



God's Presence Fills the Tabernacle

Exodus 33–34; 40



LESSON GOAL

Students will pray for God's mercy and thank Him for His faithfulness.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- God showed Moses that He was merciful yet just.
- God did not kill all the people who rebelled against Him.
- God came to stay in the tabernacle in the form of a bright cloud.
- All Israel worshiped God for sending His presence.

KEY VERSE

"And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation'" (Exodus 34:6–7).

APPLICATION

- Pray for God's mercy and turn from sin.
- Joyfully praise God for sending His Son and the Holy Spirit.

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are

- _____
- _____
- _____

Materials Needed

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

"Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... You shall teach them to your children" (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God's Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Israel's idolatry with the golden calf could have resulted in their destruction. Indeed, God had promised that He would "visit punishment upon them for their sin" (Ex. 32:34). Some of the people were destroyed by the Levites (whom God told to kill rebellious Israelites) and by the plague that God sent. Although others escaped immediate death, those who were unbelieving would suffer eternal punishment. But God showed amazing grace to Israel. He allowed the majority of the two million Israelites to live, He was willing to allow them to enter the Promised Land, and He promised to send His angel before them (32:34). (The presence of the angel had originally been promised in Exodus 23:20–24. He was the angel of Yahweh, the preincarnate Christ, who had the power to forgive sins and who had God's name.) God promised Israel, "I will send My Angel before you, and I will drive out" the nations. But this awesome news of grace was sobered with news of the consequences of sin: "I will not go up in your midst, lest I consume you on the way, for you are a stiff-necked people" (Ex. 33:2–3). Israel was stunned and went into mourning. They were worried by God's pronouncement that He would not go with them because He might destroy them (33:5). Although the plan for the tabernacle had been given, the promise of God's presence was precariously close to being revoked. Exodus 33–40 tells of God listening to Moses' prayer for God's presence to go with Israel, God revealing His glory to Moses, and God filling the tabernacle with His presence.

Promise of God's Presence: Exodus 33:1–17

Moses met with the Lord in a temporary tabernacle outside the Israelite camp. When Moses went into this "tent of meeting," the pillar of cloud that had led Israel to Sinai descended in front of the tent. God would talk with Moses there. The LORD spoke to Moses "face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (Ex. 33:11). Moses did not actually see God's face (an issue that will be discussed later in Exodus 33), but Moses had an intimate friendship with God, a friendship that displayed God's love and mercy.

Moses was disturbed that God's presence would not dwell among the people. Knowing that he had found favor with God (Ex. 33:12–13), he took advantage of that special relationship and interceded for the people. He asked God to "consider that this nation is Your people." God answered, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (33:14). In Exodus 32:10, God had offered to make Moses' descendants into a great nation, but Moses was more concerned with God's glory among the nations than his own promotion. That same desire for God's glory fueled Moses' second prayer as he asked for the certainty of God's presence. Moses asked, "How then will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us?" (Ex. 33:16). Israel would not be a separate people, the holy nation and kingdom of priests that God had intended, if God's presence was not with the people. In answer to Moses' prayer for His glory, God again promised to be with Israel.

Additional Reference Materials

Moses and the Gods of Egypt: Studies in Exodus
by John J. Davis

The MacArthur Study Bible by John MacArthur

Desire for God's Presence: Exodus 33:18–22; 34:1–9, 29–34

Moses clearly had a passion for God's glory. His first two requests for God's glorification in Israel developed into a third request. Moses prayed, "Please, show me your glory" (Ex. 33:18). Moses wanted to see God glorified both in Israel and in his own life. Moses' favor with God did not lead him to complacency over his position. Pride did not overtake him when God answered his requests. Rather, Moses hungered after a deeper relationship with the infinitely satisfying God. How amazing that God should be glorified by our wanting Him!

God answered Moses' prayer. God revealed, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you" (Ex. 33:19). Both "My goodness" and "the name of the LORD" signify the totality of who God is. His goodness and His name are summarized in this sentence: "I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (33:19). God is sovereign over all creation. All power is His, and He chooses whom He will have mercy on.

Although God promised to reveal His glory to Moses, He told Moses that he could not see His face and live. Even righteous Moses would have been consumed by the unmitigated holiness of God. God would provide a place where Moses could be hidden by God's hand from the rest of God's glory. God would allow Moses to see His glory, but only a part of that glory.

