

Israel's "First" Worship Service? "Holy Tabernacle and Unholy Cow!"

Exodus 32

Rev. Charles R. Biggs

SCRIPTURE TEXT:

^{ESV} **Exodus 32:1** When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. [The people were impatient with the Lord's timing with Moses on the mount. In the Hebrew language, the people are not coming in a friendly way to Aaron as a type of committee who represents the wishes merely of the people; rather, they gather together *against Aaron and say to him in a command: "UP! Make us gods who shall go before us."*]

As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him." [Lack of faith in God's promises; God is instructing Moses as to how the people will worship him and they follow the inclinations of their own sinful hearts, showing that (1) We are all by nature idolaters, and (2) God must show to us or reveal how he is to be worshipped lest we die.]

² So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." ³ So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. [The people were to take their gold to build the tabernacle and a place for God to dwell among them (Exodus 28)- -they were not to use the gold for idol-worship!].

⁴ And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf. And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!" ⁵ When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it. And Aaron made proclamation and said, "Tomorrow shall be a feast to the LORD." ⁶ And they rose up early the next day and offered burnt offerings and brought peace offerings. And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. [(1) Worshipping the *right God in the wrong way*; (2) Worshipping God with Aaron the *right High Priest*

leading the people in the wrong way- -altars that were forbidden and not part of the tabernacle, celebrations, and festivals that were similar to pagan revelry rather than the “regulative principle”.]

⁷ And the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, for your people, whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves. ⁸ They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshiped it and sacrificed to it and said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!'" [Moses is commanded to go down “to your people”; it is as if the LORD is not claiming them for his own possession after seeing their gross idolatry!]

⁹ And the LORD said to Moses, "I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. ¹⁰ Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them, in order that I may make a great nation of you." [God’s wrath will rightly and justly consume them for their sins against a holy God, if it were not for a Mediator!]

¹¹ But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, "O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? [Moses as Mediator of the Old Covenant intercedes on behalf of the people; he appeals to God’s covenant and God’s righteous reputation!].

¹² Why should the Egyptians say, 'With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth'? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people. ¹³ Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants, to whom you swore by your own self, and said to them, 'I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have promised I will give to your offspring, and they shall inherit it forever.'" [Importance of God’s covenant oath to his people!]

¹⁴ And the LORD relented from the disaster that he had spoken of bringing on his people. [“Whew!”]

¹⁵ Then Moses turned and went down from the mountain with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand, tablets that were written on both sides; on the front and on the back they were written. ¹⁶ The tablets were the work of God,

and the writing was the writing of God, engraved on the tablets. ¹⁷ When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, "There is a noise of war in the camp." ¹⁸ But he said, "It is not the sound of shouting for victory, or the sound of the cry of defeat, but the sound of singing that I hear." ¹⁹ And as soon as he came near the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, Moses' anger burned hot, and he threw the tablets out of his hands and broke them at the foot of the mountain. [Broken tablets that the people had broken in word, thought and deed before Moses visibly breaks them to show the seriousness of their sins!]

²⁰ He took the calf that they had made and burned it with fire and ground it to powder and scattered it on the water and made the people of Israel drink it. ²¹ And Moses said to Aaron, "What did this people do to you that you have brought such a great sin upon them?" [Moses is looking for at least a "good reason" from Aaron as to why the people led him rather than he rightfully leading the people.]

²² And Aaron said, "Let not the anger of my lord burn hot. You know the people, that they are set on evil. [Can you say "blameshifting"? Remember Adam and Eve after they sinned against God idolatrously in the garden, Adam said to God when he got caught: "The woman you gave to me caused me to do this!"]

²³ For they said to me, 'Make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' ²⁴ So I said to them, 'Let any who have gold take it off.' So they gave it to me, and I threw it into the fire, and out came this calf." [And out came this calf! My mother used to say you're not only a sinner, you're a lying one!]

²⁵ And when Moses saw that the people had broken loose (for Aaron had let them break loose, to the derision of their enemies), ²⁶ then Moses stood in the gate of the camp and said, "Who is on the LORD's side? Come to me." And all the sons of Levi gathered around him. ²⁷ And he said to them, "Thus says the LORD God of Israel, 'Put your sword on your side each of you, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and each of you kill his brother and his companion and his neighbor.'" ²⁸ And the sons of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And that day about three thousand men of the people fell. [God's just punishment through the Levites who were called

by God to serve as priestly mediators of the people; they became the people's judges rather than mediators!]

