

Exodus 33 - Stiff-Necked People; Tent of Meeting; The Lord's Glory

II. Israel's Covenant: Instruction to be redeemed nation (Ex 19:1—40:38)

(4) Tabernacle (Ex 25:1—40:38)

(B) Covenant disruption and restoration (Ex 32:1—34:35)

(b) Restoration of fellowship (33:1-23)

(i) Israel's repentance (33:1-6)

(ii) Confirmation of Moses' leadership in light of covenant violation (33:7-23)

(a) God's manifestation to Moses at the tent of meeting (33:7-11)

(b) God reveals His veiled glory to Moses (33:12-23)

Exodus 33

(b) Restoration of fellowship (33:1-23)

(i) Israel's repentance (33:1-6)

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'

1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, "Depart, go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up from the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'

1 The LORD told Moses, "Go up from here, you and the people whom you brought out of Egypt, to the land about which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob saying, 'I'll give it to your descendants.'

1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swore unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it:

2 And I will send an angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

2 I will send an angel before you and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite and the Jebusite.

2 I'll send an angel in front of you and I'll drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

2 And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, 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, because you are an obstinate people, and I might destroy you on the way."

3 *Go up* to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, because you are an obstinate people, and I might destroy you on the way."

3 Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey, but I won't go up among you, because you are an obstinate people, and otherwise I might consume you along the way."

3 Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.

4 When the people heard this sad word, they went into mourning, and none of them put on his jewelry.

4 When the people heard this sad word, they went into mourning, and none of them put on his ornaments.

4 When the people heard this troubling word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments.

4 And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments.

5 For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the sons of Israel, 'You are an obstinate people; *if* I were to go up in your midst for *just* one moment, I would destroy you. So now, take off your jewelry that I may know what I shall do to you.'"

5 For the LORD had said to Moses, "Say to the sons of Israel, 'You are an obstinate people; should I go up in your midst for one moment, I would destroy you. Now therefore, put off your ornaments from you, that I may know what I shall do with you.'"

5 The LORD had told Moses, "Say to the Israelis, 'You are an obstinate people, and if for one moment I went up among you, I would put an end to you. Now take off your ornaments so I may decide what to do with you.'"

5 For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.

6 So the sons of Israel stripped themselves of their jewelry, from Mount Horeb *onward*.

6 So the sons of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb *onward*.

6 So the Israelis did not wear their ornaments from Mount Horeb onward.

6 And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb.

Because of Israel's failure with the golden calf, the Lord withdrew His presence from among the people in the camp (v1-7). He promised to send an angel to lead them into the Promised Land, but God would not go on in the midst of such sinful covenant breakers. Moses was no doubt discouraged by Israel's failure. He wanted to be with God, and yet God had left the camp. To resolve this situation Moses set up a small tent some distance from the Israelite camp, where he could meet with God (v7).

Sheltered there from the desert wind and sun, Moses spent time alone with the Lord. Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud descended to the tent entrance and God spoke with Moses (v9). This must have been a very special experience for Moses. More than anything else, Moses wanted to know and experience God. This desire is clearly reflected in his prayer in v13. By desiring to know God's ways Moses wanted to become better acquainted with His actions, directions, and manner of doing things. He wanted to know God more intimately, more intelligently, more personally than ever before. With this desire in mind he said, "I pray You, show me Your glory" (v18). It refers to the reality and splendor of God's glorious presence. Sometimes His glory was made visible in association with the tabernacle or temple (Ex 40:34; 1 Kings 8:11; Ezek 9:3-4).

(ii) Confirmation of Moses' leadership in light of covenant violation (33:7-23)

(a) God's manifestation to Moses at the tent of meeting (33:7-11)

7 Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance 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.

7 Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance 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.

7 Moses used to take the tent and set it up outside the camp at a distance from the camp, and he called it the Tent of Meeting. When anyone sought the LORD, he would go out to the Tent of Meeting which was outside the camp.

7 And Moses took the tabernacle, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.

8 And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent.

8 And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent.

8 When Moses would go out to the tent, all the people would get up, and each would stand in the doorway of his tent, watching Moses until he entered the tent.

8 And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle.

9 Whenever 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.

9 Whenever 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.

9 When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stand at the doorway of the tent while God spoke with Moses.

9 And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.

10 When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would stand and worship, each at the entrance of his tent.

10 When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent.

10 When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the doorway of the tent, all of them would get up and prostrate themselves in worship, each one at the doorway of his tent.

10 And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door.

11 So the LORD used to speak to Moses **face to face**, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

11 Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

11 The LORD would speak to Moses face to face just as a man speaks with his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, Nun's son Joshua, his young servant, would not leave the tent.

