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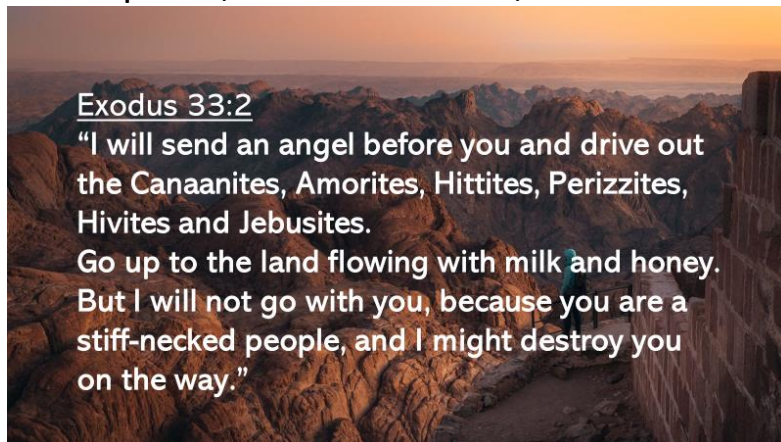


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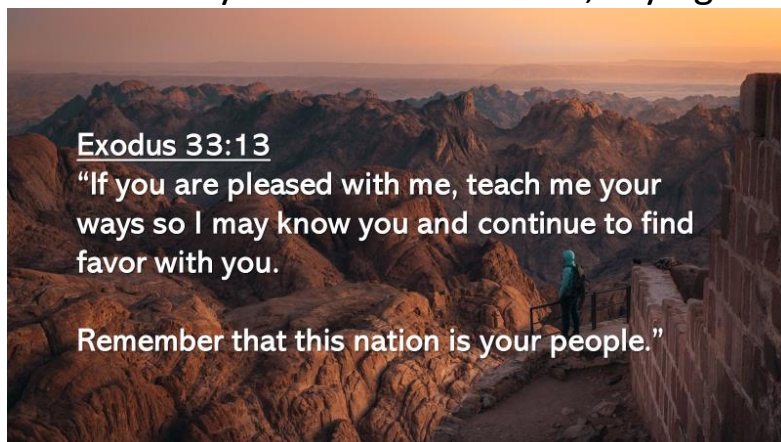
The statement made by Abimelek and Phicol in v.22... is very significant. They had observed that... **"God was with Abraham... in everything he did."**

I believe this is a primary distinction that sets apart God's people.

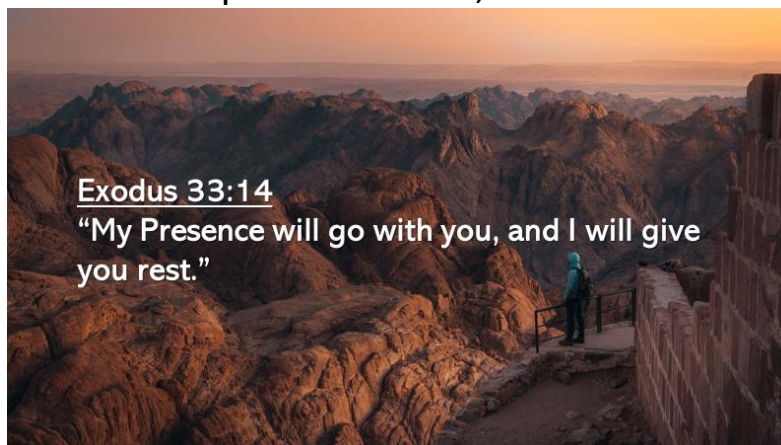
In the time of Moses, after the people had made a golden calf and worshiped it, God told Moses, Exodus 33:2...



