

Approaching God's Person

Exodus 24:9-18

Thank you for joining us this week as we continue our study through Exodus. Now, let's go with Bible teacher, J Mark, for a closer look at today's lesson.

After Israel came out of Egypt under Moses' leadership they camped at Mt. Sinai. This is an outstanding moment in human history because God came down on Mt. Sinai to meet with His people. No other gods have ever met with their followers in this way.

There on the mountain, God gave them the Law so they would know how to live. That Law is good for all people everywhere. It was intended to be the Law of God and people everywhere are expected to pay attention to it, respect it and obey what the LORD has spoken. It is this Law that shows us our need for Christ.

The Bible tells us "No one has seen God at any time." In this Scripture from Exodus, Moses and the elders of Israel did not see God face to face, but they saw that under His feet was a pavement of brilliant stone. I believe they were seeing a reflection of God's Shekinah glory.

When God spoke from Mt. Sinai the people of Israel trembled with fear and stood at the further end of the camp. They were afraid of God's presence. Now, on this occasion, the leaders are **APPROACHING GOD'S PRESENCE** as recorded in **Exodus 24:9-18**.

9. Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel:

10. And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness.

11. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also, they saw God, and did eat and drink.

12. And the LORD said unto Moses, Come up to me into the mount, and be there: and I will give thee tables of stone, and a law, and commandments which I have written; that thou mayest teach them.

13. And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.

14. And he said unto the elders, Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you: and behold, Aaron and Hur are with you: if any man have any matters to do, let him come unto them.

15. And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount.

16. And the glory of the LORD abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

17. And the sight of the glory of the LORD was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.

18. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was on the mount forty days and forty nights.

On this occasion God disclosed several direct MANIFESTATIONS as His people approached His presence.

The First MANIFESTATION was,

He Disclosed His Divine Splendor.

These men saw some representation of God. We are not given details. We are simply told they saw the God of Israel. But what they described wasn't a person. Instead, they saw under His feet was a paved work of sapphire stone. Sapphire is a precious stone that is a rich blue color. The next clause says it was like the body of heaven, or as blue as the sky of heaven. They saw this as a sapphire stone under the feet of God, a pavement that was as blue as the bluest sky.

Then we are told that the LORD did not lay His hand upon the nobles of Israel. I take that to mean that God didn't discipline or punish them, He accepted them in His presence. They saw God and ate and drank together. They enjoyed a meal together. Someone once said, "the crown of fellowship is eating together." Sharing a meal shows welcome, hospitality, and friendship.

Later on, in the book of Leviticus, God told them how to present the peace offerings that they would bring to the tabernacle. With this offering they would eat part of it in the presence of the LORD and in this way have fellowship with Him.

Not many descriptions like this are given to us in the Bible but whenever God is depicted, He is revealed in much splendor. This manifestation led those leaders to worship and to stand in awe before the Almighty God in His divine splendor.

The Next MANIFESTATION was,

He Disclosed His Divine Speech.

First, God spoke to Moses and said, "Come up to me in this mountain and remain there. I will give you the tablets of stone and the law and the commandments that I have written so that you may teach

them.” We must understand that this is an invitation to receive direct revelation. God is breaking the silence with the Word and breaking the darkness with the light of revelation. God wanted His people to understand this revelation, and Moses was given the responsibility of teaching it to them.

I am impressed with the careful way God provided for His people. If He had only spoken to Moses and the elders, it could have been lost in passing it on from generation to generation. But the LORD said, “I will give you tablets of stone and the law and commandments which I have written.” The written Word remains unchanged, and God meant that this message, this speech, should be unchanged. So, He spoke first to Moses and told him to come up and get the Law. And Moses went up along with Joshua. Aaron and Hur stayed down to keep order in the camp. If anyone needed any help, these two men were there to offer the help they might need.

Only a few people have ever talked with God. No other person talked with Him like Moses did. You cannot go to Mt. Sinai today and go up the mountain and have the same kind of conversation with God that Moses had. No. That is a matter of history, and it is recorded here for us in the book of Exodus.

We should never, by any means, attempt to change that record. The apostle John, in Revelation 22:18 and 19, warns us not to add to or subtract from the Word of God. We must be very diligent to transmit it and to understand it just like it has been given to us. God disclosed His divine speech first to Moses and then from him to the rest of the people so he could teach them. This is his manifestation by divine speech.

So, we have the manifestation of His divine splendor and the manifestation of His divine speech.

The Final MANIFESTATION was,

He Disclosed His Divine Spectacle.

I have especially chosen that word because a spectacle is something very unusual. It is so unusual that it only happens once. That is exactly the situation here on Mt. Sinai. God came down in this way only once. The glory of the LORD rested on Mt. Sinai and the shekinah glory cloud covered it for six days.

It was the shekinah cloud, not an ordinary moisture cloud, but radiating from the presence of God. He came there in that shekinah glory cloud and rested over the mountain for six complete days. We are told that the spectacle was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. Imagine yourself there at the foot of the mountain, looking up and seeing the azure blue sky, the sapphire blue sky, and over the mountain a devouring fire: the presence of God. That must have been an awesome experience.

On the seventh day God called to Moses out of the midst of that shekinah glory cloud. Moses disappeared from view as he went into the cloud and up into the mountain. He stayed there forty days and forty nights. God disclosed His divine spectacle. It happened only once. No one has ever matched Moses' experience.

In our present bodily existence, we cannot see the glory of God, it would be fatal. His glorious brightness would consume us because of our sinfulness. Moses was the only one who was permitted such close intimacy with God. While we cannot repeat the experience of Moses, we can have fellowship with the same God Moses saw. We do that through receiving the truth of the Bible and the presence of God's Holy Spirit.

The people of Israel were called to be God's people in a special way. Moses in particular was chosen to receive the Law from God. Remember that God disclosed His divine splendor, God disclosed His divine speech, and God showed His glorious spectacle so that we might know who He is and experience His presence.

Thanks J Mark for this teaching and thank you for being here with us. It is neat to see God's heart for His people. He shows the children of Israel more of Himself. They were terrified but as we just learned God guided them through their fears.

It is incredible to realize the Lord of the universe wants a relationship with people. He wants your heart. Way back here at Mt Sinai, God came close. Again, many years after this, God came closer. This time he came as a baby. God came in the flesh and limited Himself to a body. His desire was and is the same. He desires a relationship with you, He wants to be the object of your worship, after all, He alone is worthy. We see God going to extreme measures to make this possible. Today we saw a small part of the story and thankfully Jesus has completed it. Through what Christ has done on the cross, we can come into the presence of our Holy God and be in relationship with Him. This is worth thinking about.

If you'd like a copy of today's teaching, or if you'd like to contact us for any reason here are a few ways you can reach us. The best way is through email. Our email is hope@heraldsofhope.org. If you don't have email, no problem, just write to us, our address is Hope for Today, Box 3, Breezewood, Pennsylvania 15533. Or you can connect with us on our website. Our website is Heraldsofhope.org. On our website you will find some resources and under the listen tab there is other teaching similar to what you just heard. If you go to the connect tab you can message us directly. Again, our website is heraldsofhope.org.

Thank you so much for joining us. We look forward to being with you next week and till then go with God and grow in your connection with Him. He is an amazing God to love and serve.