

God's Presence on Earth

Old Testament, part 7; Multiply part 16

September 22, 2013

DAY 1: God's Presence on Earth

1. God has done a TON of things to be the God of His people. He is NOT a distant deity. He is not impersonal. He does not just want obedience, even for the benefit of the people. THE point is relationship! Only in relationship with God will the people live in right relationship with God and people. Enjoying the presence of God is the key to joy!!

2. How could an invisible God make His presence known? He was leading the Hebrews as a pillar of fire at night, and a pillar of smoke by day.

3. God first made His presence known in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve enjoyed rich relationship with God and with each other, until, they rebelled against God.

Genesis 3:8 And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. ⁹ But the Lord God called to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰ And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." ¹¹ He said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" ¹² The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate." ¹³ Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

4. List everything Adam did in response to his sin.

5. List everything Eve did in response to her sin.

6. As a direct result of losing the presence of God and living life on their own resources, Adam and Eve had their first conflict. Each one thought they were justified. Self-centeredness now seemed justified.

7. How much do you associate the presence of God with the quality of your relationships?

8. How important is experiencing the presence of God in your everyday life?

DAY 2: The Tabernacle

1. It's easy for fallen man to minimize the presence of God. For many people, the idea that God is present rarely pings their awareness. In Old Testament times God tried to make this simpler, by giving a *visible* symbol of His constant presence.
2. The tabernacle was a portable tent that could be set up, taken down, and moved as needed. But don't think "boy scout" tent. This was a stunning, large tent, made out of precious cloth, strong poles, and utensils made out of solid metal, especially gold.
3. The centerpiece of the tabernacle was the ark of the covenant. It was a decorative box which contained the two tablets of the Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod that Moses used during the exodus, a jar of manna which commemorated how God fed two million people through forty years.

Exodus 25:17 "You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold. Two cubits and a half shall be its length, and a cubit and a half its breadth. ¹⁸ And you shall make two cherubim of gold; of hammered work shall you make them, on the two ends of the mercy seat. ¹⁹ Make one cherub on the one end, and one cherub on the other end. Of one piece with the mercy seat shall you make the cherubim on its two ends. ²⁰ The cherubim shall spread out their wings above, overshadowing the mercy seat with their wings, their faces one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubim be. ²¹ And you shall put the mercy seat on the top of the ark, and in the ark you shall put the testimony that I shall give you. ²² There I will meet with you, and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim that are on the ark of the testimony, I will speak with you about all that I will give you in commandment for the people of Israel.

4. Inside the ark is the "testimony" (the Ten Commandments-25:21). What is on top of the ark?

5. The "mercy seat" sat atop the ark. It was a symbol of where God would "sit". What do you think is the significance of the "mercy seat" atop the Ten Commandments?

6. Where does God say He will meet with the people? (Look back at 25:22).

7. What is the significance of that picture?

DAY 3: God's Blessing Without His Presence???

1. While Moses was on the top of Mt. Sinai receiving the Ten Commandments, the people of God were breaking the first two commandments! They were ready to "dump" God and follow a "god" of their own making. Ridiculous!! This could be a catastrophe for the plan of God!

One of the consequences was this.

Exodus 32:35 Then the Lord sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made.

2. What do you think the people would have done had there been no consequences to their blatant rebellion and idolatry?

Exodus 33:12 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. Yet you have said, 'I know you by name, and you have also found favor in my sight.'"¹³ Now therefore, if I have found favor in your sight, please show me now your ways, that I may know you in order to find favor in your sight. Consider too that this nation is your people."¹⁴ And he said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest."¹⁵ And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here."¹⁶ For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"¹⁷ And the Lord said to Moses, "This very thing that you have spoken I will do, for you have found favor in my sight, and I know you by name."¹⁸ Moses said, "Please show me your glory."¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The Lord.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy."²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."²¹ And the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock,²² and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by."²³ Then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back, but my face shall not be seen."

