

EXODUS: The Person, Promise, and Power of God

Exodus 33, pt 2. – The Glory of God (and the Good of Man)

¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory."

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

Exodus 33:18-19a

God – Outside the Camp

⁷ Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp. ⁸ Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent. ⁹ When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. ¹⁰ And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door. ¹¹ Thus the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent. (Exodus 33:7-11)

The plans for the Tabernacle are now put on hold. In its place – at least temporarily – is a simple tent. Unlike the Tabernacle or *the* Tent of Meeting, which was to be situated in the _____ of the Israelite camp, this tent of meeting was *outside* the camp.

Instead of the group of Levites which attended it (Num. 3:5ff.), it was served by one attendant, _____.

And this "tent of meeting" only served as a communication point – it never held the ark or any other sacred furniture, and it never was employed as a site for sacrifices.

Its existence reminded them of:

1. God's _____

Because Israel was still under God's judgment, He no longer dwelled in their midst (Ex. 25:8-9). Now he was "far off".

2. God's _____

God had not abandoned them completely.

And in his mercy, He offered _____ to any _____ person who sought Him.

3. Their _____

His immediate _____ and their access to _____ were – for now – lost to them.

Consider what they lost by losing access to the Tabernacle ...

But God allowed them a mediator and an intercessor – the one man who could still meet with Him – Moses.

This replacement tent – and the divine communication that took place there served to _____ in the peoples’ eyes. Before, he had been distant from them and out of their sight. When he was with God on the mount of Sinai, they remarked, “We don’t know what has happened to him” (Ex. 32:1) Now, whenever Moses goes into the tent, the watchful people _____ in reverence for Moses and God, and _____ God.

The proper _____ has returned to Israel.

Notice the uniqueness of God’s relationship to Moses: *“the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.”*

The phrase “face to face” does not mean that Moses could see God, for just a few verses later God would say, “no one may see me and live” (v. 20). Rather, it is a figure of speech intended to show that God and his prophet enjoyed direct communication. Moses had immediate access to God. This was a level of intimacy and fellowship that no human being had experienced since the day that God banished Adam and Eve from the garden. Moses and God were friends. God told him everything he needed to know about his plans for Israel. He spoke with Moses like a friend with a friend.¹

Moses’ Request and God’s Goodness

¹² Moses said to the Lord, “See, you say 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 favor in my sight.’ ¹³ Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people.”

¹⁴ And he said, “My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

¹⁵ And he said to him, “If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here. ¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?”

¹⁷ And the Lord said to Moses, “This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name.”

¹⁸ Moses said, “Please show me your glory.”

¹⁹ And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘The Lord.’ And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live.” ²¹ And the Lord said, “Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock, ²² and 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. ²³ Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen.” (Exodus 33:12-23)

Moses’ first request was for God to be _____ with them. In asking, he is declaring his _____ on God for the completion of the journey. It was God who had brought them thus far – in no way could they make it to their destination without Him.

He based his request on God’s previous _____ to him.

¹ Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God’s Glory*, 1025.

The power behind Moses' prayer was his _____ with God.

God "knew" Moses ...

Moses knew – and desired to know more of – God ...

⁷ *He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel.*

⁸ *The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.*

⁹ *He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever.*

¹⁰ *He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.*

¹¹ *For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;*

¹² *as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.*

¹³ *As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.*

¹⁴ *For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.*

¹⁵ *As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field;*

¹⁶ *for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.*

¹⁷ *But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children,*

¹⁸ *to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments.*

¹⁹ *The Lord has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all.*

(Psalm 103:7-19)

Moses also requested from God that he show him his _____.

Instead, God says, *"I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ... I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."*

Why would God not grant him his request?

"... you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live." (v. 20)

Of course, God is a pure omniscient, omnipresent spirit. He does not have a body or a face. The face here represents his _____, God as He is in himself.

And God, unfiltered, and in all His glory would absolutely _____ Moses. (Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29) No unholy person can see his holy presence and survive it.

Michael Horton describes this type of fear as a _____ fear.

*There are many things that instill fear in us because they are evil or simply threatening. The sublime, however, is different. It's simultaneously attracts and repels. It is the beauty and light that is overwhelming, not ugliness or darkness. With God, we encounter a power that could destroy us, but can also save us from destroyers. There is a purity of righteousness, holiness, justice, goodness and love that simultaneously beckons and scares us. God is our problem, but He is also our solution. Though with one strike he could end our life, he protects those who take refuge in him ..."*²

² Michael Horton, *Recovering Our Sanity: How the Fear of God Conquers the Fears that Divide Us*, 60-61

What He offers Moses instead is a gospel of _____.

Then he tells Moses that He will show him his “backside”. Again, this doesn't describe the physical aspect of God. It is a lesser revelation of himself.

God said that as his glory passed by, he would cover Moses with his hand. There was a place in the rock where Moses could hide. There he would be under the shadow of God's care. God would shield him from the radiance of his glory. T

o put it in a more provocative way, Moses was protected *by God from God*.³

From C.S. Lewis' *The Silver Chair*

“Are you not thirsty?” said the Lion.

“I'm dying of thirst,” said Jill.

“Then drink,” said the Lion.

“May I—could I—would you mind doing away while I do?” said Jill.

The Lion answered this only by a look and very low growl. And as Jill gazed at its motionless bulk, she realized that she might as well have asked the whole mountain to move aside for her convenience.

The delicious rippling noise of the stream was driving her nearly frantic.

“Will you promise not to—do anything to me, if I do come?” said Jill.

“I make no promise,” said the Lion.

Jill was so thirsty now that, without noticing it, she had come a step nearer.

“Do you eat girls?” she said.

“I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms,” said the Lion. It didn't say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it.

“I daren't come and drink,” said Jill.

“Then you will die of thirst,” said the Lion.

“Oh dear!” said Jill, coming another step nearer. “I suppose I must go and look for another stream then.”

“There is no other stream,” said the Lion.

Next week: Exodus 34 – The Covenant Restored

³ Philip Graham Ryken and R. Kent Hughes, *Exodus: Saved for God's Glory*, 1036.