

WEEK 8 | *EXODUS 32-34*

THE ONE WHO IS MERCIFUL

Last week we left Exodus on a happy note. Israel accepted their role in God's purposes: keeping God's commands so other nations will come to know God too. But this week we see it doesn't last long. Moses goes up the mountain to receive instructions concerning the Tabernacle (that's next week) and Israel's commitment to God quickly fades...

Have you ever had a friend abuse your friendship? How did that make you feel?

KNOWING GOD IN EXODUS

Read Exodus 32:1-14

1. Why do the Israelites make the golden calf?
2. What does God say they deserve for that? Why should that be?
3. What reasons does Moses give for sparing Israel? Where in Exodus have we heard these divine motivations before?

It seems there's a tension between God's justice and God's mercy. It plays out again in chapter 33 where God says he can't accompany Israel into the promised land, because he'd have to punish a sinful nation like them. But Moses objects, "How will anyone know that you are pleased with me and with your people unless you go with us? What else will distinguish me and your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?" and so once again God's mercy wins out. This merciful God is someone Moses wants to know even more deeply...

Read Exodus 33:18-23

4. Look again at what Moses asks to see and what God offers to show him. What significance can you see in that?

Moses gets what he asked for... **Read Exodus 34:5-7**

5. What two aspects does God himself see as central to his own glory? Which seems to be emphasised more than the other?

KNOWING GOD IN JESUS

The words in Exodus 34:6 translated “love and faithfulness” can also be translated “**grace and truth**”. Once we realise that, it becomes clear that while Moses could only see the afterglow of God’s glory, we can now see God’s full glory somewhere else...

Read John 1:14-18

6. How does this passage recall the parts of Exodus we’ve just read?
7. If God’s true **glory** is seen in his combination of mercy and justice, or grace and truth, how would the cross of Jesus display God’s glory more than anything else?

FEEL THE WEIGHT

8. What’s challenging about the full weight of God’s justice? What’s comforting about it?
9. What’s comforting about the full depth of God’s mercy? What’s challenging about it?
10. Do you ever wonder what God is like and how he feels about you? Pleased? Angry?

How can Jesus show you the real truth about that?