

# Exodus Chapter 32 v 1 - 14

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[0:00] I think that's a subtle hint I meant to start, other musicians telling me get on with it. I'm not going to play anymore until you get up. Good evening.

Welcome. It's good that we can come together as God's people and join in his worship and praise. And of course particularly the praise and worship of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the one who the Bible tells us ever lives to make intercession for us. He's the one who, though he lived amongst us, we celebrate his birth just a month or so ago. We look forward of course to Easter when we remember his suffering and his death and his resurrection for us. But the reality is that our Lord Jesus Christ is not only risen from the dead but returned to his proper place, his rightful place at the Father's right hand. And there he intercedes for us. There he acts as our mediator, our go-between, between us and God. There's no way that we can come to God except through him. And yet wonderfully he lives forever to make that possible, that every moment of every day we can know fellowship with the Lord.

[1:15] And it's in Jesus' name and in faith in him that we come to worship our God this evening. And our first hymn is 296 that reminds us that there at the Father's right hand, before God's throne, there is Jesus, our intercessor.

And so whatever our sins, whatever our past, whatever our failings, he is the one who covers us with his own righteousness. Let's stand and sing 296.

Before the throne of God above, I have a strong, a perfect plea. Let's approach that wonderful throne of grace in prayer together.

Let us all pray. We thank you that you are the approachable God, that you're not the God who puts up a no-entry sign or a do-not-disturb sign, but you're the God who puts up, come to me, all you are heavy laden.

You're the God who says, come to me and eat and drink. You're the God who invites us. You're the God who calls us. You're the God who urges us.

[2:37] You're the God who, as it were, cries out to us that we might hear your voice and come to you and live. Thank you, O Lord, our God, that you have made that way for us to come to you through your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

For though, Lord, you call us to come and you urge us to come, we have been prevented from coming, not by you, but by our own sin, by our own wickedness, our rebellion, our selfishness, our pride, our unbelief.

Lord, we are the ones who have, as it were, chained ourselves to the railings of this world. We're the ones who have tied ourselves up in knots so that we cannot come and move.

We're the ones who have brought upon ourselves the curse of death and sin in our hearts. And so, Lord, in one sense, your voice to call to us falls upon deaf ears.

Deaf, Lord, because we do not want to hear. Yet, Lord, in your mercy and grace, we thank you that you have not just kept calling to us, urging us in vain, but, Lord, you have made the way of salvation for us.

[3:51] You've broken the chains that snared us. You've cut the ropes. You've, yes, Lord, breathed into our hearts and lives life and faith.

Lord, you're the one who has drawn us to yourself. We could even say, oh, Lord, you're the one who has carried us to yourself because we could not come in our own strength. And you've done all that through Jesus Christ.

For, Lord, when you called us to come and we would not come, you had a plan, a plan that you had made from before the world was made to come to us yourself, to make that journey from heaven to

earth, to make that journey into our world from creator to creation, from God to man, and yet still remain in God.

And in the mystery, in the wonderful person who is Jesus Christ, we see and we cannot help but see there is God made man. God who has entered into the humanity of our lives in every way apart from sin.

You've entered into the tiredness and the weakness. You've entered into the struggle and the pain and the agony. You've entered into the joy. Yes, Lord. In every way, you are like us except that you are perfect and holy and good and your life in this world was one of complete and utter faithfulness. [ 5 : 15 ] So unlike us, so far from us, and yet coming so near to us. Lord, we thank you again that in Jesus, you have taken our sin upon yourself.

In Jesus, you have paid the price for our iniquity. In Jesus, you have given us life from the dead. And, O Lord, thank you that in Jesus we come. We come, Lord, in his name this evening. We come joyfully. We come, O Lord, with great delight into the presence of the living God, knowing we shall not be refused, knowing we shall not be turned away.

We come to you, O Lord, in and through Jesus, your Son. And we thank you that you embrace us and draw us to yourself. Lord, we long that this evening we might know your nearness, might know what it is to be in your presence.

We long, O Lord, that this evening we may be with you and you with us, not just by faith, but by experience, by the work of your Holy Spirit in our lives, in our minds, in our hearts, on stopping those deaf ears.

