

## THE STORY: UNDERSTANDING THE BIG PICTURE OF THE BIBLE

### Week 2 – Don't Let Me Miss the Glory

Psalm 18:1-3, 31-33, 46

Habakkuk 3:17-19

The theme of Scripture is the glory of God! The unifying principle in Scripture: God's character. Who is consistent? GOD! Who never changes? GOD! GOD undergirds everything in Scripture. Is He our ROCK? Are we certain of HIM?

Oswald Chambers, in his devotional dated April 29, wrote: "To be certain of God means that we are uncertain in all our ways. We do not know what a day may bring forth." We are uncertain of the next step BUT we are certain of GOD! Chambers writes that when we can express that we are uncertain about the next moment – with joyful expectation – immediately we abandon to God. Abandoning to God means that we submit to God NOT counting the cost.

In the Hebrew Scriptures we see so clearly God's glory. The seraphim in Isa. 6 cried out, "Holy, Holy, Holy." Our transcendent God is separate and apart from His creation. What does "glory" mean? The Hebrew word for *glory* is *kavod*; *kavod* means *weighty*: ALL Who God is – His attributes, majesty, character, reputation – all that He wants us to know about Him – that He has revealed to us in Scripture – this is His glory.

God, Who is Spirit (John 4:24) has chosen to reveal Himself in a physical localized way:

- *Shekinah glory* (not in the Bible; Rabbis inserted this word. Root – *schachan* – to dwell – Ex. 25:8) - pillar of cloud/fire. God's glory dwelt between the cherubim on the mercy seat (I Sam 4:4) from which He legislated to Moses and the children of Israel (Lev. 1:1; Ex. 25:22).
- And God's glory filled the Temple after Solomon dedicated the Temple in Jerusalem (II Chron 7:1-2).
- God's glory departed from the Temple (Eze. 10) before the children of Israel were carried into exile in Babylon.
- Jesus – Immanuel – God in the flesh – "And we beheld His glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father. . ." (John 1:14)

God's glory is His physical manifestation – revelation of Himself. "Physical" indicates God's localized presence. He didn't send a part of Himself when Jesus came to earth; He didn't send a picture of Himself. GOD came to earth. John 3:16 - *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.*

Please, God, "don't let us miss YOUR GLORY" as we live out YOUR PURPOSE for us each moment!

### Genesis 15

Gen. 15:1 begins with God telling Abram, “Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great.” Abram had won a victory. Why did God tell him not to fear? What is Abram’s greatest concern. Gen. 15:2-3 - Abram appears to be asking, “What good is success without a successor?” In the Ancient Middle East a childless couple could adopt a servant or a man who didn’t have property. (Nuzi tablets found in 1925 – patriarchal customs) This adopted person was obligated to care for the needs of their “parents,” weep over and bury them when they died. God had promised Abram a son. However, at this moment in Abram’s life, Eleazar was the best for which Abram could hope.

Gen. 15:4-6 – God assures Abram that Eleazar would not be his heir. God promised Abram offspring as numerous as the stars in the heavens. And, this will come to pass through a – SON! Verse 6 is the first time “believe” is used in Scripture! “Believe” is connected with the promise of a – SON. This is the first time that Abram is said to have been “reckoned as righteous.” Abram was justified by faith; he was declared RIGHTEOUS by God. Abram was saved! Abram *believed* (aman – to stand firm, to trust in, to be certain of). Abram believed God’s promises concerning a seed – a collective seed – Abram’s multiple descendants – which included a SON! We MUST remember that God is indeed promising Abram a totally human son in his life. God is NOT telling Abram to hold on and wait for a son to appear in 2000 years (the Messiah). Abram’s faith is focused upon the promise of a son through whom blessing would come to the world (Gen. 12:3; Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7). Abram believed in God’s promise of the Redeemer, the Messiah. He anticipated the Messiah’s coming. Abraham believed in the Messiah (John 8:56).

NOTE: God’s way of saving men is the same throughout the Bible – OT and NT. Salvation is through Jesus alone – the Jewish Messiah. While Abram was saved by faith in the One Who would come, we are saved by faith in this One Who has come.

In Gen. 15 we read about the cutting of the covenant. God cut the covenant with Abram. God entered into a BINDING commitment/promise – the Abrahamic Covenant. And through this covenant God promised Abram and his descendants: land, seed, and a blessing.

