

THE GLORY OF GOD

Week 6 – Moses' Tent of Meeting

March 3, 2025

Are we submitting to God's total revelation of Himself in the Bible – in both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament? Are we considering the Apostle Paul's admonition to the believers in Rome...*Consider the goodness and severity of God....* (Rom. 11:22)

As it applies to God... are "goodness" and "severity" apart from one another? Are "goodness" and "severity" at odds with one another? God's plan works in harmony. Without God's righteous judgment, mercy has no meaning.

Ex. 32:33-34 – After God said to Moses, *Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.* God then said, ³⁴*Now therefore, go, lead the people to the place of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin.* God told Moses that He would not personally be present with the people – in their midst.

Ex. 33:1-3 - *Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Depart and go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.' ² And I will send My Angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. ³ Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked (stubborn) people.*

We need to know that God will ALWAYS deliver on His promises – because God is faithful. Moses would lead them to the land which God swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And their enemies would be driven out. What was the issue? God's presence in the midst of His people was the issue. God told Moses He would not go up in their midst – because of their sin – lest He CONSUME them along the way. God would need to annihilate them because God of God's holiness He must deal with sin! God did not want to consume them. He had promised to make a great nation of them!!

God had told Moses, *let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.* Hebrew word for "among" is ta-VECH (tavek) which means "in the midst/middle". God's desire to dwell among His people is unique. In the ancient world the pagan people would typically build their building(s) for their gods at a distance from their towns as they feared their gods.

In Ex. 33:3 we grasp God's overwhelming mercy.

AND, in Ex. 33:1 we are reading of the PROMISES God had made to His people. God reminded them in Ex. 33:1-3 of WHO HE IS:

- I swore an oath to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- I will give you the land – and it's a good land – flowing with milk and honey.
- I will send My Angel before you.
- I will defeat your enemies.
- I will protect you.
- I will not annihilate you.

Ex. 33:4-6 - *And when the people heard this bad news – I will not go up in your midst - they mourned – they lamented...they grieved - and no one put on his ornaments. WHY? ⁵ For the LORD had said to Moses, “Say to the children of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people. I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you. Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.’” ⁶ So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb (another name for Mt. Sinai. Horeb means “desolate.” Sinai means “thorny.”)*

What a picture of God’s holiness...of God delivering on His promises to protect Israel and NOT to annihilate Israel. *I will not go up in your midst....* I’m suggesting that God told Moses that He/God would not remain with the children of Israel in a close, personal, intimate, relational way as this was a time for justice.

Moses’ immediate response....

Ex. 33:7-11 - *Moses took his tent (this was Moses’ personal tent) and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp (far from the sinfulness that was in the camp where the Israelites had worshipped the golden calf), and Moses called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the LORD (observation:) went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp. ⁸ So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, that all the people rose, and each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle. (observation:) ⁹ And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. (observation:) ¹⁰ All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door; and all the people rose and worshipped, each man in his tent door. (observation:) 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. (observation:)*

God had removed Himself from the midst of the people. God was now outside the camp. Moses, the mediator between God and man, went outside the camp. And, his actions impacted the people. When Moses entered the tent and the cloud descended, the people then worshipped God (v. 10). 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! Worship – the Hebrew word, *saha*, emphasizes the act of prostration – falling before God, head bowed to the earth. And, 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 falls upon them, God’s grace is poured out!

“My Angel” – God’s Angel – going before the children of Israel to the land of promise was NOT new! The Angel of the LORD had already gone before the children of Israel in the pillar of cloud (Ex. 13:21; Ex. 14:19). Even before

Ex. 23:20-23 – 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*

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I have prepared. AND THEN GOD declares... ²¹ **Beware of Him and obey His voice; do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions; for My name is in Him.**

We’ve seen the ministry of the Angel of the LORD in passages throughout Genesis beginning in Gen. 16...Gen. 22...and on throughout the OT.

- The Angel of the LORD spoke to Moses from the burning bush (Ex. 3) and commissioned Moses to lead the Israelites.
- This unique angel commanded obedience from Israel and had the right of judgment over them.
- The name of God was in this angel (for My name is in Him).
- The *Angel of the LORD*, Who often speaks directly as the LORD (Gen. 22:1-17; Ex. 3:1-22), is Jesus appearing in the Old Testament, before His incarnation – His birth in Bethlehem - His coming as Emmanuel, God with us.
- My name is in Him: Of course, the name Yahweh is in Jesus. Jesus Hebrews name is *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 the Rock that followed them was the Messiah.

How ironic...the children of Israel wanted Aaron to fashion an idol for them so that they could feel assured that their “god” was with them (Ex. 32:1). The idol did exactly the opposite. Because of the idol, God told Moses that He would be removing Himself from their midst. When God descended on Mt. Sinai, the people stood afar off. Now they are mourning at God’s words re: His presence not accompanying them. They desired God’s presence!! They were still going to possess the land of milk and honey. It appears that they mourned the idea of loss of intimacy with God!

We need to understand that God was NOT speaking of His complete absence. His PRESENCE would be manifested to Israel at a distance: The Angel Who is a pre-incarnate/pre-Bethlehem appearance of Jesus would go before the people; the presence of God was manifested in “the tent” which Moses pitched a “good distance from the camp” (v. 7); the people could come out to God (v. 7).

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: We see Joshua's "sustained" (permanent) intimacy with God. What is Joshua's Hebrew name? Yeshua! (Joshua is from the tribe of Ephraim)
 - The Tabernacle was served by the Levites.
- 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)

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The tent of meeting – Moses' personal tent that he pitched outside the camp - was a unique provisional place for God to meet with Moses and the Israelites. The period of time for the tent of meeting – is not made clear in Scripture. 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.

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.

Moses tent of meeting 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 grace and mercy.

The tent speaks to the people experiencing the presence of God.

Do we experience the presence of God? Remember, as believers in the body of Christ – following Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended and indwelt those who placed their trust in the Messiah, God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, live within us (John 17:20-23).

God's PROVISION for the people was OUTSIDE THE CAMP! God was teaching them that they needed to separate themselves from sin. 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 – outside the camp!

Heb. 13:12-13 - *Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. ¹³ Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.*

At the very point of Israel's great sin, when the judgment of God fell upon them, God's grace was poured out abundantly!

QUESTIONS

What was new to you?

What impacted you? How will it impact your walk with God?

How might this lesson change your fellowship with and worship of God?

What will you share with a friend, neighbor....?

How do you understand the presence of God?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 6 with the Bible references.

Pray about with whom you may share what you've learned through this lesson.

Share!

Continue writing in your Glory of God Journal.

Read Week 7 when you receive it.