[ 6 : 28 ] Lord, drawing us closer to yourself. We want to be closer than we are. We want to be right up near to you to see more of your glory, more of your majesty, more of your beauty, more of your loveliness.

So, Lord, help us now. Prepare our hearts and our minds to hear you speaking to us. Prepare us, Lord, particularly to come to this table to remember all that Jesus did for us and to rejoice in it.

Come, O Lord, we pray, and cause us to come to you. For we ask these things in and through the name of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

Amen. Symbol of the church. But there's one glaringly, if I can put it, elephant in the room in Exodus in the second half, which is the episode of the golden calf.

And it's there in chapter 32. That's page 90, if you've got the church Bible. Page 90 of Exodus chapter 32.

[ 7 : 35 ] This is going to be a two-parter. So we're going to read verses 1 to 14 this evening and look at them particularly and then, God willing, next week, deal with the rest of the chapter of this terrible episode in the life of God's people.

So let's read together then from verse 1 of chapter 32 through to verse 14. When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, Come, make us gods who will go before us.

As for this fellow, Moses, who brought us out of Egypt, we don't know what's happened to him. Aaron answered them, Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons, and your daughters are wearing and bring them to me.

So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning with a tool.

Then they said, These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt. When Aaron saw this, he built an altar in front of the calf and announced, Tomorrow there'll be a festival to the Lord.

[ 8 : 52 ] So the next day, the people rose early and sacrificed burnt offerings, presented fellowship offerings. Afterwards, they sat down to eat and drink, got up to indulge in revelry.

Then the Lord said to Moses, Go down, because your people, whom you brought out of Egypt, have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol, cast in the shape of a calf.

They've bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt. I've seen these people, the Lord said to Moses, and they are stiff-necked people.

Now leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them, that I may destroy them. Then I'll make you into a great nation. But Moses sought the favor of his God.

Lord, he said, Why should your anger burn against your people, whom you brought out of Egypt, with great power and a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say it was with evil intent that he brought them out, to kill them in the mountains, to wipe them off the face of the earth?

[10:05] Turn from your fierce anger, relent, and do not bring disaster on your people. Remember your servants, Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, to whom you swore by your own self, I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky, and I will give you your descendants all this land, I promise them, and it will be their inheritance forever.

Then the Lord relented and did not bring on his people the disaster he had threatened. Please turn back then to page 90 and to Exodus and chapter 32.

As I said, this is part one of a mini look at this chapter. It's a long chapter, there's lots happening, so I don't want us to miss out on anything that God has to say to us, so we're going to look at that first half, those first 14 verses that we read just a moment or so ago.

Whenever there's an incident in which many lives are lost, in the UK, in other parts of the world as well, then it often follows an investigation into the cause of that incident, whether it be an airplane that has crashed, whether it be a train that's collided, whether it be a riot or a terrorist activity, whatever it is, whether it's been this cause of death for many lives, then there are people who are sent to investigate, to work it out, to find out how this came about in one way, perhaps to prevent it from happening again.

And often at the end of that investigation, often when the report is given and lots of things are said, there's usually one phrase, more often than not, that appears, human error.

[11:58] The plane crashed, not because of an engine failure or because of some technological problem or even weather, but human error. The train was derailed and people were injured. Again, not because of a fault in the tracks or the rails or anything else, but because of human error.

Now in chapter 32 of Exodus, we have one of the most tragic events in the whole book of Exodus. We have one of the most tragic events and incidents in which thousands and thousands of people ultimately die because of a chain of events that begins at the start of verse 1.

And ultimately, if we were to look at this and investigate this and clearly in one sense that's what happens in the first part of the chapter. An investigation by God and Moses takes place and the result is the cause of this tragedy is human error or as the Bible calls it more pointedly, sin.

Sin. And when we've read it, we've read about what happened and how Aaron with the encouragement of the people makes this golden calf and this idol that is worshipped and offerings are made to it.

We think, well, how on earth could this take place? How on earth could this happen so soon after the people had received such blessing from God? They had been in Egypt in slavery just months really earlier and God had brought them out through those terrible plagues against the Egyptians.

[13:35] He'd brought them out of slavery. He'd brought them out into that place where they were chased down by the soldiers and the sea was parted before them in this amazing miracle and they were brought through the other side and the soldiers and their persecutors were destroyed and killed.