### Gen 15:7-21

In ancient times in this area of the world, when covenants were cut, the parties participating in the covenant walked in the ditch between the animals that were cut in two. Blood from the animals flowed into the ditch. The participating parties swore to one another that they would each keep their part of the commitment. If one or both didn’t fulfill what had been promised, they would end up like the animals on each side of the ditch – dead! Who walked in the ditch? It was GOD ALONE! GOD is symbolized by a smoking oven and a burning torch (Ex. 3:14 – God is speaking from a burning bush; Ex. 13:21 – pillar of fire; Ex. 19:18 – God descended on Mount Sinai in fire; Psa. 97:2 – clouds and darkness surround Him; Dt. 4:24/Heb. 12:29 – God is a consuming fire)

God alone walked through the blood that drained from the cut animals that ran into the ditch. God swore by Himself (Heb. 6:13) to carry out what He had promised to Abram in the Abrahamic covenant (land, seed, blessing). Where was Abram? A deep sleep had come upon him. And, horror and great darkness fell upon Abram! Horror – Hebrew word – a-ma; root word – a yom (terrible; dreadful). Ex. 23:27 – I will send My fear before you as you go into the land. We see Ex. 23:27 played out in Rahab’s words found in Joshua 2:9. Rahab told the two spies that the terror of you (the children of Israel) has fallen on them – those in Jericho. because God was POWERFUL on the Jews’ behalf.

Job 9:34 & Job 13:21 – speak to the dread of God Proverbs 2:5 – the fear of the Lord – a healthy dread of displeasing God. Standing in awe of God – of Who He is. Also note Prov. 8:13. Darkness (Gen. 15:12) – Hebrew word – khash a ka; root word – kha shak – to become dark; grow dim; be darkened; be hidden.. Could this “horror” and “great darkness” speak to the indescribable holiness of God (Psa. 113:4-6; Isa. 6:3)? In Isa. 6:3, when Isaiah saw God high and lifted up on His throne, and when we read of smoke filling the Temple, we see the presence of the Lord. And Isaiah, in this passage, exclaims, “Woe is me for I am undone.” Abram was about to experience the presence of the Almighty. This was a moment of holy awe!

### Exodus 33

Context: Ex. 32:30-32 (golden calf escapade) - Moses was the mediator. Moses represented the people to God and God to the people. Moses petitioned God to forgive the people for their great sin. God cannot set aside sin. That’s the justice of God in operation! God is JUST! God assured Moses that each person would have to bear the penalty for his sin – v. 33 - *Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book*. Moses asked God to blot him out of His book if He, God, would not forgive the people’s sin. Psa. 69:28 tells us that this book is connected with the righteous – the saved. I’m suggesting that what we are reading in v. 32 is Moses’ sacrificial heart. He was willing to sacrifice himself for his people. That’s why Moses mentioned making atonement for his people. We read Paul stating the same in Rom. 9:3 – *For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren*. Other passages that speak of the book of life as related to eternal life (Rev. 3:5; Rev. 13:8; Dan. 12:1; Mal. 3:16-18).

God responded with justice (Ex. 32:33-35). God also responded with mercy!

Ex. 33:1-3 - God told Moses that He would not personally be present with the people – in their midst. This is grace and mercy?

God would deliver on His promises – because God is faithful. But, His presence in the midst of His people was an issue. When the children of Israel learned of this “bad” news (from a human perspective) re: God withdrawing His presence from them, not going up in their midst, they repented and mourned for their sin, and put off their jewelry.

Ex. 33:4-6 - It was their jewelry that fashioned the golden calf (Ex. 32:22-24).

We are going to see an “oasis-like” account in the midst of Israel’s sin and, the “threat” of God’s withholding His presence from being in the midst of His people. And, within this “oasis-like” account, God’s graciousness and mercy is revealed to us further.

Ex. 33:7-11 - There was a tent of meeting set up outside the camp where not only Moses, but also the people could go to seek God (Ex. 33:7). This place of meeting gave the people a means of worshipping God and offered them a hope for a future, fuller fellowship with God. This is God’s GRACE!

Sin always creates barriers between men and God (Isa. 59:2). In this account, God withdraws from their midst because of their sin.

