

## EXODUS 33:12-23 (MY PRESENCE WILL GO WITH YOU, AND I WILL GIVE YOU REST)

Today we will come to the center verses of the lengthy chiasm which comprises this and the surrounding chapters. We'll also start heading back down the other side of it towards its completion. The verses which surround the center verse speak of God's grace.

Moses has been told that he has found grace in the eyes of the Lord, but he is unsure as to how far that actually extends. Does it include his beloved people Israel? He asks that it would, and he goes into great length to ensure that the message he is given is perfectly understood and without any ambiguity.

It is not that he doesn't *trust the Lord*, it is that he doesn't *trust the people*. They are prone to error and they are stiff-necked towards the Lord. And so he will methodically work to make sure that the grace he has been given will also be grace for them.

**Text Verse:** Thus says the Lord:

“The people who survived the sword  
Found grace in the wilderness—  
Israel, when I went to give him rest.” Jeremiah 31:2

Israel has a long history of disobedience and falling away from the Lord, and yet if you talk to many Jews today, they are under the assumption that they are somehow deserving of God's favor. They have an attitude that because of who they are as a people, they are exempt from the very laws that established them as a people.

It's often hard to have a dialogue with a Jew about righteousness, because they feel they already inherently possess it. It is as if the grace that was bestowed on them was a once-for-all-time thing. It is as if to them God stamped them with a seal of approval, declared them righteous, and that is that.

As long as they have this impression, they have no need of Jesus. What good is imputed righteousness when you already have your own inherent righteousness? But one of the verses today is used by Paul to show us the folly of this type of thinking on their part.

And not to get too down on the Jews, there are oodles and buckets full of people who think they are inherently righteous before God on their own merits. There are others who think they are righteous because of what they have done for their church, or even more – simply because of the church they attend.

But the lesson of the Bible is that all need grace. If one needs grace, it means that they have a lack which needs to be filled. One cannot merit grace. And so if that grace is lacking, then there is no other way to replace it.

On the other hand, there are those who know they have a problem and what they seek is mercy. However, one must know where God's mercy is derived from. How do you not get what you do deserve? That is the question and it leads right back to the grace. If the grace is lacking, the mercy cannot be provided because the mercy is the result of grace.

It's a horrible cycle for much of the world and it is something that all people need to ponder and to rectify. For corporate Israel, Moses secured the grace, but for individual Israelites, there is still a need for what God offers. Moses did His part, each Jew must do his part, and every one of us needs to do our part as well. Let us seek the Lord while He may be found.

He has offered us a Rock of refuge and a place of safety. The Bible tells us all the details if we will simply search them out. Yes, it's all to be 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. Show Me Your Way (verses 12-14)**

**<sup>12</sup> Then Moses said to the Lord, “See, You say to me, ‘Bring up this people.’ But You have not let me know whom You will send with me.**

In the last passage, the people had stripped off their ornamentation in a sign of remorse. They further had been shown that the Lord was no longer to dwell in their midst, but a far distance off from them. They had to go outside the camp to seek Him. Those in the camp simply worshiped from afar.

Their acts of self-humiliation now lead to Moses beginning a discourse, petitioning the Lord for His favor and to once again allow the honor of having His glory dwell in their midst. Without His divine Presence, there would be a notable fracture between Him and the people of Israel.

In verse 11 it said, “So the Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” He is using this familiarity to draw out from the Lord His divine favor. He is looking for clarification of what it means when He said that He would send “an angel” before them. What angel? He wants the same assurance which came back in Exodus 23 with the words “My Angel.”

In the previous passage, I noted the extremely complicated nature of the chronology of these verses. Scholars have struggled to determine when things were said and how they fit together. But we learned that the details which we are

looking at in Chapter 33 and through until verse 9 of chapter 34, chronologically belong between verses 33 and 34 of Chapter 32.

In Exodus 23:30, the Angel of the Lord was promised to go up with them. In Exodus 33:7, which chronologically belongs between Exodus 32:33 and 32:34, “an angel” has been determined to go before them, but *who* it is isn’t known. Now Moses is questioning that. “Just who is it that will go before us?”