God commanded Moses to ascend Mount Sinai the next morning. He was to bring with him two stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments would be written (Ex. 34:1). For the second time, Moses spent 40 days and nights on Mount Sinai, neither eating food nor drinking water (34:28). The Lord descended in the cloud, and just as He had promised, "proclaimed the name of the LORD" to Moses (Ex. 34:5). As the Lord passed by, God revealed Himself with the words much cherished by saints from all ages:

"The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation" (Ex. 34:6–7).

Moses' response is exemplary: "Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped" (Ex. 34:8). While we can only imagine what it must have been like to see God's glory, God mercifully captured some of that glory in words. God is gracious, longsuffering, unlimited in goodness and truth, and forgiving of sin; but at the same time, He punishes the unrepentant and allows the devastating effects of sin to be felt for future generations. Believers must remember who God is and live in light of that knowledge. Worship and worshipful obedience are our joyous offering to our glorious God.

On top of the mountain, God confirmed the covenant previously made with Israel (Ex. 34:10, 27). When Moses came down with the Ten Commandments, his face shone from talking with God (34:29). God's presence had a visible effect on Moses' face. The Israelites were terrified, so Moses veiled his face. God's glory had left an unmistakable mark on Moses.

In the New Testament, God promises to dwell in the believer. If we have come to know Christ, who is "the brightness of His [God's] glory and the express image of His person" (Heb. 1:3), we can be certain that we "are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory" (2 Cor. 3:18). In the revelation of Christ, we have come to see God unveiled and are being conformed to the glorious image of Christ.

Dwelling in God's Presence

After the covenant had been renewed, Moses took an offering from the people and collected the necessary materials for the construction of the tabernacle. God "called by name" and "filled...with the Spirit of God" Bezalel to help construct the tabernacle (Ex. 35:30–31). A group of artisans was given special wisdom and understanding in order "to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary" (36:1). The tabernacle was a shadow of heaven, and it was essential that it be built exactly as God had commanded. Unlike the episode of the golden calf, when the Israelites committed idolatry with their self-styled worship, the Israelites now obeyed "according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses" (39:32). The tabernacle was raised on the first day of the second year. Almost a full year had passed since the exodus from Egypt (40:17). Three months had been spent coming to Sinai (19:1), and approximately another eight months had passed since their arrival. The episode of the golden calf was surrounded by two 40-day periods with Moses on Mount Sinai, leaving approximately six months in which the tabernacle was constructed.

Finally, the time for God's dwelling among the Israelites had come. Moses followed God's decrees for setting up the tabernacle, for its anointing, and for the consecration of the priests (Ex. 40:1–33). When all was done, "the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle" (40:34). Not even Moses could enter the tabernacle because of the cloud above and the glory inside. While Moses had been allowed to see the "back" of God's glory, he could not see the manifestation of His glory that indwelt the tabernacle. God's glory was so great that no man could see His holiness. The cloud was above the tabernacle during the day and fire was above it at night. When the cloud moved from the tabernacle, the Israelites knew it was time to break camp and follow (Ex. 40:36–38).

In Genesis 17:8, God promised Abraham that He would be the God of Abraham's descendants. In Exodus 3:7, God called Israel "My people." In Exodus 6:7, God promised, "I will take you as My people, and I will be your God." And when Israel finally came to Sinai, after seeing the magnificent manifestation of God's power during the exodus and His provision in the wilderness, Israel was privileged to have God make a covenant with them. God swore to them, "You shall be a special treasure to Me above all people...and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation" (Ex. 19:5–6). Although Israel had broken the commands that God Himself had given, He graciously restored them to the covenant relationship. He relented from His wrath and promised to take them to the land sworn to Abraham. But the ultimate revelation of His forgiveness and grace was that God Himself dwelt among the people. What a splendid array of God's attributes is revealed in His dwelling among the people of Israel!

The book of Exodus is about God making a people for Himself. The end of Exodus reveals God having accomplished what He had purposed, despite the Israelites' continuous rebellion and hard hearts. God glorified Himself among Israel and the nations, revealing that He was Yahweh, the self-sufficient I AM, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. This awesome God had chosen to dwell among sinful men. In Leviticus, God will reveal more to Israel concerning how sinful man could dwell with the Holy God in their presence.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth"
(Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.

