

“Face to Face”  
Exodus Chapter 33

Three thousand of the men of Israel have been slain and the people have been plagued by the LORD because of their worship of the golden calf. The LORD informs Moses that He will still fulfill the promise to the patriarchs of the Promised Land (Ex. 3:16-17; 13:5), because the LORD is not a man that He should lie (Num. 23:19). However, His presence will not be with them, because they are “stiff necked people,” stubborn in their rebellion and set in the way of their evil past (Deut. 9:4-7; Acts 7:39). Israel at the time of Christ was no different than their fathers (Acts 7:51). They needed a Savior, just as does all of mankind (Tit. 3:4-5).

The people’s reaction is to put off their ornaments. The Hebrew word means trappings or finery that is worn (Jud. 8:26; 2Sam. 1:24). The earrings mentioned earlier (Ex. 32:2) probably were ornaments of idol worship (Gen. 35:4; Jud. 8:24). Moses pitches his tent outside the camp and calls it the tabernacle of meeting (verse 7). Everyone who sought the LORD went out to the tabernacle and worshipped the Lord when they saw the pillar of cloud standing at the tabernacle door (verse 10). True repentance and worship entails turning away from sin and back to God (Psalm 15). We are to **put off** anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language, lying and the old man (Col. 3:8-9). We are to **put on** the new man of tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, bearing with one another and forgiving one another (Col. 3:12-13). We are to **put on** the Lord Jesus Christ and make **no** provision for the flesh (Rom. 13:14).

Moses as mediator now desires that God’s presence will be with the people. God grants that request because Moses has found grace in God’s sight. Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s grace (John 1:14, 17). The LORD speaks to Moses “face to face” (verse 11). This is anthropomorphic writing, from the Greek words *anthropos* (man or mankind) and *morphe* (form or figure). God is Spirit (John 4:24) and cannot be seen with human eyes (John 1:18). Jesus is **the** manifestation of the invisible God (John 14:9; Col. 1:15).

Moses desires one more thing; to see God’s glory (verse 18)! While the whole earth is full of God’s glory (Ps. 19:1; Isa. 6:3); it is veiled (Job 26:9) and undid Isaiah (Isa. 6:5). Now we see in a mirror dimly (1Cor. 13:12). In eternity, we will see Him as He is (2Cor. 3:18; 1John 3:2)!