This is a clue that we are still in the middle of those verses now. Only when we come to verse 34:10 will we once again be moving forward from that point. I believe the reason for this is to show us the chiasm which spans these chapters. It is showing the logical nature of what is spoken for us to understand what is going on.

I know it is complicated, and it may seem to make little difference in the overall scheme of things, but this is a detailed and important part of the redemptive narrative. Will the Lord remain among His people or not? Moses is working to determine He that will be.

He has been told to bring the people up to Canaan, but unless it is the Lord who leads them, he thinks it is unwise to move an inch. What he is doing now is establishing to Israel that without the Lord in their midst, they have no security, no surety, and are just like all the other people of the earth.

<sup>12</sup> (con’t) **Yet You have said, ‘I know you by name,**

This has not been specifically recorded in the past. However, the Lord called to Moses by name from the burning bush. He has been called by name from the midst of the cloud as well. Such an act implies the greatest sense of divine favor.

Those whom He favors in an intimate way are said to be known by name. It is the same as a king in a kingdom. All are subjects, but those who are known by name are those who have special access to the king. To the Lord, the name signifies the being and thus the special election to which one is called. This is seen elsewhere in Scripture, such as at the calling of Cyrus, the king of Persia –

“For Jacob My servant’s sake,  
And Israel My elect,  
I have even called you by your name;  
I have named you, though you have not known Me.” Isaiah 45:4

It is also what Jesus did when Peter first encountered Him –

One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). <sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus.

Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone). John 1:40-42

<sup>12 (con’t)</sup> **and you have also found grace in My sight.’**

Again, this hasn’t been recorded in Scripture. However, it has been implied in several ways. In the last chapter, the Lord’s anger was evident when He said He would destroy Israel and make Moses’ name great instead. After Moses petitioned Him on Israel’s behalf, the Lord relented for his sake. In both instances, he found grace in the Lord’s sight. At the same time, Israel was granted mercy.

**13 Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way,**

This verse brings in the full picture of Moses acting as a mediator on behalf of Israel. He is thus a picture of Christ who ever lives to intercede for His people before the Father. Because of the grace which he has been given, he submits his request, but first by restating the fact that he has already been given grace – “...if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way.”

If, in fact, he has found grace in the sight of the Lord, then he would like to know what the plans of the Lord are for the conduct of the people. How will they be led? By whom will they be led? To Moses, proof of his having found grace is tied up in whether the Lord will be with His people or not.

**13 (con't) that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight.**

This is similar to Jacob's wrestling with the Lord by the Jabbok River. He is struggling with the Lord and will not let Him go without first receiving a blessing. However, this blessing is not for himself, but for Israel. Just as the Lord blessed Israel by the River, Moses seeks a blessing for Israel while in the wilderness. To Moses, grace to him implies also grace towards the people. If they are given good and sure promises, then Moses will feel satisfied that he has, in fact, found grace in the eyes of the Lord.

**13 (con't) And consider that this nation is Your people.”**

Moses here looks back to Exodus 32:7 where the Lord said, “Go, get down! For your people whom you brought out of the land of Egypt have corrupted *themselves*.” As he did then, he again reminds Him that they are **His** people and they bear **His** name. He had acknowledged this time and again before Pharaoh

and the people of Egypt. “I have seen the affliction of My people.” “Let My people go.” And on and on, He had claimed them as His people. Moses asks Him to consider this yet again.

**<sup>14</sup> And He said, “My Presence will go *with you*, and I will give you rest.”**

*panai yeleku va’hanikhoti lakh* – “My face shall go, and I will give rest to you.” The face of the Lord is the Lord. His face indicates His Presence. This is reflected in the words of Isaiah 63 –

“In all their affliction He was afflicted,  
And the Angel of His Presence saved them;  
In His love and in His pity He redeemed them;  
And He bore them and carried them  
All the days of old.” Isaiah 63:9

This verse ends the upward climb of the chiasm which spans these many verses. The Lord has spoken; the wrestling match seems to have ended; Moses appears to have received his blessing. The Lord Himself will be present and it will be He who assures that rest is given, meaning the Land of Promise. However, Moses still senses a note of ambiguity.