And then in the desert those months as they've travelled God has provided them water from a rock of all places he provided them manna food from heaven. And even as we've seen he's given them his commandments he's revealed to them what is good for them his will his purposes he's now providing and showing them a way in which they can enjoy fellowship with him through the tabernacle and no forgiveness of sins.

God has been closer than close he's been the pillar of fire in the day he's spoken to them what are they doing? Almost immediately after God's commandments are given they're breaking them at least the first two if not more God said you're not to have a God before me I'm the only God they've broken that and said this is the gods looking at the idol that set us free from Egypt you're not to make an idol God had said clearly and plainly of anything living and bad and worship it and they've done that and surely they've broken the commandment that says don't misuse the name of the Lord because they've attributed the Lord's name to a piece of gold we could go on but all these things that happen to God's people are not simply ancient history they're not simply something that we're taught in Sunday school and has no interest to us because Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 10 and he quotes and speaks about this very incident and others as well and he says these things happened as a warning to us to the believer to the Christian a warning to us what's the warning that we're to heed from this terrible event how can we apply the lessons of this tragedy to ourselves that we

might not similarly fall into or see happen such a loss of life such sadness and grief first of all we learn about the danger of idolatry or the reality of idolatry we might say well that's got to do with us we haven't got idols perhaps we've got in our house as you know we rent a house and then the front it's got one of these little water features with a little boy and a fountain well we don't honestly we haven't got any candles around him honestly nothing like that going on in our garden but you know we don't have idols do we we may have a figurine or porcelain or some piece but we don't worship it what's idols got to do with us well when we think about these people we realise that they had come out of a land where idolatry was everywhere wherever you looked in Egypt there were statues to the pharaoh and to the gods

I'm sure you've seen them the pictures of the hieroglyphs of gods that had the head of an eagle or the head of a cow or whatever it may be they were surrounded by that it seems as soon as they lose sight of Moses they're back to that way of thinking they've come out of Egypt you can take the Israelite out of Egypt but you can't take the Egypt out of the Israelite there's still that mentality there's still that way of thinking there's still that way of understanding gods to see him as some fashioned idol some creature some beast or whatever it may be and we see that this idolatry is not something that God treats lightly it's not something that is just well got it a bit wrong God is so angry isn't he that he says to says to Moses I'm going to destroy the people

I'm going to destroy them already I've had enough of them and I'm going to set up you Moses as the father of a nation all the people of God are going to come from you now idolatry is such a terrible thing that actually the reality is that this is the first of dozens if not hundreds of episodes throughout the Old Testament where the people of God the Israelites turn to idols it was their besetting sin it was their Achilles heel as you might say you can read any book of the Old Testament any of the prophets any of the history and you'll find again and again there is Israel and there is there are God's people and they're turning away and they're bowing down to Baal or to Asherah or to some other idol or God something which is not the Lord even godly people even some of the most faithful of God's people in the Old Testament were tripped over this sin Gideon for one that amazing man who the

[18:50] Lord used and raised up to defeat the Midianites even he we're told had these idols so powerful a hold is idolatry to the human hearts and when we get to the New Testament we find again and again that we're warned against idols now that could be because as we know the people who were converted and saved were people who themselves had been pagans and that was part of their worship worship of Diana and the worship of the Greek gods and other gods who took on form in 1 Thessalonians chapter 1 Paul rejoices that the believers there had turned to God from idols but that doesn't mean that idolatry was not still a problem of their hearts it was still something they had to be careful of careful not to succumb to careful not to practice in 1 Corinthians 10 just following on from where Paul says these things are for our lesson our warning he says them flee from idolatry and the apostle John who wrote that wonderful letter 1 John speaking about loving one another and caring for one another ends the final words of his letter the final closing words that he has to give the people is this dear children keep yourselves from idols so idolatry is still a problem it was a problem then and it's a problem now and we are tempted to do that in fact if we're honest if we look around us in the world in which we live we see idolatry everywhere now that

