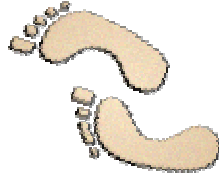


GOD WALKING AMONG HIS PEOPLE



God has always wanted to walk among His people in order to be conversant with them, one of the many applications of the word for “walk” (section 1980 – Hebrew). His desire to communicate with His people in this manner brings about a friendship and fellowship that is unequalled anywhere. Let’s look at several examples of God walking among His people.

Genesis 3:8-9

Genesis 3:8-9 shows us a picture of God’s pursuit of Adam and Eve, walking in the garden and calling out for them. Even though this particular situation was out of the ordinary because Adam and Eve had just sinned, there is still little doubt that this pattern of fellowship had been the same each day prior to this one. In any case, the correlation of God walking among His people to have intimate fellowship with them was firmly established beginning with the very first man and woman.

Exodus 32:1-14, 34 and Exodus 33:1-20

Because the children of Israel committed a very serious disobedience against God at Sinai by making and worshipping a molded image (golden calf), God decided not to journey (walk) with them anymore. He literally thought He might consume them enroute to Canaan because of their stubbornness. He told Moses to take the people to the land promised to them under the guidance and protection of His angel because He would not be present with them to go with them as originally planned.

However, in the days following God’s wrath against Israel and His decision to send the congregation on to Canaan without going Himself, Moses spoke with God whenever God descended to the door of the Tabernacle in a pillar of cloud. These were encounters undoubtedly similar to many they had enjoyed before, whereby...”The Lord spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.” (Exodus 33:11) **Note:** The use of the words “face to face” noted above were used as a figure of speech and were not literal in their meaning.

Bear in mind that somewhat later Moses asked God to show Him His glory, His whole self (Exodus 33:18); but God would not do such a thing, even though they were close friends, saying..."You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me and live." (Exodus 33:20 NKJV) We are also told that "No one has seen God at any time." (John 1:18 NKJV)

Leviticus 26:12

Leviticus chapter 26 contains a phenomenal message to God's people of any period in history.

The chapter is divided into three sections:

Verses 3-13: If we obey God.

Verses 14-39: If we do not obey God

Verses 40-45: Being restored to God

It is not at all surprising that verse 12 mentions God's intention to "walk" among His people, among those whom He truly considers to be "my people." The entire verse reads like this: "I will walk among you and be your God, and you shall be My people."

This arrangement is what God sincerely desires but it is conditional on His people living in obedience to Him. We will see more about why God's promises and desires toward us are conditional on our obedience.

2 Corinthians 6:16-18

(16) "And what agreement has the Temple of God with idols? For you are the Temple of the living God; as God has said: 'I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people'"

(17) "Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.'"

(18) "I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.'" (NKJV)

In this segment of Scripture, God clearly expresses His desire to dwell in His people and to walk (be conversant) among them as the God of His people. God's condition for such an arrangement is recorded in verse 17: "Therefore 'Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean and I will receive you.'" This is the essence of

being holy as He is holy – coming out from the world and its uncleanness so to be separated from it and set apart or consecrated unto God. Furthermore, we must not reconnect with the unclean things (of the world) from which we previously separated ourselves. By all this God says He will receive us as His people – as His sons and daughters among whom He will live and walk!

Deuteronomy 23:14

“For the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you.” The word “camp,” which appears in this Scripture, refers to an encampment of travellers or troops (SEC 4264 – Hebrew). This includes, in context, the encampment of the entire populace of Israel (Notes written by W.E. Vines and published in The New Strong’s Expanded Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, Hebrew Dictionary, p. 154) indicate his belief that “camp” as used here refers to the encampment of all of Israel. If that is so, God is pictured as walking through the entire camp to provide deliverance and to give Israel’s enemies over to them. But since God loves Israel that much, He also expects the camp to be holy – nothing in it that is unclean. God promises to turn away from Israel if He sees anything in the camp that is unholy or unclean. When Achan brought “accursed things” (unauthorized plunder) back into the encampment of Israel following the conquest of Jericho, God saw those things in the camp. Because He had forbidden taking plunder from this battle, God regarded these accursed things as unholy and unclean. God certainly “turned away” from Israel because of Achan’s sin and the presence of unclean things in the camp. The evidence was that He did not fight for them in their next battle at Ai, where they were soundly defeated. It was not until Achan and his plunder, his children, his animals, his tent and all that he had were destroyed by stoning and burned with fire (Joshua 7:24-25) that God returned to Israel and resumed His walk among them. God’s reinstatement of His walk with Israel was indeed of a conversant nature. He gave Joshua very specific instructions on how to defeat Ai in a second battle. These instructions were carried out and Israel completely destroyed the city of Ai, all of its inhabitants and its king. (Joshua 8:1-29) What a difference when sin is purged from the camp!

Revelation Chapters 1, 2, and 3

The Book of Revelation was written by John while on the Island of Patmos as a prisoner “for the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.” (Revelation 1:9 NKJV) John addressed this book (referred to as a prophecy) “to the seven churches which are in Asia.” (Revelation 1:4 NKJV) Jesus also told John to write in a book what he would see and then send the book “to the seven churches which are in Asia: to Ephesus, to Smyrna, to Pergamos, to Thyatira, to Sardis, to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea.” (Revelation 1:11 NKJV) Furthermore John then saw seven golden lamp stands (also called “candlesticks”) which Jesus revealed to him were representative of the seven churches (in Asia). (Revelation 1:20)

The importance of this representation emerges in the first message to the church at Ephesus. “These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lamp stands...” (Revelation 2:1) The picture is of Jesus walking in the seven churches in Asia. As He walked through the church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:2-7) Jesus found several praise worthy characteristics that any good church would welcome. But Jesus also found in Ephesus a church that had departed from its initial love and zeal for Christ. Jesus told the Ephesian church to repent and get back to the basics or He would “remove your lamp stand from its place – unless you repent.” (Revelation 2:5 NKJV) In other words, repent and turn back to Christ fully as at the first or He will cause you to cease to exist as a church.

Jesus walked in all the churches similarly revealing to each the things that pleased Him and the shortcomings that required repentance. It is interesting; however, that Jesus did not command two of the churches of Asia (Smyrna and Philadelphia) to repent of anything. So the result of Jesus’ walk through the seven churches shows that five of the seven churches (71.43%) had some need to repent and only two of the churches (28.57%) were not commanded to repent.

Finally, it is quite clear from the above that God is eager for us to be His people, to be our God, to dwell in us (not just visit) and to walk among us. In both the Old and New Testaments, these desires on the part of God have not changed. He simply wants His people to be His, with no conflicting or opposing loyalties hidden in the hearts of those who profess to be His own!!

“Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?” (Amos 3:3) To paraphrase: Will God walk in conversant fellowship with any of us if we do not agree with Him? God replies with a

resounding “No!” But when we agree with Him by removing every unclean thing from our hearts and life-styles, God will walk with us conversantly for the first time or by reinstatement.