The words, “with you” are inserted into this verse. The coming verses will show us that he is still concerned that this may only be a personal promise from the Lord to him. What he desires is that it will be a renewal of what was previously promised to the congregation as a whole.

*Show me Your way, O Lord, this I pray*

*Reveal to me that which I need to know*

*Show me what You have in store for me this day  
And reveal to me the path on which I should go*

*Here in Your word I come to seek Your face  
And here in Your word do I come each day  
It guides me in life from place to place  
Show me Your way, O Lord, this I pray*

*Open my eyes to the glory set before me  
Show me Your way, O Lord, this I pray  
Lead me to the still waters and to the glassy sea  
Be with me as I open this word to read, each and every day*

## **II. Show Me Your Glory (verses 15-18)**

**<sup>15</sup> Then he said to Him, “If Your Presence does not go *with us*, do not bring us up from here.**

This verse here forms the center of the long and detailed chiasm. It is a verse which reflects Moses’ adamant desire that Israel as a people be considered sacred to the Lord. Moses again ties the people in with himself. The previous verse said that Moses would be given rest, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that the congregation would receive it with him. For this reason, he reiterates the request.

What would happen if the people rebelled again. What would the Lord do if they fell into national sin? Would the Lord again reject them? Moses is looking for the highest assurance that Israel will be led to its place of rest. No matter what they



do, he is asking for the guarantee that as a people, they will continue to receive the grace of His presence. As John Lange comments concerning this verse –

“Better to die in the wilderness than to reach his goal without that guidance.”

**<sup>16</sup> For how then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us?**

This is an obvious question. Grace is unmerited favor. How can one know that they have received unmerited favor unless they have a knowledge of that favor? If they made it to Canaan and completely subdued the land, would it have been the favor of the Lord, or would it maybe have been the lesser gods of time and chance? Isaiah later speaks of such things –

“But you *are* those who forsake the LORD,  
Who forget My holy mountain,  
Who prepare a table for Gad [fortune],  
And who furnish a drink offering for Meni [destiny].” Isaiah 65:11

Or could it be the greatness of Israel as a people apart from the Lord? History has spoken of this belief time and again, as recorded in the Bible and in the history of the people throughout the ages –

And the LORD said to Gideon, “The people who *are* with you *are* too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, ‘My own hand has saved me.’” Judges 7:2

Just as the Lord cherished His honor in both of those instances, Moses desires that the people receive the Lord’s grace now. His divine Presence among them is

the guarantee of this grace that he seeks. Without it, there would be no indication that they were different from any of the other nations of the earth. In short, being the Lord's people would mean nothing more than being the people of any pagan god.

<sup>16</sup> (con't) **So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who *are* upon the face of the earth."**

By the guarantee of the divine Presence among them, a distinction will be evident. The word translated here as "so we shall be separated" is *palah*. This is fourth of only seven times it will be seen in the Bible. It is found only in Exodus and the psalms. It comes from a primitive root meaning, "to distinguish." In Psalm 139, it is used in its more precise sense –

I will praise You, for I am fearfully *and wonderfully* made;  
Marvelous are Your works,  
And *that* my soul knows very well. Psalm 139:14

The intent of Moses' words are that the presence of the Lord will indicate that they are "marvelously separated" from all of the people on the face of the earth. For the Christian, it would be the sealing of the Holy Spirit who "marvelously separates" us unto God from all other people.

<sup>17</sup> **So the Lord said to Moses, "I will also do this thing that you have spoken;**

*ha'davar hazzeh asher dibarta e-e-seh* – "The word this that you have spoken, I will do." At last, the full and complete response which Moses sought has been realized. He has displayed amazing persistence towards the Lord, having taken full advantage of the face to face friendship previously mentioned.

In his diligence, he has now been rewarded. The words are in response to the petition of the previous verse, but they are also inclusive of the entire request presented by Moses, as is evidenced in the substance of the corresponding branches of the chiasm. Those words comprise verse 13 which said –

“Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight. And consider that this nation *is* Your people.”

The Lord promised to not only make them His people, but that they would remain His people. They would not be cut off from this state even if they were to erringly fall away individually or nationally. Punishment would come, but He would – for once and forever – consider this nation His people.