I don't just mean in Buddhism or in Hinduism or even in Roman Catholicism those things are idols yes wrong yes but I'm talking about just the everyday Joe blogs in the street we make idols of people don't we idols of men and women particularly it seems people who are sports stars and athletes or people who are actors movie stars people who are big in the world the world loves to look up to somebody the world loves to have somebody to pin on the wall and be our idol or to worship them in that sense but dear friends this can happen to us as Christians and has happened again and again throughout the history of the church and even to some of us now we make idols of Christian leaders notice that it's when Moses was gone that they sought an idol do you notice that when Moses was a long time when he was out of their sight the one had been the figurehead the one that they had followed the one that they had looked to once he was gone they said we need something a replacement it's very sad that as

Christians we can look up to and worship people we want an idol someone in one sense to stand in God's place for us to speak to us to be the one that we exalt already in their hearts there was a sense of idolatry with Moses though they didn't honour him and respect him they certainly made an idol of him then of course there is the idol particularly again in our own society the idol of

possessions things cars bikes houses horses whatever they may be anything that we possess clothes handbags it can be almost anything there's the idol particularly of money isn't there it's been such a such a strange thing for me that I've seen such a and you've seen it I'm sure on the TV advertising the growth of advertising for gambling or for bingo or for anything else there's the people's lottery as well as the ordinary lottery and there's the oh it just seems to be wherever you turn the postcode lottery you name it anywhere and the bingo I just roll around sometimes in hysterics at the bingo adverts especially online bingo oh become a part of the fun people and it's got all these people doing things together sharing in a meal or sharing in a bonfire but they've all got these phones and tablets on doing bingo how on earth they're all separated they're not together at all it's so farcical but it's presenting the picture do this to bring completion happiness to your life get this money win the lottery Ephesians chapter 5 Paul warns he says this a greedy person such a person is an idolater to put our trust in our finance to put our trust in money rather than the Lord

God to love it more than him is to be an idolater but of course deep down of course the real problem is that the idol in our hearts is ourselves the root of sin is to put myself in the place of God it's to make myself the object of worship my desires my wants my needs in his little letter Jude at the end of the new testament warns about these people who follow their own evil desires and boast about themselves in other words they exalt themselves I'm the most important thing I'm the one that matters look at me look how great I am look how well I've succeeded look how good I've done for myself look at my achievements now don't we struggle with those things dear friends aren't they isn't it true to say that in our hearts we know that they're there there is a sense of us sometimes projecting onto other people what should be the worship of God there is that thinking and trusting and believing that if we had this or had that or had the other if we had more somehow that would grant us a sense of peace and isn't there really deep down in every one of us that little bit of self worship that little bit of you know

[ 25 : 16 ] I'm not I'm pretty good you know especially when I compare myself to other people but why is idolatry so bad why is this idolatry which we see here coming out of the pages and the idolatry which we know is deep in the heart of each human being including ourselves even at times why is it so bad well because of what God says about it God has calls it by different names when he speaks to Moses and he calls it different names because in one sense it's something which is much bigger than simply sin first of all we see that idolatry is iniquity iniquity verse 7 the Lord said to Moses go down because your people whom you brought out of Egypt have become corrupt they have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf they bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and said these are your gods

Israel you brought up out of brought you up out of Egypt iniquity is another word for sin but it's something it's a deliberate act of wrongdoing iniquity is a deliberate act it's not just a mistake or faux pas we like to think of sin in that way don't we yes of course I've made mistakes in my life of course I've got things wrong at times yes of course all of us in one way of course iniquity is stronger it says you have chosen to act wrongly you've chosen to break God's commandments that's exactly what these people did they knew the commandments they knew what God had said but they chose to not do them to break them you can hardly blame them and say oh of course it was a long long time ago they'd forgotten about it they'd been just a bit forgetful how can they be forgetful when it's a matter of days if not just a few weeks not ignorance but deliberate sin

God says they've cut verse 8 they've been quick to turn away from what I commanded them they've not been again it's not over a period of time it's not a gradual creeping sin that's sort of like over a period of time is ebbed but something deliberate and quick it's an action it's a determination it's a decision God's holy law and what have they done first of all they've corrupted God's law verse 7 have become corrupt corruption is when something's been polluted when something's gone off when it's rancid sin is a poison that permeates every part of our lives it corrupts it ruins it marks it harms instead of us being the shiny thing that we should be the example being made in the image of God there's corruption there's rust there's corrosion that's come in and we no longer bear the image of our