What was Moses getting from God on the mountain?

The stone tablets written by God.

What did the people of Israel do while Moses was gone?

They made a golden calf from their gold jewelry.

What was the golden calf used for?

To worship as their god.

What did God think about this?

He was very angry.

What did Moses do about it?

He destroyed the calf and called the people to repent.

What did God do for Moses?

He forgave the people and gave him an Angel to help him lead the people.



What's in a Name?

God's goodness and His name signify who He is. Help students write and decorate their own names. Here are some ideas:

- Before class, print each student's name in box letters so that he can color and decorate inside each letter. Use crayons, pens, glue with glitter, sequins, feathers, or yarn.
- Bring parchment paper and basic calligraphy pens. Let the students practice, and then write out their full names. Make them into desk placecards or even frame them.
- Bring in a book that gives the origin and definition of names. Look up students' names and write out their meanings. This would be a good opportunity to discuss God's characteristics, which make up who He is.



The Brightness of God's Glory

God is so holy and glorious that if anyone actually saw Him in His fullness, that person would die. God's presence is described as intense light. Moses had been allowed to see the "back" of God's glory, but not even he could enter the tabernacle once the glory of the Lord filled it. To help your students understand and grasp these concepts, give them the example of the sun. We cannot (and should not) look into the sun without it hurting our eyes. Have the students brainstorm for

some objects that they need to protect them from the sun: sunglasses, lotion, caps, umbrellas, etc. You may even want to bring some of these examples to class. God's glory is much more intense, more consuming, and even brighter than the sun! Ultimately, we are protected from God's holiness and can only behold His glory by being in Christ.



Build the Tabernacle

Have the students pretend to be Israelites. Their job is to build the tabernacle. It is going to be the place where God sends His special presence. It needs to be very, very beautiful. Bring in three or four 12-foot sheets of butcher paper. (White bed sheets would work as well.) Lay them on the floor and ask the students to make their prettiest pictures of angels on them. Use a rectangular table to make a tabernacle. Once the sheets of the butcher paper are decorated, drape the pieces face-down over the table. Pull the pieces down to the ground evenly on both sides. Tape them to the floor. See the drawing of the tabernacle in the back of the lesson. The beautiful pictures of the angels were on the inside of the tabernacle. This was where God was going to be. Use the tabernacle as you tell the story.



A House for God?

Look through magazines and newspapers or use the Internet to find pictures of houses from around the world. Bring these to class. Show the pictures to the students and tell them what kind of houses they are. Ask them whether God needs a house to live in. Explain that He does not need one because He is a Spirit and lives in heaven. Then ask them what kind of a house God would live in if He wanted to live in a house. In today's lesson, we are going to learn about the house God came to stay in. This house is the tabernacle. God wanted Israel to know that He lived with them. But the Israelites were sinful, so God's shining cloud stayed in the tabernacle. This way, the people could see that God was with them and they would not die.



Describing God

In order for Moses to know who God was, God described His characteristics. Describe a few simple objects to the students, and have them guess what they are. For example: "I am round, you can kick or throw me, and I am about the size of your head. What am I?" A soccer ball. Show them a soccer ball and explain that they knew what it was from your description of its characteristics. In the same way, although we cannot see God, we can know who God is by how He described Himself. Other ideas include a blanket, an apple, and a bicycle.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Reading of the Text

Read portions of Exodus 33–34, 40.

Can you see God with your eyes? No, we cannot see God with our eyes, but we still know He is there! Did you know that God said no one can see Him with his eyes and live? Today, we are going to learn what happened when Moses asked God if he could look at Him. We are also going to learn about the house the Israelites built for God to live in.

Do you remember who Moses was? That is right; he was the leader God had put in charge of the Israelites. The Israelites were waiting to go to the wonderful land that God had promised to them. God had told the Israelites that His angel would be with them and would help them get to the Promised Land. But God had become very unhappy with the Israelites. He said that He would not go with them. Why do you think God was unhappy with the Israelites? That is right—because they had sinned. They had made an idol, a golden calf, and decided that the calf would be their new god. They did not trust in God or believe in Him when they made that idol. This was a very serious sin. God could have punished all of them by destroying them and never giving them the Promised Land. But He decided to be merciful to them. What does *merciful* mean? Being merciful means that God does not punish you even though you deserve it.

