

Adult Bible Teacher

For Teachers of Adults Ages 18 and Up



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

John 14:6

Winter Quarter

December | January | February

2025-26

Large-Print Edition

Adult Bible Teacher

Large-Print Edition

WINTER QUARTER

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Daily Bible Readings for Home Study and Worship

(Readings are for the week previous to the lesson topics.)

1. December 7. The Glory of the Lord

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.

2. December 14. God's Glory in the Tabernacle

M — Moses and the Elders on Sinai. Ex. 24:9-18.
T — The Place of God's Dwelling. Ex. 29:38-46.
W — Aaron's Burnt Offering. Lev. 9:1-7, 22-24.
T — A Heavenly Tabernacle. Heb. 9:1-14.
F — An Eternal Temple. Rev. 21:22-27.
S — Longing for God's Presence. Ps. 84:1-12.
S — God's Glory Descends. Ex. 40:1-11, 34-38.

3. December 21. God's Glory in the Coming Christ (Christmas)

M — Assyria Invades the North. 2 Kgs. 15:27-30.
T — Light for All Peoples in Christ. Acts 26:12-23.
W — A Light for the Nations. Isa. 49:1-13.
T — Prayers for a Righteous King. Ps. 72:1-4.
F — The Promise of an Eternal King Fulfilled. Luke 1:27-33.
S — The Birth of the Promised Son. Luke 2:1-7.
S — A Son Is Given. Isa. 9:1-7.

4. December 28. No One Is like God

M — The Worthlessness of Idols. Jer. 51:15-19.
T — Let All the Earth Fear God. Ps. 33:1-12.
W — God's Enemies Put to Shame. Ps. 83:1-18.
T — Christ's Judgment. Luke 3:15-17.
F — God Delivers the Weak. Ps. 35:1-10.
S — God Gives Strength for Trials. 2 Cor. 1:8-11.
S — God Is Sovereign over All. Isa. 40:21-31.

5. January 4. Jesus Cleanses God's House

M — Honoring God's House of Prayer. Isa. 56:1-7.
T — Bearing Reproach for God's Sake. Ps. 69:6-13.
W — A Righteous Zeal. Ps. 119:137-144.
T — Dishonoring God's House. Jer. 7:8-15.
F — Judgment for Profaning the Temple. Ezek. 8:5-18.
S — God's House—A Place of Peace. Mic. 4:1-5.
S — Christ's Zeal for God's House. John 2:13-17.

6. January 11. Worshipping God in His Sanctuary

M — God Is in His Temple. Hab. 2:18-20.
T — Let All Flesh Praise the Lord. Ps. 145:1-3, 21.
W — Enthroned over All Creation. Ps. 29:1-11.
T — Declaring God's Glory. Ps. 96:1-13.
F — God Glorified by All Peoples. Rev. 7:9-12.
S — Ministers before the Ark of God. 1 Chr. 16:1-7.
S — A Song of Praise. 1 Chr. 16:23-33.

7. January 18. Isaiah's Glimpse of God's Throne

M — Standing on Holy Ground. Ex. 3:1-6.
T — The Angel of the Lord. Judg. 13:17-23.

W — Paul's Heavenly Vision. 2 Cor. 12:1-10.

T — Hearing but Not Understanding. Matt. 13:10-16.

F — Seeing but Not Believing. John 12:36b-43.

S — Refusing the Gospel. Acts 28:23-28.

S — Isaiah's Vision and Commission. Isa. 6:1-13.

8. January 25. God's Dwelling on High

M — All God's Works Praise Him. Ps. 103:19-22.
T — Exalted above the Heavens. Ps. 57:1-11.
W — Prayer for the Almighty's Help. Ps. 108:1-13.
T — Hannah's Petition. 1 Sam. 1:1-11.
F — Hannah's Praise. 1 Sam. 1:26—2:10.
S — God Lifts Up the Humble. Luke 1:46-55.
S — The Powerful Goodness of God. Ps. 113:1-9.

9. February 1. Solomon's Dedication Prayer

M — The Place of God's Choosing. Deut. 12:8-14.
T — God's Covenant with David. 2 Sam. 7:4-17.
W — David's Humble Praise. 2 Sam. 7:18-25.
T — Building the Temple. 2 Chr. 2:3-6.
F — God Dwells with the Humble. Isa. 66:1-2.
S — God Does Not Dwell in a House. Acts 7:44-50.
S — God Hears Prayer in His Temple. 1 Kgs. 8:22-30.