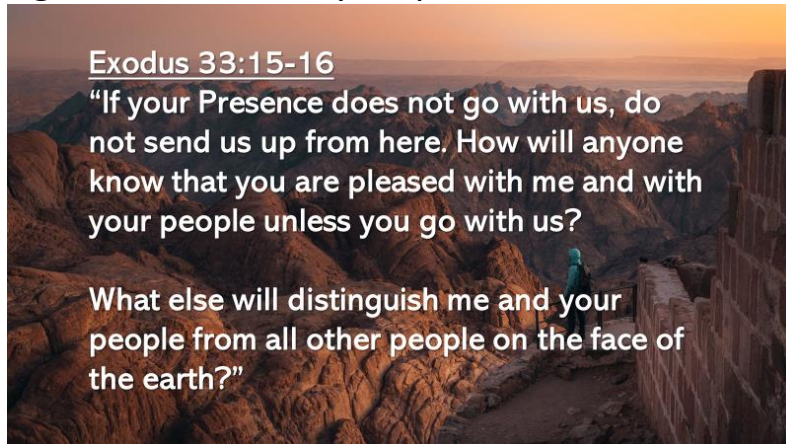
Moses boldly answered the LORD, saying to him, Exodus 33:13...



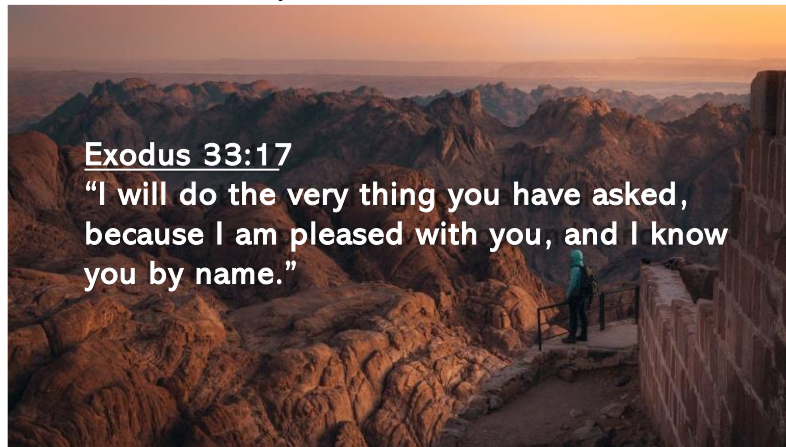
The LORD replied to Moses, Exodus 33:14...



Again, Moses boldly responded to the LORD, saying, Exodus 33:15-16...



Moses’ answer pleased the LORD, for he said to him, Exodus 33:17...



As he promised... the presence of the triune God was with and among the nation of Israel as they made their made to the land God had promised to Abraham and his descendants.

But how... did God’s presence distinguish the Israelites?

What did God do that communicated to the other nations he was with them?

Exodus 23:27-28, 31

I will send my terror ahead of you... and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run. I will send the hornet ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way....

I will establish your borders from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, and from the desert to the Euphrates River. I will give into your hands the people who live in the land.

- The Lord with them... threw their enemies into confusion
- The Lord with them... caused their enemies to run away
- The Lord with them... drove their enemies out of their way
- The Lord with them... established their borders
- The Lord with them... gave into their hands the peoples of the land

Deuteronomy 1:30

The LORD your God, who is going before you, will fight for you, as he did for you in Egypt, before your very eyes, and in the wilderness. There you saw how the LORD your God carried you, as a father carries his son, all the way you went until you reached this place.

- The Lord with them... fought for them
- The Lord with them... carried them like a father

Rahab of Jericho... said to the two spies, Joshua 2:10-11,

Joshua 2:10-11

We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed.

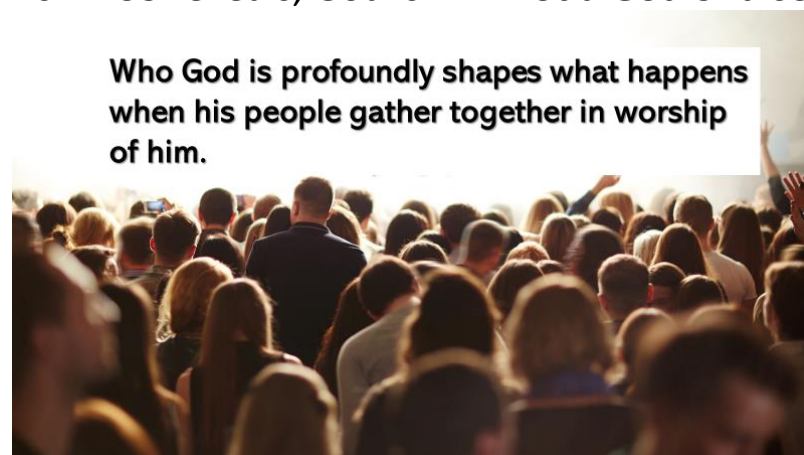
When we heard of it, our hearts melted in fear and everyone's courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.

