

EXODUS STORIES FROM THE DESERT

Part 4 – “Death to Life” (Exodus 33)

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WHY God wanted a tabernacle built in the first place.

Exodus 25:8

⁸ And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst.

Exodus 32 Sin of the golden calf

Exodus 33 Ramifications

Exodus 32 People worship golden calf

People: “As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.”

People: “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!”

God: “Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves.”

God: “I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you.”

Narrator: But Moses implored the LORD his God

And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people.

And that day about three thousand men of the people fell.

Then the LORD sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made.

Exodus 33

The Command to Leave Sinai

¹ The LORD said to Moses, “Depart; go up from here, you and the people whom you have brought up out of the land of Egypt, to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, ‘To your offspring I will give it.’ ² I will send an angel before you, and I will drive out the Canaanites, the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

⁴ When the people heard this disastrous word, they mourned, and no one put on his ornaments. ⁵ For the LORD had said to Moses, “Say to the people of Israel, ‘You are a stiff-necked people; if for a single moment I should go up among you, I would consume you. So now take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do with you.’” ⁶ Therefore the people of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments, from Mount Horeb onward.

The Tent of Meeting

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.

Moses' Intercession

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.”

But, Moses hears the singular.

That's not good enough. He wants the Lord to make His presence go with all the people. God's 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.

[singular] [singular]
[all Israel]

WHY IS GOD'S PRESENCE SO IMPORTANT?

Original Paradigm: The Garden of Eden

- God created us so that He could BE WITH US.
 - We humans had continual access to God
 - We walked with Him and had an unbroken relationship
 - This is why the "Fall of man" was even more devastating
- What the Bible is all about:
 - God moving to get our relationship back
 - God initiating to redeem us for Himself...
 - because we were created so He could BE WITH US
- It's why when Christ was born, He was called, "Emmanuel" (meaning: "God with us")
- Every theophany in Scripture is God offering His assurance...His presence.
 - Theophany:
 - a temporary, visible, or audible manifestation of God to a human
 - a manifestation of God in the Bible that is tangible to human senses
 - a visible appearance of God
- God referred to Himself as "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob". Why?
 - That triple-name title signifies His faithfulness to the Abrahamic promise
 - God will keep His relationship to us across multiple generations
 - Reminds us that He is a "doer"
 - All the action, the initiation, the forgiving, the intervening He did with these patriarchs.
 - He is active in keeping the relationship.
- God created us to BE WITH US
 - So, God's presence is vitally important
- When King David approached the Lord wanting to build a temple for Him? David felt bad for God:

"See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." (2 Sam 7:25)

 - God answered: I've lived in a tent and moved with Israel for 450 years.
 - I've never left you; have you heard me complain?
 - God said that because He created us to BE WITH US.

How do we, today, experience the “presence of God”?

Principle #1

When I know the WHO, insistence on the “Why, When, Where, What and Why” will fade.

Principle #2

“Joy isn’t the absence of trouble, it’s the presence of God.”

Unknown

And WHY did God agree to take Israel back?

God was pleased with the mediator

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.”

The Israelites were saved by the merits of their... mediator! **Sound familiar?**

Matthew 3:16-17

¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷ and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

Remember 1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

God agrees to return to fellowship with the people—to go with them out of Sinai.

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.”