



The Shekinah

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"Explaining spiritual realities with Spirit-taught words."

1 Corinthians 2:13

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The word “Shekinah” comes from the Hebrew root word, *shachan*, meaning “to dwell”.¹ The Jews used the word “*shekinah*” to refer to the special dwelling of God’s Presence.² This special dwelling of God’s Presence came to be known as the “Shekinah Glory”.

“³⁴ Then **the cloud** covered the tent of meeting, and **the glory** of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁵ Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because **the cloud** had settled on it, and **the glory** of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ³⁶ Throughout all their journeys whenever **the cloud** was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; ³⁷ but if **the cloud** was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. ³⁸ For throughout all their journeys, **the cloud of the LORD** was on the tabernacle by day, and there was **fire** in it by night, **in the sight of all the house of Israel.**” Exodus 40:34-38

What the Hebrews called “the Shekinah” is the manifestation of God’s glory which “appeared” between the two angels of the Mercy Seat which rested on top of the Ark of the Covenant. The above passage indicates that for Moses and the Old Covenant house of Israel, “the cloud” was a *visible* manifestation of “the glory of the Lord” – in fact, it was referred to as “the cloud of the

¹ This is the same root word for the word, *mishkan*, (Strong’s # H4907) meaning tabernacle, dwelling, habitation (Cf. Psalm 132:5; Numbers 24:5)

² Cf. Leviticus 16:2; Exodus 13:20-22, 14:24-25, 25:8 and 22, 30:6, 40:34-35; Ezekiel 1:28. Cf. Matthew 17:5; Luke 2:9; Romans 9:4. *Jewish Encyclopedia*:
<https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/13537-shekinah>

Lord”.³ Bear in mind that this *visible* manifestation occurred during the Old Covenant, whereas during the New Covenant, the manifestation is different – namely, *not visible, but rather spiritual*, however, a manifestation, nonetheless.⁴

“Meeting” & The Manifest Presence of God

²² ***“There I will meet with you; and from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubim which are upon the ark of the testimony, I will speak to you about all that I will give you in commandment for the sons of Israel.”*** Exodus 25:22

As we look into the Mercy Seat, which was on top of the Ark, we see *the specified place where God meets with His people; and from that place directs and guides His people*. When we look at the Old Testament in light of the New Testament, we are reminded that these things “are a mere shadow of what (was) to come; but the substance belongs to Christ.”⁵ The Ark represents the Person of Christ. **We meet with God in, by and through⁶ the Person of Christ.**

³ In theological terms, this is referred to as a “theophany” – “A theophany is an appearance of God, an intense manifestation of the presence of God that is accompanied by an extraordinary visual display.” *A theophany* is an appearance of God.... Alternatively, we may say that it is an intense manifestation of the presence of God, accompanied by an extraordinary visual display.” Vern Poythress, “Theophany”, The Gospel Coalition <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/theophany/>

⁴ Cf. John 4:24

⁵ Colossians 2:17

⁶ Greek: *dia*; Strong’s # 1223

So, again in verse 22 we read: “There I will **meet with you** ... and I will **speak to you** about all that I will **give you in commandment** for the sons of Israel.” Three things took place at the Mercy Seat:

- God meeting with His people
- God speaking to His people
- God leading and guiding His people

“There I will *meet with you...*” The Hebrew word *yaad*⁷ means to *meet* at a designated, appointed place and time. Gesenius says it is most often used in designating or appointing a wife.⁸ Paul the apostle said: “The mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the Church.”⁹ God had designated and appointed a place to meet with Israel. And that place was the Mercy Seat. Today, the Lord wants to meet with His Bride, the Church, on that same basis.

“There I will *speak to you....*” Exodus 33:11 tells us: “The Lord used to speak to Moses **face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend.**”¹⁰ Consummated communication is always two-way.

