**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

**On KTTR (99.7 FM) Every Sunday at 8:30 a.m.**

**Rolla, Missouri**

**12/31/2023**

**Men Meeting With God**

In the third month after the children of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, they come to the Wilderness of Sinai. Exodus 19:2 says, *“So Israel camped there before the mountain.”* It was at this mountain, Mt. Sinai, that the children of Israel met with God. In verse 16 it says that on a certain day, *“... there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain; and the sound of the trumpet was very loud, so that all the people who were in the camp trembled. And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain.”*

Can you imagine having the opportunity to do what Israel does here, TO MEET WITH GOD? Have you ever imagined being able to do that, and imagined what that conversation would be like? Don’t you think it would be a thrilling experience – to be able to talk with God?

In scripture, we do have accounts of individuals meeting with God. Here in this passage is one example of men meeting with God. When we look at these instances of God meeting with man, they didn’t really go as those with whom God met would have anticipated. It makes me wonder, if we had our meeting with God, would it go as we would like for it to go?

Today on our program I want to talk about some men who had a chance to meet with God. How did their meetings go? And what are some lessons we can learn from these meetings with God.

When the children of Israel met God at Mt. Sinai it was not a casual encounter with God. They were to make themselves ready to meet God. Preparation was needed. The people were to be consecrated. Severe punishment would be meted out on those who would touch the mountain. And then on the appointed day the people were brought out of the camp to meet with God. I don’t think what happened was what they anticipated. In the mountain there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud on the mountain. There was the sound of the trumpet and it was very loud. Verse 18 says that Mount Sinai was completely in smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire. The whole mountain quaked greatly. Moses spoke and God answered him by voice. Chapter 20:1 says, *“And God spoke all these words, saying…”* and then God spoke to them from the mountain the Ten Commandments. They heard the voice of God. Now notice the reaction of the people. It says in verses 18-20, *“Now all the people witnessed the thunderings, the lightning flashes, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking; and when the people saw it, they trembled and stood afar off. Then they said to Moses, ‘You speak with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die.’”*  Notice, when the children of Israel met with God they were ready for it to be over. But notice in verse 20 why God met with them. It says, “*And Moses said to the people, ‘Do not fear; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before you, so that you may not sin.’”* God met with them so His fear may be before them, so that they might not sin. God wanted them to have a deep reverence for Him so they would always obey His law that He was giving them. God is teaching them a lesson in reverence for Him. God was wanting to impress upon their minds the severe consequences if they did not reverence Him and obey Him.

If God met with us today, would He need to teach us that same lesson? If He met with us, would He need to impress on our minds that we need to hold Him in reverence?

How do we respond when His word is read? Do we read with the understanding that our Creator is speaking to us? Do we read with the understanding that we are reading His will for our lives and that He expects us to obey His will? Jesus said, *“Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.”* (Matt. 7:21) If you had a meeting with God today, would He need to impress that on your mind? Would He need to impress on your mind that God means what He says and you need to reverence Him obey Him?

When the children of Israel met with God, I don’t think it was what they would have anticipated. They were terrified and did not want God to speak with them, lest they die. May we learn the lesson God wanted them to learn: to reverence Him so that we will obey Him.

The second meeting with God that I want us to consider is when Moses met God, recorded in Exodus chapters 3 and 4. Now, Moses had fled to Midian. He had killed an Egyptian, defending one of his Hebrew brethren, and it became known. Pharaoh sought to kill Moses, and so Moses fled and dwelt in the land of Midian. There he married a daughter of the priest of Midian and dwelt with him. Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, and he came to Horeb, the mountain of God. He saw a bush burning, but the bush was not consumed. He turned aside to investigate this further. This is when it happened. This is when he had his meeting with God. It was not a meeting with all the people, but a one on one meeting. Can you imagine having a one on one meeting with God? Don’t you think Moses would be excited about this meeting? But what we find is this meeting with God was one that Moses was not all that excited about. Because in this meeting God was calling upon Moses to do something he didn’t want to do. In Exodus 3 beginning with verse 7 it says, “And the LORD said: *‘I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians…”* And then in verse 10 the Lord said to Moses, *“Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”* [Emphasis mine, ELH] Now, Moses, no doubt, was in favor of God delivering his people out of the hand of the Egyptians, but he didn’t want to be the one who would go and lead them out. He didn’t feel qualified. He began to make excuse after excuse of why he shouldn’t be the one to go and lead them out. But God answered every objection that Moses made. God was not taking no for an answer. God supplied him with what he needed, and sent him. You see why I say I don’t think Moses was excited about his meeting with God. God was calling upon Moses to do something he did not what to do.

