



No man
cometh unto
the **FATHER**
but by
ME

John 14:6

SENIOR HIGH BIBLE CLASS

FOR TEENS AGES 15-17

WINTER QUARTER | DECEMBER | JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2025-26

Senior High Bible Class

WINTER QUARTER

God, the Holy One

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LOOKING AHEAD

The holiness of God weaves mysteriously throughout the Bible, and we do not always fully understand its relationship to our lives. Over the next few months, you will walk through twelve Scripture passages that deal with the holiness of God in some way, and you will begin to understand the mystery of God's holiness and our correct response to it.

"Holiness" means uniqueness or the quality of being set apart. God's holiness stems from who He is as Creator. As fallen creatures, we are absolutely set apart from God, unable to enter the realm of His perfection. And yet, He loved us and took it upon Himself to make a way for us to encounter Him and enter a relationship with Him. When we surrender to Him and accept Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf, holiness becomes part of our lives as well.

As you will discover throughout these lessons, we have a responsibility as the people of God to revere Him for His holy nature and to live holy lives that shine forth His presence within us and reflect His holiness to the world around us.

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SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT

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.

13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew 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.

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

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

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.

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.

18 And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

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 shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

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

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

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

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

NOTES

PLEASE NOTE: Fundamental, sound doctrine is the objective of LifeStone Ministries, Union Gospel Press. The writers are prayerfully selected for their Bible knowledge and willingness to submit to the Spirit of Truth, each writing in his own style as enlightened by the Holy Spirit. At best we know in part only. "They received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

The Glory of the Lord

Lesson Text: Exodus 33:12-23

Related Scriptures: Exodus 19:7-25; 33:1-11; 34:29-35;
2 Corinthians 3:7-18; Psalm 103:6-14

TIME: 1446 B.C.

PLACE: Mount Sinai

GOLDEN TEXT—"And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live" (Exodus 33:20).

ANALYZING

A scientist approaches God with a challenge: "Modern people have come so far that we no longer need you, God. We can do anything you can do. To prove it, I challenge you to a people-making contest to show you that we are just as creative and powerful as you are." God accepts the challenge and they begin. God gathers together some dirt from the ground, forms it into the shape of a man, and breathes life into it. Immediately the person hops up and begins to walk around. The scientist nods his head and says, "That is great, but I can do it too!" He bends down and starts to gather some dirt as well. God immediately interrupts, "Get your own dirt!"

As the people of Israel saw in this passage, everything we have (even dirt!) comes from God. When we face the possible removal of His presence and glory from our lives, we realize how dependent we are on Him for both our tangible surroundings like the dirt we walk on and the air we breathe as well as the intangibles like love, goodness, and beauty. We are nothing without God.

1. The people of God see crisis (Ex. 33:12-17). The book of Exodus records Israelite history from around 1446 B.C., when God heard the cries of His people enslaved in Egypt. God sent Moses to rescue them, release them from their enslavement, and renew their relationship with Him. Moses had originally balked at the job of serving as the Israelite intercessor and had refused God's instructions four times (3:11; 4:1, 10, 13). In 33:12-13, we see that he now embraced his role of intercessor to beg God not to abandon His people.

God's reply in verse 14 was not altogether comforting. He responded with the singular pronoun "thee," meaning that His divine presence would go with Moses only, not with the entire nation of Israel. Additionally, the idea of "rest" was usually associated with the Promised Land. God indicated that Moses (singular "thee") would be given rest in the land. This put in doubt whether the remainder of the people would be allowed to experience that rest.

Moses continued his intercession, using plural pronouns to emphasize that the whole people of Israel was included in his request

(vss. 15-16). Receiving the land of milk and honey without the presence of God would be like receiving a beautifully decorated gingerbread cookie only to take a bite and find out that it is actually made of cardboard. For Israel, identity rightly stemmed from their relationship with God. Cutting off that relationship would leave them nameless and without direction and an identity of their own.

Moses also indicated that the people's identity as belonging to God separated them from the other nations on earth (vs. 16). "Holiness" can be defined as "separateness." Moses clearly stated here that the people of Israel derived their status as a holy people directly from God. That status depended on being identified with Him. If He did not continue with them on their journey into the new land, they would lose their identity as God's people. Being the people of God required the presence of God, so if He left them, it would mean their end.