In an astonishing understanding of this precept, Adam Clarke wrote the following concerning the promise of this verse. As I read what he says, remember that he lived from 1762 until 1832. Even at that point in time, he realized that God was still, even then, saving Israel for something marvelous in his future –

“...from the day in which he brought them out of Egypt to the present day, he has kept them a distinct, unmixed people! Who can account for this on any principle but that of a continual especial providence, and a constant Divine interference? The Jews have ever been a people fond of money; had they been mingled with the people of the earth among whom they have been scattered, their secular interests would have been greatly promoted by it; and they who have sacrificed every thing besides to their love of money, on this point have been incorruptible! They chose in every part of their dispersions rather to be a poor, despised, persecuted people, and continue separate from all the people of the earth, than to enjoy ease and affluence by becoming mixed with the nations. For what great purposes must God be preserving this people! for it does not appear that any moral principle binds them together - they seem lost to this; and yet in opposition

to their interests, for which in other respects they would sacrifice every thing, they are still kept distinct from all the people of the earth: for this an especial providence alone can account.”

Even at such an early date, long before any possible restoration of Israel to their land was conceived, Clarke looked at this promise of the Lord and knew it had future implications for them as a people.

The Lord has granted Moses’ request, to include everything since verse 12, but without having the chiasmic structure highlighted, the verses seem difficult to grasp and to follow; but with it available, the entire passage comes into clear focus. The requests of Moses are granted. And so, it validates the truth of the next words...

17 (con’t) **for you have found grace in My sight,**

What was unspoken in the pages of the Bible thus far, but which is implied as having been said because of Moses’ words of verse 12, is now spoken in an outright manner. Because of Moses’ intercession on behalf of his people, the Lord explicitly states, “...you have found grace in My sight.”

Now stop and think on this from a New Covenant perspective. If Moses was given such great and enduring promises from the Lord at a time when all of Israel had failed, and considering Moses’ state as a mere human mediator, how much more assured should we be of the greater and more eternal promises of Christ who is our Mediator! He is the God/Man who is there before the throne of His Father, interceding for us moment by moment as we fail to live up to His absolute perfection. Paul may have been thinking of this passage when he wrote these words from Romans –

“Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, <sup>39</sup> nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Romans 8:37-39

17 (con't) **and I know you by name.”**

The chiasm is quickly racing in the opposite direction now. These words correspond to verse 12 which started our verses today. Moses was favored by the Lord; known to Him by name. Because of this, he could mediate out such a weighty and marvelous promise from Him. How much more then can we anticipate from the mediation of Christ!

He, the Son of the Father, is known in the most intimate way of all and He speaks on our behalf, ever-petitioning for us. Because of Christ, we each are intimately known by name. There could be no greater assurance in all of heaven or earth of that which we possess because of Him.

Stepping back to Moses for a moment, what is ironic is that his petition for the Lord's Presence to be with the people until they received their rest will actually come back to bite him personally. He will die outside of the Land of Canaan for having not hallowed Him “in the midst of the children of Israel” (Deuteronomy 32:51).

Though judgment will come upon the offenders of the idolatry of the golden calf, and judgment will come upon many more – including Moses – before the wilderness wanderings are ended, the people as a whole would never have the divine Presence of God removed from them. Moses actually ended by taking the

guilt of the people upon himself. Another marvelous picture of Christ in the countless thousands already seen.

The tabernacle will be built after all. The Presence will reside in their midst, and the people will be marvelously separated from the nations of the world. Like his forefather Jacob, Moses has struggled with God and men and he has prevailed. Because of this, he has a personal request of the Lord...

**<sup>18</sup> And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.”**

Moses could have requested this at any previous time, but he only does so *after* he has secured the restoration of His people. This is amazingly similar to Jesus’ High Priestly prayer in John 17. Only after having completed the work on behalf of His people did Jesus ask to again share in the glory with His Father –

“I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. <sup>5</sup> And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” John 17:4, 5

Now that the destiny of Israel is secure, the desires of Moses need to be quenched. He had experienced fellowship with God beyond anything any man since Adam had experienced, and yet everything he had seen to this point has only made him desirous of more. He wanted to fill himself up with the goodness of the Lord and so he asks *harení na eth kebodekha* – “Show me, I pray, Your glory.”

