

The Glory of the Lord Filled the Tabernacle

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[0 : 00] Let us sing to God's praise some verses from Psalm 119, Psalm 119 and we're singing from verse 137.

Let us sing the whole of this section of the Psalm, Psalm 119 at verse 137. O Lord, thou art most righteous, thy judgments are upright, thy testimonies thou commands most faithful are and right.

My zeal hath even consumed me, because mine enemies thy holy words forgotten have, and do thy laws despise. Thy words most pure, therefore in it thy servant's love is said.

Small and despised I am, yet I thy precepts not forget. Thy righteousness is righteousness, whichever doth endure.

Thy holy law, Lord, also is the very truth most pure. Trouble and anguish have me found and taken hold on me, yet in my trouble my delight thy just commandments be.

[1 : 19] Eternal righteousness is in thy testimonies all. Lord, to me understanding give, and ever live I shall.

These verses of Psalm 119, verse 137. O Lord, thou art most righteous, thy judgments are upright. O Lord, thou art most righteous, thy judgments are upright.

Thy testimonies are upright. Thy testimonies are commands, most faithful, last and right.

My zeal hath even consumed me, because mine enemies thy holy words forgotten have, and do thy love's despise.

Thy words most pure, therefore on it thy servant's love is said.

[3 : 07] Small and despise thy sight, yet I thy precepts not forget.

Thy righteousness is righteousness, which ever doth endure.

Thy holy law, Lord, also is the very truth most pure.

Trouble and anguish have me found and taken hold on me.

Yet in my trouble my delight, thy just common mercy. Yet in my trouble my delight, thy just common mercy.

[4 : 33] Thy righteousness is in thy testimony. Eternal righteousness is in thy testimony. Thy righteousness is all.

Thy righteousness is all. Lord, to me understanding give, and ever live I shall not be.

I shall not be. I shall not be. I shall not be. I shall not be. I shall not be. I shall not be. Shall we turn again to the passages of Scripture that we read?

We can read at chapter 40 of the book of Exodus. Exodus chapter 40 and at verse 34.

Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. Now we've been looking at some random passages of Scripture with a very loose, understanding, very loose connection between the passages that we've been looking at.

[5 : 54] But focusing on the glory of the Lord, and how it is a God of the glory of the Lord, and how it is a God of the glory of the Lord. And how it is experienced in some of its differing facets. And how it is experienced in some of its differing facets. How it is a God of the glory of the Lord, and how it is relational■ and how the messages are made in different passages.

And how it is experienced in the Lord, and how it is learned in some of its different ■ets. And how of the joy of the Lord foundinc finale. between the passages that we've been looking at, but focusing on the glory of the Lord and how it is experienced in some of its differing facets.

When I was reflecting on this, I was thinking maybe it's a bit like the word grace, when we use the word grace very often.

It is used with a great deal of fluidity. We speak of grace, but we can mean any number of things when we use the word.

And I think similarly, when we reflect on what we mean by God's glory and our experience of God's glory or the experiences that the scripture brings to our attention, we do find that there are certain things which make us realize that there are certain elements that belong to it that may not always be reflected in all the experiences where God's glory is spoken of.

[7 : 39] Now, you'll know the book of Exodus is a book that is full of the experiences of God's people and the various encounters with God.

and there are many marvelous occurrences that we read about within the book of Exodus, some of them miraculous, some of them decidedly encounters between mere mortals and the divine.

we know, for example, that the book of Exodus brings to our attention the redemption of God's people from bondage and how God intervened in their lives and through various miracles and through various judgments he dealt with those who were responsible for their imprisonment.

We see the various plagues listed and what occurred as a result of that. We read of the miracle of the parting of the Red Sea and how the Lord intervened within the natural world and made the water part and allowed God's people to pass over dryshod and he brought judgment to bear upon the Egyptians who were their pursuers.

In the wilderness we read of many experiences that they had where they encountered God's arm and bear in meeting their needs supernaturally.

[9 : 42] He fed them, he clothed them, he dealt with their thirst and so on. All of these things we remember through our reading of this book.

We also read in the book of the giving of the moral law and how God through his servant Moses spoke and his law was written on tablets of stone and the people of God were taught thereby.

And all of these encounters I suppose many of them at least focus on the passion of Moses. And Moses is the hero if you like of the book of Exodus.

He is not only the pen that records the events for us but he is the one that God deals with directly and through Moses he deals with his people.

But what we need to remember as we think about Moses is that he is always God's servant. He is there to do God's bidding.

[11 : 04] He is there to speak God's truth and he is there to perform whatever it is that God would have him do in his name.

