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When My Glory Passes By I Will Put You in the Cleft of the Rock **33: 12-23**

When My glory passes by I will put you in the cleft of the rock DIG: What three concerns does Moses bring to God? What do those concerns have in common with the people (see 32:1)? What does the Presence of God (or lack of it) mean to him? What ensures Isra'el's continuing existence? Did God change His mind here? What is Moses shown and told? Why did God set limits? When is Moses' prayer more fully answered (see Luke 9:30-32)?

REFLECT: Do you refuse to go anywhere unless the Lord leads? Have you ever gone places you wouldn't want the Lord to know about, let alone go with you? How do you need God's Presence today to deal with the every day problems in your life?

The tent of meeting was outside the camp of **Isra'el**. **Moses** entered the tent after telling **Isra'el** he would see about interceding on their behalf. By that point he had gotten **God** to agree to lead **Isra'el** into the Promised Land, but the instructions for the Tabernacle had been delayed. So **Moses** made three bold requests to **God** inside the tent of meeting.

First, Moses asked God to reveal His ways. He said: **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.** More than anything else, **Moses** wanted to know and experience **God**. So **he** continued: **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.** Even though **they** had sinned greatly, **Moses** asked **God** to have compassion on them and that **His Presence** would be in **their** midst. But **the Lord** replied to **Moses'** first petition when **He** said: **My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest (33:12-14).** When **God** said **you**, **He** meant **Moses** because the word **you** is a second person masculine *singular*. Basically, **God** was proclaiming that **He** would only go with **Moses** and not **the people**.⁶⁹³

Secondly, Moses was persistent in the cause of including the Hebrews. Emboldened

even further, **Moses** pleaded: **If your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here. 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? And God** graciously replied to **Moses** that **He would do the very thing he had asked, because He was pleased with Moses and He knew him by name (33:15-17). God** would fully restore **the Hebrews. God** would be present in the midst of **His people**. That was what **the Israelites** needed to hear to move forward and build the **Tabernacle**.

Thirdly, pressing harder, Moses wanted God to show him His glory. **Moses** asked **God** to reveal the essence of **His** being, saying: **Let me see Your glory.** **God's** revelation would come in the form of **His** attributes. First, was **His goodness.** And **ADONAI** said: **I will cause all My goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My name, ADONAI, in your presence (Psalm 86:5, 100:5, 118:1; Ezra 3:11; Jeremiah 33:11).** Secondly, was **His mercy.** Especially significant was the announcement of the name of **God** given here. **His** name was captured in the phrase: **I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy. And** thirdly, was **His compassion.** Continuing this thought, **He** declared: **I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion (33:18-19).** The New Covenant gives us some insight on this statement. After quoting this very verse, Rabbi Sha'ul affirms that **God's** saving relationship to **His** people does not **depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy (Romans 9:16).** **Moses** could do nothing whatsoever to gain even a minimal glimpse of the glory of **God.** Such an experience would only occur through **mercy,** getting something he did not deserve.

Moses' unique relationship to God, as detailed here, is beautifully summarized in Deuteronomy 34:10-12, where among other things we are told that no prophet has risen in Isra'el like Moses, whom ADONAI knew face to face. No other figure is paid such a high complement in the TaNaKh. Moses was indeed a spiritual giant.⁶⁹⁴

He continued with one warning: **But you cannot see My face, for no one in a sinful state may see Me and live (33:20).** It would kill **Moses** instantly. The Scriptures are full of examples showing that mankind cannot see **God (Exodus 3:6; Judges 13:22; Job 13:20).** **God** is sinless and holy, whereas, mankind is sinful and unholy. Not even the angels can look directly at **God (Isaiah 6:1-3).**



Then ADONAI said: **There is a place near Me where you may stand on a rock (33:21).** In order for sinful man to be able to get a glimpse of an infinitely righteous and

holy **God**, it is necessary that he should be put **on** the security and piece of a **rock**. **Jesus Christ** is that **Rock (Matthew 16:18)**. Then **he** said: **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 (33:21-22)**. The verb **passed by** is often found in the ratification of covenants (see **Genesis 15:17** and **Jeremiah 34:18-19**). It may have the same purpose here, because immediately after this incident the two stone tablets were replaced and the Covenant was renewed.

Then I will remove My hand and you will see My afterglow; but My face must not be seen (33:23). **The rabbis teach that Moses saw the knot of the phylactery, or the leather box containing Bible verses, at the back of God's head**. **Moses** would see **ADONAI's glory** in a way that **he** had never seen before, but again, it could not be the fullness of **God's glory**, because it would destroy **him**. It would be an imperfect view, yet it would fulfill **Moses'** desire to see a confirmation that **God** would lead **His** people and **His Presence** would dwell among **them**.

What **Moses** longed for when **he** asked **God**, **"Let me see Your glory"** would eventually be revealed in **Yeshua**. **He is the visible image of the invisible God (Colossians 1:15 CJB)**. In **Hebrews** we are told that **Jesus** is the reality to which **the Tabernacle** pointed; **He is the greater and more perfect Tabernacle (Hebrews 9:11)**. In **John 2:19-22**, the **Lord** says that **His** body is **the Temple**, the place where **God** meets mankind.

Jesus unveiled **His glory, the glory of God**, on the mount of Transfiguration (see the commentary on **The Life of Christ Gb - Jesus took Peter, James and John Up a High Mountain where He was Transfigured**), and **Moshe** was present to see it. On that **mountain**, **Moses** and **Elijah** were present with **Yeshua** and **they spoke about His departure**. The word translated **departure** in **Luke 9:31** is the word for **exodus** (Greek: *exodon*). **Messiah** was about to lead the ultimate **exodus** through **His** death and resurrection. **His** sacrifice made the way for sinful people to have fellowship with **YHVH**.

John comments in **his** gospel: **The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14)**. This is reflected here in **verses 18-23**. **Moses** asked to see **God's glory**, and he was allowed to receive a quick glimpse. But when **the Son of Man** returns, **His** coming will be **a sign** for the entire world to **see**. After the Great Tribulation, **the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30)**. We will **see** **Yeshua Messiah** in **His** glorified body. And we will not only **see Him**, we will be like **Him**. **Dear friends,**



now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Jesus appears, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is (First John 3:2). This is the anticipation and hope of believers who are walking by faith. That is how **Moses'** walked. **He** knew **ADONAI's Presence** had to go with **Him** or **he** would fail.⁶⁹⁵