

## **EXODUS 33:1-11 (EVERYONE WHO SOUGHT THE LORD)**

The chiasm which spans all of chapter 32 and through most of chapter 34 continues on in this passage. It is bringing us closer to the anchor verse which will come in just one more sermon. Until then, the structure of the chiasm appears to reveal to us the proper placement of the verses which we will look at today.

However, the verses today aren't just a set of verses that need to be properly aligned chronologically into the on-going narrative. They are also verses which show us a snapshot of Israel at several points throughout their history. The people disobey the Lord, the Lord distances Himself from them, but He also makes Himself available to them, at least individually, even if collectively they are out of His favor.

Today's verses show a separation between the Lord and Israel. Today's world shows the same. They are still under the promises of one covenant, while out of the favor of another one. As long as people can understand this, then it makes sense as to why they have remained a people despite their immense disobedience towards Him, and even their outright rejection of Him.

If He were to completely reject them, then His promises to their father's would be voided. This will never happen. An oath of God will never, never fail.

When we see Christians being killed around the world, and especially for those Christians who are facing such persecution, it might seem that God's promises have failed for us. That is, if we look at this world as our promised inheritance. Way too many Christians seem to look at it in that regard.

But there are no enduring promises that we won't face a lifetime full of trouble, pain, persecution, or misery. This is why the Bible notes we live by faith, not by

sight. If this world were our true reward, then we might have reason to feel that way. But it is not.

We have a true inheritance that can never be taken away from us. God has spoken this, and it is true. When we get feeling like we may have been forgotten, all we really need to do is look at Israel. They have actively rejected the Lord, and yet He has remained faithful to them because of His former promises.

We have called on Christ, and His word says that because of that we have an eternal inheritance. Just as He has been faithful to unfaithful Israel, He will surely demonstrate the same faithfulness to us because of the sure promises found in Christ.

**Text Verse:** In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, <sup>12</sup> that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

<sup>13</sup> In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory. Ephesians 1:11-14

These are the verses I send people to, time and again, when they are filled with bad doctrine concerning our inheritance. There is an entire camp of people out there who look at the salvation granted to us as a conditional thing; something we can lose.

However, if there is something that we can do (or not do) in order to lose our salvation, then it is not of grace at all – and it never was. Whether leading up to our salvation or following along after it, if there is something that is required by us, then it is not of grace, but of works.

Further, if we trusted in Christ, believed the word of truth which is the gospel of our salvation, and then were sealed with the Holy Spirit as a guarantee, then what has happened must be eternal. If it was not, then that was 1) a rather crummy guarantee, and 2) God made a mistake.

Such things call into question the workings of God. Let us never presume to do that, even internally as we struggle and doubt our salvation. Today's passage continues to show us that the Lord was still there for Israel. He may have distanced Himself from them, but He has not left them, nor forsaken them. Neither will He do this to you. These are truths which are found in His superior word. And so let's turn to that precious word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

### **I. A Stiff-necked People (verses 1-3)**

**Then the Lord said to Moses, “Depart *and* go up from here,**

John Lange says, “This is one of the most mysterious chapters in all the three books of the covenant.” He is right. It is extremely hard to follow what is going on, and where the words belong in the narrative. However, it is not impossible to determine.

The words of chapter 33 and part of 34 are an expansion of what was said when Moses went back up the mountain after the narrative of the golden calf. This is similar, for example, to Genesis 2 being an insert into the sixth day record of Genesis 1. After the debacle of the golden calf, Moses ascended the mountain again where we read this –

Now it came to pass on the next day that Moses said to the people, “You have committed a great sin. So now I will go up to the Lord; perhaps I can

make atonement for your sin.”<sup>31</sup> Then Moses returned to the Lord and said, “Oh, these people have committed a great sin, and have made for themselves a god of gold!<sup>32</sup> Yet now, if You will forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written.”

<sup>33</sup> And the Lord said to Moses, “Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book.<sup>34</sup> Now therefore, go, lead the people to *the place* of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin.”

The details which we are seeing in Chapter 33, through verse 9 of chapter 34, chronologically belong between verses 33 and 34 of Chapter 32. The Lord said to Moses that He would blot out of His book the one who sinned against him. This account follows, and then the promise of the final verses of the chapter next are given. Confusing, yes. But it appears logical and orderly when laid out.