- He speaks of the children of Israel as Moses’ people (Ex. 33:1).
- God tells them that His Angel will lead them into the promised land (Ex. 32:34; 33:1-2).
  - This Angel leading them is nothing new!!
  - Ex. 23:20-22 – even before the people sinned in the worship of the golden calf, God had said, *Behold, I send an Angel before you to keep you in the way and to bring you into the place which I have prepared.* <sup>21</sup> *Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him. But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries*
    - This unique angel commanded obedience from Israel and had the right of judgment over them. Most of all, the name of God was in this angel (for My name is in Him).
    - We only know a few angels by name, and in a sense, *Micha-el* and *Gabri-el* each have the name of God in their name. But neither Michael nor Gabriel commanded this kind of obedience from Israel or presumed to sit in judgment over them. This is the specific Angel of *the LORD*, Jesus appearing in the Old Testament, before His incarnation in Bethlehem, who often speaks directly as the LORD.
    - My name is in Him: Of course, the name Yahweh is in Jesus. His name is literally *Yah-shua* – God is salvation.
    - Jesus was with Israel in all their wilderness experience. I Cor. 10:3-4 speaks of the children of Israel in the wilderness and states that *all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,* <sup>3</sup> *all ate the same spiritual food,* <sup>4</sup> *and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ*
    - And to bring you into the place which I have prepared: The Angel would go before them into the place which I have prepared. Isn’t it interesting that Joshua led the children of Israel into the Promised Land. Joshua’s Hebrew name is Yeshua.
    - Jesus is going before us (believers) to prepare a place for us in heaven (John 14:2-3)

- The place where we walk today as followers of Jesus has been prepared by God. And where we will walk tomorrow is prepared by Him also.

Consider with me that the GRACE of God is seen even in God's threat to remove Himself from their midst. God's purpose regarding keeping a distance between Himself and the Israelites as they traveled on toward the land He had promised them was so that He wouldn't destroy them! In Ex. 33:5 God says, *I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you.* To be in their midst was to greatly endanger the children of Israel. While to be distant from them was to assure their safety. And, so Israel repented (Ex. 33:4, 6). When GOD indicates that He will deal with them from a distance, they mourn! And, they put off their ornaments.

NOTE: God was NOT threatening His complete absence. His presence would be manifested to Israel at a distance:

- The Angel would go before the people.
- The presence of God was also manifested in "the tent" which Moses pitched a "good distance from the camp" (v. 7).
- The people could come out to God (v. 7).

This is a magnificent picture of GOD'S MATCHLESS GRACE!

We need to realize that this "tent of meeting" is distinct from the Tabernacle:

- FIRSTLY – we need to know that the Tabernacle had not been constructed as yet!!
- The tent of meeting was outside the camp (Ex. 33:7b)
  - The Tabernacle would be inside the camp (Num. 2:17).
- The tent of meeting was served by Moses (from the tribe of Levi [Ex. 2:1-10]) and Joshua (from the tribe of Ephraim [Num. 13, 3, 16]. NOTE Ex. 33:11 - *So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.*
  - NOTE: We see Joshua's "sustained" (permanent) intimacy with God. What is Joshua's Hebrew name? Yeshua!
- The cloud of God's presence came down to the tent of meeting only when Moses was there.
  - The cloud hovered over the Tabernacle at all times except when Israel was to break camp and march (Ex. 40:34ff)
- Ex. 33:9 - *And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, (the tent of meeting) that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.*

- *Ex. 34:34-35 - Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle (not the tent of meeting).<sup>35</sup> And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*

The gracious provision of the “tent of meeting” was not that only Moses could go there to seek God, but that the Israelites could seek Him as well. *Ex. 33:7b - And it came about, that everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp.* The God Who had appeared at the top of Mt. Sinai, which the Israelites were not allowed to approach (Ex. 19:12-13), not even the priests (19:23-25), was now willing for people to seek Him in this tent, outside the camp.

**This tent speaks to the remoteness of God due to Israel’s sin – their idolatry. This tent speaks to God’s justice. YET – the tent also provided a NEARNESS to God that was MORE INTIMATE than anything the people had yet experienced. This tent speaks to God’s mercy, His grace!**

When Moses was up on Mt. Sinai with God, it was an “out of sight, out of mind” scenario to the Israelites. They weren’t concerned about Moses’ life or his safety. NOW – with the tent of meeting – vastly different story. Whenever Moses went out to the tent of meeting, the whole congregation stood at the entrance of his tent and intently watched Moses until he had entered the tent (v. 8).

AND when Moses entered the tent and the cloud descended, the people then worshipped God (v. 10). When the people got right with God, there was a close connection to Moses. Additionally, the intimacy which God had with Moses was God’s way of emphasizing that Moses was the leader God had appointed – Ex. 19:9, “Behold, I shall come to you in a thick cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you, and may also believe in you forever.”

**At the very point of Israel’s great sin, when the judgment of God appears imminent, God’s GRACE is oh so very visible!** We see the glory of God in salvation through judgment. It is visible in the warnings which God gave them: The warning of extermination (32:10); of death (32:24); and of a distant relationship (33:1-3). God did not warn the Israelites to torment them. He warned them to TURN THEM from their sin to repentance.

