

LESSON 13

THE TABERNACLE OF GOD

Scripture Text: Exodus 33:7-23; Exodus 34:29-34

Last week we saw a dark time in Israel's history—their idolatry. They paid an extremely high price for that sin. Some died. God said He would visit their sin upon them. He sent plagues, and He gave them to worship the host of heaven, let them reap what they had sown (Acts 7:41-42). He removed Himself from the midst of the people to a position outside of the camp. But in love and mercy, He did not abandon them.

The Lord dwelt in the tabernacle and met the people there. His presence went with Israel and gave them rest. Intimate communion with Him caused the face of Moses to shine. Now the Lord dwells in the hearts of His saints. What does the presence of the Lord do for a person now?



MEMORY VERSE: *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.* —Hebrews 3:12

The Lord in the Tabernacle

Exodus 33:7 Moses pitched the tabernacle **without the camp**. Since the tabernacle for which the Lord showed Moses was the pattern was not yet built, this was a temporary place of worship, probably a tent. Because Israel's sin drove God from their midst, those desiring to meet Him must go out to Him **without the camp**. This suggests Christ's bearing of shame and guilt of sin for us. This is typified by: 1. this tabernacle without the camp; 2. the burning of the main body of the sin offering **without the camp** (Leviticus 4:1-12), and 3. the Crucifixion of Jesus **without the gate**—the fulfillment. All three typify His actual, spiritual taking of our shame and guilt. Because He did this, we must share the reproach, or figuratively go out to Him, if we are to have the benefit of His salvation (Hebrews 13:11-13).

Exodus 33:8-11 The closeness of Moses to the Lord is seen. The pillar of cloud came down to the door of the tabernacle and **the Lord spake unto Moses face to face**. In awe the people watched and worshiped. The Lord's presence in that tabernacle was a type of His dwelling in the hearts of the church (Revelation 21:3).

Then Israel had a visible tent where God dwelt. Now the human heart is the temple of God (1 Corinthians 3:16). He dwells in all who open their hearts to Him. As the glory of the Lord beautified the tabernacle, so the glory of the Lord blesses and beautifies the one in whom He lives. The New Testament is full of Scriptures containing examples of the indwelling of the saints by the Lord and of instances of manifestations to man of the glory of God. Some of these are: Luke 2:9; John 17:23-24; Acts 7:55; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Ephesians 3:17; Colossians 1:27; 3:3; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 1 John 3:24; 4:12, 15-16.

God's Presence With Israel

Exodus 33:12-16 Moses requested of the Lord to know who would go with him in leading Israel to Canaan. He knew God had commanded him to lead them. He knew he had God's favor. He knew Israel was God's people. Now

to know who would go with him would bind these into one sure purpose. **My presence shall go with thee.** That satisfied Moses. Nothing less would have. What would the Lord's presence bring to him? Rest. **I will give thee rest.** Moses **said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence**—we will not go. Would not our experience and influence as saints be stronger if we followed this example?

God Answers Prayer

Exodus 33:17-23 The Lord talked with Moses. Moses said, **Shew me thy glory.** The Lord passed before him and let him see His back but not His face. The Lord's full glory is too great for man to bear. To see His face would be to die. Why did God grant this? Moses was just as human as all of us. And there is no respect of persons with God. Why then did Moses get answers when sometimes we do not? He asked from a position of obedience and faith and communion with God. We can do that too.

The Lord said He would, through His presence, give rest to Israel. It was a rest of settled dwelling and of peace with their enemies (Deuteronomy 12:9-10; 1 Chronicles 23:25). His presence gave confidence and strength. It gave guidance and leadership through the Law and His direct voice. It gave cleanness and righteousness, beauty and glory. When we obtain the Lord's presence, it will do the same for us (John 14:16-23).

Moses' Face Shone

Exodus 24:29-34 The Lord called Moses into the mount to get new tables of testimony to replace the broken ones. Only these were cut by Moses, not by the Lord as the first ones were. After forty days and night with God, Moses came down. **The skin of his face shone** so that the people fared to come near. Moses had not known that his face shone. He veiled his face while speaking to the people. What made the face of Moses shine? God came down, covered by a cloud, and stood close to Moses and passed by before him there. (See verses 5-6.) By inner absorption with God, Moses was so filled with Him that His shining brightness broke through to the surface. It was so intense that it struck fear to the people. This was not something to entertain the people; it was not imaginary. It was the mightiest power. It is too dangerous to trifle with. We read of no other human one so intense, but Stephen's face shone in some way (Acts 6:15). Many from then until now have received shining faces through salvation. This comes through full surrender to God and continued communion with Him. This is far different from cheerfulness. It is the visible glory of God in a face behind which God lives in full control. It has a strong influence for God. It draws, and it convinces.

JUST A THOUGHT

True religion is always supernatural.

This lesson is adapted from a lesson by Mary Lehmann.
It is revised and posted here with written permission from
(c) Bible Paths Publications, PO Box 299, Keithville, LA 71047