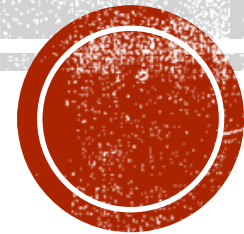


GOD'S PRESENCE AND GOD'S PURPOSE



Pekudei “Accounts”
with Rev. Chris M. Coursey

GOD'S PRESENCE AND GOD'S PURPOSE

- I grew up feeling lost and disconnected from God.
- Deep down, I hoped God had a reason for my existence but I had no idea what that was.
- I felt like I was disappointing God because I wasn't living and doing all the right things as I understood He wanted me to. I saw life through a narrow lens: when things were good, God loved me. When things were bad, God was angry with me.
- Instead of a joyful relationship with Yeshua my focus was on performance and behavior modification.
- I gave up trying to accommodate this "angry God" and began to, "do what was right in my own eyes." This was not a good plan.
- I felt like something was missing, but I didn't know what it was.
- My breaking point arrived in college.



THE EXODUS PROGRESSION

- Exodus begins with Israel feeling disconnected from the Creator. In Exodus 2 she is bitterly enslaved in Egypt and feels alone, abandoned and apart from God.
- Scripture tells us during this period of time that, “God saw them, God remembered His covenant, God heard them, and God knew them” but it does not say that God spoke to them or that the people were aware that God was with them.
(FFOZ - Torah Club Volume 1)
- The Israelites felt forgotten and forsaken; utterly hopeless.
- Chapter 1 – the Egyptians made Israel’s lives “bitter with hard bondage” that quickly brings to my mind a horseradish reaction.
- In chapters 3 and 6 of Exodus God gives Israel the sacred Name. Here is a profound level of intimacy never before seen.
 - “And God spoke to Moses and said to him: “*I am* the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but *by My name* LORD I was not known to them.” Exodus 6:2-3



THE EXODUS PROGRESSION₂

- The rest of the Exodus narrative is spent recording a progression that details how God delivers His people then draws them to Himself.
- At one point God tells Moses, “You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and *how* I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Myself.” (19:4)
- Israel learns about God’s character and Presence as He guides His People and begins to show them who He is. (This includes the 13 Attributes from the Song of Moses, spelled out in chapters 15 and 34.)
- By chapter 19 Israel hears God speak directly to them and by today’s parasha, God takes up residence with Israel.
- Israel is blessed with the Divine Presence in their midst and this is a sign of acceptance and glad-to-be-together joy.
- Now we look at a few verses from today’s parasha.



SHEMOT/EXODUS 40:34-35

- **Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.**



SHEMOT/EXODUS 40:36-38

- Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the Lord *was* above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys.



THE CLOUD AND GOD'S PRESENCE

- This Cloud has been guiding Israel in the wilderness since they left Egypt.
- This Cloud was on top of Mount Sinai where Moses would walk up to speak with God.
- We can understand this Cloud as the sign or symbol of God's Presence for God's people.
- We know this as God's glory or "kavod" which is "Shekinah." It is what Rabbi Munk refers to as the sacred light known as the Divine Presence.
- Shekinah is derived from the same root from which the word Mishkan (tabernacle) is derived = dwelling or "being at home." (FFOZ Vol. 1, Pekudei)
- We can say God is at home with His people.



CONTEXT: THE WORK IS FINISHED

- We see in Exodus 35 that Bezalel from the tribe of Judah along with Aholiab from the tribe of Dan - with other craftsmen, were skilled to create and design the necessary elements of God's sanctuary. (Exodus 36)
- Bezalel and team created the curtains, loops for the curtains, tents and clasps, the ark made out of acacia wood, gold cherubim for the mercy seat above the ark, the ornate table for the showbread, the lampstand, the altar of incense, the anointing oil and incense with sweet spices, the altar of burnt offering, the bronze laver, the court of the tabernacle with pillars and bronze sockets, along with garments for the priests, ephod, breastplate and more.
- These are skilled people creating holy objects for the worship of the Living God! In a sense, these are home builders who are building God's House for God to dwell in the midst of His people.



CONTEXT: THE WORK IS FINISHED

- When all the work is finished preparing the Mishkan (tabernacle) for God's service along with the garments for the priests to serve God, we see God's glory arrive on the scene as a confirmation of acceptance for His people.
- The Tent of Meeting is where God meets with His people in a special way. Today's parasha is a reminder that God is holy, and His servants are set apart for His work and ministry, which makes them holy.
- Here is a relevant picture for all of us today; Yeshua, the High Priest has set you apart for God's work. *He is with you*, He is equipping you and He is clothing You to worship, serve and honor Him. *Yeshua is with you.*
- 1 Peter 2:9, "But you *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."



THE FINISHED WORK ON GOD'S HOUSE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY, GOD'S ABIDING PRESENCE ALONG WITH BEZALEL WITH AHOLIAB AND THEIR SPECIAL SKILLS REMINDS ME OF THE 3 ESSENTIALS FOR LIFE TAKEN FROM THE LIFE MODEL.

- 1. Multi-generational Community = Maturity.**
- 2. Immanuel Lifestyle = God's Presence.**
- 3. Relational Skills = Specialized skills for relationships.**



3 ESSENTIALS FOR LIFE (LIFE MODEL)

1. **Multi-generational Community** = the nutrient-rich soil with people from all ages and stages come together. We reach our full development by interacting with people in ways that match our needs for every stage of life. Each new stage of life builds on the previous stage.
 - **Infant Stage:** I receive without having to give or asking for what I need.
 - **Child Stage:** I learn to take care of myself and ask for what I need.
 - **Adult Stage:** I can now care for two or more people at the same time.
 - **Parent Stage:** Give life to children without requiring anything in return.
 - **Elder Stage:** Care for my community and guide those without families of their own.



3 ESSENTIALS FOR LIFE (LIFE MODEL)

2. **Relational Skills** = 19 specific skills my brain relies on to be fully human and act like people instead of monsters. Here are the skills that make relationships work.
- I experience joy and learn to rest.
 - I recover from negative emotions.
 - I remain myself when things go wrong.
 - I stay connected during intense feelings and recognize when others need a breather.
 - I share stories that convey my values and pass on my character.
 - I see some of the qualities God placed in me and others.
 - I see some of what God sees. (Immanuel Lifestyle)



3 ESSENTIALS FOR LIFE (LIFE MODEL)

3. **Immanuel Lifestyle** = We live with the awareness of God's interactive Presence in our lives. We follow Yeshua's example who says what He hears His Father saying, and does what He sees His Father doing.
- The Good Shepherd *knows* His sheep and *is known* by His own. (John 10:14)
 - God's sheep hear His voice and He *knows* them, and they follow Him. (John 10:27) (*Ginosko*)
 - The Immanuel Lifestyle is the intentional "turning" our attention to and tuning in to what Yeshua is doing moment by moment.
 - The Samaritan woman at the well: she encountered Yeshua, she tells the village about Yeshua, some believe due to her testimony but when they meet Yeshua themselves they *Ginosko* knew Yeshua; "...now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." (John 4:42)



YESHUA DWELLS WITH US

- And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:13-15)

