys love the book of Numbers? Yeah, that's what I thought. So the book of Numbers starts off where Exodus leaves off with Israel preparing to depart from Mount Sinai. And what's the first thing that happens in the book of Numbers? Hint, it's why we call it in English the book of Numbers. A census takes place. A census of fighting men is taken at the beginning of Numbers. So let's be honest, who here has actually made it through the census? I can't remember. It wasn't relevant to me. Usually we get to the beginning of Numbers and we're so excited and we start going and you kind of start to skip over a couple chapters so things can get interesting. It's so boring and it's so mundane. How is any of that edifying? Why, let me put it this way. Why would the biblical authors that have been keeping us at the edge of our seat through this entire narrative, telling this story, being the directors, take the camera. When Moses is up on the mountain, bam, we need the camera right here. And then he's coming down the mountain and we need the camera now to go to the bottom of the mountain and be with Israel looking up and Moses is coming down. What's wrong with his face? Oh, his face is, get the towel, right? The camera changes, the perspective changes. Why at this point? Just names and numbers, so-and-so, so-and-so, oh

guess what, and so-and-so. Because the scene changed. And if we understand that, it becomes much more interesting. The story is still being told. The movie is still being filmed here for you. We've just gone from Egypt. Were the Israelites as strong and mighty people in Egypt? No, what were they? Next scene. The next scene in the story is not a bunch of families of slaves that were gathered together coming through some waters. No, here in Numbers, we don't see a bunch of slaves anymore, do we? We see a bunch of soldiers being organized, not in family units, but tribal units.

Numbers chapter 1 verse 2. So here we go. Be engulfed by the painting here. Can you do it? Even when most boring, be engulfed by the painting. The drama that's building here, the pride. You are a 21-year-old Israelite standing there, a slave all of your life. Here, you're about to be called a soldier of a great nation. Imagine the stillness that was present as Aaron and Moses began to name every man that was going to be soldier status, warrior status. Every time a name was called, you see one body in the mass of people stand up a little bit straighter, as if assuming this pseudo attention, shoulders back, filled with pride. Honor has just been given until finally you hear your name spoken. From Reuben, Eliezer, the son of Shadur. From Simeon, Shalumiel, the son of Zerushadai. Men, I want you to imagine. I want you to imagine your name being called right now amongst the crowd of people. And I don't want you to focus on your reaction because you know what you'd be doing, right? I want you to imagine your wives, your children being present. Imagine when your five-year-old hears your name called and they recognize that's the name of my dad, right? So they begin tugging at your wife's arm, tugging at the skirt. That's daddy. Oh, man. Can you feel it? Can you feel the stillness of the scene?

See, there's a film called Kingdom of Heaven that was produced in 2005. Anybody seen it? Neat little pseudo-historical film. It stars Liam Nilsen and Orlando Bloom. There's a scene during the Crusades, 12th century, where they're barricaded in Jerusalem, surrounded by a massive Arab army led by Sultan Saladin. Orlando Bloom gives this speech called the Jerusalem speech in the movie. He's saying, listen, guys, we have to defend Jerusalem. Not the walls.

Not the walls. We need to defend the lives within it. The people. Each other. The women. The children. And there's this guy that comes up and he starts arguing. He's like, "No, we can't. How are we supposed to defend Jerusalem? We have no knights." So Orlando Bloom, he looks over and he sees a boy, maybe 18 years old, a peasant boy. And he says, "Can you swing a sword?" "Yes, sir." "Kneel." Oh, the scene gets so tense. He then turns around and calls all of the peasants capable of swinging a sword or carrying a shield to kneel. Everybody kneels. The music starts playing in the background. No dialogue, just staring. Everyone knelt. A peasant? Now you will rise a knight. Oh, what an overwhelming sense of pride that's just contagious when watching

the film. Where people who could have never imagined any other life but servitude are now reborn as a nation of knights.

A Soldier Commissioned by God

Here at the beginning of the book of Numbers, every time you read a name, picture that scene happening and be engulfed in the painting, with the music playing and everything. Picture the shoulders of a slave being drawn back, their back straightened, their gaze sharp. You are now a soldier commissioned by a nation led by the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It would have been incredible to be there. And we miss it. We miss it because we don't know how to read the drama. But the intent, the intent I believe is that you would at least feel some of that throughout the literature, throughout the narrative. "You're no longer slaves to Pharaoh. You belong to me. I know your name. I know who you are. You are a citizen of this kingdom, my kingdom."

Now, Matt, that's awesome storytelling by the literary geniuses God inspired to write the Bible. But honestly, what does that have to do with me today? I'm glad you asked. This is great. See, here's the thing: the story of Israel is a story leading to Yeshua. And the story of Yeshua is directly tied to you. See, this story doesn't stop at a mountain in the wilderness with ancient Israelites. The vocation and the mission to usher in the kingdom of God on earth is one that is taken up and fulfilled, engulfing the world by Yeshua. That's what Mark says the gospel is. "Jesus went into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God. The time has come," he said, "the kingdom of God has come near. Repent, believe the gospel, believe this good news." The good news is that God keeps his promises despite the failures of man. That through his death, burial, and resurrection, heaven would collide with earth in a way that hadn't been felt since Eden.