God the Bible constantly refers to this and calls it either the flesh or the sinful nature it's not something that's sort of separate to us it's not something that we take off and put to one side it's something that permeates even into our hearts we can't just take up corruption and put it down we're told very clearly that since Adam's sin since the fall since that turning away and decision to

disobey God sin has come into every single heart and every single life Paul tells us in Romans chapter 5 that by one act of disobedience sin has come to the many one act of disobedience sin has come to the many and we know what the problem with corrosion is don't we if you've got a car you know that once you've got some rust unless you do something about it then it's going to spread might start just as a spot on the bonnet unless you deal with it it's going to spread under the paint work and before you know it you've got a hole it's not something that's powerless corruption spreads and the Bible talks about this and theologians and Christians use this phrase the total depravity of sin it's something that that touches every part of our lives it affects the way we think about things it's the way we respond and act to people it's the way we react to God it's the way we treat our possessions and so on and so forth every part of our human nature has got this taint of corruption this pollution that affects us all so he says they've become corrupt and he says what they've done they've turned away we've already seen that from the commandments of God they've been quick to turn away verse 8 from what I commanded them to turn away again is an action isn't it it's something that you do it's something that that that you know you turn away from you you turn the opposite direction it's to reject something and people turn away from one another when you turn away in your car and you're driving along and you see maybe a big line of traffic ahead of you traffic you turn away and you go down a side road or something like that it's a decision and we have turned away from the commandments of [ 30 : 58 ] God Isaiah the prophet when he speaks about Jesus coming talks about the situation that we're in we all like sheep he says have gone astray each one of us has turned to our own way God the good shepherd has set us on a path he's put before us as it were in his commandments the path to good food to nourishment to healthiness but we think we know better than God we think well we've got we know how things should be we know what's better for us than God knows for us and so we turn away we go our way and what happens well in the illustration of the sheep we're lost and in danger isn't that the attitude we think we know better than God and then one other way that God describes them which is perhaps a little odd to us verse nine I've seen these people the Lord said to Moses they're a stiff necked people it doesn't mean that they've got a crick in the neck or some they need some physiotherapy because they've sort of pulled a muscle stiff necked is not something to do in that sense with our health it comes from farming comes from where a farmer would have two oxen and a yoke on the oxen or even one oxen and he would steer the oxen as they were plowing through the field steer them this way steer them that way and stiff neck was when an oxen decided it was going to go its way no matter how much the farmer pulled on the rein to go one way it wouldn't go it was determined to go its own way it's again this sense of turning our way sin at its base level sin is used you get away all the trappings from it and all the things that people put on the top of it sin ultimately is this it's a rebellion against God

God it is setting on our face and our head and saying this is the way I am going to live my life I do not care what God has to say I do not care what God wants this is how it's going to be the God who deserves our faith the God who deserves and calls for our obedience is the God that we rebel against against and as I said the reality is this dear friends though by God's grace he saved us he's made us new creations that sinful corrupt hard stiff-necked attitude is within us all it's still there it's still something that we have to battle against it's still something that we are tempted to do aren't we dear friends when we're faced with what's temptation temptation is simply this it's saying will I choose what God wants or what I want it's temptation it can be in any form or any shape but it's simply that choice what I want or what God wants and the trouble is that temptation is strong isn't it because if we we would if we didn't have within us that desire that says I want to do what I want we wouldn't be tempted at all wouldn't be a problem to us we'd never never be tempted the fact we are tempted is proof positive that still sin and idolatry still lives in our hearts what can be done what can be done for these people here what can be done for us we've seen that though

God has given his commandments and his word and his truth that wasn't enough for them was it just as it's not for us just as it's not for the people of our world in Romans chapter 8 Paul says what the law was powerless to do God has done through the sending of his son the law is powerless the law is good what God has commanded is right problems here in us in our hearts and our lives the law condemns us the law is a mirror that when held up to us shows us just what we're like just as we see this example here it shows us what our hearts are like that idolatry is there it shows us that we are people who rightly deserve God's condemnation God wasn't wrong to say to Moses I've had enough these people have stirred up my anger and I'm going to punish them he had every reason

to he'd given them he'd shown them love he'd shown them care he'd provided for them he'd given them his commandments he'd said this is the right way go and do it and they just said up yours God I'm going to do what I want stuff you