10. February 8. Holy as I Am Holy

M — A High Standard. Matt. 5:21-37.
T — Perfect as the Father Is Perfect. Matt. 5:38-48.
W — Sons and Daughters of God. 2 Cor. 6:14—7:1.
T — Love Fulfills the Law. Rom. 13:8-10.
F — Walk in the Light. 1 John 2:7-11.
S — Show No Partiality. Jas. 2:1-13.
S — Love Your Neighbor. Lev. 19:1-4, 9-18.

11. February 15. Holy Conduct

M — God's Will for Your Life. 1 Thess. 4:1-7.
T — Be Transformed, Not Conformed. Rom. 12:1-2.
W — Fearing the Lord. Heb. 12:28-29.
T — Lights in the World. Phil. 2:12-16.
F — Children of God. 1 John 3:1-10.
S — A Chosen People. 1 Pet. 2:9-12.
S — Called to Be Holy. 1 Pet. 1:14-17.

12. February 22. Run toward Holiness

M — The Ultimate Prize. Phil. 3:7—4:1.
T — Jesus Defeats Temptation. Luke 22:39-44.
W — Jesus Perfected through Suffering. Heb. 5:7-10.
T — Importance of Discipline. Prov. 15:10, 31-33.
F — The Way of Holiness. Isa. 35:1-10.
S — The Fruit of Righteousness. Jas. 3:13-18.
S — Look to Jesus. Heb. 12:1-17.

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

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).

Preparing to Teach the Lesson

TODAY'S AIM

Facts: to see how Moses interceded for the Israelites and how God responded by showing him His glory.

Principle: to understand that God's holiness and glory are an integral part of His character.

Application: to transform our lives by the glorious presence of God, which distinguishes us from those who do not believe in Jesus.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Have you ever been tempted to give up on someone who is difficult, perhaps ending a friendship or avoiding a family member? God could have given up on the Israelites, whom He had rescued from slavery in the land of Egypt. They constantly rebelled and treated Him like a false god. After Moses interceded for them, God showed His steadfast love and mercy while also highlighting His holiness and glory.

DEVELOPING THE LESSON

1. The guidance of God's presence (Ex. 33:12-14). Our passage begins with Moses' first request to God: to gain greater knowledge of and guidance from God. Moses rooted this re-

quest in God's own knowledge of him: (vs. 12). Just as God knew Moses, so He knows us, and He has our best interests at heart. We may be tempted to doubt Him or choose what is easy for us—as the Israelites did with the golden calf—but our best interests are to have a greater understanding of God Himself and to reflect His glory as a result.

Moses knew he needed God's guiding presence, so he asked for a deeper knowledge of God in order to lead the Israelites well. The sign of God's favor and presence with Moses would be wisdom, which comes from a relationship with Him. The more we come to know God, the more wisdom He will give us. Our lives will be transformed when we submit to God and ask Him to reveal Himself to us.

2. The holiness of God's presence (Ex. 33:15-17). Moses continued his dialogue with God with a second request: for God's presence to go with His people. Without God's presence, the Israelites would be like any other nation. Although God may not visibly go with us today, His presence still distinguishes us from the rest of the world.

The commandments God had just given Moses called the Israelites to holy lives that would mark them as different from the rest of the world. The false gods of the nations did not require holiness from their worshippers. The living God, however, *is* holy and could only dwell in the midst of the Israelites if they maintained the holiness to which He called them. They would do this imperfectly (and already had), so through this request Moses was essentially asking for God's continued forgiveness.

Many of the commandments of the old covenant, such as the specific regulations regarding worship in the tabernacle, no longer apply to us. Nevertheless, our lives should still be different from the world because God's holiness has not changed.

3. The glory of God's presence (Ex. 33:18-23). In the final verses of our lesson, Moses asked to see God's glory. God again showed His mercy to Moses and agreed to make Himself known. The glory of the Lord reveals His character. He not only proclaimed His name to Moses; He revealed His sovereignty, His goodness, and His mercy. God's glory is also so powerful that Moses could not stand to be in His full presence. Our God is unlike any false idol; without His mercy, we cannot stand before Him and live.

