

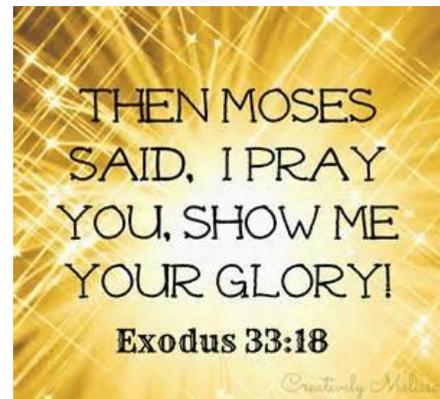
“Through the Bible in a Year with Pastor Don and the FBC Family”

Feb. 14, 2016

- Exodus 33-34 – Moses desires to see the glory of God (33); renewal of the Covenant (34).
- John 6:15-24 – Jesus walks on water.
- Song of Solomon 4:9-13 – The King’s praise for his bride’s purity (virginity).

Commentary:

1. Exodus 33-34. Chapter 33 we see, in contrast with the strained relationship between Israel and the Lord, Moses’ intimacy with Him. Moses was intimate with God in the tent he erected outside the camp. The people could worship God but from a distance (33:10), but God would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend (v. 11), that is, clearly and openly. Moses’ speaking “face to face” with God does not contradict the fact that he was not allowed to see God’s face (v. 20) as “face to face” is a figurative expression suggesting openness and friendship (cf. Num. 12:8; Deut. 34:10). Note Moses’s attitude: 1) he wanted to know the Lord’s intentions for His people, 2) he wanted to continue to learn God’s ways and enjoy God’s grace/favor, and 3) he asked to see the glory of God (v. 18). This request was fulfilled as God allowed Moses to have a deeper vision of His glory (33:19–23). Proclaiming God’s name (v. 19, His revealed character) to Moses, God allowed him to see His goodness (v. 19) and His back, but not His face. This passage demonstrates that while people truly can know God, they can never know Him exhaustively. *Esse* truly is incomprehensible. Chapter 34 gives us the renewal of the covenant that the Israelites broke with golden calf. Note God’s promises to reveal His power and glory to the Israelites. However, only Moses expressed an interest in seeing God’s glory for its own sake. Question: what do you desire more? God solving your problems to make your temporal life better or contemplating, knowing, and seeing the glory of God? Are you like Moses or the Israelites? We all have the potential to be like either.

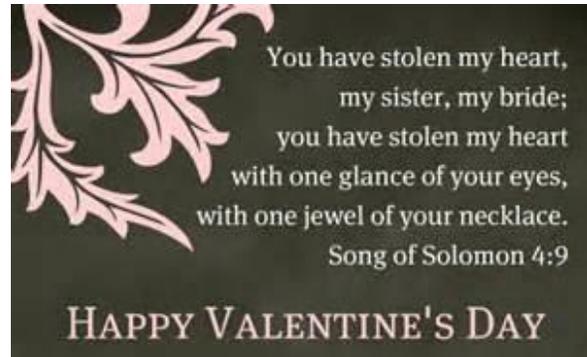


2. John 6:15-24. The section begins with a note concerning evening or darkness. Such a notation in John usually is not merely chronological, but also theologically instructive. Darkness may describe not only the setting but also the disciples’ theological situation as they entered a boat and headed from the east side across the lake to Capernaum on the northwest side (6:17). During this journey they encountered a severe storm on the lake, and in spite of all their rowing efforts, they only appear to have covered about “three or three and a half” miles (6:19). The Sea of Tiberias or



Galilee is a deep gouge in the Jordan rift surrounded by hills so that winds frequently sweep down and stir the waters into a frenzy. Even today the situation is similar. Power boats periodically are warned to remain docked as the winds whip the water into foamy white caps. Imagine then what it would be like to be in wooden boats propelled by sails and oars. It is a small but treacherous lake that Josephus indicated was about 4.6 miles by 16.1 miles. Contemporary measurements, however, would put the maximum size at about 6.9 miles by 12.6 miles, though recent heavy water usage in modern Israel has reduced it slightly from those dimensions. In the midst of the disciples' frustrating attempt to make headway on the sea, Jesus came calmly walking on the water. The exodus symbolism would be hard to miss, especially following the bread sign. But the other aspects of the story are equally intriguing because the coming of Jesus to the disciples contains a number of the well-known elements present in Old Testament theophanies (appearances of God/the Angel of the Lord). There is the familiar mark of fear or dread verging on the expectation of death as a result of encountering God. There is also the assuring word, "Don't be afraid," which gives the sense that God does not come in judgment. The sense of relief at survival indicates acceptance by faith. A very important element is Jesus' identification "I am" (ἐγώ εἰμι). This is connected with 'Ehyeh of Exod 3:14, as are all of the I AM statements by Jesus in John. The very one who was at the burning bush is the very one who is incarnate and walking on the water.

3. Song of Solomon 4:9-13. The words "stolen my heart" mean to be robbed of either one's willpower or his ability to think clearly. The effect of his bride's love was so powerful that even a glance from her beautiful eyes or even seeing an article of jewelry or clothing associated with her was enchanting to Solomon. He calls her his sister because in the ancient Near East "sister" was an affectionate term for one's wife. The word rendered love (אַהֲבָה) was used for physical expressions of romantic love. The verse might be more accurately translated, "How delightful are your kisses. How much more pleasing are your caresses than wine." Her physical expressions of love had a more refreshing and intoxicating effect on him "than wine." Even her perfume added to the excitement of their love. The senses of sight, touch, smell, and sound were involved in their love-making. The beloved gave herself freely with joy. She was not at all passive in their lovemaking. Her kisses were as desirable as "milk" and as sweet as "honey." The "garden locked up," "spring enclosed," and "sealed fountain" all suggest "inaccessibility." The king was obviously praising his bride's virginity. Gardens were walled to keep out intruders. Springs were sometimes covered, and fountains were sealed on the sides with clay to indicate private ownership. Similarly, she had kept herself "sealed" from all others, thus preserving her purity for her husband. By extending the metaphor of the garden (begun in v. 12) Solomon conveyed to his beloved how much he valued her purity. She was like a rich exotic garden, with rare and valuable plant life. Such a garden was therefore valuable, attractive, and desirable. Included were fruits, flowers, plants, trees, and spices. What a beautiful and erotic view of love and sex, all sanctioned in God's Holy Word!



On the Glory Road,

Pastor Don