

Exodus 34:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

Analysis

God proclaims His name YHWH twice, then reveals His character in what becomes Israel's most-quoted liturgy. רַחוּם (rachum, compassionate) derives from רֶחֶם (rechem, womb), suggesting motherly compassion. חַנוּן (chanun, gracious) means showing unmerited favor. אֶרֶךְ אַפַּיִם (erekh appayim, 'long of nostrils') literally means slow to anger—the opposite of 'flaring nostrils' in rage. רַב־חֶסֶד (rav chesed, abounding in steadfast covenant love) and אֱמֶת (emet, faithfulness/truth) form the foundation of God's covenant relationship.

Historical Context

This revelation comes immediately after Israel's golden calf apostasy, making God's gracious self-description all the more stunning. These attributes are echoed throughout Scripture (Num 14:18, Neh 9:17, Ps 86:15, Joel 2:13, Jonah 4:2).

Related Passages

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. Why does God emphasize mercy and grace immediately after Israel's greatest sin?
2. Which of these divine attributes do you most need to understand more deeply today?

Interlinear Text

וְעָבַר	יְהוָה	עַל	פָּנָיו	וַיִּקְרָא	יְהוָה
passed by	And the LORD	H5921	before him	and proclaimed	And the LORD
H5674	H3068		H6440	H7121	H3068
יְהוָה	אֵל	בְּחַסְדּוֹ	וְיִחְנֶנּוּ	אֶת־רַחֲמָיו	אֶפְסָיִם
And the LORD	God	merciful	and gracious	longsuffering	H639
H3068	H410	H7349	H2587	H750	
וְרַב	חֵסֶד	וְאֱמֶת:			
and abundant	in goodness	and truth			
H7227	H2617	H571			

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 86:15 (Grace): But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

Joel 2:13 (Grace): And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the LORD your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.

Psalms 145:8 (Grace): The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

Nehemiah 9:17 (Grace): And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready

to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.

Jonah 4:2 (Grace): And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.

Psalms 86:5 (Grace): For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

2 Chronicles 30:9 (Grace): For if ye turn again unto the LORD, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the LORD your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.

Micah 7:18 (Grace): Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy.

Deuteronomy 5:10 (Grace): And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Psalms 138:2 (Truth): I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name.