

EXODUS 34: NEW PROMISE
SERMON-ALIGNMENT CURRICULUM

by Kevin McGill

We're near the end of Exodus, and chapter 34 won't let us leave too quickly. Israel has just betrayed the Lord with the golden calf (Ex 32). Moses intercedes, appealing to God's own name and character, and God renews the covenant (Ex 34:6–9, 10). Think of it as vows renewed before the wedding night even happens. The Lord doesn't walk away; He steps closer.

In Scripture, a covenant is more than a contract—it's a life-promise. God binds Himself to a people who have already failed Him. That is grace.

God's New Covenant: "Marvels Never Before Seen" (Exodus 34:10)

God says, "Behold, I am making a covenant... before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth" (Ex 34:10). God vows to act in history with visible, undeniable works so the nations will know His name (cf. Jos 2:9–11).

What is a miracle? In simple terms: a miracle is God's visible and extraordinary act in the natural world.

Why does God do miracles?

Glory—to reveal who He is (Ex 9:16; Jn 2:11).

Judgment—to set right what is wrong (Ex 7–12).

Protection—to defend His people (Ex 14:19–31; Jos 10:12–14).

God openly reorders the disordered. He isn't absent from the field of human conflict; He is present and decisive.

Group Discussion Questions:

- Where am I asking God to "reorder the disordered" in my life this month? (Ps 27:1–5; Phil 4:6–7)

The Covenant of Protection (Exodus 34:10–12)

Notice the sequence: "I am making a covenant... I will do marvels" (Ex 34:10–11). The miraculous is not an occasional favor; it's part of the covenant itself. God pledges to be Israel's defender as they face the nations. His promise lands like a father's vow: "I will protect you".

In 1993, after a rail bridge near Mobile, Alabama, was struck in dense fog, an Amtrak train derailed into the water. A rescuer described a young girl being lifted from the submerged car by her father's hands. He saved his daughter, then slipped back and drowned. The image isn't perfect, but it gestures toward the Father who lifts His children from death through the sacrifice of His Son (Jn 10:11; Rom 5:8). The renewed covenant foreshadows the gospel: God binds Himself to protect a people who cannot protect themselves, and He will do so at great cost to Himself.

Miracle Campaign Fulfilled in Jesus (Lk 4:18–21; Mk 1:27; Jn 11:25–26)

The covenant of protection finds its fullness in Jesus. His miracles defend the weak, restore the broken, and confront death itself (Lk 7:22; Mk 5:34–42; Jn 11:43–44). The cross is the ultimate battlefield where He shields us by bearing our sin and shame. The resurrection is the decisive miracle that secures our future (1 Cor 15:3–8, 54–57).

So when we read Exodus 34:10—“I will do marvels”—we can hear an echo that reaches Calvary and the empty tomb. God’s life-promise to protect culminates in Christ’s life, death, and resurrection.

Group Discussion Questions:

- Where do I most need to hear the Father’s vow, “I will protect you,” and what step of obedience would align me with that promise? (Isa 41:10; Rom 8:31–39)
- Where am I resisting the protection of the cross—trying to carry what Jesus already carried? (Isa 53:4–6; Gal 2:20)
- Jesus embodies the covenant: every healing, every exorcism, every resurrection is the fulfillment of God’s promise to protect and redeem. What does it reveal about God’s heart that His greatest “marvel” was not fire from heaven but a Savior on a cross? (Luke 4:18–21; John 11:25–26; Col 2:13–15)

God’s Pattern of Covenant Grace v 13–27

In verses 12–27, God renews His covenant with Israel, repeating many familiar commands—no idols, no treaties with pagan nations, and the observance of sacred feasts (Ex. 34:12–27). At first glance, it sounds like the same covenant from Mount Sinai (Ex. 20:1–17), but something new is happening. God now adds a promise to fight Israel’s battles through miraculous power (Ex. 34:10–11; Deut. 7:1–2; Josh. 10:12–14). This covenant isn’t weaker—it’s stronger. God doesn’t promise less; He promises more.

When trust is broken, we expect distance. But in this renewal, God moves closer. The relationship that should have ended is reborn with greater intensity. This is the rhythm of all **God’s covenants: from Edenic Rule: Eden’s shared rule (Gen. 1:26–28), to Noah Covenant - Noah’s protection (Gen. 9:8–17), Abrahamic Covenant - Abraham’s blessing (Gen. 12:1–3), Mosaic Covenant - Moses’s holiness and presence (Ex. 19:5–6), Davidic Covenant - David’s father-son intimacy (2 Sam. 7:12–16), and finally New Covenant - Christ’s indwelling grace (Jer. 31:31–34; Lk. 22:20).**

Every time Israel fails, God deepens His commitment. The more they run, the more He pursues (Hos. 2:19–20; Rom. 5:8). This covenant renewal shows a God who never gives up—a God who turns rebellion into relationship, and betrayal into grace (2 Tim. 2:13; John 1:14–17).

Group Discussion Questions:

- In most relationships, betrayal creates distance. With God, reconciliation brings greater closeness. How does this reversal—God moving toward us after failure—challenge the way we view repentance and restoration? (Ex. 34:6–7; Luke 15:20–24; 2 Tim. 2:13)
- Where has repeated failure made me assume God has withdrawn, and how does this covenant arc correct that assumption? (Ps 51; Heb 4:14–16)
- Every failure in Israel's story becomes another opportunity for grace. How have moments of personal failure led to a deeper understanding of God's mercy in your life? (John 1:14–17; Ps. 103:8–12; 1 John 4:9–10)

Shining Face - Now You Know Who I am

This passage takes on new meaning after everything we've seen in Exodus.

Moses had met with God before (Ex. 19:20; 33:11), but this time something has changed—his face shines. God is revealing more of His glory than ever before (Ex. 33:20–23), as if to say, "Now you know who I am."

Israel had known God as the One who delivers—the God who split the sea and led them out of Egypt (Ex. 14:13–14). But after their failure with the golden calf (Ex. 32:1–8), they experience something deeper. They encounter His mercy and grace (Ex. 34:6–7; Ps. 103:8–12). They discover that the God who delivers is also the God who stays (Deut. 31:6; Heb. 13:5). That's the same journey every believer takes. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob began with promises, but through testing, they came to know God personally. Faith matures through hardship as God moves us from performance to authenticity. This covenant is built not on perfection but on grace—not on fear, but on love.

Group Discussion Questions:

- When has God revealed Himself to you in a deeper or unexpected way after a personal failure or season of doubt?
- Where have you been afraid to face God because of disappointment or shame? What would it look like to bring that failure into His light and let His mercy define it instead? (Ps. 34:4–5; 1 John 1:7–9)
- Moses's face reflected the glory of God. What does your life reflect right now—to your family, friends, or church community? What do you want it to reflect? (2 Cor. 3:16–18; Matt. 5:14–16)