²⁹ And Moses said, "Today you have been ordained for the service of the LORD, each one at the cost of his son and of his brother, so that he might bestow a blessing upon you this day." ³⁰ The next day Moses said to the people, "You have sinned a great sin. And now I will go up to the LORD; perhaps I can make atonement for your sin." [Atonement is desperately needed to keep all of the people from being consumed by God's wrath!]

³¹ So Moses returned to the LORD and said, "Alas, this people have sinned a great sin. They have made for themselves gods of gold. ³² But now, if you will forgive their sin- but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written." ³³ But the LORD said to Moses, "Whoever has sinned against me, I will blot out of my book. ³⁴ But now go, lead the people to the place about which I have spoken to you; behold, my angel shall go before you. Nevertheless, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them." ³⁵ Then the LORD sent a plague on the people, because they made the calf, the one that Aaron made. [“...the one that Aaron made.”]

Gods of Gold and the God of Wrath

“We Need a Mediator!”

Exodus 32- Part 2

Rev. Charles R. Biggs

Propositional Statement: As the people of God, we approach God through a Mediator. The people of God in Exodus 32 were given access to God, as he prepared the way for them to approach him, as well as a mediator. *How much more* do we have a Mediator who does not change, who ever lives to intercede for his people.

Key Verses: Ex. 34:6-7

FCF: We tend to approach God in our own ways. We have a tendency to do things as we please. We need to understand the importance of a Mediator between sinful man and a holy God. We need to know that what God provides for our worship is indeed what we need! We must appreciate God’s grace and mercy to us in Christ!

Introduction- Here’s a story in inspired Scripture that reveals God’s people- -sinful warts and all!

Psalm 106:20-23: They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass. ²¹ They forgot God, their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt, ²² wondrous works in the land of Ham, and awesome deeds by the Red Sea. ²³ Therefore he said he would destroy them- had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them.

Introduction

So what is the Old Testament God so mad about anyway?

“Are you saved?” “Saved from what?!”

Marcion in the early church formulated the doctrine that the Old Testament God was mean and angry and the New Testament God was

gentle, loving and kind. Jesus made his father “settle down” and be nice to sinners!

THEME: THE WRATH OF GOD AND THE MEDIATOR OF GOD

I. THE SIN OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD

A New Nation of People the LORD will Make (Ex. 32:7-10)

- a. God is extremely angry and displeased with this sin of Israel- - yet opens up the possibility of intercession-mediation by Moses by saying to him:

“Let me alone that I may consume them.”

- b. No special favor to Israel if they failed to keep the covenant- - it was by grace they had been delivered and saved from Egypt (Ex. 20:1).
- c. *Your people* (God speaking to Moses), *you* brought out of Egypt...“Moses’ people” (a glimpse of how God must make his people from within, from the heart by his Spirit if they are truly to “trust and obey for there’s no other way”!
- d. *My people no longer?!* (cf. Exodus 5:1; 7:16; 8:21)

“Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, 'Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.'”- Exodus 5:1

- e. God desires to act in immediate judgment because of their stubbornness, or because they are a *stiff-necked people* (v. 9-10).
- f. God wants to “start over” and make Moses another Abraham!

Sin and Its Consequences

1. What is sin?

1. Westminster Shorter Catechism: What is sin? A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God.
 2. A disregard of God's commandments.
 3. An affront to a holy and gracious God.
 - a. Exemplified in Exodus 32 by (1) a lack of trust in God's goodness and timing; (2) a desire to make God accessible and his worship like the world around the Israelites.
2. What are the consequences of sin?
1. Separation from fellowship with God (cf. to Garden of Eden).
 2. Spiritual Death and Physical Death.
 3. Subjects of God's Wrath: Eternal Death-Judgment.
 4. Hatred between men (Cain and Abel).
 - a. Discord
 - b. Blame-shifting
 5. Here as in Genesis 2, there is a "fall of man". Here in Exodus 32 we see a people who have been redeemed reenact what Adam and Eve did in the garden.
3. Why must sin be punished?
1. God is holy.
 2. God is just.