Exactly what he is requesting is debated, but if one assumes that Moses was already aware of the Genesis account, then he is asking to see what Adam saw. He is asking to see the visible representation of the Lord who walked in perfect fellowship and harmony with our first father.

Before sin clouded man's mind, he walked in fellowship with His Creator, but when sin entered Adam, he hid from Him and stood in fear of Him. Moses is asking that this division be ended and that a more perfect fellowship – the glory of God – be revealed to him. He has seen numerous and marvelous manifestations of God, but they concealed more than they revealed. Moses desires that to end.

*Show me Your glory, O Lord, this I pray  
Reveal to me that which I most desire to know  
Let me see Your goodness set before me, here on this day  
And reveal to me the path on which I should go  
Here in Your word I come to seek Your face  
And here in Your word do I come each day  
It guides me in life from place to place  
Show me Your glory, O Lord, this I pray  
Open my eyes to the majesty set before me  
Show me Your glory, O Lord, this I pray  
And there I shall sing praises to You by the glassy sea  
Until then I will seek You in Your word, day unto day*

### **III. Here is a Place by Me (verse 19-23)**

**<sup>19</sup> Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you,**

This promise is fulfilled in the words of Chapter 34 verses 5-7. He promises a special revelation of Himself to Moses where He will reveal all of His goodness

before him. The word for “goodness,” *tuv*, is one which indicates beauty, gladness, welfare, and the like.

This goodness is certainly not a physical brilliance so much as it is the ethical reality of who the Lord is, represented elsewhere by the physical brilliance. This is the infinite ethical purity of God which transcends anything a human could ever grasp.

Further, the attributes of God are many, and they are all good, but some of them carry a negative connotation – justice for example carries the connotation of judgment on sin. As Moses is a fallen man, he could not bear to see His infinite purity in this manner. What Moses will behold is the merciful, gracious, compassionate Creator in a manner that he could assimilate. And as He so passes by, the Lord says that He will do something extra...

<sup>19 (cont')</sup> **and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you.**

The noun here is used for the pronoun. This is something common in Scripture. To proclaim a name is to proclaim the essence of the being which the name represents. The name will be proclaimed, or “called out” as the word implies, for Moses’ sake. He will be neither surprised and thus terrified, nor will he blink and miss his chance at the unique revelation of the Lord.

Yehovah will proclaim His coming as an exceptional act of grace to his trusted servant. It is something unmerited, and yet it is something which defines who He is. He is the God of all grace...



**19 (cont') I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”**

The Lord is notifying Moses that He will, in fact be gracious towards him, and thus towards the people on whose behalf he is petitioning, but He is not doing this to curry their favor. Rather, there are some who will be punished in light ways, and some who will be punished with a heavy hand.

Others will be pardoned and receive mercy. However, this doesn't mean that they are better or more righteous than those who receive punishment, but because of His own sovereign will in His workings in redemptive history. His grace and compassion are neither arbitrary, nor are they to curry favor or to show vindictiveness.

Instead, He is sovereign. His judgments are righteous and His ways are perfect. What He does is a result of who He is and what He has determined. Paul uses this very verse in Romans 9 to upturn the self-righteous attitude of the Jews –

“What shall we say then? *Is there* unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!  
<sup>15</sup> For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.’ <sup>16</sup> So then *it is* not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.” Romans 9:14-16

The Lord was not obligated to forgive Israel, nor was He bound to show His goodness to Moses. He was gracious because Moses found grace in His eyes. Grace is getting what one doesn't deserve, and mercy is not getting what one does deserve. The person who receives either can't boast of what he has received, and the person who doesn't receive cannot find fault in what he has not received.

**<sup>20</sup> But He said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live.”**

These words have to be taken in the greater context of the Bible. It is not an inability to see God, but it is an inability to see the particular sight to which He refers. God revealed Himself to Jacob as Genesis 32:30 points out.

