

Moses' Encounters with Shekinah Glory (Ex 33:7-11)



1. New Commission for Moses at Mt Horeb (Ex 3:1-5)

- a. Moses was a burnt-out old man at the age of 80. His attempt to deliver Israel 40 years ago failed spectacularly (Ex 2:14). The prince of Egypt became a shepherd tending his father-in-law's flock for 40 years in the 'backside of a desert.' (Ex 3:1) All his dreams and ambitions came to nothing, and Moses came to the end of himself. That is when God suddenly visited Moses. The burning bush was his encounter with a mini version of God's glory. It was Moses' preparation to eventually host the mega version of God's glory, that delivered Israel out of Egypt.

When Moses was just about through with his life, suddenly he caught the strange sight of a burning bush. It was the very picture of Moses' life - about to burn out and be extinguished. But strangely, this old dry bush did not burn out. It burned on. Compelled by the strange phenomenon, he came close to inspect it (Ex 3:2). That is when out of this burning bush the Lord spoke to Moses, 'Moses, Moses!' (Ex 3:4) When the voice of the Lord called Moses by name, it changed everything! The voice of the Lord is powerful. It shook the very core of Moses' being and rearranged everything inside.

'The voice of the LORD is over the waters; The God of glory thunders; The LORD is over many waters. The voice of the LORD is powerful; The voice of the LORD is full of majesty...' (Ps 29:3-11).

- b. *New Beginning - 'Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground.'* (Ex 3:5)

God was teaching Moses a heightened sense of respect for the glory of God. Moses had to learn to honour God's presence before he could walk with God closely in His manifest presence. With this fresh encounter, the old tired disillusioned Moses received new strength from the Lord for the new task ahead. And with it also came the healing and restoration from the past failures. May the Lord grant us this personal encounter with Him to re-energise us for the journey ahead.

- c. As the result, Moses fulfilled his mission of bringing Israel out of Egypt with a great deliverance, led by the glory of the Lord manifest as the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night (Ex 13:21-22 c.f. Deliverance Ex 14:19-20 and Provision Ex 16:10-14). So, they arrived at Mt Sinai where Moses first encountered the Lord to fulfil the second half of the task – to establish the covenant between Israel and the Lord, entering into a permanent relationship with Him.

2. Covenant of Law at Mt Sinai (Ex 19:16-20)

On the 3rd day, the Lord descended on Mt Sinai in cloud and fire with thundering, lightning, and a long blast of the trumpets. The earth shook in God's holy presence.

- a. The manifest presence of God would impart the fear of the Lord in His people. Their hearts would be cleansed from all unholy fears, including the fear of men so that they would be free to walk in holiness. On the 7th day, the Lord called Moses to 'come up' to Mt Sinai to be with the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights. Moses had to wait to be invited up. Presumption to come up without the express invitation would be a deadly move. So, the Lord entered the covenant relationship with Israel (Ex 24:12, 15-18). There on top of the mountain, Moses received the law on two tablets of stone (Ex 32:15 c.f. Ex. 20:1-17) and detailed instruction on how to construct the tabernacle and perform priestly duties (Ex 25-31), so that the presence of the Lord on Mt Sinai in cloud and fire, can dwell among Israel in the tabernacle (c.f. Lev. 16:2).
- b. However, Israel sinned by breaking the first commandment, worshipping the golden calf, and the Lord refused to lead Israel with His Presence (Ex 33:3 c.f. 32:9-10). This was the crisis moment, but for Moses, this great crisis turned into even a deeper encounter with the Lord.

3. Deeper Fellowship with the Lord at Moses' request (Ex 33:7-11)

This had nothing to do with God's commission on Moses or his ministry. It was purely Moses' personal request. Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp far from the people, and called it '*tent of meeting*'. This is NOT the tabernacle of Moses. It was yet to be built. This was a mini-tabernacle – a personal meeting place for

Moses and the Lord. Whenever Moses went to this tent to speak with the Lord, the glory of the Lord descended on the 'tent of meeting' (33:9). This is described in the most intimate way, '*So the LORD spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.*' (Ex 33:11)

- a. There are four levels the Lord speaks to His people (c.f. Num 12:6-8). (i) visions; (ii) dreams; (iii) dark-sayings (parables); (iv) face to face (plainly).
- b. This was the content of this face-to-face dialogue between Moses and the Lord in the tent (Ex 33:12-23) after *God refuses to go with stiff-necked Israel* (Ex 33:3).

Moses Show me your way that I MAY KNOW YOU...and consider that this nation is Your people. (33:13)

God My Presence [God's Glory] will go with you and I will give you rest. (33:14)

Moses If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. (33:15)

God I will also do this thing that you have spoken... (33:17)

*Moses **Please show me Your glory.** (33:18)*

God I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. (33:19)

Moses' thirst and quest to know the LORD and His glory are breathtaking! He experienced the most intimate encounters with God than any mortals. Yet that was not enough. Moses still hungered for more. He wants to see more of God's glory and know Him more deeply! So, the glory and the beauty of the Lord is the unique revelation of Moses (Ps 90:17). 500 years later, David came along and sang of God's glory and beauty.

- c. Impartation of the glory (Ex 34:5-8). How did God show His glory to Moses? The Lord descended in the cloud and proclaimed His 'name' – His nature - in that encounter.

God's seven-fold DNA: merciful, gracious, longsuffering, abounding in goodness and truth, willing to forgive, but punishing the guilty (just and righteous). This was God's answer to Moses' prayer, 'I want to know You.' As a result of this close encounter, God's glory was imparted to Moses. His face began to shine with God's glory, so that the children of Israel could not look at Moses' face (Ex 34:29-35). C.f. Moses put a veil over his face in public, but in private fellowship with the Lord, he took away the veil.

- d. God kept His word to Moses, and it led to God's presence dwelling among His people in the wilderness in the tabernacle that was finally constructed. This was God's plan all along (Ex 40:34-38). Interestingly the tabernacle was built from inside out, signifying the importance of holiness.

4. The Glory of the Lord in the New Testament (2 Cor 3:7-18)

- a. The glory cloud in the Old Testament is but a shadow of the reality - the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in the church and within each believer (C.f. 1 Cor 3:16; 6:19). This ought to be the greatest privilege and greatest quest for the believers.

'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.' (John 14:23 c.f. 14:19-21)

- b. If Moses could behold the glory of the Lord which was fading glory, and yet be transformed, how much more the believers under the better covenant?

'Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech – unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away... But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.' (2 Cor 3:18)

'To them, God will make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.' (Col 1:27 c.f. Eph 3:8-9 – unsearchable riches of Christ... which is the fellowship of the mystery.)

- c. Today we need three types of deliverers to arise in the body of Christ: (i) Elijah – ministry of divine authority in supernatural; (ii) John the Baptist – ministry of the fearless proclamation of the prophetic word of the hour; (iii) Joseph – ministry of deliverance in the times of great famine.