For now, Moses is told to “Depart and go up from here” with the abrupt words *lek aleh mizzeh*.

What appears to be the case is that everything promised to Moses on Mount Sinai which encompass all of the details of the construction of the tabernacle, and everything associated with it, was suspended. Moses was given all of those instructions with the anticipation that it would be built, and that the Lord would dwell in their midst as they traveled.

However, now they are being directed to simply go up from their place of encampment. This is based on a completely different covenant made at a completely different time, meaning at the time of Abraham. As for the covenant which was just made since their arrival at Sinai, that was to be disregarded; it was voided by the golden calf.

**<sup>1 (con't)</sup> you and the people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt,**

The words again reflect the sentiment that they are not the covenant people. The Lord says, as He did in verse 32:7, that they are the people Moses brought out of the land of Egypt. The Lord has distanced Himself from the people due to their disgraceful conduct.

**<sup>1 (con't)</sup> to the land of which I swore to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, 'To your descendants I will give it.'**

Regardless of the status of the covenant between the Lord and the people, the issue of the inheritance of the land does not change. It was firmly resolved while Moses was on Mt. Sinai with the Lord the previous time. When the matter of the covenant violation arose, the following exchange came about between the two –

And the Lord said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and indeed it *is* a stiff-necked people! <sup>10</sup> Now therefore, let Me alone, that My wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation."

<sup>11</sup> Then Moses pleaded with the Lord his God, and said: "Lord, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? <sup>12</sup> Why should the Egyptians speak, and say, 'He brought them out to harm them, to kill them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and relent from this harm to Your people.

<sup>13</sup> Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your descendants as the stars of heaven; and all this land that I have spoken of I give to your descendants, and they shall inherit *it* forever.'" <sup>14</sup> So the Lord relented from the harm which He said He would do to His people. Exodus 32:9-14

The people, despite their rebellion would be the particular line of descendants who would receive the promises made to their fathers before them.

**<sup>2</sup>And I will send *My Angel* before you, and I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.**

This is the same general promise as in Exodus 23:23 which said –

“For My Angel will go before you and bring you in to the Amorites and the Hittites and the Perizzites and the Canaanites and the Hivites and the Jebusites; and I will cut them off.”

This same promise concerning these inhabitants will be repeated in Exodus 34:11. All three are under the same context. However, the order of the names varies in all three. The Canaanite group moves within each verse, but the other four – the Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites stay in the same order. No idea why, just thought I would share that with you.

Amorites Hittites Perizzites Canaanites Hivites Jebusites.

Canaanite Amorite Hittite Perizzite Hivite Jebusite.

Amorite Canaanite Hittite Perizzite Hivite Jebusite.

Also, the Hebrew does not say “My Angel.” Instead it simply says “angel.” The word “my” is inserted by the translators. This then leaves in doubt who exactly is going to lead them.

### **<sup>3</sup> Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey;**

This is the fourth of 20 times that this expression will be used in the Bible. The last time will be in Ezekiel 20 where it is also called "the glory of all lands." A land flowing with milk and honey implies richness and fertility.

Milk comes from cows and so it means there will be abundant pasture lands. Honey comes from bees which pollinate flowers and so it implies all sorts of fruit trees, herbs, and flowers.

Further the term "a land flowing with milk and honey" has a spiritual connotation. It isn't just speaking of the physical abundance but also of spiritual abundance. It is the land of God's word and the people through whom that word has come.

The word of God is said to be sweeter than honey. It is also equated with milk which nourishes. Thus, this is a reference to that as well. The land would literally flow with milk and honey for sustaining Israel's physical lives. It would also flow with milk and honey for sustaining their spiritual lives.

At this time, they do not know this, and with the covenant broken, only the first can be assumed. Only in looking back after the fact can we see that both the physical and spiritual aspects of this verse have come about in Israel.

For now, the words are certainly given to shame the people for their ingratitude towards the already abundant provision of the Lord. He has given them Manna and water from the rock. He has given them meat. He has protected them and made a covenant with them.

Despite all of this, and so much more, they rejected Him. And yet he directs them to go up to the land, flowing with milk and honey, which was set apart for them.

**3 (con't) for I will not go up in your midst,**

This verse doesn't say that the Lord will not go up with them. It says the He will not go up *b'qirbekha*, or "in the middle of you." The word *qerev* gives the idea of the inward part. The fact that He just said, "I will drive out the Canaanite and the Amorite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite" shows that He intended to go ahead of them, just not among them. And there is a reason why He intends to not go in their midst...

