

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. רָחוּם (rachum, compassionate) derives from רֶחֶם (rechem, womb), suggesting motherly compassion. רָחָן (chanun, gracious) means showing unmerited favor. אֶרֶךְ אַפִּים (erekh appayim, 'long of nostrils') literally means slow to anger—the opposite of 'flaring nostrils' in rage. רָבֶּחֶסֶד (rav chesed, abounding in steadfast covenant love) and עֲמָתָה (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

Psalm 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

רַבְבָּשׂ יְהִי הַלְּקָרְבָּן וְיִתְּהַלֵּל
passed by And the LORD H5921 before him and proclaimed And the LORD
H5674 H3068 H6440 H7121 H3068

הִנֵּה אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים
And the LORD God merciful and gracious longsuffering H639
H3068 H410 H7349 H2587 H750

וְרָבָבָה טָהָרָתָה
and abundant in goodness and truth H571
H7227 H2617

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.