

**“Don’t let the Creator speak to us!”** The transition had been rough. Living in the wilderness was hard and completely out of our realm of experience. But the Creator had **provided** for us. Even if it wasn’t in the way we wanted and up to our standards, he gave us what we needed and we were learning how to cope with that. It had been 47 days since the Angel of Death had passed over us and now we came to camp at the base of Mount Sinai. Moses told us the Creator was going to speak with us and make a covenant with us. He said we would be the Creator’s people, a **“kingdom of priests”** and a **“holy nation,”** if we kept the Creator’s commands. We responded, **“We will do everything the Lord says.”**

We wondered and speculated what it would be like for the Creator to speak to us. But none of us were prepared. On the 50th day after we had left Egypt, thunder and lightning, unlike any we had ever experienced descended upon Mount Sinai. And a great dark cloud covered the top of the mountain. Moses warned us repeatedly to not approach the mountain, but to stay at a distance and listen. He even put up a fence to keep us from touching the mountain. Moses went up the mountain. Then the Creator spoke in the booming thunder, **“I am the Lord your Creator who brought you out of Egypt, out of slavery.”** Then the Creator spoke Ten Words, Ten Commandments to us. **“Do not put anything or anyone above me...Do not serve anything you make with your own hands...Do not be hypocrites...Remember to rest land, animals, and each other...Take care of your father and mother...Do not kill...Do not violate marriage relationships...Do not take what is not given to you...Do not lie or deceive...Do not desire what you do not have.”** Hearing the Creator speak, hearing his commands, we were terrified to our very core. We said, **“Moses, you speak to us and we will listen, but don’t let the Creator speak to us!”** We never wanted to hear that voice again. It was terrifying. These words cut through all of our defenses. These words penetrated our very flesh and bones—they cut into the most secret places of our hearts and souls. So we backed away and stood at a distance while Moses went to speak with the Creator on our behalf.

After he spoke with the Creator, Moses came down and told us everything he had heard from the Creator. In our fear, we again said, **“We will do everything the Lord says.”** Then Moses wrote it down and read it to us and for the third time we said, **“We will do everything the Lord says.”** We just wanted this to be done and over with. Then Moses sprinkled us with blood from an oxen and said, **“This is the blood of the covenant that the Lord is making with you on the basis of these words.”** Then Moses and Aaron and the seventy elders of our people went up and saw the Creator. Covered in the blood, as we had been when we left Egypt, they were not harmed by the Creator and they ate and drank in his presence.

Then Moses went up the mountain again. But this time, Moses was gone for days—and then it turned into **weeks**. We were in the wilderness and felt completely out of place. We didn’t know how to live and survive apart from Civilization, it was only because of Moses that we had made it this far. Where was he? Had he abandoned us? Had he seen the Creator face-to-face and **died**? So we went to Aaron and said, **“Make us gods who can lead us! We don’t know what has happened to Moses!”** So Aaron gathered all the gold we had plundered from Egypt and melted and shaped it into a golden calf, an image we were familiar with from Egypt. Then Aaron said, **“These are your gods!”** Cattle had provided food for us for generations. We loved their beef, milk, and cheese—and we sure missed them out in the wilderness. A calf was a very fitting god for us. Then Aaron organized a great festival and we gathered to worship this image and to eat and drink, breaking the very commandments the Creator had directly spoken to us.

Then on the 40th day of Moses’s absence, we saw Moses coming down from the mountain—he was alive! Moses had two stone tablets upon which the Creator’s **own hand** had written the very Ten Commandments we had heard with our **own ears**. When Moses saw us worshiping the golden calf, he was furious. He threw down the stone tablets the Creator himself had written and shattered them, breaking the commands of the Lord into pieces. Then Moses destroyed the golden calf, turning it into a powder that he made us drink. Then Moses called for anyone who would stand on his side. The Levites all came to Moses and he said to them, **“Grab your sword and kill your brothers, kill your friends, and kill your neighbors!”** We had all heard the Creator himself say, **“Do not kill.”** We had all heard Moses repeat this word, **“Do not kill.”** The Creator himself had written it upon the stone tablets, **“Do not kill.”** But in Moses’s anger this word was thrown aside. The Levites chose to listen to Moses and **not listen** to the Creator who had said, **“Do not kill,”** and they went out and killed 3,000 of us that day. Moses had literally broken the commandments on the rocks and then he spiritually broke the commandments through his violence. Then the Creator said, **“Go back into the land I promised to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But I will not be going with you because you are disobedient people.”** But Moses begged the Creator to forgive us and come with us. At our repentance the Creator forgave us and said he would continue to journey with us.

So the Creator continued to meet with Moses, but the Creator would not let Moses see him face-to-face. Since Moses was filled with hypocrisy and disobedience, Moses would die if he saw the Creator. The Creator only let Moses see his **backside**. And when Moses returned from Mount Sinai, the new stone tablets were written by **Moses’s hand** and not the Creator’s own hand like the set Moses had destroyed. And after Moses had been speaking with the Creator his face would shine with the Creator’s glory, but we could not handle even seeing the Lord reflected in Moses’s own face, so Moses put a **veil** over his face to hide the true glory of the Creator from us. We couldn’t handle the truth of the Creator. We couldn’t handle his straight-forward Word. We needed his Word **filtered** and **mediated** through Moses. We could only handle seeing the **backside** of the Creator. We needed to have the truth **veiled** for us. And this is why we had begged, **“Don’t let the Creator speak to us!”** Sure, it kept us physically alive. But inside we were dead and lost. We needed a living relationship of faith with the Creator. We needed to face the Creator’s Word head on. We needed his Word to kill us and resurrect us as new people. But we weren’t ready for that. We were afraid—trapped in our fear. So the Lord gave us this law which was veiled, mediated, and filtered through broken and fallen Moses.

**“Don’t let the Creator speak to us!”** Facing the Creator’s truth is overwhelming. In fact, coming face-to-face with the Creator and his truth will **kill** us and our flesh. We are scared of this death and so we try to hide from the Creator’s Word. We **veil** his Word. We look only at its **backside**. We listen to it only through **mediators** and teachers who water it down and make it easy and palatable for us. But we can only run for so long, we can only live in this immaturity for so long. And the time for us to grow up has come. **“The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.”** It is time for us to come to Christ Jesus and lay aside Moses and all other **mediators** who tell us what we want to hear and who distort the Creator’s Word. To come to Christ is to be **face-to-face** with the Creator. To come to Christ is to pull aside the **veil**. Christ comes to you on the seashore of your life, finding you busy with your life. And there Christ looks you in the eye and says, **“Follow me.”** Like the people of Israel at Mount Sinai, this Word is terrifying and our flesh will cry out, **“Don’t let the Creator speak to us!”** You will want to shrink away from Christ’s calling that is directed at you. You will want to protect your life as you know it. You will want to veil his Word. But you need to stand firm and face the Creator’s Word head on. Yes, Christ’s Word will kill you, but his Word will also raise you from the dead. The Creator himself is speaking to you this day through Christ Jesus. **Listen** to what he has to say. **Amen.**