Exodus 33:9 says, “Whenever Moses entered the tent (of

⁷ Strong’s # 3259

⁸ Gesenius’ *Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon*

⁹ Ephesians 5:32

¹⁰ Exodus 33:11

meeting) ... the Lord would speak with Moses.” And Numbers 7:89 says “... Moses went into the tent of meeting to speak with Him....”

What was the nature of their dialogue? In 1 Chronicles 13:3 David said: “Let us bring back the ark of our God, for we did not **seek it** in the days of Saul.”¹¹ The Hebrew word translated “seek” is *darash*, and can also be translated as “inquire”, “ask”, “question” or “consult”. Examples of Moses inquiring or consulting the Lord at the Ark are in Exodus 23 and 33, where he inquires of, reasons with, and makes requests of the Lord. In the New Testament, the writer to the Hebrews encourages us to “draw near with **confidence** before the throne of grace....”¹² The Greek word translated “confidence” is *parresia*. It is a compound word: *par*, meaning “all”, and *resia*, meaning “speech” – therefore actually meaning feeling *free to inquire of the Lord about anything*.

God said that there, at the Mercy Seat, would be “all that I will **give you in commandment**”. The Hebrew word, *tsavah*, does not mean commandment in the sense of “*Thou shall do this, and thou shall not do that*”. The word phrase means “all that I will give you **to constitute or set in order**”. God was building a people – a

¹¹ When Saul became king, he never bothered to bring up the ark from the house of Abinidab in Kiriath-Jearim. (1 Samuel 7:1-2; 2 Samuel 6:1-4)

¹² Hebrews 4:16

kingdom of priests.¹³ In Egypt, Israel's identity was slavery - the only thing they knew was how to make bricks. They needed to learn their identity in God, His plans and purposes, His ways, His culture, and the nature and character of His kingdom.¹⁴ "All that I will give you to instruct you and direct you" – that is, God would be leading His people through a wilderness land into a promised land for their inheritance. By extension, God is leading His Church through "this present darkness"¹⁵ into His kingdom and eternal purposes.

⁷ Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. ⁸ And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. ⁹ Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses. ¹⁰ When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. ¹¹ Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend." Exodus 33:7-11

¹³ Exodus 19:5-6

¹⁴ Exodus 19:5-6

¹⁵ Ephesians 6:12

The Tent of Meeting with the Ark of the Testimony and the Mercy Seat were the very first items to be constructed in the Tabernacle. It seems Moses recognized the preciousness and the importance of this gift – specifically, *being able to meet with God, hear His word, and be led by His Spirit* - so, he immediately began meeting with God at the Mercy Seat, even before the rest of the Tabernacle had been constructed. The Scripture says that the Tent of Meeting was placed “outside the camp”: Consciously or unconsciously, Moses seemed to understand that there must be a separation between a holy God and sinful people. But this was only a temporary arrangement, until the whole of the Tabernacle was constructed, signifying the completed work of redemption by Christ which opened a way into the presence of God. Then the Tabernacle could be placed in the center of the camp, in the midst of His people. The Scripture says that “everyone who sought the Lord would go out to the tent of meeting”. They would go out to the Ark of the Testimony and the Mercy Seat, because *there* God would meet with His people to speak to them and guide them. So, we read that God’s glory came down upon the Mercy Seat. God’s meeting and speaking with His people is the method by which God leads His people. God led His people by revealing His glory. This is Moses’ testimony, not only in the Book of Exodus¹⁶ but

¹⁶ Also, Exodus 13:21-22

also in the Books of Numbers¹⁷ and Deuteronomy.¹⁸ In other words, Moses testifies that God led His people in this way the whole forty years, in and out of the wilderness. But Scripture shows the same testimony was given in subsequent generations: throughout the time of David's Tabernacle,¹⁹ and into the time of Solomon's Temple.²⁰ **This is the way God has chosen to shepherd His people – *by revealing His Shekinah Glory*.** David saw the Lord as his Shepherd²¹. The psalmist, Asaph, tells us clearly how the Lord directs and guides His flock; and Asaph's description matches exactly what the Lord had given to Moses in the Tabernacle at the Mercy Seat. In Psalm 80, Asaph sings: "Oh, give ear, Shepherd of Israel, You who lead Joseph like a flock; You who are enthroned above the cherubim, shine forth!"²² **The Lord's Shekinah glory dwells upon the Mercy Seat, and shines forth direction for His people.** "Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come" (1 Corinthians 10:11) – "For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, so that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."