**3 (con't) lest I consume you on the way,**

Elsewhere, the Lord is called a consuming fire. That which He does not purify with His presence is burnt up in it. The Lord says that He would not go up in their midst because if He did, it would be catastrophic for them. And the reason is expressly given...

**3 (con't) for you *are* a stiff-necked people."**

This is now the second time that this term, "stiff-necked" is used in the Bible. It is a metaphor which is normally explained as being obstinate, but it is more than that. It defines a perverse people who want to behave in a way which is both unacceptable and unreasonable, even in spite of the consequences they will face.

*You want a home, a place where you can stay*

*Go up there and make it ready on your own*

*I shall not be with you lest I consume you on the way  
Don't weep to Me; nor to Me shall you moan*

*You have forgotten Me and so now I have let go of you  
There will be a distance between the two of us  
There is nothing more that You can do  
Unless You call upon My Son; upon the Lord Jesus*

*You want a home, and it is waiting there for you  
One that He alone has made and can endow  
If You call on Him, He is faithful and He is true  
You can come home through Him, this I do avow*

## **II. From Mount Horeb (verses 4-6)**

**<sup>4</sup>And when the people heard this bad news, they mourned,**

What is implied is that Moses went back down the mountain at this time. The events are still a part of the insert between verses 33 and 34 of the previous chapter, and they will continue to be so throughout chapter 33. Like I said, this is an insert chapter which fills in details which bring about a resulting action. It is the same as the details of Genesis 2 filling in what was missing in Genesis 1 and which led to a resulting action.

Having gone down to the people, he told them what the Lord had said. In His rejection of them because of the violation of the covenant, and His words that He

would not go in their midst, it brought about a great sense of mourning. The word used is *abal*. It is only the second time that it has been used in the Bible.

To get the sense of their state, we can go to the first use of the word. It was in Genesis 37 when Jacob heard of the death of Joseph –

And he recognized it and said, “*It is my son’s tunic. A wild beast has devoured him. Without doubt Joseph is torn to pieces.*”<sup>34</sup> Then Jacob tore his clothes, put sackcloth on his waist, and **mourned** for his son many days.

The grieving of Israel was profound over the bad news they had been given. It is a pattern which will be seen again in their history. Only when the knowledge of their sin is highlighted do they realize their horrible plight and mourn over their actions. An account, not too distant in their future will indicate the same type of mourning.

The people will refuse to enter Canaan when the twelve spies return with a bad report about the land. They will face the Lord’s sentence concerning their punishment and the same type of mourning will be mentioned.

<sup>4 (con’t)</sup> **and no one put on his ornaments.**

As a sign of their mourning, the people refrained from adorning themselves. The Hebrew reads “and no man put on his ornaments.” The masculine would include all people. The word for ornaments is introduced into the Bible here, *adi*. It is from the verb *adah* which means “to adorn.” The ornaments could indicate finery, an outfit, something worn on the head, etc.

Wearing ornaments today is no different than back then. They bring attention to oneself. They highlight and intensify the perception of a person. In not wearing

ornaments then, it is a sign that a person wants no such attention and is thus in a state of grief. This is seen, for example, in the book of Jonah –

“So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. <sup>6</sup>Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered *himself* with sackcloth and sat in ashes.” Jonah 3:5, 6

**<sup>5</sup>For the Lord had said to Moses, “Say to the children of Israel, ‘You *are* a stiff-necked people.**

The tense of the words of this verse isn’t completely clear. Some scholars see this as a statement which followed, rather than preceded, the people’s repentance. The dolts at Cambridge find another answer by saying that –

“The people are here told to do what they have already done” which is “a clear proof that two narratives have been combined.”

In other words, they say that there are multiple authors who have been combined into one narrative. Were that so, they would have made a clearer, not a less clear transition.

It is probably correct that these words follow the people’s repentance. Because of this, the next clause is not a threat of destruction, but a repetition of what has already been said as an explanation as to why He would not be in the midst of them...

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **I could come up into your midst in one moment and consume you.**

Were the Lord to come into their midst, even for a moment, He might be inclined to consume them. The word *rega*, or “moment” is introduced here. It is from the verb *raga* which gives the idea of suddenness. It thus indicates the wink of an eye or something instantaneous. It is used twice in an affectionate passage from Isaiah when speaking of the Lord’s tenderness towards Israel –

“For a mere **moment** I have forsaken you,  
But with great mercies I will gather you.