II. THE WRATH OF ALMIGHTY GOD

1. Understanding God's Wrath is to Better Understand God's Character

This will also help us to understand God's character. God never changes, therefore there is no conflict in between God's goodness and his wrath. God is loving, but he is wrathful; God is holy and just, therefore he must punish iniquity; God is good and loving, but hates sin. To those who would question God's wrath, the creature must continually be turned and face God, his Creator. In him we all

live, move and have our being (Acts 17). Who has the right to talk back to God and question his righteous judgment? Romans 9 tells us that no one has that right, any more than the clay can say to the potter “why have you made me this way?!”

2. Understanding God’s Wrath is to Better Understand God’s grace and love: “What are we saved from?”

We have seen events where God’s wrath is manifested, but why is God angry? We now turn to consider sinful man in light of God’s wrath. Habakkuk 1:12-13 speaks of God’s righteousness in light of man’s sins. Verse 13 says: “You [O LORD], are of purer eyes than to behold evil and cannot look on wrong...” Man is a sinner and the soul that sins shall die (Gen. 2:16,17; Ezek. 18:1-4) All men deserve the righteous manifestation of God’s wrath in the fury of his judgment.

Prior to God’s revelation of his wrath on the Egyptians and on Mt. Sinai, we see another picture of God’s wrath and saving goodness in the Garden of Eden. After Adam failed the covenant he made with God, and knowing that God had pronounced the sentence of death upon him because of his disobedience, Adam hides from him when God comes into the garden. God had told Adam that if you sin...you will die (Gen. 2). However, in God’s great mercy, God provides a sacrifice for Adam and his wife. God restrains his righteous anger toward Adam in order to come to him in blessing rather than wrath. This is our great and merciful but wrathful God.

Adam and all of us whom he represented in the garden (Ps. 51; cf. Rom. 5:12-21), are conceived in sin, born under the wrath of God. The Apostle Paul tells us that we are by nature children of wrath (Eph. 2:1ff). This is our condition upon our conception, in our birth, throughout our lives. At any moment, it would be just and righteous of God to take any one sinner from the face of this earth and to consume him eternally in the fire of his wrath in hell.

The only reason any of us were alive for any time at all before we knew Christ is because of his great mercy and because of his good pleasure (2 Pet. 3:7ff). This means that had it not been for God’s own good pleasure, his desire to preserve us in his patience, we would all have been consumed. In His great wisdom, he is pleased to have patience so that some will come to repentance upon seeing his great work and hearing his great word.

All men are sinners as Paul teaches in Romans 3:10ff. Turn and Read Romans 3:10-19. All mouths must be shut as we constantly stand before God the Judge, our King. We must realize that we have nothing to appease his wrath; nothing in our power to do the works he has given us to do in his law;

nothing in our power to take away our guilt- -nothing that keeps us from the anger of God shown upon Pharaoh and his army; nothing in our power to keep us from being by nature sinners.

There is nothing that is keeping God from displaying his wrath upon all the world except his promises he has made to all who believe; nothing that can keep God from immediately demanding perfect obedience to his law that was revealed upon Mt. Sinai; nothing that can keep God from punishing us now eternally for our guilt and sin! There is absolutely nothing we can claim for ourselves in the presence of a holy and righteous God except that we are without hope and without God in the world! NOTHING- - Except...Except...Except...in the righteousness of Christ. The just and holy God must punish sin, but how is he to do this? Consider his great wisdom and grace revealed in the Person and Work of Christ.

^{ESV} **Psalm 2:12** Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

^{ESV} **Psalm 78:35** They remembered that God was their rock, the Most High God their redeemer. ³⁶ But they flattered him with their mouths; they lied to him with their tongues. ³⁷ Their heart was not steadfast toward him; they were not faithful to his covenant. ³⁸ Yet he, being compassionate, atoned for their iniquity and did not destroy them; he restrained his anger often and did not stir up all his wrath. ³⁹ He remembered that they were but flesh, a wind that passes and comes not again. ⁴⁰ How often they rebelled against him in the wilderness and grieved him in the desert! ⁴¹ They tested God again and again and provoked the Holy One of Israel. ⁴² They did not remember his power or the day when he redeemed them from the foe, ⁴³ when he performed his signs in Egypt and his marvels in the fields of Zoan.