So when we look at this passage I don't want to look at it in isolation because it is undergirded by many of the other dealings that God had with his people through his servant Moses.

And it brings various thoughts to mind concerning the revelation of God's glory that Moses experienced and through Moses that his people God's people came to encounter.

And there are things that occur simultaneously with God's dealings with Moses that are not always predictable or always easily understood.

There are certain things which we can take for granted. We can understand that the calling of Moses into service was something that needed to be obvious to God's servant and to those that he was dealing with on behalf of the Lord.

[12 : 35] He spoke to Moses clearly and lucidly so that he understood himself who was speaking to him that it was the Lord, I am that I am, that was addressing him.

And I suppose in a sense as you go on through the book of Exodus, you will understand that it was necessary to give impetus to God calling Moses or give clarity to Moses himself that he was indeed God's servant and that this was indeed God's calling for him, that it was God who called him and God who gave him that calling.

And I suppose that follows the people of God throughout all the generations. Whoever it is that called to serve God in whatever capacity, they are looking for confirmation that their calling is indeed the Lord's, that he has dealt with them personally and lucidly, so much so that they cannot fail to be persuaded of it.

And the reason for that is simple, and you see it in the book of Exodus, how many of the things that Moses encountered would necessarily challenge his own strength, spiritually, if not physically.

We know that he was somebody who was endowed almost with superhuman strength. He was somebody at the end of his days who was as physically able as he was at the outset of his ministry.

[14 : 33] But that is God's doing. But then again, regardless of that, it was necessary for Moses to know that God was calling him and God was with him throughout.

And just to bolster that thought, I think it has to be understood, and the scriptures in the New Testament emphasize that, that what Moses did as God's servant was done by faith.

In the epistle to the Hebrews where the giants of the faith are written about Moses as mentioned there, and the detail of his calling as that man of God is emphasized as well.

We read in Hebrews 11, verse 24, by faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of son.

Sin for a season. And it goes on to expand on that essential faith, faith that rested upon God's promise and ensured that God would see his servant fulfill his calling.

[16 : 11] So it's important for us at the very outset before we even expand on this thought in any meaningful way to remember that the experience of Moses was the experience of somebody who was a man of faith, whose encounter with God, as God chose to reveal to him his glory through his encounters with him, and there was a variety of them.

It had to be the case, and we'll return to that point before we finish, it had to be the case that Moses, the man of God, was a man of faith, and what he encountered and what he fulfilled in God's name was a result of faith.

Now, looking at the verse here before us, I don't want to take it, as I said, in isolation. I want to direct you to several occurrences that Moses encountered the glory of God.

It is spoken of as an encounter with the glory of God. His early experience, you'll remember, was when God spoke to him out of the burning bush.

Who would argue that this was anything other than a glorious encounter? God spoke to him and Moses knew that it was God who spoke to him.

[17 : 50] At least he came to that certainty. And he understood it to be a supernatural encounter with God.

And I think that is important as well. But if we go to Exodus chapter 24, just for a couple of examples, there in that chapter, we find first of all how God affirms his covenant with Moses and with God's people through Moses.

Remember his dealings with Abraham and with Jacob coincidentally was a revelation of his glory, but in the context of the covenant.

covenant. And in chapter 24, verse 7, we read there that Moses took the book of the covenant and read in the audience of the people, and they said, all that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient.

And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, behold, the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you, concerning all these words.

[19 : 15] And so on. Then we come to the end of the chapter where we read there, Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount, and the glory of the Lord abode upon the mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days, and the seventh day he called unto Moses, out of the midst of the cloud, and the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel, and Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and got him up into the mount, and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.

Now that seems, on the face of it, to be a contradictory experience on the part of Moses, there is no question but that the glory of the Lord is understood in God's descent to the mount, his presence there, the covering of the mount with clouds and fire and so on, the prohibition that was to others to approach it, and Moses yet goes into it, and he is not for Britain.

and when we move on from here, we find Moses again setting out the parameters and the boundaries for the spiritual worship of God as given to him by God, and it is through that that we read, God will meet Israel at the door of the tabernacle, and the tabernacle will be sanctified by his glory.

So, Moses is given intimate detail of how God was to be worshipped, what God required, the various sacrifices, how they were to be offered, later on he describes to Moses, and Moses fulfills to the left the construction of the tabernacle in the wilderness, and the worship associated with it.

But, there is again, a clear understanding that God is revealing himself to Moses and to God's people in glory, and they are clearly affected by what he says, and what they see, by the repetition of promises, they are assured of God's presence.

