

## The Tabernacle, Part 8: Near to God

God has called individuals aside and revealed His glory and shown Himself to them. Throughout the Bible, God revealed Himself to one or two individuals at a time. There were rare times God revealed Himself to many people until the Exodus and during the time of Israel's deliverance from Egypt. In the Exodus, God established a new order of fellowship and worship. He prepared a large group of people for His presence and introduced corporate worship with Israel. God required Pharaoh to let His people go so they may worship Him. He called millions of them out of Egypt for this purpose. Israel was the first church (*ecclesia*) or called-out ones. They were God's chosen people. In the New Testament, the church is the whole assembly of believers. They are called out from every nation, kindred, tongue and people to serve the true and living God. They are the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, (Hebrews 12:23).

By establishing Israel as His very own people, God reveals what He really wants to do with everyone He calls out. What God does with them is a demonstration of His heart's desire for pulling them into close fellowship. What He is doing is above and beyond the general revelation that was given in the cloud and pillar of fire.

**Exodus 24:1-2 NKJV** <sup>1</sup>Now He said to Moses, “**Come up to the LORD**, you and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and **worship from afar**. <sup>2</sup>And **Moses alone shall come near** the LORD, but **they shall not come near**; nor shall the people go up with him.”

Seventy-four individuals were called up to worship near the presence of the Lord. God could only be approached in the manner He determined. God wanted to have fellowship with His people, but God was too holy for everyone to rush into His presence.

**Exodus 24:3-4 NKJV** <sup>3</sup>So Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, “*All the words which the LORD has said we will do.*” <sup>4</sup>And Moses wrote all the words of the LORD. And he rose early in the morning, and built an altar at the foot of the mountain, and twelve pillars according to the twelve tribes of Israel.

This was the testament that Moses wrote down everything that He heard from the Lord. The altar and the twelve pillars represent the covenant that God was making with His people.

**Exodus 24:5-6 NKJV** <sup>5</sup>Then he sent young men of the children of Israel, who offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings of oxen to the LORD. <sup>6</sup>And

Moses took half the blood and put it in basins, and half the blood he sprinkled on the altar.

The sprinkled blood on the altar was a seal of the oath and covenant that God was making.

**Exodus 24:7 NKJV** <sup>7</sup>Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of the people. And they said, *“All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.”*

The *“Book of the Covenant”* was the Word that God had given Moses. When the people heard the covenant, they said: *“All that the LORD has said we will do, and be obedient.”*

**Exodus 24:8 NKJV** <sup>8</sup>And **Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people,** and said, *“This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words.”*

The covenant was established by the spilling of blood. Jesus said something similar to this at the Last Supper. Matthew 26:28 NKJV For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Blood was necessary to seal the covenant.

**Exodus 24:9-10 NKJV** <sup>9</sup>**Then Moses went up,** also Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, <sup>10</sup>**and they saw the God of Israel.** And there was **under His feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and it was like the very heavens in its clarity.**

There they saw the God of Israel. This revelation was over and above what the congregation had seen in the Exodus.

**Exodus 24:11-13 NKJV** <sup>11</sup>But on the nobles of the children of Israel He did not lay His hand. So they saw God, and they ate and drank. <sup>12</sup>Then the LORD said to Moses, **“Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them.”** <sup>13</sup>So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God.

Then only Moses was invited to draw near to God. Now through Christ, we all may come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need, (Hebrews 4:16).

**Exodus 24:14-17 NKJV** <sup>14</sup>And he said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we

come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them.” <sup>15</sup>Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. <sup>16</sup>Now the glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. <sup>17</sup>The sight of the glory of the LORD was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel.

#### Preparation had to be taken for this fellowship to occur.

God was introducing a blueprint for what He intends to do with this people. God is ever near His people, but now He stepped out of the realm of invisibility to have fellowship with them. The appearance of His glory in the sight of the children of Israel was terrifying and wonderful. The language here is clear. God is holy and almighty. He required specific preparations for entrance into His presence and for worship. Moses offered burnt offerings and peace offerings to the Lord. Then, he took the Book of the Covenant and read it in the people’s hearing. Then he sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice on the people for a covering. He said: *“This is the blood of the covenant which the Lord has made with you.”*

Then they were able to draw close to God.

#### After the preparations, God came down and they saw Him and ate and drank.

The idea and revelation of this is greater than we can imagine. The Almighty Holy God came down in the sight of the whole congregation. This revelation of God was clearer than anything they had seen in the pillar of cloud or fire.

#### God prepared them for His presence and for worship.

Then God came close and did not consume them. God's ultimate goal was to bring them into His presence. They were brought closer to God than they had been. Everything around Mount Sinai was made holy ground in God’s presence. All around the mountain, barriers had to be established. God was physically present with His people. After that time, God made greater provision for His people to come near and find His help. Even when they transgressed against God and became wicked in His sight, God made provision for them to come into His fellowship.

**2 Chronicles 7:14 NKJV** If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

In Deuteronomy, God made provision for them so that even if they were scattered among the peoples of the earth because of sin, they could return and fellowship with Him.

**Deuteronomy 4:29 NKJV** But from there you will seek the Lord your God, and

you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

God's intent to fellowship with His people is provided for any who will draw near.

**James 4:8 NKJV** Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

When God called Moses and the elders up into His presence on Mount Sinai, He was very specific about their approach to Him.

They were to come aside from the remainder of the congregation. They came close enough to Him that they saw the God of Israel. Under His feet, they saw what looked like a paved work of sapphire stone, which looked like the very heavens in clarity. God did not lay a hand on the nobles of Israel. They saw God and ate and drank in His presence. The seventy elders had been near God and ate and drank in His presence. They were told to wait there while Moses stepped higher into the glory of God. When God pulls us up to a greater revelation of Himself, He does not want us to go back down to what we were before.

Then God called Moses on up into the cloud and into His presence.

God had a higher calling for Moses. He was headed into a face-to-face encounter with God. This face-to-face encounter with God caused Moses to be exceedingly afraid and tremble. God was preparing all of them for worship and His presence.

If we are going to come into God's presence, we must be pulled aside.

We cannot be a kingdom of priests unto God until we are close to Him. We must have a separation unto God. If you are going to come into the presence of God, you must be willing to come aside from some things. Are you willing to step aside to find more of Him? After that experience, God started making specific demands on the congregation.

**Exodus 25:1-9 NKJV** <sup>1</sup>Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>2</sup>“Speak to the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering... <sup>8</sup>And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. <sup>9</sup>According to all that I show you...

God told them to give willingly and then He required specific things from them. God was preparing to have them make a sanctuary so that He may dwell among them. God wanted to dwell in the midst of His people. This Tabernacle would be taken with them wherever they would go.

When they gave willingly they were committed to the vision and purpose to establish a place for God to dwell among them.

They wanted to know this God, and walk in the glory cloud where Moses and

the seventy elders walked.

God is not going to dwell with them unless they are willing to commit to it.

It will cost us to have God's presence revealed in glory and power.

God is ready to give you the riches of heaven. He is ready to pour out blessings that you will not be able to receive. He has provided a place to have fellowship with you. He is ready to pull us up into His presence and dwell with us. He wants to show us His glory and reveal Himself to us.