^{ESV} **Nahum 1:2-3:** The LORD is a jealous and avenging God; the LORD is avenging and wrathful; the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries and keeps wrath for his enemies. ³ The LORD is slow to anger and great in power, and the LORD will by no means clear the guilty. His way is in whirlwind and storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet.

^{ESV} **Romans 2:5** But because of your hard and impenitent heart you are storing up wrath for yourself on the day of wrath when God's righteous judgment will be revealed. ⁶ He will render to each one according to his works: ⁷ to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; ⁸ but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury.

^{ESV} **John 3:36** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

^{ESV} **Romans 1:18** For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.

^{ESV} **Romans 5:9** Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

^{ESV} **Ephesians 5:6** Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

^{ESV} **Colossians 3:6** On account of these the wrath of God is coming.

^{ESV} **Revelation 19:15** From his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations, and he will rule them with a rod of iron. He will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God the Almighty.

^{ESV} **Romans 9:22** What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction,

^{ESV} **1 Thessalonians 5:9** For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ...

“Since our hearts cannot, in God’s mercy, either seize upon life ardently enough or accept it with the gratefulness we owe, unless our minds are first struck and overwhelmed by fear of God’s wrath and by dread of eternal death, we are taught by Scripture to perceive apart from Christ, God is, so to speak, hostile to us, and his hand is armed for destruction; to embrace his benevolence and fatherly love in Christ alone” (II.XVI.ii)

III. THE MEDIATION AND INTERCESSION OF MOSES

“Go Down, Moses”: Moses the Faithful Mediator of God’s People (Ex. 32:11-14; 30-32)

- a. **Moses gets angry with the people upon returning below from on top of the mountain:**

1. Moses smashes the Law before the faces of the people showing them how great their sin against God is!
 1. The people have broken the essential and foundational first two commandments and thus are guilty of breaking all of them!
 2. The covenant with God that was made by vow and oath in Exodus 24 is broken by the people!
 3. ***God has no reason NOT to destroy them as he said he would.***
2. The calf is ground into powder and the people eat it - - “total annihilation” symbolically in the ancient Near East (Enns, pg. 574).
3. ***Moses questions and scolds Aaron the High Priest for allowing the people to control and influence him.***
Aaron is shown as a sinner set apart, consecrated by *grace alone!* There is nothing in Aaron that makes him fit for God’s service apart from God’s call!

Aaron’s sin has become the sin of the people. Aaron was called to lead the people of God as their chosen High Priest and representative.

I threw the gold into the fire and out came this calf!

NOTE: It is interesting to note that Jewish rabbis in interpreting this passage want to paint Aaron in a non-sinful light. They rabbis do not want to believe Aaron was lying (this reveals an underestimation of sin, and the stark and sinful reality the Old Testament reveals the people of God).

b. Moses intercedes on behalf of an undeserving people:

1. Moses asks the LORD if he may die (*be blotted out of God’s book*) on behalf of the people. Moses wants to

make atonement for their sin against the Living God (v. 31-32).

1. Moses as the Mediator-High Priest before Aaron.
2. Substitutionary atonement on behalf of the people: one to die for the sins of the many.
3. Not just any substitutionary atonement – but a person is required!
 - a. Moses is not being overzealous in his act of mediation at Mediator of the people!
 - b. Moses is (perhaps somewhat intentionally, perhaps with revelation we are not told he has received from God) speaking the truth that a person is required (cf. Gen. 22 with Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac).
2. Like Paul in Romans 10, he desires to be *cut off* or *blotted out*, if the remainder can live! What love! But as good a Mediator as Moses' was, he was still a sinner and could not represent the people as a perfect Mediator, nor a perfect sacrifice for the sins of the people. Moses' death on behalf of the people is rejected, but points to a greater Mediator and death for sinners ***greater than Moses!***

^{ESV} **Numbers 20:12** And the LORD said to Moses and Aaron, "***Because you did not believe in me, to uphold me as holy in the eyes of the people of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land that I have given them.***"

