

Show Us Your Glory!

Exodus 33:18 (New American Standard Bible)

Then Moses said, "Please, show me Your glory!"

Introduction

Let me tell you a story of Moses this morning.

After Moses brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, he led them to the Promised Land. It took 40 years, even though it would've taken less than two weeks if they had gone straight. In other words, they wandered in the wilderness a lot, and many things happened during those years as you can imagine. This is one of them.

One day God called Moses to Mt. Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. So, he went up with Joshua his assistant. He stayed there 40 days and 40 nights. When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they went to Aaron, Moses' brother, and said, "*Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him*" (Exodus 32:1). They brought to Aaron their jewelry, and out of it, Aaron created a golden calf. Before their new god, the molten image of calf, they celebrated eating, drinking and dancing.

Moses wasn't dead. He was just delayed. As he was coming down from the mountain with the two stone tablets in his hands, he saw the party going on in the camp of Israel. Listen to Exodus 32:19-20: *And it came about, as soon as Moses approached the camp, that he saw the calf and the people dancing; and Moses' anger burned, and he threw the tablets from his hands and shattered them to pieces at the foot of the mountain.²⁰ Then he took the calf which they had made and completely burned it with fire, and ground it to powder, and scattered it over the surface of the water and made the sons of Israel drink it.*

If Moses was upset that much with the people's idolatry, how much more do you think the LORD God Himself was provoked to anger? In fact, the LORD was so sick and tired of the people and their disobedient heart that He told Moses that He wasn't going up with them to the Promised Land. He said to Moses, ³*Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, because you are an obstinate people, and I might destroy you on the way*" (Exodus 33:3). Of course, Moses wouldn't move an inch unless the LORD would go with him.

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One thing Moses never neglected during those 40 years of journey was having an audience with the LORD. Listen more. Exodus 33:7-11: ⁷ Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. ⁸ And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. ⁹ Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the Lord would speak with Moses. ¹⁰ When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would stand and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. ¹¹ So the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

In one of those meetings, Moses asked the LORD to show him His glory! Listen to Exodus 33:18-23: ¹⁸ Then Moses said, "Please, show me Your glory!" ¹⁹ And He said, "I Myself will make all My goodness pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the Lord before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion to whom I will show compassion." ²⁰ He further said, "You cannot see My face, for mankind shall not see Me and live!" ²¹ Then the Lord said, "Behold, there is a place by Me, and you shall stand there on the rock; ²² and it will come about, while My glory is passing by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock and cover you with My hand until I have passed by. ²³ Then I will take My hand away and you shall see My back, but My face shall not be seen."

Moses was used to such glory of the LORD. In fact, after his meeting with God, his face became so radiant with glory that he had to put a veil over his face whenever he talked with the people (Exodus 34:33-34).

Why am I talking about Moses and God's glory? Because I want to see the glory of the LORD in our church and in our midst. Don't you? You see, I listen to prophets, pastors, and saints who have seen God's glory through visions and dreams. Some of them even visited Heaven in spirit. They describe how beautiful it is to be in God's presence and how awesome it is to witness God's glory firsthand. I envy such experiences and I too want to see the glory of God myself. It has not happened yet. But that doesn't discourage me. I pray that someday God will allow me to see His glory.

So, until that happens, I decided to take a glimpse of His glory in the Bible, His Word. I looked up the word 'glory' in the Scripture. You are about to hear the result of my study.

Examples of God's glory

Altogether, the word 'glory' appears 320 times in the Scriptures (178/142---OT/NT). We cannot separate glory from God and God from His glory. As His presence fills the entire universe, so does His glory, the Scripture declares! *The heavens tell of the glory of God* (Psalm 19:1). *The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea* (Habakkuk 2:14). God is the Majestic Glory (2 Peter 1:17). He is full of glory! Ascribe glory to God alone (Psalm 29:1)!

Prerequisite. Signs. Prayer.