[21 : 59] and it is a glorious presence. No one of them was in denial of who God was or what God was doing in their midst. They were, as his people, convinced of his presence, and that his presence was a glorious presence.

presence. And, when Moses, we are told, comes down from the mount following his time there, and the people have created a golden calf, Moses is shocked to discover this, how quickly the people have departed from that previous knowledge that they possessed of God's glory, how quickly their memory evaporated their knowledge of God.

They followed their own base instincts into sin and created a golden calf that they were to worship.

worship. And, the offense that God experiences or shows through Moses is evident to all. But, the interesting thing is that Moses intercedes as a type of Christ.

He intercedes for the people and God listens to Moses' intercession. Although his displeasure is manifested in judgment, yet the glory of God is seen even in the judgment.

[23 : 33] We need to remember that also. That the holiness of God and the righteous indignation of God in the face of sinful behavior is itself a facet of God's glory which we cannot overlook or forget.

And yet it is a measure of God's long-suffering and patience that he is willing for his covenant to be renewed through Moses and he openly witnesses to his willingness following the people's repentance.

And here again we move on and we come face to face with another experience of Moses where he refers to an encounter.

Remember this is his own account. It's a spirit-given account right now but it is Moses' own account of his experience. So in chapter 37 we read there how the Lord deals directly with Moses and Moses speaks to the people.

It came to pass in verse 9 of 33, chapter 33, it came to pass as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle and the Lord talked with Moses and all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door and all the people rose up and worshipped every man in his tent door and the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face as a man speaketh into his friend and he turned again into the camp but a servant Joshua the son of Nun a young man departed not out of the tabernacle.

[25 : 43] Now that experience again is a face to face encounter on the part of Moses with God whatever that means it is certainly spoken of as a glorious experience that Moses is able to testify to but he is bold in testifying to his relationship with God on the basis not of what he is or what he has done in the past but on who God is and what God has done in the past.

You'll read again in chapter 33 verse 17 the Lord said unto Moses and to this thing else that thou hast spoken for thou hast found grace in my sight and I know thee by name and he said I beseech thee show me thy glory 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 show mercy on whom I will show mercy and he said thou canst not see my face for there shall no man see me and live and the Lord said behold there is a place by me and thou shall stand upon a rock and it shall come to pass while my glory passes by that I will put thee in a cliff of the rock and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by I will take away mine hand and thou shalt see my back parts but my face shall thou not see now the important thing there is that the scripture is not inconsistent on one side we read of

Moses speaking to God face to face and the last reading we read there of the God of heaven insisting that God is not able to be seen because for the simple reason he is spirit he does not possess bodily parts so whatever is being addressed there whatever is being spoken of is really to do with the passion of God and the glory of that passion the power of that passion and his willingness to come down to the level of a mortal such as Moses which is what he is with the needs of the mortal the needs of his humanity being declared and God in his goodness is willing to deal with

Moses in that capacity and there itself there is a measure of the awesome glory of God how ready he is you'll read that again and again throughout his dealings with his people who bear his name that despite their neglect of the means of grace despite their forgetfulness of the provisions that he had made in almost unlimited measures throughout their time in the wilderness how quickly they forgot and how willing God is to deal with them out of a sense of his understanding of what their needs are some of the divines say that what Moses is seeking at this point when he asks for God to reveal himself to him that he is not doing it for himself he is doing it rather more on the basis of his understanding of what he is called to do instinctively he needs confirmation instinctively he needs to be reassuring instinctively he needs to be reminded of who exactly

God is and what God wishes them to do so in the following chapter chapter 34 again we read of a face-to-face encounter between Moses and the Lord it's as if the scripture is telling us that this is something that God is prepared to do in order to overcome the desperate fallenness of the people of God the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord and the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed the Lord the Lord God merciful and gracious long suffering and abundant in goodness and truth keeping mercy for thousands forgiving iniquity and transgression and son that by no means clear the guilty visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and upon the children children unto the third and fourth generation and

[31 : 16] Moses bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped now again what God is doing there is reminding Moses of the terms of the covenant who God is and what he is to his people it's not repetition as such but a reminder of a truth that remains constant in the face of his people's neglect and inconstancy inability to continue even in the path of obedience for a short time and while what Moses sees is mysterious and we can't dismiss it as anything that the fact is that even in this one act where Moses bows his head it's an act of worship he is confronted again by God's glory and by

God's awesome holiness and there might be a danger on the part of somebody who has repeatedly been in contact and in face-to-face communication with God and God with him and that this was something that God was prepared to do again and again on with the understanding that Moses had that privileged position and yet Moses did not fall prey to pride or believe that he was entitled in any way shape or form to the privileges that God gave him as his own servant he bowed his head and doubtless worshipped God Professor