God’s provision for the people was removed from the camp and was distant from the camp – and thus from their sin!!!! God was teaching them that they needed to separate themselves from sin. Lev. 16:27 – on the Day of Atonement/Yom Kippur – the goat for the sin offering for Israel was carried OUTSIDE THE CAMP! JESUS is the fulfillment of the Day of Atonement/Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur, Aaron, the High Priest, confessed over the scapegoat the sins of the people and a “suitable man” (Lev. 16:21) escorted the scapegoat outside the camp. The sins of the people were removed from the camp.

Lev. 16:21-22 - *Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat (the scapegoat), confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. <sup>22</sup> The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness.*

God is holy. He detests sin. Jesus became sin for us. Jesus came into this world as our sin-bearer. He came to die outside the camp. JESUS bore our sins in His body – outside the gate – outside Jerusalem (Heb. 13:12-13) – outside the camp! Jerusalem depicted the religious center of Judaism which was focused on the external – on “doing” – and not on the heart.

Who lived outside the camp? The poor, the wretched, the unclean, the lepers! Leprosy speaks to our natural condition – mankind’s sinful condition – our ruined condition – before coming to faith in Jesus. Jesus came to identify with mankind. It is sinful mankind – those who realize their sins and confess their sins – who are crucified with Christ. Those who place their trust in Jesus for salvation meet Him at His cross – outside the camp. They come into an intimate relationship with Him – outside the camp. Our sins have been dealt with – outside the camp. And, in this we rejoice!

Gal. 2:20 – *I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.*

GOD’S GLORY – His majesty, His character, His reputation – in His justice/judgment – which is for our GOOD – in His righteous demands – there is GRACE.

There are two full accounts given in Exodus of the construction of the Tabernacle. First we have a description of the Tabernacle and its furniture as it was given to Moses at Mount Sinai (Ex. 25-31). We then have a parenthesis in Ex. 32 & 33 with the record of Israel’s transgression in the sin of idolatry – the worship of the golden calf. Despite Israel’s transgression, the Tabernacle was erected. Israel’s sin did not turn God from His purpose of mercy! Israel’s sin did not turn God from His desire to dwell with man!

What is the connection between Exodus 33 and the big picture of the Bible? The UNIFYING PRINCIPLE of Scripture is the glory of God – His character, His attributes, His reputation – ALL that He is. God reveals to us His justice in this passage – His right to judge sin. The Bible has established that mankind is set on sin.

Gen. 6:5 - *Then the LORD<sup>[b]</sup> saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;*

Gen. 8:21 – (AFTER the flood) *the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth. . . .* We all deserve to be eternally punished – to be separated from God for all eternity. We all deserve hell. BUT GOD is pleased to show mercy which He is not obligated to give to anyone! God “mercies” whomever He pleases (Ex. 33:19b).

Mercy – not getting what we deserve (hell)

Grace – getting what we don’t deserve (heaven)

When a judge pardons a guilty person – when justice is not meted out. . . how does that impact those whom the guilty/convicted person has offended? When a Judge fails to sentence a convicted murderer, the rights of those that convicted murderer wronged are not upheld. Who is most offended by our sin? GOD! BUT GOD’S mercy is not unjust. God’s perfect goodness is displayed in the balance between justice and mercy. Psa. 85:10 – *Mercy and truth have met. . . .*

In the OT the law was given to the children of Israel. The law consisted of 613 commandments. This is the Mosaic Covenant. The Mosaic Covenant required obedience. If you broke one commandment, you were guilty of all (Dt. 27:26; James 2:10). The law reflected Who God is. God’s standard: perfection. Man cannot keep the law. The law shows man his sin. How does man then have a relationship with God? God’s grace stepped in and gave the children of Israel the sacrificial system – substitutionary atonement – a life for a life – which looks forward to the cross. God demonstrated His righteousness. Jesus came to give His life. Jesus came as our sin-bearer – to be the sacrifice for sin – the ultimate sacrifice that would appease/satisfy God’s wrath. God judges the substitute (the one who dies) so that the one for whom the sacrifice is made (you and me if we have placed our trust in Jesus) can be saved – mercifully and justly!

As we move through these lessons, we need to keep ALWAYS in front of us the GLORY OF GOD. In this lesson we’ve seen a loving, merciful, gracious, just, faithful God. What is our response? Can we all, individually, cry out to God, “Please don’t let me miss the glory!”

#### QUESTIONS:

How is God’s glory the theme of the Bible?  
 How do you understand God’s justice and His mercy?  
 What was key to you regarding the tent of meeting?  
 Any V8 moments?

#### HOMEWORK:

Continue in your journal. How does God’s glory impact you?  
 Read week 3’s handout when you receive it via Email.  
 Create a collage (of sorts) using your “chart” on page 4 of Week 1’s handout. Add some of the “BP” sentences you marked in your week 1 handout to the “chart.”