First, God's glory appears whenever and wherever His presence is strong. No presence of God, no glory of the Lord. Vice versa. Here are some examples from the Bible. God often appeared to Moses and to the people of Israel on Mt. Sinai and at the tent of meeting. Sometimes the glory of the LORD was so strong and holy that even Moses couldn't enter the tent of meeting (Exodus 40:35). Prophet Isaiah witnessed God's glory in the Temple of Jerusalem (Isaiah 6:1 ff). So did King Solomon. As he dedicated the Temple to the LORD with his thanksgiving and prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices and the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord (2 Chronicles 7:1). Even when the angel appeared to the shepherds in the field, the glory of the Lord shone around them (Luke 2:9). Wherever God's presence is strong, so is His glory.

Next, what signs do we see when the glory of the Lord appears before us? Here's what the Bible says: Mount Sinai was covered with *smoke*, because the Lord descended on it in *fire*. The *smoke* billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain *trembled* violently (Exodus 19:18). When the glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai, for six days *the cloud* covered the mountain (Exodus 24:16). In a nutshell, the glory of the Lord appears *in the cloud* (Exodus 16:10), like a *consuming fire and earthquake* (Exodus 24:7, 19:18, Deuteronomy 5:24), with *smoke and angels* (Isaiah 6:4) and with *the brightness of light* (Ezekiel 10:4, Acts 22:11).

Thirdly, I pray for God's glory in our midst. I pray that we may see the glory of the Lord in our sanctuary, in our heart and mouth, and in our land.

The psalmist testifies that he has seen power and glory of the LORD *in the sanctuary* (Psalm 63:2). So did Prophet Isaiah. So did King Solomon. I too pray that His glory and power would fill our sanctuary (in every single corner of this house of prayer) so that, whenever we enter here to worship Him, we too may feel His presence, power, and glory.

Would you please join me in such a prayer? Ask the Lord to fill our sanctuary with His glory and power (Ezekiel 3:12).

I also pray for the LORD to fill our heart and mouth with praise, thanksgiving, and His glory every day. Psalm 71:8 says, *My mouth is filled with Your praise. And with Your glory all day long. All day long. Every day. Not just once in a blue moon. Not just once a week, either. Not just when we worship. Every day. All day long.* This happens when we are filled with the Holy Spirit the Spirit of truth (Ephesian 5:18). It happens when we walk in truth and light with the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And when our hearts are filled with God's glory, it overflows into our mouth (John 12:41). People will glorify God when they hear our words of thanks and praise to the Lord.

Finally, I pray that the LORD would fill our land with His glory: *Certainly His salvation is near to those who fear Him, That glory may dwell in our land* (Psalm 85:9). This won't happen until people in America fear the LORD, showing their holy reverence to the LORD in their hearts and lives. It may take time for us to see this happen, but it must begin with us first.

I must point out two things that hinder us from experiencing the glory of God in our midst. First one is *sin*. Romans 3:23 says, by sin, we fall short of God's glory. Where sins abound, God's presence will not be there, neither shall be His glory. When our heart and mind are full of sin and disobedience, and our mouths are full of words of complaint and slander, God's glory will not be with us or in our lives. Abstain from sinful desires (1 Peter 2:11).

Next, it is *the devil* himself that blinds our minds and hearts so that we will not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:4). Remember, we are engaged in a spiritual battle with our enemy the devil. The enemy would do anything and everything to keep us from experiencing the glory of God. He puts a veil on our heart and eyes so that we may not see the light and the glory of Christ. Beware of that.

Conclusion

God gives us glory (Psalm 84:11). He wants us to seek His glory (Romans 2:7). Let us seek His glory and honor in our lives, in our family, in our church and in our land. A word of caution. Seek His glory not casually but reverently. With confession of sin and with the attitude of worship.

Let us pray. Lord, fill our sanctuary with Your glory. Fill our hearts, our minds, our words and actions, with Your glory. Show us Your glory so that we may forever walk in Your light and truth. Amen.