<sup>8</sup> With a little wrath I hid My face **from you for a moment;**  
But with everlasting kindness I will have mercy on you,”  
Says the Lord, your Redeemer. Isaiah 54:7, 8

<sup>5</sup> (con't) **Now therefore, take off your ornaments, that I may know what to do to you.”**

If the first clause came after the repentance of the people, then the words here would naturally follow in that same vein. And so instead of these words being a command to take off their ornaments, they are a command to lay them aside altogether.

The word is *yarad* and it means “down.” Therefore, it is an admonition to leave the ornaments off entirely. In obedience to this, and in that humbled state, the Lord would decide what He would do with the people. This is likely from the next verse...

**<sup>6</sup>So the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by Mount Horeb.**

The words here say that they stripped off their ornaments “*from* Mount Horeb.” John Lange says this means, “on account of.” But even more fully than that is that the people stripped off their ornaments *from that time on*. Because of what occurred, they left them off entirely and kept them off. They remained in a perpetual state of penitence.

What is most interesting is that the term Horeb has not been used since Exodus 17:6. Since then, the term Sinai has been used eight times. Then, the term Horeb won't be used again until Deuteronomy 1:2, but the term Sinai will be used numerous times by then.

Although they are used almost synonymously, because Horeb and Sinai are used to indicate the same place, the words are selected to be used for different reasons when they are, in fact, used. Horeb means "Arid" or "Desert." Sinai means “Bush of the Thorn.”

The different names are used to show different aspects of what is going on. When Sinai is used, it is normally referring to the on-going redemptive workings of God for His people. When Horeb is used, it indicates the total dependence of the people on the provision of the Lord, or it indicates that which has been accomplished by Him already.

Here in the desert, the people need the Lord to sustain them. They have fallen out of favor with Him, and so Horeb is the right and proper term to use for their needy condition. From Horeb on, they have put away their ornaments in seeking the favor of the Lord.

*The Lord is righteous, and it is we who have strayed  
He gave us laws with which to guide our ways  
But we turned from them and our hearts were swayed  
And now we live out saddened, miserable days*

*Return to us, O Lord, heal our erring ways  
Grants us again Your presence in our midst  
Where we can lavish upon You all of our praise  
Let go of Your anger, and loosen your terrible fist*

*Lord God, to You our eyes are turned  
And to You our hearts shall be directed always  
For closeness with You our desire has burned  
It shall never be quenched, even for eternal days*

### **III. The Tent of Meeting (verses 7-11)**

**<sup>7</sup> Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp,**

This verse now explains the separation of the Lord from the people. He would not dwell in their midst at this time, but rather a far distance from them in order to not consume them in His wrath. The Hebrew says *ha'ohel*, or "the tent." The definite article is thus believed to indicate Moses' personal tent. Moses' tent was probably the finest in the camp and thus he moved it out from the camp in order to meet with the Lord.

7 (con't) **far from the camp,**

The term “far from the camp” implies quite a distance. When the Ark went before the people as they crossed into the Land of Promise in Joshua 3, the distance between the people and the ark was 2000 cubits, or 3000 feet. It is quite a distance, and is probably comparable to the distance Moses was from the camp itself.

7 (con't) **and called it the tabernacle of meeting.**

As has been typical with the KJV and the NKJV, they incorrectly call this “the tabernacle of meeting” instead of the “tent of meeting.” It is the same word as was just used at the beginning of the verse – *ohel*. It means “tent.” The word for “tabernacle” is *mishkan*. The KJV gets two demerits and the NKJV gets one.

7 (con't) **And it came to pass *that* everyone who sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle of meeting which *was* outside the camp.**

The Lord was not in their midst, but He was not altogether unavailable to the people. They could venture out of the camp to meet with Him if they chose to do so. This precept is similar to the words of Hebrews 13 concerning those who would come to Christ. If the people want to meet with the Lord, they must be willing to do it on His terms –

“Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. <sup>13</sup> Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach.” Hebrews 13:12, 13

This separation was to be a reminder to them that they were not in favor with the Lord. In order to seek Him, they had to come to Him. The covenant was nullified through their actions and thus it was up to them to come humbly out of the camp, bearing the reproach of their actions in order to seek His face once again.