God showed mercy when He agreed to go with the Israelites because they had been sinful and did not deserve to have the blessing of God's presence with them. Why do you think that God agreed to go with the Israelites? Well, the Bible tells us that Moses asked God. God loved Moses very much, and they talked every day. It made Moses very, very sad that God said He would not be with them, so He asked God to remember that the Israelites were His chosen people and asked Him to go with them. God showed them great mercy when He said, "My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Ex. 33:14).

Moses knew what a blessing it was to have God's presence with them. Moses loved God very much, and he wanted to know Him even more. So one day Moses asked God a question. He said, "Will you please show me your glory?" Moses wanted to see God with his eyes! And what do you think God said? He said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you." But there were a few rules. Remember, God said that no one can see Him—His face—and live. So Moses would not be able to look at God's face. Also, God said that he would have to go back up on top of the mountain named Mount Sinai. Moses had to bring two stone tablets with him. When God was ready to show Himself to Moses, He hid Moses behind a rock and let Moses see the back of Him when He passed by.

When Moses came from the mountain, his face shone like the sun! He was glowing with God's glory. God had also written His Ten Commandments on the two stone tablets and given them to Moses to bring back down to the Israelites.

Now that God had promised to be with the Israelites and Moses had seen His glory, the Israelites had a big job to do. They had to make a house in which God's presence could live. God told them exactly how to build the house, and it had to be perfect because God would live there. This house that they built was called the tabernacle. When it was finished, God lived in it, and no one could go in the part of the house where God was. Remember, God said no one could see His face and live. When God sent His special presence, the whole nation of Israel cheered and praised God.

How did God show mercy to Israel? He lived among them, even though they had been very sinful. They did not deserve to have God's presence with them, but He did not punish them as they deserved. Almost 1,500 years later, God sent His presence in a different way. He sent His Son, Jesus. Jesus came to earth to show us just what God the Father is like. John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." When Jesus went back to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to live inside all those who believe in Jesus—that is, those who have turned from their sin and followed Jesus. Now the Holy Spirit dwells inside all true Christians.



Lesson Questions

What two things did Moses ask God for?

His presence with the Israelites and to see His glory.

What had the Israelites done that made God angry with them?

They had worshiped an idol, a golden calf that they had made.

Where did Moses see part of God's glory?

On top of Mount Sinai.

What does *mercy* mean?

Not getting punished when you deserve it.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



Treasure-Box Object

The object for this lesson is a rock. God placed Moses in the cleft of the rock before showing him His glory.

Praise and Worship

God Is So Good

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

I Will Sing of the Mercies



Seeking God's Glory

The book of Exodus has shown us,
(Hold hands like a book; then make an X with arms.)

Much about a man named Moses,
(Pretend to stroke beard.)

But the main point of the story,
(Hold up one finger.)

Is that we should seek God's glory.
(Point to self with thumb, shade eyes with hand and look up.)

He abounds in all good things,
(Spread hands out in front, then sideways)

Mercy, grace, longsuffering.
(Count to three on fingers.)

So read God's Word and then obey,
(Hold hands like a book, then hold hand to ear and nod head.)

And worship our Lord every day.
(Palms together, bow head, close eyes.)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments" (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Salt Painting

Materials: 1/8 cup liquid starch, 1/8 cup water, one tablespoon Tempera paint or two squirts yellow food coloring and 1/2 cup table salt, white paper plates with two eyeholes cut out, paint brushes

Directions: Mix all the ingredients together. Keep the mixture stirred. Paint the mixture all over the paper plate to make it glow. As it dries, it will crystallize. Hold the paper plate up to the student's face to see it "glow." Moses' face glowed after he talked to God.



Two-Sided Tabernacle

Materials: two copies of the tabernacle coloring sheet; construction paper; glue; crayons; gold, red, and orange glitter

Directions: Direct the students to spread a light layer of liquid glue on the cloud of each tabernacle scene. Have them put silver or gold glitter on the cloud to represent the tabernacle during the day. Have them put red and orange glitter to represent the tabernacle at night. As the glue dries, have the students color the



pictures. When they are finished, have them glue one page on one side of the construction paper and one page on the other side.