- The Lord with them... did impossible things for them
- The Lord with them... gave them success in battle
- The Lord with them... caused their enemies to be gripped by fear and to lose their courage

What distinguished the nation of Israel from all other peoples.... was God's presence with them.

But was this true only in the day of the OT?

In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul gave detailed instructions to the church at Corinth regarding their corporate worship and the use of spiritual gifts. As 14:33 reveals, God is... **"...not a God of disorder but of peace."**

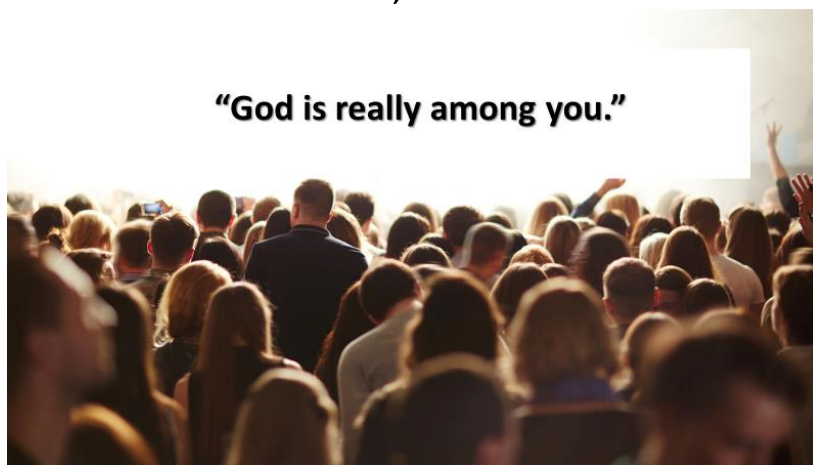


But in what way?

When the people of God gather in the name of Jesus, the triune God, who is distinguished by peace, manifests his presence among them.

What struck me... is that in this chapter Paul also described... how God's presence with his people when gathered in worship... impacted inquirers who had gathered with the church.

Paul under the inspiration of the Spirit wrote...that these inquirers will be.... convicted of their sin... because their hearts will be laid bare. This conviction of sin... will bring them to their knees in worship, and cause them to exclaim, 14:25...



Martin Lloyd-Jones described what he had observed... when God manifested his glorious presence to his people....



In Genesis 21.... what was it that convinced Abimilek and Phicol... that God was with Abraham?

- I'm certain Abimilek would have heard how God had given success to Abraham, when years earlier, he, with a band of 318 trained men... had defeated the combined armies of Kedorlaomer.
- More recent, Abimilek himself... had experienced first-hand how God defended Sarah, protecting her virtue... demanding that he return Sarah to Abraham, whom he had unknowingly married.
- Abimilek had also experienced firsthand the mercy of God when Abraham's prayed for him and he was healed... along with all the women of his household.
- Abimilek would also have known of the miracle of Isaac's birth, and what God had done to enable Sarah to become pregnant.

v.23 - I'm sure the memory of the Sarah debacle still lingered... which is why Abimilek desired for Abraham to swear to him that he would never deal falsely with him.

Abraham quickly answered Abimilek – v.24.

And then Abraham raised an issue – v.25b.