What is of note is that the words “everyone who sought the Lord” implies that not everyone sought the Lord. Some did and some did not. Those who did had to go to where the Lord would meet with Moses, or “He who draws out,” as his name means.

It is to be remembered that these verses are an insert into the ending of Chapter 32. Once the insert is finished, the narrative continued to the end of Chapter 32 with these words –

Now therefore, go, lead the people to *the place* of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My Angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit for punishment, I will visit punishment upon them for their sin.”

<sup>35</sup> So the Lord plagued the people because of what they did with the calf which Aaron made. Exodus 32:34, 35

A time of punishment lies ahead. However, the Lord offers grace before that time comes. He has given grace by leaving their midst and not destroying them. He has given grace by allowing them to come out of the camp to Him. And He has given grace by allowing restoration for those who do seek Him. Thus we see the truth found in Romans 5 –

“Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more.” Romans 5:20

And so in this narrative, we actually have a picture of Israel after their collective rejection of Jesus. They had forsaken the Lord and He no longer dwells in their midst. But He has still offered them individual grace before the time of punishment comes, meaning the tribulation period. Any who choose to do so can come outside the camp, bearing His reproach in order to be reconciled to Him.

**<sup>8</sup>So it was, whenever Moses went out to the tabernacle, *that* all the people rose, and each man stood *at* his tent door and watched Moses until he had gone into the tabernacle.**

This is an obvious sign of respect that is being portrayed here. The tent was not so far off that it could not be seen when Moses entered into it, but it was far off enough so that the people were reminded that the Lord was no longer in their midst.

As he passed through them, they would rise, and during the intervening time until his arrival, they would stand at the door of their tent watching the amazing scene of close and personal fellowship of which they were now denied.

The *pethakh*, or door, is that place which provides access. There seems to be a hint of symbolism here. As the people watched Moses walk towards the Tent of Meeting, they waited and watched at their own door. It was as if they were inviting the Lord to come to them if He so chose.

They were apart from Him and estranged from Him, but they still held out hope that He would make a change and come to them. Their ornaments were put aside and their hearts were being molded for a time of restoration.

And so they waited “until” Moses went into the tent. It was as if they had hoped that maybe he would turn around and rejoin them in the camp. If so, maybe the Lord would come into their midst instead of being separate from them.

Again, it is as if a picture of Israel after Christ’s first advent is being seen here. They rejected the Lord, went out after gods of gold, and found that they had lost His favor. Individually, they could come out to Him, but collectively, He is not there for them.

For the people at Sinai, it will not be until the sanctuary is built that the Lord will again reside in their midst. And it will not be until the time that Christ comes to His temple in Jerusalem that He will once again be in the midst of Israel. The words of Ecclesiastes shout out to us of the repetitive patterns of history –

That which has been *is* what will be,  
That which *is* done is what will be done,  
And *there is* nothing new under the sun. Ecclesiastes 1:9

Nothing is new. Each thing that comes about is already something that has occurred. God does this so that we can call the past to remembrance and be confident of what the proper course for our future should be.

**<sup>9</sup>And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle, that the pillar of cloud descended and stood *at* the door of the tabernacle,**

Only when Moses was within the tent would the pillar descend and stand at the *pethakh*, or door. The place of access is where the meeting between the two would take place. The divine presence descending there for the people to see was an assertion of the authority of Moses.

Where they were set off from the Lord and considered unacceptable to fellowship with, Moses was given the Lord's approval that his actions retained the Lord's favor. By coming in this way, and after Moses was within the door of the tent, there could be no possibility of deception.

The cloud moved according to its own design and apart from any possibility of Moses' having been behind its movement. Although unstated, it can be inferred that this was a regular occurrence.

Instead of the cloud coming and staying after Moses' first visit, it was what occurred each time Moses went to the tent. When the meeting was over, the cloud probably went back to the top of Sinai. Interestingly, the term "pillar," when speaking of this cloud, has not been seen since Exodus 14:24.

The cloud has been mentioned several times as having been atop the mountain, but the term pillar has not accompanied it since then. The *ammud*, or pillar, comes from the word *amad*, or stand. Thus, in this we get the idea that the standing cloud *stood* at the door of the tent.