“So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: ‘For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.’” Genesis 32:30

The name Peniel means “Face of God.” And so he saw that sight which God chose to reveal. However, he did not see the fullness of God, represented by His face. Even in our eternal state, we will not see the fullness of God, nor could we. God is infinite in His being. For us to see God in His face, or in His infinite nature would mean that we would need to be infinite as well; able to comprehend all of who He is. For us to do so would mean that we would be God. But there is one God and only one. In Revelation 22, it says this –

“And there shall be no more curse, but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. <sup>4</sup>They shall see His face, and His name *shall be* on their foreheads.” Revelation 22:3, 4

We will behold the Lamb. We shall see His face as He endlessly, ceaselessly reveals the infinite Father to us. There will never be a time when we will have seen all of God, even until the ages of ages. There will always be more to know. This is why Moses could not see the face of the Lord. He could not behold all that God is.

**<sup>21</sup> And the Lord said, “Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock.**

Here we have a picture being developed for us. The Lord has a specific place in mind which is near to Him. He asks Moses to stand *al ha'tsur*, or “on the rock.” There is a definite article in front of rock, it is not “a” rock, but “the rock.” This is where Moses is to position himself. Matthew Henry rightly states –

“The rock in Horeb was typical of Christ the Rock; the Rock of refuge, salvation, and strength. Happy are they who stand upon this Rock.”

When the glory of the Lord passes by, Moses will be at this place of refuge. He will see this marvelous vision, but he will be kept safe while there. The reason is explained in the next verse...

**<sup>22</sup> So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock,**

The Lord says as His glory passes by, He will take Moses and place him in the cleft of the rock. The word is *neqarah* and is used only twice in the Bible, here and in Isaiah 2:21. It indicates that which is dug or gouged out, thus a cleft.

The question is, why didn't He just tell Moses to go hide in the cleft of the rock? Instead he says He will place him there. The answer is that it is God who places us in Christ. It is we who choose to stand upon the Rock, but only God places us into Christ. It is a picture of being saved from the complete destructive power of God in relation to sinful man.

One is either in Christ and secure from what must happen when man faces the infinitely holy God, or they are not in Christ and can only make a futile attempt to

hide themselves. As I said, the word for “cleft,” *neqarah*, is only used twice. The other time shows the futility of the man who attempts to hide from the Lord –

“In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver  
And his idols of gold,  
Which they made, *each* for himself to worship,  
To the moles and bats,  
<sup>21</sup> To go into the **clefts** of the rocks,  
And into the crags of the rugged rocks,  
From the terror of the Lord  
And the glory of His majesty,  
When He arises to shake the earth mightily.

<sup>22</sup> Sever yourselves from such a man,  
Whose breath *is* in his nostrils;  
For of what account is he?” Isaiah 2:20-22

<sup>22</sup> (con’t) **and will cover you with My hand while I pass by.**

Moses will not just be hidden in the Rock, but the Lord will also cover him from His splendor. Thus He will be both concealed and protected when the perfections of love, grace, mercy, justice, truth, righteousness, holiness, wisdom, and the like are revealed. Without such a covering, Moses would be destroyed. But hidden in the Rock, he will be spared from that fate. The words of this verse are reflective of the truth spoken by Paul in Colossians 3 –

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ *who is* our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.” Colossians 3:1-4

Our lives are hidden in Christ, the Rock. At the same time we are protected from the wrath of God. His perfections, which we fail to meet in our fallen selves, are kept from us by the covering of Christ, God's right hand of power. However, the glory that was hidden from Moses will be revealed to us in the future. It will be an eternity of God revealing His goodness to us, moment by moment without ceasing, and without an instant of anything less than awed wonder.

**<sup>23</sup> Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back;**

The verses are filled with anthropomorphisms – hand, face, back are all human attributes which are being used for us to understand, in a limited way, what we are intended to know. And yet, at the same time, there is a hint of what God would do in the future through Christ.

The term for “back” is *akhorai* – My back. The word means more than just the back. It is used to indicate “west.” When looking towards the Lord in the tabernacle or temple, His face would be towards us, looking east. Thus His back would be west. It is the direction which we aspire to go towards – ever towards His face.

