

March 19

Scriptures: Read Exodus 34

Key Verse: “The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth...” (Exodus 34:6)

Overview

Before going up alone to meet with God early the next morning, Moses was told to make himself ready (34:2) and to cut new stone tablets to replace the ones he had broken. God, in His grace, would once again inscribe His moral law upon them. This was the first act of God in His reconciliation with Israel. Likewise, when we are reconciled to God He writes His laws upon our hearts (Heb. 8:10). But first, like Moses who was required to prepare the tablets, we must prepare our hearts that they be open and tender to receive the law of God. The rough stone tablets became a beautiful expression of God’s love and acceptance for the Israelites. In the same manner, when God writes upon our hearts we should show forth His beauty and love within us.

Once Moses ascended the mountain, God immediately came down to meet him in a pillar of cloud, thus veiling the brilliance of His glory. Here God made Himself known to Moses in the fuller way he desired (33:18). As God passed by Moses, He expressed the glory of His mercy, Grace, patience, goodness, and forgiveness which all stem from the great love He has for His people. To know God we do not have to visually see Him; we know God we do not have to visually see Him; we know Him by His character, attributes, and experiencing His presence all in faith believing. His “mercy for thousands” implies the universal extent of His grace. Although the Israelites were His special people at that time, He still was good and merciful to others. At the same time, the Lord is just and holy, and will not clear the guilt – those who do not repent (34:7). This part of verse seven can also be translated: “forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin which by no means goes unnoticed”.

The Lord is all-seeing and all-knowing. No one should think they can hide their wrongdoings from Him. Those who do not repent, and thereby do not reverse the curse upon them, cause sinfulness (because of the bad influence,) among their descendants as well, even until the third or fourth generation. This is true until the spirit of the Lord draws one unto repentance and thus the future curse of their family may be changed from a curse to a blessing. Moses wanted reconfirmation from God that the Israelites, His inheritance, would see His blessings and His forgiveness. God’s newly revealed glory caused Moses to bow low and worship Him (34:10). This was done through Moses as their mediator, likewise the New Covenant of grace with believers is made through Jesus Christ. There are two main points in the covenant that God stressed since on these very things they had already failed: (1) “You shall worship no other god” (34:14) and (2) “you shall make no molded gods (34:17). They were not to make any treaties with the heathen nations, nor allow any intermarriage which is a compromise leading to spiritual downfall.

During this second forty days and nights, the Lord reiterated several rules He had given concerning the observance of the Sabbath and other feasts (34:18-26; see comments on Ex. 23:10-19), plus some and additional information. This time Moses gained more knowledge of

God and saw more of His glory. In the closing period upon the mountain, the Lord once again commanded Moses to write the book of the Law. This was so the people would have something concrete that they might learn and know what God expected of them, and to have the written word to pass on to their future generations. Would the people remain faithful this time while Moses was absent, and trust that God could provide all his needs? It is impossible for a person to go without food and water for forty days, but God supernaturally sustained Moses. This time the Israelites passed the test. Moses descended the mountain with good news of reconciliation to those anxiously awaiting the Lord's reply and he was honored by God to carry down His written Word to them. What an honor it is to give the words of God to others! Moses' face was shining with the glory of the Lord, a sign that he had met with God and his mediation on their behalf had been accepted. The people must have been filled with great joy, but at the same time they experienced a much needed fear and reverence for God and His holiness.

Prayer

Thank You Father for Your forgiveness. Please keep us faithful to You. Your goodness leads us to repentance.