

Exodus chapter 34.

As we read this passage, we see a beautiful picture of the heart of our God. You know, some people try to divide the Bible up and say there is a "God of the Old Testament" who is angry and harsh, and a "God of the New Testament" who is all about love. But that is a mistake. Our God is the same yesterday, today, and forever. In this chapter, we see the perfect balance of His character: His incredible, overflowing grace, and His absolute, holy justice.

The Proclamation of His Name

In the first few verses, the Lord tells Moses to hew out two new tablets of stone because Moses had broken the first ones in his anger over the people's sin. God is a God of second chances! He tells Moses to come up the mountain alone. No man, no flocks—just Moses and the Lord.

As Moses stands there on Mount Sinai, the Lord descends in a cloud and proclaims His own name. Listen to how God describes Himself in Exodus 34:6-7:

"The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing the guilty..."

What a glorious declaration! He is "*longsuffering*"—that means He has a long fuse. He is patient with us even when it is painful for Him. He is "*abounding in goodness*." But notice the balance: He forgives sin, yet He "*by no means clears the guilty*."

This is where we see the necessity of the Cross. God is too holy to simply "wink" at sin and say, "That's okay, don't worry about it." No, sin must be judged. But because He is so merciful, He provided the substitute. When Jesus shed His blood on the cross, the justice of God and the mercy of God met. The guilt was paid for so that the forgiveness could be offered.

The Reality of Sin's Impact

The passage mentions that God visits the "iniquity of the fathers upon the children... to the third and fourth generation." Now, some people get tripped up here. Does God punish a child for what their dad did? No, the Bible is clear that each person is responsible for their own sin.

But what we see here is a heavy practical truth: Sin has a fallout.

When a parent walks in rebellion, it creates a "ripple effect" of pain. We see it in broken homes where children carry the scars of divorce. We see it in the tragedy of addiction, where babies are born suffering because of a mother's choices. We see it in the horrific cycle of abuse. Sin leaves "psychiatric scars"—deep wounds in the soul that can last a lifetime.

Here is the Good News: The blood of Jesus is more powerful than your family history. If you grew up in a home that was "off the wall," if you have gaps in your memory because the trauma was too great,

I want you to know that in Christ, you are a new creation. He doesn't just patch you up; He makes you new. He can erase those scars and break those generational chains.

A Jealous God and a Holy People

In Exodus 34:14, God says His very name is Jealous. Not jealous like a petty human, but jealous like a husband who loves his wife and won't share her heart with another. He warns Israel not to make covenants with the corrupt nations around them.

God commanded them to destroy the altars of the Canaanites. Why? Because those cultures were practicing horrific things, including sacrificing their own infants to idols like Baal. They were like a "rabid dog" in a playground full of children. God, in His love, sought to protect His people from that deadly infection.

He tells them in Exodus 34:26:

"The first of the firstfruits of your land you shall bring into the house of the Lord your God."

God doesn't want your leftovers. He doesn't want what's left of your time at the end of the day or what's left of your paycheck at the end of the month. He wants to be first. When we put Him first, we find that everything else falls into its proper place.

The Fading Glory and the True Light

Finally, we see Moses coming down the mountain. His face is literally glowing! He had been in the presence of God for forty days, and he caught a "divine tan." He had to put a veil over his face because the people were afraid.

But the New Testament tells us there was another reason for that veil. Paul tells us in the book of Corinthians that the glow was actually *fading*. The Law, as glorious as it was, was a temporary covenant. It was meant to point us to something better.

The Law shows us our need, but it can't change our hearts. Only Jesus can do that. Today, for many, there is still a "veil" over their hearts. They try to be "good enough" for God, or they stay stuck in the traditions of men, and they miss the simple beauty of a relationship with Jesus Christ.

A Challenge for the Believer

If you have been walking with the Lord, I want to challenge you today: Are you reflecting His glory? Moses' face shone because he spent time in God's presence. You cannot spend time at the feet of Jesus and stay the same. If you find your heart becoming cold or "stiff-necked," get back into the Word. Get back into prayer. Let the veil be taken away so you can behold Him clearly.

An Invitation to the Unbeliever

Perhaps you feel the weight of those "generational sins." Maybe your life feels like a "cesspool" of past mistakes. I have wonderful news for you.

Jesus Christ didn't just stay on that cross; He rose again! His resurrection declares to the whole universe that He is God, Savior, and Lord. He has the power to forgive every sin and heal every wound. He is standing at the door of your heart right now, merciful, gracious, and longsuffering.

Don't wait. Don't try to "clean yourself up" first—you can't. Come to Him just as you are. Repent of your sins, put your trust in His finished work on the cross, and let Him make you a new creature today.