John L. Mackay reminds us that the way God deals with Moses is not really a response to human merit but a response that comes from his own heart as it were a display of divine sympathy rising out of the understanding that he has of the weakness of those that he is ministering to even when they would expect punishment on the part of their waywardness what does he confront them with a reminder of who he is a reminder of what he has promised to do a reminder of what he is yet to do and when we get to chapter 40

I suppose you're left asking the question how can we have moved from these encounters with God that Moses had where he had the privilege of being in his company for 40 days and 40 nights and where the glory that confronted him there resulted in Moses' own face radiating that glory so I insist it's just a reflection of the glory that Moses was exposed to and that reflection was intolerable to those who were not privy to it when he came down from the mount he had to veil his face because such was the glory that marked him out and yet when we get to the end of chapter 40 we read there that when the

Lord has established the means by which they are to worship him in the wilderness that he demonstrates what will be evidence of his presence within the camp the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night the presence of God is seen in these things and they know it to be so we read in verse 34 the cloud covered the tent of the congregation and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle and Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation because the cloud was there what are we to make of that why was it that if anywhere the the Mount Sinai shows the awful reality of

[36 : 41] God's holiness and God's glory when Moses was there and the awfulness that deterred others from approach and yet Moses was privy to that encounter with God and here he is forbidden here he is denied that and I think the only answer I can give to it is that we are to remember that any exposure we have to the glory of God is entirely under the control of God it is as and when he chooses to reveal himself in his glory that it is demonstrated even for his servant Moses it had to be the case that only as God permitted it was he given the privilege of a face to face encounter and there were limits placed upon what he was able to endure and that has to be remembered

I was reading a passage a book written by most of you would know Hugh Martin and Hugh Martin has written a book which is really to do with the Holy Spirit the abiding presence but in that book he makes reference to Moses experience but more particularly he refers to a passage in the New Testament where the apostle Paul says the following God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ Christ and what Hugh Martin does very interestingly is this he lays emphasis on the ability that man has to endure

God's glory is entirely of God's making he says glory is presented to the soul and light is made to arise in the soul and the glory is the glory of God and the light is the light as revealed in Jesus Christ the light is the light of God as conveyed by the Holy Spirit I suppose that makes it difficult for you to understand but I think the emphasis that Hugh Martin is making is this if you read for example the plight of man because of the fall man is incapable by nature of determining the glory of

God for themselves an impossibility the spiritual blindness our spiritual blindness by reason of sin is such that we cannot determine or appreciate God's glory which means that God has to intervene in order for a sight of that glory to be possible so what Hugh Martin says is this God dwells in light that is full of glory but which also is inaccessible to creatures he covers himself with light as with a garment with light which for its overpowering splendor is to created eyes equivalent to darkness and that seems almost impossible for us to appreciate his overpowering splendor is to created eyes equivalent to darkness but it remains he says that the

Lord of his own will of his own sovereign pleasure should come from the obscurity of his glory in approachable and reveal himself and that is what we are seeing in the experience of of Moses for all his privileged position as the intercessor the intermediate that God appointed to be between his people and himself for the privilege that he gave him to have a hearing ear when it came down to it nevertheless for all his encounters with God where he glimpsed the glory of God that was entirely of God's doing it wasn't simply because Moses climbed high enough that he would be able to see it for himself

[42 : 22] God reveals his glory to fallen men and women when he chooses and where he chooses and for the time that he chooses and while we see occasions demonstrated in the New Testament even in the Old Testament frequently it is always of God because he is selfish in who he gives his glory to or imparts his glory to he will not give his glory to another and that is true in different ways as well well Moses in the book of Exodus is someone that we could go to and specifically apply to one instance and one experience alone and expand on that but I think for our purposes it is better to have a broader picture of the frequency of the exposure that

Moses had to God's glory but always under God's supervision and always with a view to God's purposes being fulfilled God encouraging a servant God giving access to the heart of God even through his law and so on and may God that is blessing to these few folks let us pray Lord oh God we know that you are a God of glory you inhabit eternity and you're surrounded by the creatures who would add to your glory by their worship and we would seek so to do in this world so that we would know something of it bless us together and remember all who are unable to be with us for whatever reason cleanse from sin in Jesus name Amen I'm going to sing in conclusions and verses from

Psalms 103 in Gaelic Psalm 103 and at verse 7 Lastly in John 14:9

Him Ort is Sam Aaron God is strength and help as then we'll see under God forefront of people laughing music ■ Fatema Thank you.

Thank you.

[46 : 35] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. May we grace, mercy, and peace be God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all now and always. Amen.