ANTICIPATING THE NEXT LESSON

In the next lesson, we will examine the significance of the glory of the Lord filling the tabernacle.

—Katherine Robinson

Studying the Text

ASTONISHING REQUEST #1— Ex. 33:12-13

Moses was about to probe into the very heart of who God is. He needed the assurance that the Lord was truly the kind of God who could pardon sin and take Israel as His inheritance, even though Israel was a stiff-necked and idolatrous nation (cf. 34:9). {Everything was riding on God's character. So, in the first of his bold requests, Moses prayed that the Lord would make His ways known to him if he had really found favor in His sight (33:13).}^{Q1}

Moses was pleading to know the hidden intents and purposes of the Lord for His people. It was unclear to Moses how God's glorious plan for His people could come to fruition if their sin would only provoke His wrath and judgment upon them. The Lord had indeed bound Himself to His people, but Moses did not see how that would end in anything

but disaster in light of Israel's sin. Thus, Moses sought deeper knowledge of God's character and ways.

ASTONISHING REQUEST #2— Ex. 33:14-16

Moses knew there was no point in Israel going anywhere if the Lord did not go up with them. Although the Lord agreed to accompany Moses (vs. 14), Moses pressed Him to make the same promise for all the people of Israel, not just for him personally. {Moses understood that if God's presence did not go with them, Israel would be just like any other nation, and their entire mission would be futile. Thus, he prayed that the Lord would not send them forward if He was unwilling to go with them (vs. 15).}^{Q2}

Moses was holding out for something unspeakable. This was his second astonishing request: that a holy God would have so much mercy upon a stiff-necked people that He would go

up with them to the Promised Land and thereby make them distinct among all the peoples of the earth (vs. 16).

ASTONISHING REQUEST #3—

Ex. 33:17-19

God agreed to go up with His stiff-necked people. He would extend His grace not just to Moses but also to the rebellious people for whom Moses interceded. He went on to tell Moses that he had found favor in His sight and that the Lord knew him by name. That drove Moses to inquire ever more deeply into the nature of such a God who is lofty and exalted but also willing to show such favor to undeserving sinners.

Moses' request to see God's glory (Ex. 33:17-18). The only thing left for Moses was to look into the depths of God's goodness for the assurance that His promise could really happen for such a wicked people. {In other words, he needed to know what about God's own nature made His promise even possible.}^{q3}

Moses was on the brink of asking the unthinkable. {Like a person who stares into the heart of the sun or gets security clearance to a top-secret meeting, Moses desired the loftiest thing of all—to see the glory of the Lord Himself (vs. 18)! This was his most astonishing request yet.}^{q4}

What did Moses mean by that request? What exactly did He want to see? What is the “glory” of God? Certainly, he was not merely asking for a special, mystical experience. Neither was he asking to see a physical manifestation of God because that would not be God's essence. Rather, Moses sought a deeper understanding of the nature and essence of God. In asking to see the Lord's glory, he meant something like: “Let me have a glimpse into Your divine nature. Let me see the meaning of Your great name. Show me

the foundation of this amazing promise. Give me some assurance that You will indeed grant Your saving presence to this stiff-necked people!”

Thus, out of Moses' need for reassurance that God would not abandon him or Israel, he asked for a God-given security clearance to understand the depths of the Almighty. Moses' daring request was nothing less than a desire to have God confirm His stunning willingness to show such favor to an often rebellious and defiant people.

Next, we must understand another level of Moses' appeal, namely, the meaning of “glory.” What is the “glory of God” that Moses desired to see? Many may be aware that the Hebrew word “glory” carries the idea of weightiness. When applied to a person, it describes a person of gravity, weight, and significance. {When applied to God, however, glory describes all that He is that makes Him infinitely significant.}^{q5} In other words, God's glory is nothing less than a summary way to describe the infinite worth and beauty of God because of the innumerable attributes that make Him who He is.

That is precisely what we see in God's response one chapter later. At the very moment when the Lord showed Moses His glory, He proclaimed His attributes, describing Himself as compassionate, gracious, slow to become angry, full of faithfulness and truth, and forgiving (vss. 6-7). The glory of God is His supreme worth because of His cumulative perfections that eternally define who He is.

