

“A Jealous God”
Exodus Chapter 34

Moses had literally physically broken the Ten Commandments (Ex. 32:19). Those two tablets of stone had been given to Moses and written by God (Ex. 31:18). Now God instructs Moses to cut two tablets of stone on which God will write His commands. Moses now has a part in God’s revelation much as the prophets and apostles were used by God to write His words (2Tim. 3:16; 2Pet. 1:20).

The LORD descends in the cloud upon Mount Sinai and proclaims His name (verse 5) and His character of mercy, grace, longsuffering, goodness and truth (verse 6). His mercy is for thousands, oftentimes a symbolic number in Scripture representing something uncountable (Ps. 50:10-11, 90:4) or all that are in or a part of His plans (Ex. 20:6, Deut. 7:9; 2Pet. 3:8; Rev. 5:11, 20:2-7). The LORD also warns of the consequences of sin and iniquity (verse 7); reiterated in the New Testament (Gal. 6:7-8).

Moses pleads for pardon for the sin and iniquity of him and the people (verse 9). The LORD answers with a covenant that He would do great marvels (verse 10) and drive out the inhabitants of the land (verse 11). They in turn must **not** make any covenants with the inhabitants of the land, because that would lead to the worship of their false gods (verses 12, 15-17).

The LORD states the reason for not worshipping other gods (verse 14). His name is **Jealous**. He is a jealous God. We often do not think of jealousy as an admirable quality because we equate it with being envious or suspicious of another in a controlling sense. But the primary definition of jealous is being watchful or careful of another or of one’s rights. God is all good (1John 1:6), so His jealousy is always for our good and protection. Every time in the sacred writings when Israel went after other gods the consequences were devastating. God always gives us the good and best (Matt. 7:9-11; James 1:17). His jealousy flows from His essential nature of love (1John 4:8:16). His love is sacrificial (1Cor. 13:4-8).

When Moses returns from the mount (again for forty days and nights, verse 28), his face shined with the glory of God. Paul elaborates on the glory of the Law on the stones and on Moses’ face but explains that this glory passed away (2Cor. 3:7). Now the Law is written in our hearts in Christ (2Cor. 3:3). We are being transformed into His glorious image (2Cor. 3:18)!