11 And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man,

departed not out of the tabernacle.

- "...face to face" - speaks to the manner of communication, the confidence, the comfort, the forthrightness; the directness between them

(b) God reveals His veiled glory to Moses (33:12-23)

12 Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people!' But You Yourself have not let me know whom You will send with me. Moreover, You have said, 'I have known you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.'

12 Then Moses said to the LORD, "See, You say to me, 'Bring up this people!' But You Yourself have not let me know whom You will send with me. Moreover, You have said, 'I have known you by name, and you have also found favor in My sight.'

12 Moses told the LORD, "Look, you have told me, 'Bring up this people,' but you haven't let me know whom you will send with me. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name,' and also, 'You have found favor in my sight.'

12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight.

13 Now then, if I have found favor in Your sight in any way, please let me know Your ways so that I may know You, in order that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people."

13 Now therefore, I pray You, if I have found favor in Your sight, let me know Your ways that I may know You, so that I may find favor in Your sight. Consider too, that this nation is Your people."

13 Now, if I've found favor in your sight, please show me your ways so I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. And remember, this nation is your people."

13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

14 And He said, "My presence shall go *with you*, and I will give you rest."

14 And He said, "My presence shall go *with you*, and I will give you rest."

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

14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

- Fulfilled in the Book of Joshua (Cf. Joshua 1:8-9; 21:44)

15 Then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go *with us*, do not lead us up from here.

15 Then he said to Him, "If Your presence does not go *with us*, do not lead us up from here.

15 Then Moses told the LORD, "If your presence does not go with us, don't bring us up from here.

15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence.

16 For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the *other* people who are on the face of the earth?"

16 For how then can it be known that I have found favor in Your sight, I and Your people? Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the *other* people who are upon the face of the earth?"

16 Otherwise, how shall it be known that your people and I have received favor from you, unless you go with us and that we, your people and I, are distinguished from all the people on the surface of the earth?"

16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth.

- We should go nowhere unless the Lord leads

17 The LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name."

17 The LORD said to Moses, "I will also do this thing of which you have spoken; for you have found favor in My sight and I have known you by name."

17 The LORD told Moses, "I'll do the very thing that you have said, because you have found favor in my sight and I know you by name."

17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found grace in my sight, and I know thee by name.

18 Then *Moses* said, "**Please, show me Your glory!**"

18 Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!"

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

18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

- "...Please, show me Your glory" - the answer to Moses' request is given in 34:6-7 where God reveals several of His divine attributes

Moses was asking for a full self-disclosure of God's glorious person—a revelation that would sustain and encourage him, enabling him to carry on as Israel's leader. But Moses

asked for more than God was willing to grant. The Lord responded by telling Moses that mortal man cannot see God in the fullness of His divine glory and still survive the experience (v20; see also John 1:18; Col 1:15). But God graciously accommodated Moses by announcing that He would make His "goodness" pass before Moses and would "proclaim" His name in Moses' presence (v19). "Goodness" may imply the "beauty" of the Lord and so it anticipated a theophany. But in this case God gave Moses not a vision of how He appears but a description of what He is. The promise to proclaim His name is probably another way of saying the same thing. In biblical times a person's "name" was associated with his or her character and reputation. For Yahweh to proclaim His name meant He would declare or announce His attributes, the essence of His divine character. God told Moses that He would place him in the cleft of a rock, covering him with His hand until He passed by. Then God told Moses, "I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but my face shall not be seen" (v23). This statement is rich in anthropomorphisms, attributing to God the human features of a hand, back, and face. Since God does not have a physical body (John 4:24), these terms reveal how intimately and personally God would disclose Himself to Moses.

19 And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion to whom I will show compassion."

19 And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

19 God said, "I'll cause all my goodness to pass before you, and I'll proclaim the name 'the LORD' before you. I'll be gracious to whom I'll be gracious, and I'll show compassion on whom I'll show compassion.

19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

20 He further said, "You cannot see My face, for mankind shall not see Me and live!"

20 But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"

20 But," he said, "You cannot see my face, because a man cannot see me and live."

20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

21 Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand *there* on the rock;

21 Then the LORD said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand *there* on the rock;

21 The LORD said, "Look, there is a place near me where you can stand on the rock;

21 And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by.

22 and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by.

22 and as my glory passes by, I'll put you in a crevice in the rock, and cover you with my hand until I've passed by.

22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:

- In this same cave, 600 years later, Elijah took cover when he was overwhelmed by the spiritual darkness of Israel under the demonic Jezebel (1 Kings 19:9)

23 Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."

23 Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."

23 Then I'll remove my hand so you may see my back, but my face must not be seen."

23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.