

EXODUS 34:1-9 THE LORD PROCLAIMS HIMSELF

We are in the section that so aptly gives us a great glimpse of the glory of God. God's nature is clearly described here, as well as any place in the Bible. Moses had asked God to show him His glory. God actually agreed with that, only it would be in His own terms. He said His goodness would pass before Moses and His name would be proclaimed to him. That, is where we are now at. God is going to reveal Himself, what He is about, to Moses. Moses is going to hear more than he is going to see this glory as God proclaims His name, character, and His justice as He shows the backside of His glory. Moses needs this reinforcement and renewal of the covenant as he represents the people who had rebelled against God's commands. God's grace is a shining theme in this whole section. He could have destroyed the whole nation, but because of the mediatorship of Moses, God restrained His wrath and put favor on Moses and the Israelites. By seeing His mercy, compassion, and grace, we get to see the essence of the heart of God. The security of the people is not found in themselves, but in God. He is the basis of all the blessings and promises they have. What a truly great God we have who has manifested Himself to Moses and also to us.

1. RENEWING OF THE COVENANT VV 1-4

A. MOSES MUST PREPARE THE TWO TABLES

When Moses saw the people in their idolatry as he was carrying the tablets of stone down the mountain, he was so disgusted with their behavior that he threw the tablets down and they broke. That was symbolic of the covenant being broken. The original tablets were done by God.

Now, Moses would have to cut out the stone as God would write on them again.

This is all about preparing for a renewal of the covenant God had made with the people as they were to be reinstated after their great sin. It is amazing that God would be willing to carry on with a covenant relationship. This is certainly an act of grace.

B. MOSES ATTENDS AGAIN ON TOP OF SINAI

Moses and only Moses was to present himself to God, not unlike before. Nobody was to go up with him. This was clearly a statement to the people that God was distancing Himself from them. They could not even be in the vicinity, nor the animals. This is all the Lord's terms and of course Moses follows the directions completely, which they had not done. His obedience is contrasted with their disobedience. The covenant approach to God was to be careful and respectful. God is to be approached according to His command and fellowship with Him will entail moral conformity.

C. THE PARALLELS TO THE FIRST TIME

When they first came to Mt Sinai, there were similar instructions. This is a reestablishment of the covenant that was inaugurated at Sinai in chapters 19-20. There were stone tablets there. There was a proclamation of the Lord's name, like there is here. We

see covenant language all over the place. The texts in both of the tablets were written by the finger of God. Moses was to be ready to meet God in the morning. Moses is to go up and God is to come down, like before. The mountain is off limits for all, like before.

Covenant language is most definitely used here. It's the language of God coming and again binding Himself in commitment to His people. The covenant is being renewed.

2. THE LORD PASSES BEFORE MOSES VV 5-7

A. PROCLAIMING HIS NAME

The name of the Lord is an expression of what He is and what He does.

Descended No sooner had Moses gotten to the top of the mount than God gave him the meeting he wanted. God condescended so that Moses could be communicated with. Ps 113:6 says What is man that he should thus be visited? He descended in the cloud that was the same one that was at the tent of meeting, the pillar of cloud that had gone before Israel.

Drew Near God was right there with Moses. Moses witnesses a theophany.

Proclaimed The Lord preached His name to Him. This is the self-existent one. This name is to be elaborated on being combined with His attributes that are listed in vv 6-7. The name at the burning bush was I Am That I Am, now He makes Himself known in the glory of His grace and goodness. God is preaching about God and telling what He is like. This is a way that Moses sees the glory.

Yahweh is pronounced twice for emphasis. He is a personal God. He is a covenant God who is faithful to His people.

Passed by

B. PROCLAIMING HIS CHARACTER

Here is the description of God's character. The moral demands of God are rooted in His very nature. His laws are according to His nature. Moses bowed to the ground and worshipped when he heard God speak these magnificent words.

If it were only God's righteousness and justice that were His attributes, the children of Israel would have been obliterated that very moment they sinned. This did not happen because He has other characteristics. The terms of the covenant reflect His very own character. We are to be rooted in who He is and what He does. God is revealing His essential character in a very dramatic way. We get to see the very heart of God. He was standing next to Moses and Moses is actually telling us not what He looked like but what He was. He tells us what he heard. The proclaiming is preaching and what we should learn about this is that preaching should be about God. It is not about our felt needs. It is about Him. Whatever we preach about, it is certainly to be God-centered. When God appeared before Moses it was a message about Him. This is what the Israelites need to know desperately. What you need to know about is me, is what God is doing here. You need to know your God.

Exodus 33:19, Numbers 14:18, Deut 4:31, Neh 9:17,

Ps 86:5,15, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2

The focus here, is on God's mercy and grace. He was able to put these on display with the backdrop of the nation's sin. They deserved to be blown away. But God, being rich in mercy saved them.