The Greater Exodus

Just like Moses came down glowing with the glory of God, ushering in God's glory into the people and into the tabernacle, so too we see Yeshua glowing with the glory of God at the transfiguration. The same scene happening, ushering in God's glory, not into the physical temple, but into the expanding temple of believers that is being built up. Just like God offered the Israelites a new status and a new life apart from slavery to Egypt and Pharaoh, so too we find a new status and new life from slavery to sin and death in Yeshua. He is the greater Exodus. Just like the Israelites died to Egypt when they crossed through the waters of the Red Sea, so we die to our former selves through the waters of baptism in the name of Yeshua. This is what [Romans 6](#), 3-7 is all about.

But it doesn't stop there. See, as believers, we can walk away from sin. We can be freed from the shackles of slavery. We can enter into this new life. We can enter into the new kingdom, becoming citizens of a kingdom not of the earth, but one in heaven, and still stunt our growth by stopping at the mountaintop experience. Just as Israel rejoiced when the fire of the glory of God came down the mountain and dwelt among them, do we rejoice as well. At Pentecost, the spirit fell and the fire of God's glory came to rest on believers. This wasn't a temporary thing. It continued with them, just as it had in the tabernacle.

The Spirit That Raises the Dead

So here's a verse I want to leave you with today. It's in Romans chapter 8, 11. And Paul's making a petition for the resurrection, but I love how he phrases it. He says, "The spirit of God, the spirit of God that raised Jesus from the dead, he will give life to your mortal bodies by the same spirit within you." The spirit of God who raised Jesus from the dead lives in you. Lives in where? In you. Lives in you. Does it? Does it? Have you accepted the new status of a son and a daughter of the King? Raised up as a soldier of Christ, as Paul refers to you several times. The same spirit that gave life to Yeshua's body lives within you. What are you doing with it? Are you living boldly? Are you running the race? Are you showing the world what mercy, grace, and forgiveness that can only come from God looks like? Or have you experienced a mountaintop experience and that's your only testimony?

We're called to be more. We're called to do more. We're called to bear the name of God in the world so that when the world looks at us, they don't see who we are, they see whose we are. And that's what I believe we can learn from this narrative.

Worship team, you guys can come up.

Don't Miss the Point

And so I don't know where you guys are at today. I hope you can nerd out in the Bible like I do, following the patterns, noticing the perspective changes, the scene changes that they put in there. But none of it really matters if the scene never changes in your life. And so that's the takeaway: we can read stories about Moses. We can read stories about Aaron. We can read stories about the Israelites standing up and becoming soldiers and their status being changed into a new life and going on to be the image bearers of God. We can read all that stuff, and it's all great. But if you don't understand that this is also a story about you, then what's the point? If you don't understand that this whole status change thing, this whole exodus from slavery, this

whole new man thing, this whole restoration and entering into a life of eternal, everlasting thing through Yeshua is about you as well, then what's the point? The lessons in Torah are hard sometimes.

Please stand as we conclude services with worship.

A Prayer Team Ready to Help

And I don't know where you're at today. I don't know what you're going through today. Whatever it is, I want you to know that we have a prayer team that's dedicated to meeting with you, that's dedicated to lifting you up in prayer, supporting you. And I would ask that you would consider taking advantage of that today. Despite what's going on in your life, maybe you've never experienced anything beyond a mountaintop experience and you want to take the next step out of that, of inviting God off the mountain into every part of your life. Maybe that's where you're at today. Or maybe you're walking with God in your midst, but you're going through a land and you're going through the wilderness and sometimes it's hard and you need someone to help lean on, to lift you up in prayer. Guess what? They can do that.

Almighty, our Father, our King, Father, we thank you for this time together. We thank you for your eternal word that you've passed down from generation to generation, your Holy Spirit that crafted this word through the fingertips of the authors that wrote it. We thank you, Father, for the lessons that are eternal. But Father, most of all, we thank you for the ultimate teaching that we have. And that is the life that we only find in you through your Son, Yeshua, the Messiah. We thank you, Father, for the blessing of his peace in our life. In Yeshua's name we pray. Amen.

I'm Matthew Vander Aales, pastor of Founded in Truth Fellowship, and we hope you enjoyed this message and that it was a blessing to you and your family. Founded in Truth exists to cultivate a fellowship of image bearers that live the redeemed life only Yeshua can give. If this ministry has been a blessing to you, we would love to hear from you. Send us an email through the contact form on our site. For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at Foundedintruth.com.

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