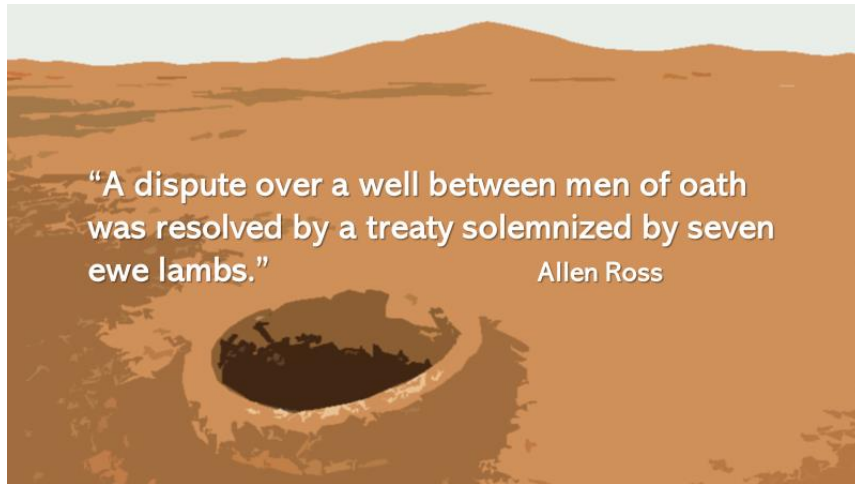
Abimilek answered, v.26.... "I am not aware that my servants did this."

Water rights in that day and in that time, was an issue that had the potential for explosive conflict.

How was the matter dealt with?

We see in the passage that it was Abraham who took the lead... and his solution was based on his relationship with God.

Allen Ross says...



p.388.

Like Abimilek, the reader today also asks... what is the meaning of this?

From verses 27-33, we see three things... a number, a verb and a name... each repeated... three times.

- The number is... "seven" – v.28, v.29, v.30
- The verb is... "made a treaty" – v.27, v.31, v.32
- The name is... "Beersheba" – v.31, v.32, v.33

When something is repeated three times in the Bible it is often done, in order to make a particular emphasis.

For example....

- Three times Noah sent out a bird from the ark to determine if the earth was dry.
- Elijah in his confrontation with the prophets of Baal... had water poured over his sacrifice... three times.
- Before Peter went to the house of Cornelius, three times, he was shown a similar vision.

I believe through this incident in Genesis 21... God is impressing upon the reader the importance of covenant.



The Bible reveals God to be a God of covenant.
God made human beings in his image... which means... that God purposes... that like him... we would be people of covenant.

But why... are covenants so important to God? so important for us?



In our passage the covenant which Abraham and Abimelech entered into ...concerned property... a well.

v.27 - it is thought... that the sheep and cattle were sacrificed, then cut in two and walked between... in a way similar to what God had done with Abraham in Genesis 15.

In doing so, Abraham, in essence said to Abimilek, if I have lied to you about the well.... may my life be taken and severed apart like these animals.

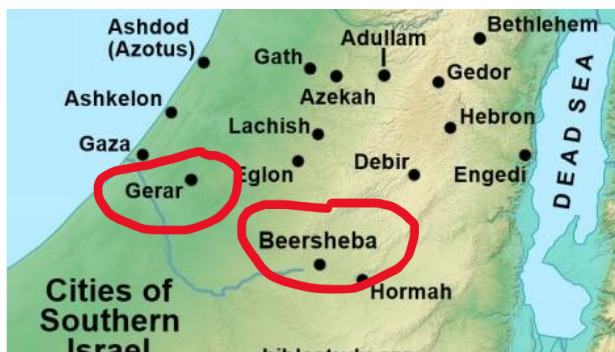
But what about, v.28, the seven ewe lambs which Abraham had set apart?



These seven lambs were intended to be a tangible, but also a continuing witness to Abimilek of Abraham's promise to him.

The strength and binding nature of all covenants... made in the presence of God... comes from the LORD, the unseen Witness, who is himself truthful and faithful... and who delights in the integrity of his people... and Who is strong to help them be true.

v.31 - where Abraham and Abimilek swore oaths to each other, and where the covenant treaty between them was cut, was called Beersheba.



The word Beersheba means "well of oath" or "well of seven."