I'm going to make an idol and this is what we're going to worship God had a right to be angry so how can it be that these people will be spared from God's anger how is it possible for us to be spared the judgment that we deserve God says to them leave yes to Moses leave me alone so that my anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them verse 10 leave me alone Moses so I can destroy them every right to do so so what happens what happens well the only thing that can happen the only thing that can save them the only thing that can save us is that somebody intercedes on our behalf somebody intercedes verse 11 Moses but Moses sought the favour of the Lord his God God says to Moses I'm going to destroy the people and Moses as it were steps up and he intercedes he mediates between

God and the people of course the Lord knew he would do this God isn't caught by surprise God's intention was always this again to show us something more wonderful even than Moses and he intercedes on behalf of these people these sinful idolatrous people he prays for them and he asks God to forgive them and to spare them for three reasons three reasons the first is this that they are God's people Lord he said why should your anger burn against your people whom you brought out of Egypt with great power and a mighty hand did you notice in verse 7 when God speaks to Moses he says these are your people Moses you brought them out of Egypt they're your problem Moses says no they're not my people they're yours Lord you save them not me there's a real clear demarcation a clear declaration there they're your people Lord you save them you own them they belong to you you've shown love to them they haven't chosen you

[ 37 : 57 ] Lord but you chose them that's the grace that's the reality that's what God has done these people didn't deserve God's blessing they didn't deserve his salvation but God chose them he chose to rescue them he was the one who sent Moses wasn't he to go back and to set the people free and we've looked at that right at the beginning of Exodus how God heard their cry and because of Abraham Isaac and Jacob because of his covenant towards them he saved them and set them free no they're your people God don't wipe them out destroy them they belong to you and that intercession as it were of Moses points us very clearly and strongly to what we've been thinking already this evening to the Lord Jesus Christ that intercessor the one Hebrew says whoever lives to make intercession for us the one who acts on our behalf and speaks on our behalf to a holy righteous angry

God in 1 Peter sorry 1 John in chapter 2 the apostle John writes this I've written these things to you so that you might not sin but if you sin we have an advocate with the father we have one who acts on our behalf that word advocate is the same word that's used by Jesus when he talks about the coming of the Holy Spirit the comforter the helper the advocate as it's translated so one who comes alongside and represents us supporting us Jesus intercedes for you and for me because we belong to God the God who chose us out of this world to be his own not because of anything we could ever do but because of his great grace and goodness the very evidence and proof that we belong to God and that he is our God is that Jesus Christ died for us upon the cross to purchase us for God in heaven the angels sing a wonderful hymn of praise to Jesus glory and honour to you the lamb for you with your blood purchased men for God you purchased people for God you paid the price we belong to

God in that sense in two ways we belong to God as all humanity belongs to God because he created us and made us but for the Christian we belong to God in an even greater more supreme way because he paid the price to redeem us to purchase us to set us free to bring us into his family to be his precious possession and now Jesus like Moses of old stands in the gap between God and us between sinful human beings and a holy God he stands in the gap and he takes upon himself God's anger God's punishment for our sin it's a special word that is used in 1 John chapter 2 speaking of Jesus he is the propitiation for our sins Paul uses that phrase as well in some of our translations it's altered slightly to atoning sacrifice but a propitiation is or a propitiator is someone who turns away or absorbs upon themselves the wrath of

God to save others one who stands in the gap one who takes the blast as it were and we hide behind them for protection so Moses says they're your people Lord you rescued them you saved them you did so much for them don't destroy them and then he says this Lord spare them because of your name in the world verse 12 verse 12 why should the Egyptians say it was with evil intent

that he brought them out to kill them in the mountains to wipe them from the face of the earth Moses is concerned about how the Egyptians and the other nations around would think of God if he was to destroy the Israelites now they'd all heard about what God had done when you go on into Joshua and into other parts of the Old Testament you read about the other kings and nations they all heard about how

