



# The Harvest

Embrace TRUTH | Live TRUTH | Share TRUTH

## Loving, Just, & Faithful

One of the more well-known sections about God's character is found in Exodus 34:6-7. Though they are merely a few short verses, we see here laid out an overview of who God is and how He relates to His people throughout the whole of the Bible and, arguably, with all of us as His children:

*“Then Adonai passed before him, and proclaimed,  
'Adonai, Adonai the compassionate and gracious God,  
slow to anger,  
and abundant in lovingkindness and truth,  
showing mercy to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin,  
yet by no means leaving the guilty unpunished,  
but bringing the iniquity of the fathers upon the children,  
and upon the children's children to the third and fourth generation.'”*  
~ Exodus 34:6-7 ~

A dichotomy exists here in the nature of God's character: He forgives His people and He holds them accountable. He shows compassion and mercy. And He judges. In order to understand the reason for describing God describing Himself in this manner, we must take a look at the context of the passage.

Earlier in Exodus, God set apart the people of Israel for Himself (*read Exodus 19:3-8*). God continued to fulfill His covenant with Abraham (*read Genesis 12:1-3*) by setting apart his descendants for Himself. The Israelites agreed to partner with God and to become His people, doing everything He asked of them. So God met with Moses and gave him the commandments written in stone - just as they were to be written on the hearts of the people who had chosen to be part of the covenant - and instructions on how each person was to live set apart unto the Lord (*Exodus 22-24*). In the chapters preceding chapter 32, we get a glimpse of the standard God will hold His people to within the covenant they had agreed to.

But in chapter 32, we see that God's people had already pulled away from Him. They rebelled and sought after a god they could see. They violated their covenant with the Lord God Almighty. In chapter 33, Moses pleads for the people and begs the Lord to remain faithful to the covenant, despite the faithlessness of Israel who broke it.

All of this finds its culmination in God's declaration of the aspects of His character. Read Exodus 34:6-7 again to remind yourself what God said about Himself. He is:

- Compassionate
- Gracious
- Slow to anger
- Abundant in lovingkindness
- Truth
- Merciful to a thousand generations
- Forgiving
- Unwilling to leave the guilty unpunished
- Passing judgement down to the third and fourth generations

Pause: How have you seen God reveal these aspects of His character in your life?

---

---

---

---

In this passage, we see that God can be both loving and still pass judgement on His people. He forgives the repentant heart, and He judges the unrighteous and belligerent. Both of these attributes coexist. It is important to note that God says He is merciful and forgiving to “*a thousand generations*” while passing judgement only to “*the third and fourth generations.*” Thus we see that His love and blessings to His people that faithfully participate in the covenant will last much longer than His wrath at their sinful nature.

The character trait not explicitly stated by God Himself but demonstrated clearly in His heart towards His people is faithfulness. God had a way out of this covenant between Himself and Israel: **He didn’t take it.** He chose to love and forgive them. He chose to go before them, fight for them, and dwell in their midst. He remained faithful.

We see the Lord make this decision to remain faithful to a people who have forsaken Him time and time again throughout Scripture and throughout history. The same is true in your life. When you have been faithless, God has remained faithful to you. So turn to Him, obey His commands, and restore your side of your covenant with the Lord. He is waiting with forgiveness and mercy for you and for a thousand generations.

A good overview of this passage is found in the Bible Project video “Character of God: Exodus 34:6-7.” You can watch it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nxwzq1PJImM>.

What should our response be to the glory of who God is? (Hint: *read Exodus 34:8-9*).

Worship: Take some time to dwell on what you’ve learned about God’s character and praise Him.

- ~ Faithful by Elevation Worship
- ~ You’re Worthy of It All by The Worship Initiative, Shane & Shane
- ~ There is a King/What Would You Do by Elevation Worship

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---