If God had a meeting with you or me today, might He ask us to do something really hard, that we would not want to do? What would that be? Would He say, “You know that guy you work with that lied about you, and because of his lie you did not get the promotion you deserved. That guy that is always critical of all you do. I want you to pray for him every day, and I want you to do something good for him.” How then would you feel about this meeting with God? Would it be hard to do? You might be saying, “If God told me to do that, I would do it.” But he has already told us to do that. Jesus said in Matthew 5:44, *“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”*

Or I wonder if He might say, “I want you every day to spend at least one hour in Bible reading and in prayer.” Now, for some, this would be easy because they are already doing that. But for others it would be very hard. But isn’t this what God wants us to do? We are told in 1 Peter 2:2, *“as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby.”* And also in 1 Thess. 5:17, *“pray without ceasing.”*

I wonder, if we had a meeting with God, would He tell us something hard to do? And would we be willing to do it?

The third meeting with God we want to consider today is when Saul of Tarsus met with God. This is recorded in Acts 9.

Saul of Tarsus was a persecutor of the church. Here in Acts 9 we read of him on his way to Damascus with authority from the high priest that if he found any there who were Christians, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. When he came near the city of Damascus, this is when he had his encounter with God. Suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. He heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?” He said, “Who are You, Lord?” Then the Lord said, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting, but arise, and enter into the city, and it shall be told you what you must do.” I suggest that if Saul had anticipated a meeting with God, this is not what he would have expected. What was Jesus saying to Saul? The gist of what He was saying was, “Saul, you are wrong. You need to repent.” Jesus was saying, “What you have been doing with such vigor and zeal, this effort to which you have been dedicated, thinking you have been serving God, you have been all wrong about it, and now you need to change your course in life and start doing something completely different.” What do you think Saul was thinking at this moment? No one had been more zealous in opposing faith in Jesus Christ than Saul, and now he learns he was actually working in conflict with the God he thought he was serving.

In Damascus Ananias comes to him and announces God’s plans for him, and encourages him to be baptized, and wash away his sins. Saul is baptized, and then begins to preach the Christ. Saul changes his course in life. What a great example of what we must do when we learn that our course in life has been all wrong.

If God was to meet with me, might the meeting be for this same purpose, to change my course in life? Would God meet with you to confront you with your sinful ways, to say that the course you are taking is all wrong, and you need to change directions?

Would He need to say to you, “I need you to change course about you looking at pornography. I know you think no one knows about what you are doing, not even your wife, but I know. And you need to change directions. You are not going to be able to do that with your internet access and your cable TV. So you need to cut them off. I need for you to be serious about making this change.” Might that be what God would say if you met with God?

Or would He need to say to you, “I’m ready for you to obey the one, true gospel? I realize you have been raised in a religious heritage that denies baptism for salvation. I realize you have been struggling with that, and have been resisting that truth even though you know that is what My word says. There has been a battle going on inside you between truth and error on the subject of baptism and you need to let the truth win. You have been going in a religious direction all your life that is not the way of truth and I need you to change your direction.” Might this be what God would say if you met with Him?

God has already given us His instructions in His word. We don’t need a meeting with God. Every day God is talking to us through the words of His Book. Every time we read it, God is trying to tell us something. The question we need to answer is simply this, “Am I listening?”

This is an important question because one day we will all have our meeting with God. Paul said in 2 Cor. 5:10, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”* The day is coming when we will meet God in judgment to answer for the lives we have lived. And all along the way He has been talking to us – not from a mountain, and not from a burning bush, or not associated with bright lights from heaven, but He has been speaking to us through His word the Bible. Some people listen so that when that day comes and they have their meeting with God it will be for them the greatest of all days – it is the day of reward. But some people do not listen, so that when that day comes it is the most tragic possible. The question again we need to answer: ARE WE LISTENING? ARE WE READY FOR OUR MEETING WITH GOD?