God delivered the people out of Egypt how he parted the sea how he kept them in the wilderness and Moses saying look Lord if you were to destroy them now after doing all that how would the world view you how would people think of you they think of you as a despotic God an evil God a God who does not care but rather the reason you saved these people was that they might give glory to you the reason you saved them was to show what to the whole world the wonderful God that you are Moses intercedes for the people because of the glory of God and again that's what Jesus has done Jesus our saviour came to save us and now intercedes for us for God's glory for God's praise for God's honour in our lives dear friends people are to see that God is patient and merciful and gracious and good to see that in spite of our failings in spite of our folly in spite of our idolatry at times

[ 43 : 39 ] God is a God who hasn't given up on us he hasn't washed his hands of us he hasn't said that's enough whip evangelical church my goodness me their pastor and those members I've had enough of them we're still here as a testimony to the goodness of God we're still here because God is glorified in our lives now that doesn't mean that we can just sin as we want to sin or sin purposefully as if like oh that God is so great he forgives those people who are so wicked no says Paul elsewhere where he's asked the question should we carry on sinning that grace may abound no by our faithful obedience to God God is glorified in this world by people seeing how different we are that we've been transformed and changed not by simply being good people and turning over a new leaf but by the work of the spirit of God in us when people see that our conversation and our attitudes and our view of the world and of things is different they'll see what's happened this must be

God this must be his grace and goodness so Moses intercedes by speaking of the glory of God the name of God and one final thing here Moses intercedes and speaks to God concerning the promises God has made look at what he says there in verse 13 remember your servants Isaac Abraham and Israel to whom you swore by your own self in other words a promise I will make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky I will give your descendants all this land I promise them and it will be their inheritance forever Abraham Isaac and Jacob were the patriarchs the ones who were the beginning of this wonderful family of faith and it was because again of God's promises to them that

God saved them and brought them out of Egypt promises that they'd be a vast nation promises that inherit this wonderful land promises that were never to be broken because they were promises built upon a covenant an unshakable unchangeable determination and agreement by God now what would happen if God was to destroy them now if God was to destroy this people because of their sin it would go against his promises it would mean that God is not faithful to keep his word it would mean that God is a God who says one thing and as soon as people make a mistake and get it wrong he changes his mind no says Moses you're not that sort of God are you you're not that promise breaking God you're that covenant keeping God and so it is with Jesus the incredible mystery that we read about in the Bible is this that God in Jesus has made a covenant of faithfulness and love towards us his people throughout all of time never to give up on us never to change his mind about us never to stop loving us we are saved we are

God's people because of his promises Peter when he writes to the Christians in his second letter he speaks of the very great and precious promises of God that have saved us why did Jesus come into the world because God promised he would why did Jesus die on the cross for our sins because God promised he would why have we been born again of the spirit of God because God keeps his promise why is it that all those who put their faith in Jesus will never be rejected or turned away but accepted because he's promised Paul goes on to say even more in 2 Corinthians he says no matter how many promises God has made they are yes they're affirmed in Jesus all the promises of the Old Testament all the promises of God find their meeting place they're coming together in Jesus so that we as God's people who put our faith in Christ once we are part of Christ every promise of God that comes ours to so even now as we sin against the

Lord as we do Jesus our advocate stands in our place and in one sense says to the Father Lord you've promised to forgive those who confess their sins please forgive this dear one and he does Lord you've promised that those who put their faith and trust in me will not be condemned Lord this one has put their faith and trust in me Lord pardon them this is the wonderful work that's going on all the time for the believer for all eternity Jesus interceding mediating how could we sin against such a saviour how could we embrace sin in our lives how could we turn away from such a God who has loved us with such an incredible love and how can we treat sin as trivial how can we treat sin as something that doesn't really matter when we know the price that had to be paid for our forgiveness when we know what

[ 49 : 21 ] Jesus did on our behalf how can we simply say well it's only a lie it's only a wicked thought it's only a bit of selfishness to see the cross where Jesus our propitiation bore the wrath of God for us should make us hate sin all the more and to look to him for the grace to be like him day by day and give idolatry the elbow and make him the center stage and the worship of our hearts come back for the grace of God has appeared that brings salvation to all people it teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self controlled upright and godly lives in this present age while we wait for the blessed hope the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior

Jesus Christ amen amen to peace now each and gather who owes