It is a good thing to know how bad we are, for then it is when we see God's amazing grace. The more we know how sinful sin is, the more we understand grace. We need to know we are always in need of Him. We constantly need His grace, for we are absolutely nothing without grace and deserve the harshest of His wrath.

He wants them to know He is more gracious than they could ever imagine. It was absolutely impossible for them to base their redemption on themselves. It was outside themselves they could base it on. It was in God's grace for they had been unfaithful and did not deserve anything good from the Lord. There is nothing in you that can compel God to redeem you. In fact all that you are would repel Him. He manifests His grace here in that He deliberately chooses to be gracious. He did not respond because Israel acted. God is compassionate and gracious, so He chose to be compassionate and gracious to them. There is nothing in your hands you can bring to the Lord.

Merciful— In the Hebrew it means the type of understanding a mother shows toward her child The pagan gods were thought of as hostile by the people

It is a tender compassion a father has for his children. Ps 103:13

It is put first because it is the first wheel in all the instances of God's good will to fallen man, whose misery makes him an object of pity. Isa 63:9

Gracious

This is the behavior of the Good Samaritan who showed kindness

to one who had no claim on him. Rom 5:8-God shows His love for us, in that

while we were still sinners, he died for us.

It speaks of kindness. Not only does God have a compassion to His creatures but a doing good to them and it is from His own good will and not from anything in them. This is free grace.

The reason He brought Israel out in the first place was because He was gracious.

We are to be this way also. 1 Pet 3:8

Longsuffering—God takes His time to react to human sin. He is slow to anger. He delays the execution of His justice as He waits to be gracious, and lengthens out the offer of His grace. God is so patient with His people.

Goodness---This speaks of a goodness above our conception and expression.

Truth---He is faithful, trustworthy, with emphasis on reliability and trustworthiness. A trustworthy person can be relied upon to tell the truth.

Keeps covenant love for thousands (of generations.) His mercy is never exhausted. He gives mercy to many and keeps giving it.

Forgiving of iniquity, transgression, and sin

This is a pardoning mercy and in this, divine grace is magnified.

Forgiveness doesn't mean to overlook the sin, but because of His other attributes He counts the sins as paid for. It ultimately points to the cross where the sin

is taken care of.

The terms listed here for sins are as a whole to Hebrew thought. They are offences of all sorts.

C. PROCLAIMING HIS HOLINESS AND JUSTICE

Even though God is merciful, gracious, patient, good, faithful, and forgiving, He still is righteous and just.

He will not clear the guilty without justice being satisfied

To third and fourth generation Ex 20:5 Idolatry requires the penalty to extend to the third and fourth generation. That is how much sin has as an impact on many. God has to judge sin but it is counted against those who rebel. It is on the guilty. The consequences can be an effect on people of other generations. Sin sets into motion a ripple effect just like a rock thrown into the water. God is gracious and merciful but He does not necessarily prevent natural consequences from playing themselves out. A man who is a drunkard who then is forgiven and delivered from his addiction, still has children who are effected. One who has abused his children and then become a Christian, still has children who may deal with the abuse differently. The consequences can still be there and far reaching. What God does do is to limit the effects of sin to three or four generations. Instead of the ripple effects extending beyond and even forever is that God will slow them and eventually stop them. His mercy goes to thousands of generations and effects only three or four generations. Before we take advantage of His mercy, we need to think of how our sin can offend our great God and also the many people it can effect.

3. THE RESPONSE OF MOSES

VV 8-9

A. BOWED AND WORSHIPPED

Moses fell on his face immediately after seeing the character of God and then saw the sin of the people. When we see our sin and how bad it is, we see the greatness of God's grace. When we see that, we see even more how bad we are and then in turn we see how amazing God's grace is. We need to see how bad we are, to see God's grace, but we need to see His grace to see how bad we are.

B. AFFECTIONATE PRAYER

For the presence of God---Despite God's words of forgiveness, Moses wants some added evidence that God will go with His people.

For pardon of sin He begged from God what God had already said His character was. Moses grasped the essentials. If the purposes of the Exodus were to be fulfilled, then God would have to be with them and they would be His special possession. Moses identified with his people as he too included himself with them as being a sinner in the need of forgiveness. Moses laid hold of the truth God forgives sin and transgressions as in 33:7

For privileges for the people

By the grace of God, Moses achieved his purposes: God promised to go with His people, God showed Moses a glimpse of His glory, and God forgave Israel their sins. Moses could return to the people with the second tables and assure them that their sin had been forgiven.

All this is ultimately realized in God incarnate, Jesus Christ