

Bible Study - God's Character

Week 1



Opening Question:

What is the most
quoted scripture in
the Old Testament?

Overall Objectives for the Bible Study

- ❖ Learn more about God's Character through scripture
- ❖ Explore examples of God's Character throughout scripture

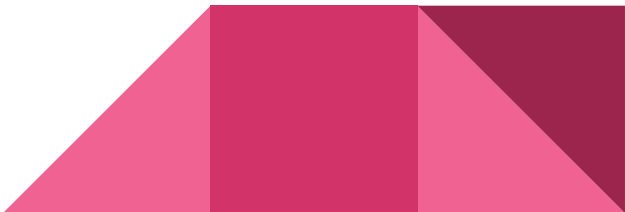


Objectives for today's Bible Study

- ❖ Introduce one of the most quoted scriptures of the Old Testament and how it relates to God's Character



Exodus 34:6 - 7

- ❖ While the scripture is read, write down each attribute of God that you hear
 - ❖ How do the attributes of God mentioned in Exodus 34:6-7 align with who you know God to be?
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The Literary Shape of Exodus 34:6 - 7

- ❖ Verses 6 and 7 are designed in a way that an idea is presented and then repeated in reverse order so that it highlights the most important parts of the text (this is a literary device called a chiasm)
- ❖ This is done to draw your attention to how verse 6 ends (“loyal love and faithfulness”) and how verse 7 begins (“keeper of loyal love for thousands”)
- ❖ Question: Which character trait of God does the author of Exodus deem to be the most important and how can you tell?

The Context of Exodus 34:6 - 7

- ❖ Exodus 34:6-7 comes after a large narrative block in Exodus, particularly Exodus 19 - 31
- ❖ In Exodus 19:4-6, God speaks to Moses from Mt. Sinai telling him to remind the Israelites of their deliverance and promising to bless the nation if they keep God's commands
- ❖ In Exodus 24:15-18, Moses ascends Mt. Sinai and remains there in God's presence for 40 days and 40 nights. This is when God gives Moses instructions how to build the tabernacle

The Context of Exodus 34:6 - 7

- ❖ Question: Does anyone know what the Israelites did while Moses was on Mt. Sinai?
- ❖ If you said “build a golden calf”, you are correct [Exodus 32:1-6]. Moses intercedes on behalf of the Israelites, asking God to remember His covenant with Abraham
- ❖ That, however, did not stop Moses from being angry. He was so angry that he broke the stone tablets that held the law, beats the golden calf into dust (and put it in the water and made the people drink it), and calls on the tribe of Levi to execute the idolaters among Israel (this is also why the Levites became the priests) [Exodus 32:15-30]

The Context of Exodus 34:6 - 7

- ❖ But even after Moses was angry, he still went back up onto Mt. Sinai to atone for the sins of the Israelites still living [Exodus 32:30-34]
- ❖ And Moses would intercede on behalf of the Israelites four more times, offering his life (2nd), not leaving until God went with the Israelites (3rd), and asking God to show His Glory (4th) [Exodus 33]
- ❖ By the time Moses calls God compassionate and gracious, he has already intercede one last time, asking God to forgive the Israelites and to go with them to the promised land [Exodus 34:9]

Exodus 34:6-7 as a Narrative Summary

Exodus 34:6-7 is a condensed statement of God's character that offers commentary on His behavior toward Israel in the narrative context


Exodus 34:6-7	God's Actions in Exodus 32-34
Compassionate and gracious	
Slow to anger	
Abounding in loyal love and faithfulness	
Forgiving iniquity transgression and sin	
Yet he won't declare the innocent the guilty	
Repays sinful generations to the 3rd and 4th but keeps loyal to thousands	

But the 3rd and 4th Generation??!!

- ❖ The 3rd and 4th is an idiom in Hebrew that means “whatever number”. This is put in contrast with God’s loyal love for “thousands of generations”. The numerical disparity is there to drive home the point that mercy triumphs over judgement (James 2:13)
- ❖ This verse could be interpreted to mean that God will not punish an innocent following generation for the sins of their parents, but will punish generations that decide to keep sinning
 - Deuteronomy 24:16
 - Jeremiah 32:18-19

But the 3rd and 4th Generation??!!

- ❖ One conclusion is that since the lower number (third and fourth, whatever number) is associated with judgement and the higher number (thousands) is associated with God's loyalty, God's inclination is always towards generosity and mercy
- ❖ However, God's generosity will not be at the expense of His justice and holiness.



This Week's Action Item:
Find one scripture in the Old or
New Testament that references
Exodus 34:6-7 and share it next
week