<sup>9</sup> (con't) **and the Lord talked with Moses.**

Once there, it says, "...and talked with Moses." The words "the Lord" are inserted by the translators. The standing cloud is the subject of the verb. It is directly equated with the presence of the Lord. It is how the Lord has manifested Himself to Moses and in the sight of the people.

A cloud is that which covers or conceals a thing. Throughout Scripture, the cloud is used to signify the coming and going of the presence of the Lord. It is this display which the Lord chose to come to Moses in the sight of the people,

reminding them that just as He had delivered through the Red Sea and led them in the wilderness to Sinai, He was still there.

They had forgotten Him, even though His presence was in full sight atop Sinai, and now they had to see His presence from a distance as Moses talked and intimately fellowshiped with Him.

**<sup>10</sup> All the people saw the pillar of cloud standing *at* the tabernacle door, and all the people rose and worshiped, each man *in* his tent door.**

This verse leads us to the notion that the cloud didn't just suddenly appear as soon as Moses went into the tent. Instead, the people stood all the time that Moses walked to the tent. Then the people would sit down and wait for the next great thing to occur, the appearing of the cloud.

Once the cloud appeared, the people would rise again and worship, as it says, "each man *in* his tent door." For the fourth time in just three verses, the *pethakh* or door is mentioned. It is as if a stress is being laid on the door of the people to show that they wished that the Lord would come into them.

They worshipped him not in groups, but individually. It was a sign that they would gladly welcome Him in and have Him fellowship with them as well. They had lost His favor and this was their way of begging for that favor to be restored to them once again. For them, that time was gone, but for Moses, it continued on uninterrupted...

**<sup>11</sup> So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face,**

These words are to be taken in the sense of familiarity as they will next be described. The Lord at this time came in the pillar, without discernable face or mouth. Rather, the term *panim el panim*, or “face to face,” means that they had open and free discussion without anything to hinder their words. In essence, the Lord has allowed Moses to speak to Him personally intimately, even...

**<sup>11 (con't)</sup> as a man speaks to his friend.**

When a man speaks to his friend, titles and formalities are set aside. Instead, there is a warmth and a closeness that permeates the conversation. It is the highest note of the character of Moses and the bond between him and his Lord. It is something that very few in the Old Testament ever attained the honor of knowing, even remotely, in comparison to Moses.

**\*<sup>11 (fin)</sup> And he would return to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, did not depart from the tabernacle.**

When Moses’s time at the Tent of Meeting was done, he would make the trek back to the camp. This is expected as he would carry the messages of the Lord back, and he would also be needed in the camp for advice and direction over a host of matters. But once again, the enigmatic Joshua shows up out of the blue as he has already done a few times. He is identified in three ways.

- 1) He is Moses’ servant.
- 2) He is the son of Nun.
- 3) He is a young man.

The word for servant means a to minister or serve. He is the one who tends to the needs of Moses as a general's aide would tend to the needs of his superior. His father's name, Nun, is introduced into the Bible here. The name comes from the verb *nun* which means to propagate or increase. It is used only once in the Bible, in a messianic psalm when speaking of the reign of the King –

“His name shall endure forever;  
His name **shall continue as** long as the sun.  
And *men* shall be blessed in Him;  
All nations shall call Him blessed.” Psalm 72:17

And he is lastly noted as a young man. This despite the fact that it says this in Joshua 14:10 –

“And now, behold, the Lord has kept me alive, as He said, these forty-five years, ever since the Lord spoke this word to Moses while Israel wandered in the wilderness; and now, here I am this day, eighty-five years old.”

This means that Joshua is now about 38 or 39 years old. Therefore, the term *na'ar*, or young man, is probably being used either in relation to Moses who is over 80, or it is referring to his years of service to the Lord, he being a young man in his time of duties.

The name Joshua, or Yehoshua, is a contraction of Yehovah and *yasha*. Thus his name means “Yehovah is salvation.” In this final verse of the day is a picture of the work of the Lord. Moses, or He who draws out” is the one who draws out from the Lord that which is for the people, and from the people that which is for the Lord.

Yehoshua, or the “Lord is Salvation,” remains outside the camp, there at the place where the Lord meets with either the people or the people’s mediator. Either way, the people must come to where he is at. Isaiah 59 tells the people that –

“Behold, the Lord’s hand is not shortened,  
That it cannot save;  
Nor His ear heavy,  
That it cannot hear.  
<sup>2</sup> But your iniquities have separated you from your God;  
And your sins have hidden *His* face from you,  
So that He will not hear.  
<sup>3</sup> For your hands are defiled with blood,  
And your fingers with iniquity;  
Your lips have spoken lies,  
Your tongue has muttered perversity.”

