

Exodus 33:12-23

12 Moses said to the LORD,

'See, you have said to me,
"Bring up this people";
but you have not let me know
whom you will send with me.

Yet you have said,
"I know you by name,
and you have also found favour in my sight."

¹³Now if I have found favour in your sight,
show me your ways,
so that I may know you
and find favour in your sight.

Consider too
that this nation is your people.'

¹⁴He said,
'My presence will go with you,
and I will give you rest.'

¹⁵And he said to him,
'If your presence will not go,
do not carry us up from here.

¹⁶For how shall it be known
that I have found favour in your sight,
I and your people,
unless you go with us?

In this way,
we shall be distinct,
I and your people,
from every people on the face of the earth.'

¹⁷The LORD said to Moses,
'I will do the very thing
that you have asked;
for you have found favour in my sight,
and I know you by name.'

¹⁸Moses said,
'Show me your glory, I pray.'

¹⁹And he said,
'I will make all my goodness pass before you,
and will proclaim before you the name,
"The LORD";

and I will be gracious
to whom I will be gracious,
and will show mercy
on whom I will show mercy.

²⁰But', he said,
'you cannot see my face;
for no one shall see me and live.'

²¹And the LORD continued,
'See, there is a place by me
where you shall stand on the rock;

²²and while my glory passes by
I will put you in a cleft of the rock,
and I will cover you with my hand
until I have passed by;

²³then I will take away my hand,
and you shall see my back;
but my face shall not be seen.'

Reading Torah This Week

Our last Sunday with Exodus in this lectionary year,
After the Golden Calf, before the second set of tablets
Moses haggles with God for assurance in a theophany
My audio and notes on all of Exodus 33 from April 2022:
<http://www.hereticslikeus.com/2022/04/time-to-go-again-exodus-33.html>

Moses meets with God in the tent of tabernacle,
As the 'priestly' voice in Torah emphasizes
His face glowing after each encounter

Moses pushes back on the divine 'get up and go' again
seeking assurances from God to be with Moses and Israel,
before facing and displacing other nations
(fraught context in this season of warfare in Gaza)

How will Israel be distinct from other nations, safe among them
How will divine favour or preference be shown?
Torah editors are post-exile- God's promise retains sovereignty
Showing mercy after the calf – and toward other nations too

We probably ought to linger over this set-up this week:
about displacing nations, easily read 'Netanyahu v Hamas'
after 3000 years resisting accommodation and assimilation
negotiating boundaries, relationships, maintaining integrity

How does your 'mental movie' cast the 6 nations driven out,
how 'they' inhabited and lost the land to some 'us',
racializing, condescending 'othering' tropes?

Yahweh promises Moses another theophany, outside the tent –
In the cleft of rock, covered by the hand of God,
Then seeing the backside of God – the last word in Hebrew,
a-hōray from *achor* hindquarters, rear part, behind...
Which Annie Dillard renders with humour, God 'mooning' Moses

Matthew 22:15-22

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went
and plotted to entrap him
in what he said.

¹⁶ So they sent their disciples to him,
along with the Herodians,
saying,

'Teacher,
we know that you are sincere,
and teach the way of God
in accordance with truth,
and show deference to no one;
for you do not regard people with partiality.

¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think.
Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?'

¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said,
'Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites?
¹⁹ Show me the coin used for the tax.'

And they brought him a denarius.

²⁰ Then he said to them,
'Whose head is this, and whose title?'

²¹ They answered, 'The emperor's.'

Then he said to them,
'Give therefore to the emperor
the things that are the emperor's,
and to God the things that are God's.'

²² When they heard this,
they were amazed;
and they left him
and went away.

Reading Gospel This Week

The lectionary enters the final month of the 'Year of Matthew'
Continuing with teaching set in Jesus' mouth in Jerusalem
But before apocalypse and passion sections

This next challenge comes from Pharisees, with Herodians
(in c.21, set in the temple, it was chief priests and elders)
See parallels in Mark 12:13-17, Luke 20:20-26, cf John 3:2

What do you imagine of the Pharisees,
with oral Torah, roots of Talmud and synagogue Judaism?
Who are your Herodians, collaborating with the Roman regime?
For evangelists' post-70CE community, what differs from 33CE?

The opening compliment, echoed in 4 gospels,
appears affirming of Jesus' role teaching truth
without 'deference' or 'partiality' to face values

The question of 'lawful and 'taxes' in NRSV's v17 is loaded –
which 'law' or 'tax': Roman/Herodian, temple cult/oral Torah?
exesti 'permitted', usually refers to Torah and oral Torah
kensou 'tribute' is a particular imperial tax, not temple tax

The response attributed to Jesus is not naïve:
gnous 'aware' of their *ponērian* 'malice' (only in Mt)
calls then *hypocritai* - gap between word and act

As with the authority challenge in c21 by priests,
a rhetorical riposte meets question with question:
whose likeness and inscription is on the coin?
Some stuff is 'of Caesar', some 'of God', genitive case
(not possessive pronoun usage)
contrasting Caesar's imperial rule with divine rule

The malicious motive of entrapping Jesus
into offending Caesar or religious parties
is not realized (nor now) – they're *ethaumasán*
'Marvelled', 'wondered', 'amazed'... wow, why?
Because Jesus is shrewd as well as smart? Are we?