The well would be an enduring testimony, not just for Abraham and Abimelek, but also for future generations.

Hundreds of years later, when Abraham's descendants returned to Canaan from Egypt, Beersheba marked the southern border of Israel. Look at Judges 20:1

Judges 20:1

Then all Israel from Dan to Beersheba and from the land of Gilead came together as one and assembled before the LORD in Mizpah.



There is a very important truth emphasis made in the passage. Though God had promised the land of Canaan to Abraham, according to Hebrews 11:9, “[Abraham] made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country.”

What this means is that... “[Abraham] did not receive the things promised; [he] only saw them and welcomed them from a distance...” Hebrews 11:13

But through the covenant made in Genesis 21... God gave to Abraham a downpayment, a guarantee... he gave to him a well.

As far as downpayment's go.... it was small. But it was nonetheless... a tangible testimony to the promise.

All who follow Jesus... similar to Abraham...live in this present time as strangers in a foreign country.

And like Abraham... we too have been given a downpayment, guaranteeing that the promises made by God to us... regarding our salvation and new creation... will be fulfilled.

What is our downpayment?

Ephesians 1:13-14

... you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, **the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance** until the redemption of those who are God's possession.

The downpayment of the Holy Spirit is our assurance... it is the basis of our hope... that God will do all... that he has promised.

- Will Jesus come again?

The downpayment of the Holy Spirit confirms... yes.



- Will Jesus raise our bodies from the dead?

The downpayment of the Holy Spirit confirms... yes.

- Will Jesus save us body, soul and spirit?

The downpayment of the Holy Spirit confirms... yes.

- Will all things be made new?

The downpayment of the Holy Spirit confirms... yes.

- Will we live forever with God in the new heaven and earth?

The downpayment of the Holy Spirit confirms... yes.

When Abimilek returned to Gerar, Abraham did two things.

1. He planted a tamarisk tree.

Why did he do that?

Typically, any vegetation that grows in a desert... has to have some kind of water, however minimal that water might be.



But in a desert... where there is water, there will be... vegetation.

The tree Abraham planted... grew... and it thrived... because... there was water there.

In this way it would serve as a testimony to God's presence with... and his blessing of... Abraham.



The second thing Abraham did was to call upon the name of the LORD. Through this incident, God had revealed himself to Abraham as...



The Bible, in James 4:14, says our live like a mist, that appears for a little while and then is gone.

In Psalm 90:10... the length of our life is said to be seventy or eighty years if our strength endures.

But the LORD... eternally is... he had no beginning, and he will have no end.

As our years pass, we change, and our strength diminishes.
But the LORD... eternally is... his power never diminishes.

Though the LORD our God lives outside of time, he is active within it. From eternity past to eternity future... the LORD... eternally is... his person and character are unchanging, as are his promises.

In the downpayment of a well, which he had been given, Abraham by faith, knew that God, the Eternal God, El Olam...would do all he had said he would do... for him... and for his descendants.

The God who blessed him, would bless Isaac... and Isaac's children... and their children... and their children.

Abraham knew... there would come a moment when he would no longer be present on the earth, when he would no longer be able to influence and guide his descendants.

But the God who faithfully had been with him, in everything he did... would faithfully be with his descendants... for the LORD is El Olam.

Four thousand years have passed since the time of Genesis 21. And the LORD whom Abraham called up, El Olam, is faithfully present with us... Abraham's faithful descendants... as he was with him.

The LORD says to his people in every generation.

Isaiah 40:25-31

"To whom will you compare me? Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens: Who created all these? He who brings out the starry host one by one and calls forth each of them by name.

Because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing. Why do you complain, Jacob? Why do you say, Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD; my cause is disregarded by my God"? Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. He gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

This is who Abraham followed... and worshipped.
And this is who we too follow... and worship, the LORD, the Eternal God.

Prayers of the People

I pray for _____ that God may count them worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of theirs and every act prompted by their faith.

I pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in them, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

2 Thessalonians



Prayers of the People

May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word. May the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way. Amen.

2 Thessalonians