Romans 15:4

¹⁷ Numbers 7:89, 10:11-13

¹⁸ Deuteronomy 1:33

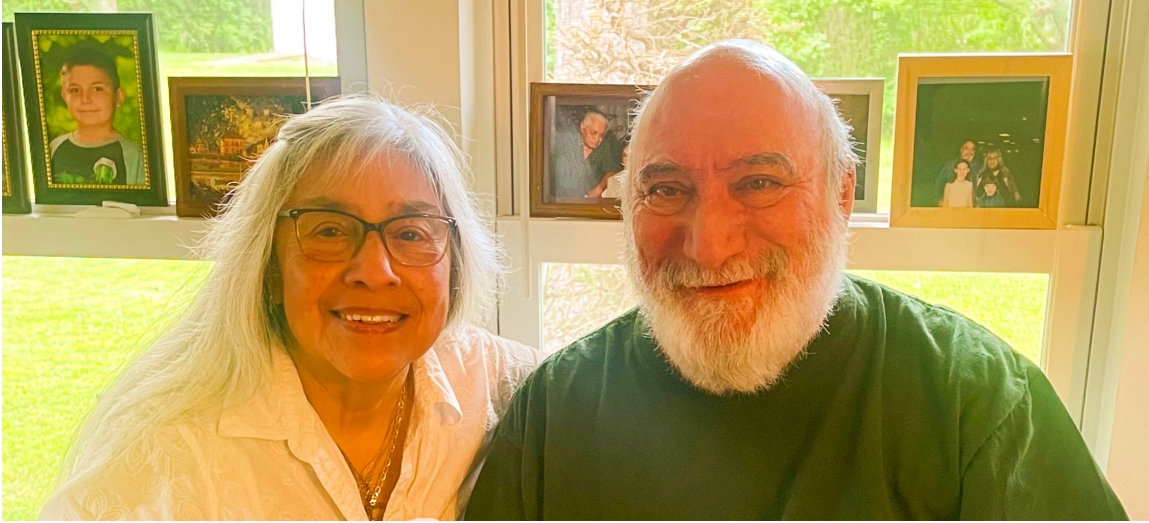
¹⁹ Asaph in Psalm 80:1 and David in Psalm 99:7.

²⁰ 2 Chronicles 7:1-3. God also revealed His glory through fire in the days of Elijah (1 Kings 18).

²¹ Psalm 23. Cf. Peter also refers to Christ as the "Chief Shepherd" (1 Peter 5:4), "the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls" (1 Peter 2:25).

²² Psalm 80:1

Bill & Frances Furioso
~ At Christ's Table ~



Bill Furioso and his wife, Frances, have been married for more than 40 years, and have two children, four grandchildren, and two great-grandchildren.

Bill and Frances served as missionaries in South Africa for thirteen years making disciples, establishing churches, and training church leaders. Over a span of 40 years, they also traveled extensively in an itinerant Bible teaching ministry which took them to hundreds of gatherings on four continents ministering in churches, conferences, spiritual formation seminars, and home gatherings. They have shepherded several churches, discipled many to Christ, and mentored church leaders in the USA and abroad.

Being an avid student by nature, Bill has done both formal and informal study in various fields including Education, Music, Philosophy and Theology. As a writer, he has authored many publications which are distributed worldwide. Because of Bill's disabilities resulting from a spinal cord injury, he can no longer travel, so their ministries of writing, recording, distributing, mentoring, and correspondence are now shared primarily via the Internet... www.AtChristsTable.org

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