

upon the Land more curse and destruction. Yet this will not happen. All rebels will be removed before they enter the land: "and I will purge out from among you the rebels, and them that transgress against Me: I will bring them forth out of the country where they sojourn, and they shall not enter into the land of Israel: and ye shall know that I am the LORD [Yahweh]" (v. 38).

As a final point on Malachi and Achan, it is relevant to note that Joshua addressed Achan as "My son" (Josh. 7:19). This fatherly language is reflected in Malachi 4, where the "fathers" and "children" are mentioned.

## Conclusion

Soon the proud and confident State of Israel will be brought to the brink of destruction by the invasion of Gog. As in A.D. 70, many Jews will perish and suffer. Some of those who understand Bible prophecy, if not the one faith, will flee east to Jordan. Those who survive in the Land will be refined and humbled. Those who are scattered will have the opportunity to enter the new covenant, and hence the Land. It behoves us to ensure that we have no accursed thing that will be exposed at the day of judgement, so that we too can enter the Land.

# Moses: earth's meekest man

## 20. Show me Thy glory

John Mitchell

*After the disappointment of the golden calf incident, Moses is encouraged by being given a revelation of God's glory greater than anything given to any other man.*

**M**OSSES' HARROWING experience in the matter of the golden calf, whilst intensifying the loneliness of his leadership, served only to strengthen his relationship with the Lord his God. But, conversely, despite Moses' pleadings for them, Yahweh's relations with the children of Israel had markedly declined. Hitherto they had had the privilege of God in their midst, with the pillar of cloud and of fire signifying His presence. Now, for their own safety and because of their sinful nature, such intimacy would be withdrawn for the rest of their journey to the promised land.

"I will send an angel before you and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. But I will not go with you, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way".\* The Lord's decision, coming on top of the slaughter and the plague in the aftermath of their great sin, filled the people with remorse. "When the people heard these distressing words, they began to mourn and no one put on any ornaments", those symbols of victory over the Egyptians whom, with God's almighty power, they had spoiled. The same Lord who

had told them to put them on had now told them to take them off again. For, whereas Yahweh had triumphed over the gods of Egypt on their behalf, they had allowed the gods of Egypt

to rule over them in the matter of the golden calf, towards which they had contributed from the ornaments Yahweh had given them. In this they had deserted the Lord, so now He would distance Himself from them.

### Moses moves his tent

In token of this partial separation, Moses moved what many have assumed to have been his tent in the centre of the camp (wrongly translated as "the tabernacle" in the AV) and pitched it some distance away, outside the camp, calling it "the tent of meeting". As such, in view of what had gone before, the place assumed a new and tremendous significance in the lives of the people. For when anyone enquired of the Lord he would go out to it, and the tent acquired a respect and reverence it had not known before. And whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people rose and stood at the entrances to their tents, watching him as he entered it, and the pillar of cloud came down while the Lord spoke with Moses.

What they had before taken for granted, the people now made a focus for communion with

\* Quotations from Exodus 33 are taken from the NIV.

God, for whenever they saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance to the tent, they all stood and worshipped, each at the entrance to his tent, while the Lord would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. Not all that passed between Yahweh and Moses is recorded, but something of what Moses said is.

Evidently he was still a lonely man, shattered, not just by the rejection of what he had stood for, through the idolatry of the people, but also by his loss of confidence in Aaron his brother, to whom he had entrusted the welfare of his people. Perhaps even Moses had to learn, along with all the saints, that the final and eternal help of man cannot come from the flesh but only from the Father in heaven. His situation was paralleled by that of the Lord Jesus himself when, just before the crucifixion, his friends deserted him, and they all "forsook him, and fled" (Mt. 26:56).

Faithful still to his people's cause, Moses nevertheless felt terribly alone and in need of assurance: "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but You have not let me know whom You will send with me", he said to the Lord. "You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favour with Me.' If I have found favour in your eyes, teach me Your ways so I may know You and continue to find favour with You. Remember that this nation is Your people".

One wonders whom Moses might have had in mind as the one God would send with him. Already there was a very promising young man named Joshua, son of Nun, who had proved himself a capable and brave warrior in battle against the Amalekites, and who had been acting as Moses' servant and companion on the holy mount. He had even accompanied him to the tent of meeting when the pillar of cloud was there. But God had no such human help in mind. The Lord replied, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest". What blessed assurance, this, not just to Moses, but to all the saints that are known by name, to whom Emmanuel also said, "Come unto me, ye weary, and I will give you rest" (Hymn 327)! The Spirit of Christ was at work, even in the wilderness.

Moses saw the point of God's guiding hand: "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?". The Lord replied, "I will do the very thing you have asked,

because I am pleased with you and I know you by name".

### **God's glory revealed**

Thus emboldened, Moses sought an even greater intimacy with the Almighty than had been vouchsafed to him before. He had met with Yahweh at the burning bush in the wilderness, heard Him from the devouring fire on Horeb, spoken to Him as if face to face in the pillar of cloud, but he had never seen Him in His glory without a cloud between. So he petitioned a privilege never before given to man when he said, "Now show me Your glory".

In His reply, the Lord went as far as was possible with any sinful human being, while at the same time emphasising and reiterating His love for fallen man. He said, "I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim My name, the LORD [Yahweh], in your presence [as at the burning bush]. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But, He said, 'you cannot see My face, for no one may see Me and live'". He Who is of too pure eyes than to behold sin could not countenance mortal man unglorified; He dwells in light unapproachable, being He "Whom no man hath seen, nor can see" (1 Tim. 6:16).

And this has remained true throughout all generations. Some privileged individuals have had unique encounters with, and revelations from, the Almighty, but none has yet experienced the fullness of His presence. Elijah, instructed by Yahweh, stood upon the mount while His presence approached in a great and powerful wind that tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks. But the Lord was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper (literally, "a sound of gentle stillness"), which, when Elijah heard it, he covered his face, and stood in the mouth of the cave while God spoke to him. But Elijah did not see His face.

The Apostle Paul had special visions and revelations from the Lord, and was caught up to the third heaven, where he heard inexpressible things that man is not permitted to tell. But he did not see God. Even the Lord Jesus Christ in the days of his flesh is not recorded as seeing Him face to face. Such is the separation of all the human race from their Creator.

How then did Yahweh condescend to the importuning Moses in the matter of showing him His glory? "There is a place near Me", He said, "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".

And that was the closest view of the Lord God Almighty that man had seen since he walked with Him in the Garden of Eden.

[\(To be continued\)](#)