Thus, Moses' plea to see the glory of God was a daring (but right!) request to gain a deeper understanding of God's perfections. That, in turn, led to God's affirmation of Moses' appeal, as well as God's own definition of His name.

The Lord's response (Ex. 33:19). {The Lord affirmed Moses' request by promising to cause all His goodness

to pass before Moses and to proclaim His name as He did so.}⁹⁶ Here it is important to see the theology unfolding in God's reply. Moses asked to see the Lord's *glory*, and in response, the Lord affirmed that He would show His *goodness* and proclaim His *name*. Thus, God's glory, goodness, and name are parallel and complementary (cf. Isa. 48:9-11). That tells us two things.

{First, the parallel between God's glory and goodness tells us that at the heart of God's essence is His moral beauty and perfection that always and only does what is best for His creatures. That inherent truth about God would provide Moses the assurance and hope that He sought.

Second, in the ancient context, someone's name was more than a self-designation. It was seen as something that revealed who that person was. Therefore, the parallel between God's glory and name indicates that God was going to reveal to Moses something essential to who He is.}⁹⁷ That brings us, then, to the definition of God's name and glory.

{Upon Moses' request, the Lord proclaimed, in concentrated form, His glory, goodness, and name. He told Moses, "I . . . will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy" (Ex. 33:19). Although God would add more detail in chapter 34, this statement *is* the glory of the Lord.}⁹⁸ It is who He is and the summary of His essential glory that Moses desired to see. What the Lord revealed here about Himself explains how and why God could dwell among such sinful, rebellious people without causing their extermination. Thus, such a profound theological statement from the Lord deserves a careful and thoughtful explanation.

Clearly, the Lord desired to make known to Moses that His bestowal of grace and compassion on unworthy sinners proceeds from the very na-

ture of His glory. As God's expanded statement in 34:6-7 indicates, God is also glorified by His wrath upon the unrepentant, but even there the emphasis is on God's proclivity toward grace and compassion. His wrath only lasts a few generations, but His mercy lasts for a thousand generations. God is unapologetically just and willing to judge the wicked, but He is not a God who takes pleasure in the death of the wicked. Rather, He is pleased when they turn from their evil ways and live (cf. Ezek. 33:11).

Why did God so closely identify His glory with His grace and compassion? Three components of the Lord's compassion on sinners can help us understand how it brings glory to His name.

{First, God's extension of grace and compassion to sinners is unconditional. That is, no inherent merit or worth in the sinner is required to earn God's bestowal of grace and compassion. There are no previous conditions that unworthy sinners have to meet to somehow merit the mercy, compassion, or grace they so badly need. That was clearly the case for Israel. By Moses' own admission, they were a stubborn and stiff-necked people (Ex. 34:9). They met no conditions that could in any way force God's hand to bestow His favor, love, compassion, or grace. And yet God still offered it to them.

Second, God's bestowal of grace and compassion upon sinners is always a free gift. He has the right to dispense grace as He sees fit. God's grace toward sinners is not the result of a bargain or negotiation between two parties; rather, God offers it of His own free will. That is God's prerogative. He has grace and compassion on whomever He wills (33:19).

Third, God's lavish bestowal of grace and compassion is relational. The Lord clearly revealed to Moses that He desires a people for Himself. The Lord does not merely wish for

earthly agents to do His bidding. He wants people to love Him and delight in His ways. The Lord's compassion and mercy are a means to bring reconciliation between Him and a sinful people so that He may dwell among them and they may find in Him their deepest delight.}⁹⁹

INHERENT LIMITATIONS FOR MOSES—Ex. 33:20-23

God used anthropomorphic language in verses 20-23 to describe how He would reveal Himself to Moses. We know that God is spirit and thus does not have a physical body (cf. John 4:24), so He was obviously not talking about a physical “face,” “hand,” or “back.”

{By declaring that His “face” is a deadly sight to humans, God emphasized His holiness in contrast to human frailty.}⁹¹⁰ He seemed to indicate not merely that *sinner*s cannot see Him and live but that *the human race* cannot see Him and live.

