

**Ascent: Following Moses Up the Path to Intimacy with God  
2: God's Glorious Character and Our Response: Part One  
Exodus 19.14-19, 20.18-21, 24.10, 33.18-34.8 (20.18-21)**

**May 8**

X: premarital counseling

Philippians 3.7 That I may know him.

Knowing God quote Packer

This seems like a strange passage to address intimacy with God

At first glance, God seems forbidding, and the people seem unwelcome, and God seems to be doing everything he can to push and keep them away

But a closer look reveals  
God has invited them and brought them  
And God is now giving them the gift of revealing himself to them  
So they can know him\

God is spirit – He doesn't have a body so we can't see him.

1. (review) God initiates and invites

Exodus 19.4-7

2. God reveals

Doing premarital counseling with a couple of couples right now  
A significant part of that is me asking questions and them answering –  
It's a way for me to get to know them, but it's also designed to be a way for them to get to know each other  
they are revealing aspects of themselves to each other – why, to deepen the relationship with them, to make their connection closer, to grow in intimacy

a. revealed his heart

b. now reveals his nature and character

1. **transcendence**: lapis lazuli

Transcendence: above and apart from us in his nature

Exodus 24.10

The writers try finding earthly points of reference to captures something of what they've seen

He is like this

Ezekiel, Daniel, Revelation: writers wrestle to capture what they've seen

Daniel 10

<sup>5</sup> I looked up and there before me was a man dressed in linen, with a belt of fine gold from Uphaz around his waist. <sup>6</sup> His body was like topaz, his face like lightning, his eyes like flaming torches, his arms and legs like the gleam of burnished bronze, and his voice like the sound of a multitude.

Here: God is transcendent

Above and apart from us physically

Creator above creature – not our peer

Creatures are limited, finite, dependent

Creator is independent, all powerful, has life and existence in himself

See Knowledge of the Holy quote

Psalms 100

<sup>1</sup> Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth.

<sup>2</sup> Worship the LORD with gladness;  
come before him with joyful songs.

<sup>3</sup> Know that the LORD is God.

It is he who made us, and we are his [\[a\]](#);  
we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

Revelation 4.11

Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.

I Corinthians 8.6

There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist,

Acts 17

<sup>24</sup> "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. <sup>25</sup> And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. . . <sup>28</sup> "For in him we live and move and have our being.

Draws the line then invites them to approach

2. **holiness**: cloud, fire, smoke, quake, trumpet

God uses earthly points of reference to capture something of his nature  
Like physical metaphors  
I am like this

Holiness: above and apart from us in his character  
Marked by a purity and perfection that is foreign to us

Exodus 19 and 20

Shekinah glory: the dwelling glory  
20.23 set it apart as holy  
Holy: set apart as separate and sacred  
    19.6 holy nation  
    19.10 consecrate yourselves  
    19.22 consecrate yourselves  
    19.23 set it apart as holy

God is perfect in his character  
He is only good – there is no part of him that is evil

We see the limits 19.12 put limits  
But we can miss the invitation 19.13 after the ram's horn they may go up

Declares war on the one who rejects him – fear and terror  
Fascinating that in ancient Near East culture each of these were understood in terms of war and battle  
Woos the one who accepts him – awe and reverence

Draws the line and then invites them to approach

3. **love**: passes before Moses and declares his character  
Exodus 33-34

Above and apart from us relationally  
In his dealings and doings with us

Our love is conditioned on the performance of the other, their success or failure  
His love is marked by a commitment to his own commitment to us regardless of our performance,

Jealous:  
JI Packer Knowing God, “a praiseworthy zeal to preserve something [a love relationship that is] supremely precious”  
“His jealousy presupposes his covenant love, and this love is no transitory affection”

in his regard for humanity

Marked by a devoted, committed love regardless of failure

Incredible declaration of love and devotion to his people

Compassion: understanding of our human struggles

Gracious: generosity

Abounding in love: not stingy, boundless love that keeps pouring out, spilling over

Faithful to us and his commitment to us

Forgiving not just our actions but a heart that is

Loving:

Draws the line and then invites us to cross over into a covenant relationship, relating to him on his terms

So God gathers his people in his own front yard and draws back the veil and gives them glimpses of who he is, to bridge the gap between heaven and earth, to help them know who he is and what he is like, not to put them off, but to draw them in, to invite them up into deeper and deeper intimacy with him

X: Daniel piece –

What is about to happen in a way of capturing that in the smallest of ways

Sound and sights meant to convey his transcendence, holiness, and love

Traces of sound, glimpses of sight,

In worship we remember what is true about God and we respond with the praise and honor that is God's due

Intimacy grows as our knowledge of God grows

But there's one more chapter to the story

God appears before them veiled in a cloud, seen from behind

Turn from the old testament to the new

Walks in their midst, seen face to face

The birth of a baby

John 1.14 and 18

God personalizes his invitation and revelation

NT:

Jesus is the revelation of God

The image and likeness

If we want to know what God is like, we don't need to hop on a plane and fly to Egypt

We can open the gospels – the four biographies of Jesus at the beginning of the New Testament – and encounter him there

His love, his holiness, his transcendence

Jesus: if you've seen me, you've seen the father

Last week: Israel's encounter with God at Mt Sinai

There at God's initiative bringing them near, inviting them to draw near

First step – realizing and taking to heart that God desires us to draw near, to know him, to be in relationship with him

Next step – intimacy is grounded in seeing God.

Ancient Christian tradition going back before Augustine, that the highest end of the Christian life was seeing God

Sinning

Miss the mark, miss the path of duty and right

Torah: the way, the path of god's best for his people – the best way to walk

Sin is wandering off that path

Having a clear view of God moves us to stay on that path

The path: find your greatest happiness in me

I made you for myself, and your heart will be restless until it finds its rest in me

Sin is veering off to seek to find rest in things other than God

Jealousy: I am deeply devoted to you and I desire your deep devotion in return