It is used to indicate the hereafter in Isaiah 41. In other words, things that are yet future. Thus, the Rock is Christ, our safe Refuge. The Hand is Christ, our Protector. The Face is Christ, the Revealer of God. And the Back is Christ, the One who is to come. What Moses saw was the glory of Christ as He would come afterwards in human flesh, revealing the Father to us. This is what John 1:14 is referring to –

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

Moses saw the revelation of what God was doing in the stream of time in order to bring us back to Himself. This is why later, in the Song of Moses, he wrote these words –

“For I proclaim the name of the Lord:  
Ascribe greatness to our God.  
<sup>4</sup> *He is* the Rock, His work *is* perfect;  
For all His ways *are* justice,  
A God of truth and without injustice;  
Righteous and upright *is* He.” Deuteronomy 32:3, 4

He understood that Yehovah was the Rock. The symbolism was revealed to Him and thus God showed him His glory.

**\*23 (fin) but My face shall not be seen.”**

To close out our verses, Moses was reminded that the face of God, was not to be seen. But as we already know, Jacob saw His face by the river Jabbok. Abraham saw His face as He traveled towards the destruction of Sodom. Joshua will see His face as He stands as the Commander of the Lord’s army.

Gideon, the parents of Samson, and others as well encountered the Man who moves through time because He is from outside of time. Each saw the Man while not seeing the full essence of the Lord. And we too shall see His face as the glory of God streams from Him for an infinite number of days.

We are hidden in Christ, and thus God will allow us to look west towards Him as He looks east towards us, forever revealing the goodness which Moses merely tasted for a moment in time. If you want a part of that marvelous goodness which

God offers; if you seek Him but aren't sure if you have sought Him in the right manner, today is the day of good news for you.

He has His hands out and is waiting for you to stand upon the Rock and to be protected by the covering of Christ, the power of God for all who believe. Let me take just another minute to tell you about Jesus and how you can be right with God through Him...

**Closing Verse:** "The Lord your God in your midst,  
The Mighty One, will save;  
He will rejoice over you with gladness,  
He will quiet *you* with His love,  
He will rejoice over you with singing." Zephaniah 3:17

**Next Week:** Exodus 34:1-9 *Moses asks, "Set for us this precedence... (Take Us as Your Inheritance) (94<sup>th</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.

### **Safe in the Cleft of the Rock**

Then Moses said to the Lord

"See, 'Bring up this people.' So You say to me

But You have not let me know

Whom You will send with me; who will it be?

Yet You have said, 'I know you by name; which is right  
And you have also found grace in My sight  
Now therefore, I pray  
If I have found grace in Your sight  
Show me now Your way  
That I may know You, alright?

And that I may in Your sight find grace  
And consider that this nation is Your people; here in this place  
And He said, "My Presence will go with you  
And I will give you rest, what I have spoken is true

Then he said to Him  
"If Your Presence with us does not go  
Do not bring us up from here  
It would be better that we stayed here, even so  
For how then will it be known  
That Your people and I have found grace in Your sight  
Except You go with us  
Surely then we would see that in us You delight

So we shall be separate, Your people and I, as if a new birth  
From all the people who are upon the face of the earth



So the Lord said to Moses

“I will also do this thing that you have spoken

For you have found grace in My sight

And I know you by name, this word shall not be broken

And he said, “Please, show me Your glory”

Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you

And I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you

So this is the thing that I shall do

Gracious to whom I will be gracious will I be

And I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion

Thus it is, as you now see

But He said, “You cannot see My face, this word I give

For no man shall see Me, and live

And the Lord said, “Here is a place by Me

And you shall stand on the rock, and you shall see

So it shall be, while My glory passes by

That in the cleft of the rock I will put you

And will cover you with My hand

While I pass by; this I will do

Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back

But My face shall not be seen; this sight you shall lack

Heavenly Father, how good it is to know  
That there is a place of safety both in and from Your majesty  
Jesus does to us Your majesty show  
And Jesus also reveals it slowly, for all eternity

And so we are not consumed by Your glory  
Instead we can revel in it, seeking out Your face  
This is the marvel of the Gospel story  
This is why we come to gather in this place

Thank You, O God, that for the ages we will glory in You  
Because of what Jesus Christ for us alone does do

And so in His name we give You all of our praise  
And we shall do so for all the ages, even for eternal days

Hallelujah and Amen...