

A burning question for Israel in the Sinai desert. Is God really there?

'When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain they gathered around Aaron: "Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.' (Ex 32:1-2)

God threatens to start again (32:9-10) *"your people... quick to turn away... I may destroy them. Then I will make you into a great nation.'* (32:7-10) God pulls back from this, but still he isn't pleased.

The WITHDRAWN Presence: (33:1-6). *'Go to the land I promised...I will not go with you,'*

The promise of life in the land of plenty stands but this apparent success is a tragedy. God has been grievously sinned against. The first commandment immediately broken!

Samson: The Philistines are upon you, Samson!' He awoke from sleep: 'I will go out as I have time after time and shake myself free.' **Samson didn't know that the Lord had departed him.** Jdg 16:20

Sardis: I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive but you are dead. **Wake up!** *Strengthen what remains and is about to die, I have found your deeds unfinished in my sight, (Rev 3)*

What do we learn from Samson and Sardis about living presumptuously without our fervently seeking and relying on the transforming power of God's holy presence?

The FAMILIAR Presence: 33:7-11 God announces judgment, but Moses responds (12)

Israel is about to lose God's presence but Moses enjoys God's presence.

'whenever Moses went to the tent the people rose and stood watching Moses...saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance, they stood and worshiped at the entrance to their tent.

The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend

Direct consciousness of God's immediate presence while praying.

The RESTORED Presence: 33:12-17 Moses wants God's people to have God's presence

a. Reasons: What would Egypt say if God left his people? (32: 9-1)

b. Reminds: You promised Abraham: *'I will give your descendants all this land I promised them...'*

GOD RELENTS -- *'My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'* (33:14)

c. Reproves: *"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?

GOD RESTATES: *'I will do the thing you asked... I am pleased...I know you by name'* (33:15-17)

OVERWHELMING Presence: 33:18-34:9 *'Show me your glory'.*

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. But you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live."* Then the Lord said, *'There is a place near me where you may stand on a rock. 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. Then I will remove my hand and you will see my back; but my face must not be seen.'* (Exodus 33:19-23)

God's Presence is his name and nature (7 features)

34:4-7 The LORD came down in the cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name the LORD And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the **compassionate** and **gracious** God, **slow to anger, abounding in love** and **faithfulness**, ⁷ maintaining love to thousands, and **forgiving wickedness**, rebellion and sin. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; **he punishes** the children and their children for the **sin** of the parents to the third and fourth generation." Moses bowed and worshiped.

COVENANT Presence: 34:10-28 Then the Lord said: "I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the Lord, will do for you. God bonds himself to Israel. They must 11-17 Resist paganism. 18-26 Worship faithfully.

TRANSFORMING Presence 34:29-35 *Moses came down from Sinai... he was not aware that his face was radiant because he had spoken with the LORD. Aaron and the Israelites saw Moses, his face was radiant... When Moses finished speaking to them, he put a veil over his face. But whenever he entered the LORD's presence to speak with him, he removed the veil until he came out. when he came out and told the Israelites what he had been commanded they saw that his face was radiant. Then Moses would put the veil back over his face until he went in to speak with the LORD.*

The God whose "back" he saw revealed his face in Jesus. God was always like Jesus.

'No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.' (John 1:18)

'As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed' (Luke 9:29) ***'His face shone like the sun (Matt 17:2). Moses and Elijah, appeared in glorious splendor talking with Jesus...Peter and his companions were very sleepy...but when they became fully awake, they saw his glory.'*** (Lk 9:28-32)

TRANSFORMED BY THE LORD

We are not like Moses who would put a veil over his face to prevent the Israelites from seeing the end of what was passing away. But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read...But whenever anyone turns to the Lord the veil is taken away...only in Christ is it taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.
(2 Corinthians 3:12-18)

Jesus brings us into Gods presence and we are to shine his light through the Spirit.

For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light ⁹ (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) ¹⁰ and find out what pleases the Lord. ¹¹ Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them... everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and **everything that is illuminated becomes a light.** This is why it is said **"Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."**

AWAKE TO THE LORD

Apostles: ***'Peter and companions were very sleepy...fully awake they saw his glory.'***

Church: **As for me, I will be vindicated and will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness.'** (Ps 17:15; 1 John 3:2 Revelation 22:4)