3. Moses bases his intercession on God's covenant promises to his people (v. 11-13). He intercedes back that the *stiff-necked people* are your people - that is belonging covenantally to God. Moses prays as we should pray and intercede:

- a. **Not based on any merit**- -but only on God's covenantal faithfulness, mercy and grace.
- b. Knowing God does not change, and is immutable, **yet God commands us to pray to seek his will to be done.**

Exodus 34:5-8:*The LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. ⁶ The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "**The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.**" ⁸ And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshiped.*

God's Justice and Mercy

1. God punishes, but also has mercy! God "has mercy upon whom he wants to have mercy" (Exodus 33:19; cf. Romans 9).

^{ESV} **Exodus 33:18-20:** Moses said, "Please show me your glory." ¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. ²⁰ But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."

2. God *relents*, or "*changes his mind*" from destroying all of the Israelites because they have broken the covenant (as the NASB translates it)- v. 14.

2. A mystery how this can occur (Dt. 29:29).
Difficult concept for some people.

- a. We know that God does not change; he is immutable (cf. 1 Sam. 15:29):

^{ESV} **1 Samuel 15:29** And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret."

- b. **Scripture interprets scripture and what we find is that this is an anthropomorphic way of saying that God relented from his anger**; God pitied the Israelites and showed mercy and compassion (cf. Exodus 34:4-6). God opened up the possibility of intercession-mediation by telling Moses to ***“let me alone so that I may consume them”***.
- c. Prayer is powerful and a conversation with God himself; God does not change. A tension we must hold together in the Scriptures and glory in God’s thoughts and ways being higher than our thoughts and ways!

^{ESV} **Romans 11:33-36**: Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

- d. Effectual power of prayer in the presence of the unchanging, all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-present God.
- e. **“Principle of Accommodation**: God in his infiniteness condescends or accommodates to our finite, time-bound minds to explain his turning in wrath from some in order to

offer them mercy rather than justice for their sins.

- f. **Anthropomorphism**: God's character revealed in human terms and likeness to show forth God's Mediator in Moses. The point here is not to get sidetracked from God's "changing his mind" to God showing the people their need for a mediator, represented here by Moses.

- g. **Anthropopathism**: God's emotions understood from a human perspective (cf. Genesis 6:6: "God was 'sorry' that he had created man...").
 - NOTE: In fact, there is an important contrast here between Moses and Aaron that should not be missed: Aaron could not hold back the people, but Moses could hold back God's wrath, which as a type of a Greater Mediator is able to do by taking upon himself the wrath of God for sinful men.

- h. This is how God reveals himself to his people – and this is how we, by faith, are to understand him. God repented, relented, ***changed his divine mind with the way he was going to execute this judgment, he did not change with regard to his eternal decree.***

- i. God ordains-decrees the end as well as the means (prayer). In the eternal decree, Moses' prayer, our prayers, are all ordained for his glory and our good.

- j. In the New Testament, Jesus prays “If it is possible that this cup should pass...but not as I will.” God answers prayers, but we do not know his purposes- -we are not God.

Calvin gives help on this: “But with God repentance is nothing but a change of dealing, wherein He seems to retrace His course, as if He had conceived some fresh design. When, therefore, it is said a little further on that ‘the LORD repented/relented of the evil,’ it is tantamount to saying, that He was appeased; not because He retracts in Himself what He once decreed, but because He does not execute the sentence He had pronounced.” –*ibid*, pg. 343.

^{ESV} **Exodus 34:9-10:** And he said, "If now I have found favor in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance." ¹⁰ And he said, "Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels, such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation. And all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the LORD, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.

4. Moses preaches repentance to the people and the need for atonement for their sins (v. 30) (the reason why God had taught them about the Tabernacle and the Priesthood).

The Judgment of God on Law-Breakers (Ex. 32: 15-29; 33-35)

God answers Moses’ prayer by not destroying the people (he has mercy on some, although all are deserving of judgment- - God does not finally reject his people) (v. 35).

This generation (except for a small remnant) eventually dies in the wilderness as recorded in Numbers 14- Ex. 34.

This passage (perhaps more than any other!) shows the sinful rebellion of God’s people against a holy God, as well as the

impermanent and imperfect Mediatorship of Moses and High Priesthood of Aaron.

