

Exodus 33:1-23 Grace and the Presence of God

Aaron's weak leadership, or the absence thereof, which caused him to give in to the pressures from a demanding and rebellious people, resulted in serious consequences at a critical time in Israel's history. Instead of Aaron leading the people, the people led him. YeHoVaH plagued the people because of what they did with the calf that Aaron made.

YeHoVaH determined at that moment to send an angel before Moses and the people to drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites and to lead them to the land flowing with milk and honey. This was done to prevent YeHoVaH's wrath from consuming the people on the way for what they had done.

In this portion of Exodus, Moses would again appeal to YeHoVaH on his own behalf and on behalf of the Children of Israel for YeHoVaH's grace and His presence to be with them and go before the people for their protection against their enemies.

Ex 33:1 And the LORD said unto Moses, Depart, and go up hence, thou and the people which thou hast brought up out of the land of Egypt, unto the land which I swear unto Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob/Israel, saying, Unto thy seed will I give it:

Ex 33:2 And I will send an angel before thee; and I will drive out the Canaanite, the Amorite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite:

The Hebrew word for "before" in this passage will be used in a variety of ways in this passage.

Before – **06440** פָּנִים paniym {paw-neem'} pl. (but always as sing.) of an unused noun הַפָּנִים {paw-neh'}

Meaning: 1) face 1a) face, faces 1b) presence, person 1c) face (of seraphim or cherubim) 1d) face (of animals) 1e) face, surface (of ground) 1f) as adv of loc/temp 1f1) before and behind, toward, in front of, forward, formerly, from beforetime, before

1g) with prep 1g1) in front of, before, to the front of, in the presence of, in the face of, at the face or front of, from the presence of, from before, from before the face of

Usage: AV - before 1137, face 390, presence 76, because 67, sight 40, countenance 30, from 27, person 21, upon 20, of 20, ...me 18, against 17, ...him 16, open 13, for 13, toward 9, misc 195; 2109

Ex 33:3 Unto a land flowing with milk and honey: for I will not go up in the midst of thee; for thou art a stiffnecked people: lest I consume thee in the way.

In the previous Chapter, Father had 3,000 Israelites killed by the Levites. Although 3,000 Israelites have been killed, the anger of God had not been completely satisfied.

Ex 32:28 And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses: and there **fell** of the people that day about three thousand men

As a result of what had happened, God would not go up with the people. Instead, He would send an angel to lead them into the land flowing with milk and honey. The anger of God had not been quenched for He said the people were stiff-necked and that He might consume or destroy them while on the way with them if He went up with them.

It begs the question, why would God not go up with them? God said that the people were stiff-necked. Although many had been killed, those who remained were not all innocent. Some may have been complicit with what the people did. Others witnessed what they had done but did nothing.

God's grace in this matter was on full display. He did not destroy all of Israel as He desired and had purposed in His heart.

Moses had to reason with God about His grace and favor. As a result, God's grace and mercy were extended to Israel.

Ex 33:4 And when the people heard these evil tidings, they mourned: and no man did put on him his ornaments.

Ex 33:5 For the LORD had said unto Moses, Say unto the children of Israel, Ye are a stiffnecked people: I will come up into the midst of thee in a moment, and consume thee: therefore now put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee.

Ornaments were jewels, anklets, earrings, fine apparel, etc.

Ex 33:6 And the children of Israel stripped themselves of their ornaments by the mount Horeb.

Ex 33:7 And Moses took the tabernacle/tent, and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the Tabernacle of the congregation. And it came to pass, that every one which sought the LORD went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.

This Tabernacle of the Congregation is not the same as the Tabernacle of the Congregation spoken of in Exodus 27.

Ex 27:21 In the tabernacle of the congregation without the veil, which *is* before the testimony, Aaron and his sons shall order it from evening to morning before the LORD: *it shall be* a statute for ever unto their generations on the behalf of the children of Israel.

The Tabernacle in Exodus 27 had not been made at the time. The Tabernacle that was to be made would be in the midst of the camp, not outside the camp.

Ex 33:8 And it came to pass, when Moses went out unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up, and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses, until he was gone into the tabernacle.

Tent/tabernacle – **0168** אֹהֶל 'ohel {o'-hel}

Meaning: 1) tent 1a) nomad's tent, and thus symbolic of wilderness life, transience 1b) dwelling, home, habitation 1c) the sacred tent of Jehovah (the tabernacle)

Usage: AV - tabernacle(s) 198, tent(s) 141, dwelling 2, place(s) 2, covering 1, home 1; 345

The people were humbled by YeHoVaH and by Moses when he ground up the golden calf into powder, scattered it upon the water, and made the people drink it.

Ex 32:20 And he took the calf which they had made, and burnt *it* in the fire, and ground *it* to powder, and strawed *it* upon the water, and made the children of Israel drink *of it*.

Ex 33:9 And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses.

Ex 33:10 And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and **worshipped**, every man in his tent door.

Worshipped – **07812** שָׁחָה shachah {shaw-khaw'}

Meaning: 1) to bow down 1a) (Qal) to bow down 1b) (Hiphil) to depress (fig) 1c) (Hithpael) 1c1) to bow down, prostrate oneself 1c1a) before superior in homage 1c1b) before God in worship 1c1c) before false gods 1c1d) before angel

Usage: AV - worship 99, bow 31, bow down 18, obeisance 9, reverence 5, fall down 3, themselves 2, stoop 1, crouch 1, misc 3; 172

They bowed and prostrated themselves in the door of their tents.

Ex 33:11 And the LORD spake unto Moses **face to face**, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he turned again into the camp: but his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the tabernacle.

Moses communed with YeHoVaH in the door of the Tabernacle/Tent of the Congregation and reminded Him of what they had discussed.

Ex 33:12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found **grace** in my sight.

Grace – **02580** חֵן chen {khane}

Meaning: 1) favour, grace, charm 1a) favour, grace, elegance 1b) favour, acceptance

Origin: from 02603; TWOT- 694a; n m

Usage: AV - grace 38, favour 26, gracious 2, pleasant 1, precious 1, wellfavoured + 02896 1; 69

Ex 33:13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, show me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find **grace** in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

Evidence of God's grace and mercy is displayed by God's presence going before Israel when He had said earlier, He would not go but send an angel to lead them.

Ex 33:14 And he said, My **presence** shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

Ex 33:15 And he said unto him, If thy **presence** go not with me, carry us not up hence.

Ex 33:16 For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found **grace** in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the **face** of the earth.

Ex 33:17 And the LORD said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for thou hast found **grace** in my sight, and I know thee by name

Ex 33:18 And he said, I beseech thee, show me thy glory.

Ex 33:19 And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

Proclaim – **07121** קָרָא qara' {kaw-raw'}

Meaning: 1) to call, call out, recite, read, cry out, proclaim

Usage: AV - call 528, cried 98, read 38, proclaim 36, named 7, guests 4, invited 3, gave 3, renowned 3, bidden 2, preach 2, misc 11; 735

Name of the LORD – **03068** יְהוָה Yehovah {yeh-ho-vaw'}

Meaning: Jehovah = "the existing One" 1) the proper name of the one true God 1a) unpronounced except with the vowel pointings of 0136

Usage: AV - LORD 6510, GOD 4, JEHOVAH 4, variant 1; 6519

Paul quoted this passage in Romans:

Ro 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Ex 33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.

Ex 33:21 And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

Ex 33:22 And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by:

Ex 33:23 And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.

This word of YeHoVaH given to Moses would be fulfilled in the next Chapter beginning with Exodus 34:5.