3. The enterprise of getting God's people to the Promised Land is in danger of going belly up.

a. What are Moses' complaints of God? (33:12-16)

b. How does God respond to the complaints of Moses?

c. In this passage, list every significance of God's presence:

4. If God offered you His blessings OR His presence without those blessings, which would you take?

DAY 4: The Temple

1. A generation passed; the people made it to the Promised Land. Many generations passed; King Solomon built the temple, God's permanent place on earth. What would be the difference between seeing God's presence in a tent or a permanent temple?

1 Kings 8:1 Then Solomon assembled the elders of Israel and all the heads of the tribes, the leaders of the fathers' houses of the people of Israel, before King Solomon in Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the covenant of the Lord out of the city of David, which is Zion. ² And all the men of Israel assembled to King Solomon at the feast in the month Ethanim, which is the seventh month. ³ And all the elders of Israel came, and the priests took up the ark. ⁴ And they brought up the ark of the Lord, the tent of meeting, and all the holy vessels that were in the tent; the priests and the Levites brought them up. ⁵ And King Solomon and all the congregation of Israel, who had assembled before him, were with him before the ark, sacrificing so many sheep and oxen that they could not be counted or numbered. ⁶ Then the priests brought the ark of the covenant of the Lord to its place in the inner sanctuary of the house, in the Most Holy Place, underneath the wings of the cherubim. ⁷ For the cherubim spread out their wings over the place of the ark, so that the cherubim overshadowed the ark and its poles. ⁸ And the poles were so long that the ends of the poles were seen from the Holy Place before the inner sanctuary; but they could not be seen from outside. And they are there to this day. ⁹ There was nothing in the ark except the two tablets of stone that Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel, when they came out of the land of Egypt. ¹⁰ And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, ¹¹ so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. ¹² Then Solomon said, "The Lord has said that he would dwell in thick darkness. ¹³ I have indeed built you an exalted house, a place for you to dwell in forever."

2. What is Solomon's "take" on the opening of the temple?

3. What struck you from this passage?

4. Solomon dedicates the temple with a long prayer. Here is a portion of it:

1 Kings 8:27 "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain you; how much less this house that I have built! ²⁸ Yet have regard to the prayer of your servant and to his plea, O Lord my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer that your servant prays before you this day, ²⁹ that your eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which you have said, 'My name shall be there,' that you may listen to the prayer that your servant offers toward this place. ³⁰ And listen to the plea of your servant and of your people Israel, when they pray toward this place. And listen in heaven your dwelling place, and when you hear, forgive."

5. What is the significance of this event? What is important to Solomon? What does he remember about God's presence?

DAY 5: God Became Flesh

1. The history of the O.T. is that God's people continue to rebel, even with God's presence in "visible" form. It is one more attempt by God to solve the problem of sin. Not even His permanent presence in Jerusalem was enough to arrest man's sin. Something else would be done. Jesus would come, God in the flesh!

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

2. In John 1:14, what attributes of God does John recognize in Jesus Christ? (Look for a handful!)

3. Think about all that God had done to arrest the folly of sin in each generation! What more could He do?! Well, here it is: God became Flesh!!! An invasion of epic proportions! What strikes you about God's next step?

4. All it takes is a casual reading of the gospels to finally understand that God's presence is meant to open up a relationship with people that should be every person's highest priority!!!

5. The life of Jesus, in relationship with everyday people shows you the kind of personal relationship God wants to have with you. It's PERSONAL!!! WITH YOU!!! As you go about your day, He is WITH you!

Psalm 84:1 How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! ² My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. ³ Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God. ⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise!

6. What are some of the things the psalmist attributes to God's presence...

a. To his joy?

b. To his peace?

c. To his deepest longings?

d. To his desires? (Hint: even the right UNMET desires bring pleasure!!!)

We will never experience something we do not earnestly DESIRE...