This passage shows that both Moses and Aaron are not sufficient to take care of sin and allow the people to dwell eternally in God's holy presence!

Behold your Compassionate and Faithful God!

Read Exodus 34:6-9- Thank God for his grace that the covenant he makes with his people is maintained from God's side – not the people's side! It is by grace!

Exodus 34:6-7 ⁶ The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation."

The limitations of Moses' Mediatorship points forward to a greater Mediator who can make full atonement for sin (Read: Heb. 3:1-6). Jesus our Mediator!

IV. THE MINISTRY OF MEDIATION AND INTERCESSION OF CHRIST JESUS FOR SINNERS

Conclusion: Contrast Today with Israel's Time Period

- a. A temporal Mediator- imperfect.
 - b. A temporal intercession for God's people- imperfect.
 - c. A temporal worship place- imperfect.
 - d. A temporal and ongoing washing away of sin- imperfect.
-
- a. A permanent Mediator- perfect (1 Tim. 2:5).
 - b. A permanent intercession for God's people- perfect (Heb. 7:23-25- *Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing. But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since he lives to make intercession for them*).
 - c. A permanent worshipping of God in spirit and truth- perfect.

- d. A permanent atonement made by Jesus Christ on our behalf-perfect!

OUTBREAK OF GOD’S WRATH TODAY? Understand this episode in Redemptive-History BEFORE a permanent and final Mediator is provided to satisfy and take God’s wrath. The similarity of God’s judgment on Israel here and we today is more with our future. We like the Levites will be separated by Christ Our Mediator from the goats who do not believe, who have sought their own ways of worshipping and serving God – they will be subject to the judgment and wrath of their Creator!

As Moses cried out to the people:

“Those who are with YHWH, come to me.”

Moses shows that is only one way to the True God- - no syncretism, no pluralism, no polytheism, no foolishness *in God’s faith*.

So Jesus Christ, *the Mediator Greater than Moses said:*

“Come to me all you who are burdened by sin and the demands of the Law. I will in no way cast you out. I will forgive your transgressions and intercede for you before YHWH and give you everlasting life by my Spirit. My yoke is easy and my burden is light...I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life no one comes to the Father except through me!”

1 Corinthians 5:21 teaches us that “He made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” God forsook Christ on the cross and turned away his face from his son. God said, “The LORD curse you and make his face turn away from you,” rather than the LORD bless you and keep you and make his face shine upon you (cf. Deut. 6:4-6). God’s righteous wrath was so intense, so severe that even the Son of God himself prayed that if it be possible to allow God’s cup of wrath to pass from him; not “my will, but yours be done” (Luke 22:42-46).

This cup that Christ drank on our behalf- - the wrath of God and the death because of sin, Christ now invites his people to partake in a cup of life- - the life of his blood shed for the remission of sins. This is the true righteousness and holiness and justice of God revealed in his wrath. God’s patience from the time Adam sinned, in his forbearance, or the holding back his wrath upon a sinful people, he

now displayed upon his most righteous and holy Son whom he loved- -and this all for us.

It is because God poured out his wrath on Christ as our propitiation, our substitute for our sins, that we can boldly come into the throne room and not tremble as the Israelites at Mt. Sinai. For we have not come to a mountain burning and rumbling with fire and thunder, but to the Holy City, the New Jerusalem (Heb. 12:18ff). Read Romans 3:19-26. God could be just in punishing sin, but also the justifier of those who believe by faith in Jesus.

Romans 3:23-26²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,²⁴ and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,²⁵ whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.²⁶ It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

Is there a better story and an example of how deeply sinful man needs and depends upon God's grace, mercy, forgiveness and HIS COVENANT FAITHFULNESS and not his own?

Is there a better story and example of how deeply sinful man needs and depends upon God's love alone and not a cooperation with God. From the beginning when Israel covenants with God, it is revealed that salvation is of the LORD alone- -there is no cooperation with God in achieving salvation. We do not work 'with God', the golden calf story shows we tend to work against him!

Prayer:

Grant us, O Lord, to trust in you with all our hearts; for, as you always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so you never forsake those who make their boast of your mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.