The sins of the people had, in fact, separated them from their God. He was there and willing to save, but the people had to come to Him to be restored to Him. This is the state of Israel today. Most still have not come outside the camp to Him, nor have they come through His Mediator to Him. Instead, they sit at their doors worshipping from afar and are not in His presence.

For the people at Sinai, their time of restoration lies ahead. And for Israel collectively, the same is true. The Lord’s hand is not shortened, but the people’s unwillingness to allow the outstretched hand to heal them remains an impassable obstacle to their restoration.

Today as we close, I would ask you to remember Israel in your prayers. They will be restored, but of them, who, how, and when is not known to us. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to pray for them, just as any lost souls. They need Jesus and they need to come outside their camp, to where He is, in order to find Him.

And the same may be true of you. Maybe you're listening today and have never raised yourself up and acknowledged Him in your life. If so, you are no closer to God than the worst heathen. But you can get that corrected by a simple acknowledgment of your state and His ability to fix it. Let me explain that to you...

**Closing Verse:** "Jacob shall not now be ashamed,

Nor shall his face now grow pale;

<sup>23</sup> But when he sees his children,

The work of My hands, in his midst,

They will hallow My name,

And hallow the Holy One of Jacob,

And fear the God of Israel.

<sup>24</sup> These also who erred in spirit will come to understanding,

And those who complained will learn doctrine." Isaiah 29:22-24

**Next Week:** Exodus 33:12-23 *The news is great, in fact for them it will be the best...* (My Presence Will Go With You, And I Will Give You Rest) (93<sup>rd</sup> Exodus Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. Even if a deep ocean lies ahead of You, He can part the waters and lead you through it on dry ground. So follow Him and trust Him and He will do marvelous things for you and through you.

### **Everyone Who Sought the Lord**

Then the Lord said to Moses

"Depart and go up from here, He did command

You and the people whom

You have brought out of Egypt the land  
To the land of which I swore to Abraham  
Isaac, and Jacob, saying  
“To your descendants I will give it  
So to you I am relaying

And I will send My Angel before you  
And I will drive out the Canaanite, that’s right  
And the Amorite and the Hittite too  
And the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite  
Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey  
For I will not in your midst go up with you  
Lest I consume you on the way  
For you are a stiff-necked people, it is true

And when the people heard this bad news, there at their tents  
They mourned, and no one put on his ornaments  
For the Lord had said to Moses  
“Say to the children of Israel  
‘You are a stiff-necked people  
And you know this very well  
I could come up into your midst in one moment  
And consume you, so could I do  
Now therefore, take off your ornaments

That I may know what to do to you  
So, stripped themselves did the children of Israel  
Of their ornaments by Mount Horeb, as the record does tell

Moses took his tent and pitched it  
Outside the camp, far from the camp he went  
And called it the tabernacle of meeting  
Yes, this is the name he called this tent  
And it came to pass that everyone  
Who sought the Lord, so we know  
Went out to the tabernacle of meeting  
Which was outside the camp, there they did go

So it was, whenever Moses went out  
To the tabernacle, that all the people rose  
And each man stood at his tent door and watched Moses  
Until he had gone into the tabernacle, before they again did repose  
And it came to pass, when Moses entered the tabernacle  
That the pillar of cloud descended, him to meet  
And stood at the door of the tabernacle  
And the Lord talked with Moses, in fellowship sweet

All the people saw the pillar of cloud  
Standing at the tabernacle door, as we know

And all the people rose and worshiped  
Each man in his tent door, it is so  
So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face  
As a man speaks to his friend, there in that place  
And he would return to the camp  
But his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man as we know  
Did not depart from the tabernacle  
He stayed at the tent, even so

Lord God, You are there still  
Waiting for Your people to come to You  
For each and every one that will  
You have promised them something new

No longer will we be estranged and living apart  
No longer will we be far from Your place  
Instead ahead will be a brand new start  
When we come to fellowship with You face to face

Thank You, O God, for Jesus who makes all things new  
Thank You for our Lord who is ever faithful and true

Hallelujah and Amen...