Confusingly to modern readers, just a few verses earlier, Moses is said to have spoken with God “face to face” (vs. 11). There is no contradiction, though, because as the rest of the verse indicates, the phrase “face to face” was an idiom meaning that Moses spoke with God as one would speak with a friend—not at a distance but up close and unhindered. The anthropomorphic reference to God’s “face” is simply used in two different ways in chapter 33.

In summary, we see in this intense episode that Moses needed assurance. Knowing the people of Israel’s propensity to provoke God and rebel against His ways, Moses feared that the future of the nation was in jeopardy. And indeed, it was! The golden calf episode reflected the spiritual condition of the people and so was only a harbinger of more to come.

Although the Lord did promise to accompany the people in response

to Moses’ appeal, Moses needed the deepest assurance that all of God’s promises would remain fully intact. Thus, Moses pleaded to see God’s very glory. He understood that any rock-solid assurance of Israel’s great future had to come from God’s own incomparable nature and not from the shaky nature of a sinful people.

The Lord revealed that His very nature leads Him to have compassion and grace on the undeserving. That was Moses’ deepest confidence that God could and would dwell among an undeserving people, and it remains the great hope of undeserving sinners to this day.

—Jerod A. Gilcher

QUESTIONS

1. Why did Moses ask the Lord to make His ways known to him?
2. Why did Moses not want Israel to enter the Promised Land without God’s presence going with them?
3. Why did Moses need to know something about God’s nature?
4. What was Moses’ most astonishing request?
5. What is God’s glory?
6. How did God promise to grant Moses’ final request?
7. What is the relationship between God’s “glory,” “goodness,” and “name”?
8. Which of His attributes did God emphasize when describing His glory to Moses?
9. How does God’s compassion bring Him glory?
10. What does God’s warning about seeing His face in Exodus 33:20 teach us about the relationship between God and humans?

—Matthew Robinson

PRACTICAL POINTS

1. We need a mediator to stand in the breach and reconcile us to God (Ex. 33:12-13; cf. Ps. 106:23).
2. God's presence gives the church its worth and significance (Ex. 33:14-16; cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17).
3. The indwelling Holy Spirit assures us that we are chosen children of God (Ex. 33:16; cf. Rom. 8:16).
4. We find favor in God's sight because our Mediator, Jesus Christ, has found favor in His sight (Ex. 33:17; cf. Rom. 5:2).
5. God wants us to make bold requests of Him (Ex. 33:18).
6. There will always be more to learn about our glorious God (vss. 19-23).

—Matthew Robinson

RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

1. How would you define God's glory? How does Exodus 33:12-23 change your understanding of God's glory?
2. Why is studying the character of God relevant for daily life? How can knowing more of God's character help you grow in godliness?
3. Think of some common struggles you regularly face in your life (such as fear, anger, laziness, or lust). For each struggle, which attribute of God acts as the best remedy? For instance, how does the sovereignty of God serve as a cure for fear? How does the love of God serve as a cure for selfishness?
4. If you could get to heaven and forever enjoy all its eternal blessings, but God were not there, could you still be happy? Why or why not?

—Jerod A. Gilcher

ILLUSTRATED HIGH POINTS

I know thee by name (Ex. 33:12, 17)

A youth group leader offered the following icebreaker question at the beginning of a Sunday school class: "If you could have one wish granted, what would it be?" The assistant leader of the class, who was also a missionary, had a surprising answer. She said she would wish to know the names of everyone in the world so that she could bring a smile to people's faces when she greeted them by name.

It feels good to be known and called by name, especially by someone we would not expect to know it. We can derive great comfort and joy from knowing that the God of the universe is on a first-name basis with us, just as He was with Moses.

If thy presence go not with me (vs. 15)

When I was in high school, my band director asked me to attend the first annual National Brass Symposium with him in Atlanta, Georgia. Even though it was the symposium's first year, thousands of musicians showed up for it. The reason it was so successful was that dozens of the best brass players in the world were teaching and performing at it. No one knew anything about the symposium itself yet, but they did know the *people* involved with it. The presence of so many incredibly talented musicians distinguished the symposium from other band events.

In Exodus 33, we see a similar principle. Nobody in the ancient world would have thought much of one small nation coming onto the scene. And yet the surrounding nations knew all about Israel by the time they reached the Promised Land. They were terrified because they knew Yahweh was in the midst of the Israelites (Josh. 2:9-11).

—Matthew Robinson