

Exodus-Part 26 (Chapter 33)

The Command to Leave Sinai

Exo 33:1 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.'

Exo 33:2 I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

Exo 33:3 Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way."

Exo 33:4 When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and no one put on any ornaments.

Exo 33:5 For the LORD had said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites, 'You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you.'"

Exo 33:6 So the Israelites stripped off their ornaments at Mount Horeb.

The Tent of Meeting

Exo 33:7 Now Moses used to take a tent and pitch it outside the camp some distance away, calling it the "tent of meeting." Anyone inquiring of the LORD would go to the tent of meeting outside the camp.

Exo 33:8 And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching Moses until he entered the tent.

Exo 33:9 As Moses went into the tent, the pillar of cloud would come down and stay at the entrance, while the LORD spoke with Moses.

Exo 33:10 Whenever the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshiped, each at the entrance to their tent.

Exo 33:11 The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend. Then Moses would return to the camp, but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent.

Moses' Intercession

Exo 33:12 Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but you have not let me know whom you will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with me.'

Exo 33:13 If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. Remember that this nation is your people."

Exo 33:14 The LORD replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."

Exo 33:15 Then Moses said to him, "If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here."

Exo 33:16 How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"

Exo 33:17 And the LORD said to Moses, "I will do the very thing you have asked, because I am pleased with you and I know you by name."

Exo 33:18 Then Moses said, "Now show me your glory."

Exo 33:19 And the LORD said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."

Exo 33:20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."

Exo 33:21 Then the LORD said, "There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock."

Exo 33:22 When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock and cover you with my hand until I have passed by."

Exo 33:23 Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen."

Exodus 33 highlights the necessity of God's personal presence over mere blessings, a theme fulfilled in the New Testament through Jesus Christ (Immanuel, "God with us"). Moses' intercession for the people and his direct, "face-to-face" relationship with God foreshadows Christ's role as the supreme mediator and the revelation of God's glory through grace.

Key Connections to the New Testament:

- **The Presence of God (Immanuel):** In Exodus 33:14-15, God promises his presence to lead Israel to "rest". This is fulfilled in Matthew 11:28-30, where Jesus invites believers to find rest, and in Matthew 1:23, where Jesus is defined as "God with us".

Mat 11:28 "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

Mat 11:29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Mat 11:30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Mat 1:21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Mat 1:22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

Mat 1:23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

- **Jesus as the Superior Mediator:** Moses acts as a mediator, pleading for the sinful people after the golden calf incident. This directly foreshadows Jesus as the final and greater mediator (1 Timothy 2:5) who acts on behalf of humanity.

1Ti 2:1 I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people--

1Ti 2:2 for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness.

1Ti 2:3 This is good, and pleases God our Savior,

1Ti 2:4 who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

1Ti 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus,

1Ti 2:6 who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time.

- **God's Glory and Grace:** Moses asks to see God's glory, and God responds by showing His "goodness" (Exodus 33:18-19). The New Testament states that "the Word became flesh... we have seen his glory... full of grace and truth" (John 1:14), revealing that God's deepest nature is grace.

Joh 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- **The "Face-to-Face" Relationship:** God speaks with Moses as a friend (Exodus 33:11), but Moses cannot see God's face directly. The New Testament promises that believers will see God "face to face" through Jesus (1 Corinthians 13:12).

1Co 13:12 For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

- **The Rock and God's Protection:** Moses is protected in the "cleft of the rock" while witnessing God's glory (Exodus 33:22). Christ is the "rock" who provides protection and allows us to experience God without being destroyed by His holiness (1 Corinthians 10:4).

1Co 10:1 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea.

1Co 10:2 They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.

1Co 10:3 They all ate the same spiritual food

1Co 10:4 and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.

Exodus 33 serves as a bridge, showing that while God's presence is dangerous to sinful people, it is essential for distinguishing them from the world. The New Testament provides the ultimate solution for abiding in that presence safely: grace through Jesus Christ. Through Jesus and His Holy Spirit in us we are empowered to live a life pleasing unto God. Christ helps us to say no to the world and say yes to God. If we focus on ourselves and this world we will live in and be a slave to sin. If we focus on Jesus and live through Him we are free from sin.

Joh 8:34 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin.

Joh 8:35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever.

Joh 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Gal 5:16 So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.

Gal 5:17 For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want.

Gal 5:18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law.