Stone Tablets

Make stone tablets from Play-Doh, and pretend to write on them with a cotton swab or wooden craft stick. Review the Ten Commandments as the students "write" on their tablets.



Glowing Item

Bring a toy, shirt, or any item you have that will glow in the dark after being exposed to light. Show the students how the item works by exposing it to bright light and then taking it to an area where there is as little light as possible. In today's Bible lesson, Moses spent 40 days on the mountain talking with God. Moses' face was glowing when he came off the mountain, and the people were afraid to come near him.



5

Making Moses Memories

Choose a coloring page and reduce it to 4 x 6 inches. Have each student color the page, cut it out, and glue it to the next page in his scrapbook. At the end of the Exodus series, students may take home their completed scrapbooks.

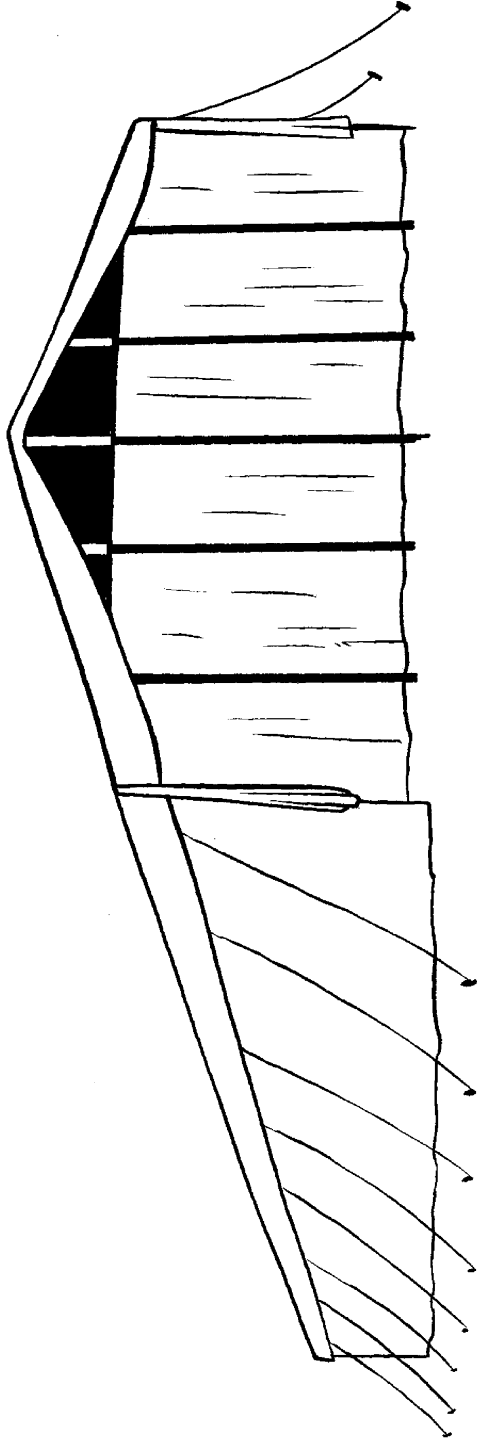
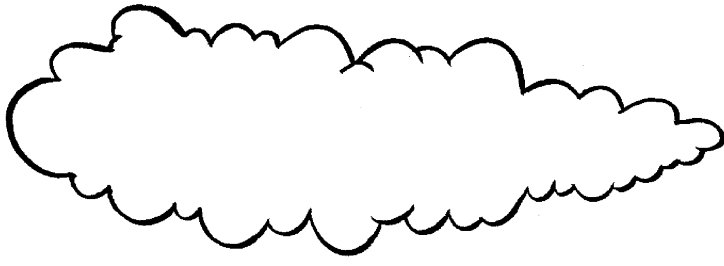
Coloring Sheets

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of this lesson. The students can color the pages in class or at home.



MEMORY VERSE

Review Exodus 20:1–17.





The LORD said to Moses, "So shall it be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by"
(Exodus 34:22).



“Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle” (Exodus 40:34).