Fortunately for the people of Israel, God relented (vs. 17). He determined to continue His relationship with the people of Israel. This was partially because of His strong relationship with Moses, but as we see through His revelation of Himself and His attributes, it rested more strongly on His own mercy and compassion. God's name reveals a character that consists of being merciful, gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth (34:6).

2. Moses sees the glory of God (Ex. 33:18-23). Building on that positive response, Moses asked God for a further privilege: to see His glory. Humans struggle to comprehend God's glory, even though God does sometimes reveal His glory to peo-

ple, as seen in Leviticus 9:23. However, these revelations occur infrequently and hold great significance. Would God grant this third and very personal request of Moses?

The Lord responded affirmatively (Ex. 33:19). Interestingly, He replied to Moses' request to see His glory by allowing him to see His goodness, indicating a connection between these two qualities. We can see here God's renewal of His covenant promises to faithless Israel. God revealed Himself and indicated that His name should be understood in terms of His attributes. God's name links to His covenant love, His glory, and His holiness. It points to His reality.

God continued His response to Moses with an enigmatic statement about His mercy and compassion. Despite the fact that Israel had given God no reason to continue His relationship with them, He remained faithful and forgiving. Although they had given their devotion to a golden calf in place of God, His mercy and compassion remained unchanged. No one deserves His mercy, and no one deserves His compassion. He gives them entirely as He sees fit.

God had promised to reveal His goodness and His name to Moses. However, He could not show Moses the entirety of His glory, since no one can see Him and live (vs. 20). Here God's "face" represents His complete presence, presumably including the entire weight of His glory, which no human can withstand.

So the Lord offered Moses this compromise: God would place Moses in the cleft of a rock while He passed by. God prevented Moses from experiencing the entirety of His glory in order to protect him. Moses was incredibly close to God, but even he could not survive an encounter with God in all His glory.

The Israelites needed the presence of God, but the entirety of His presence would have destroyed them. God's love solved the dilemma the Israelites faced. He revealed as much of His glory and holiness as they could handle, while acting in goodness, mercy, and compassion toward them.

Imagine being lost in the Arctic in the midst of a bitterly cold winter. Fire would be an absolute necessity for your survival. However, fire always contains the threat of destruction and the potential for injury or death. You would need access to a carefully controlled fire to meet your needs while not being consumed.

That is the picture of God's presence in this passage. The Israelites could not survive without Him, but His glory is an all-consuming fire that could swallow them up in an instant (24:17).

DAILY BIBLE READINGS

M — God's Glory at Sinai. Deut. 5:22-29.

T — Unable to Live in God's Presence. Ex. 33:1-6.

W — Revive Us Again. Ps. 85:1-9.

T — Living in God's Presence. Ps. 27:1-14.

F — God's Glory Reflected. Ex. 34:29-35.

S — God's Glory Unveiled. 2 Cor. 3:7-18.

S — Beholding God's Glory. Ex. 33:12-23.

APPLYING

We need the presence of God in our lives today just as much as the Israelites did. For those of us who have entered into the community of faith by a personal relationship with Jesus, the Holy Spirit is that continual presence in our lives. Even when we do not deserve His forgiveness and goodness, He is there. We can call on His name at any time and

know that His reality is as true for us as it was for them.

At times, we may not want God around if we are choosing sin. We may not feel His presence during hard times or trials. But even in those times, God's presence dwells continually with us, and we have constant access to His glory (Heb. 4:14-16). We should often consider whether we are acting like the Israelites. Are we worshipping a "golden calf," allowing other priorities, temptations, or idols to usurp God's place in our lives?

We must consistently set aside time to analyze whether our lives reflect devotion to Him and celebration of His presence within us.

We should also recognize that we need to have a correct level of fear concerning the glory of God. God's glory should never be taken lightly. It should always be sought with sincerity and reverence. Have you taken God for granted? Have you begun to treat Him casually or think of Him as an equal? This passage should draw you back to a place of respect and deference.

ASKING

1. What did Israel do that caused God to be angry with them, as seen in Exodus 33:5?
2. What three requests did Moses present to God? Give the verse numbers and the requests.
3. What did God reveal to Moses (vs. 19)? Did He ultimately show Moses His glory?
4. Can people handle seeing the glory of God?
5. What are some ways to describe God's glory as seen in this passage?