God and His People

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[0:00] If you have your Bibles, let's go ahead and turn to Exodus chapter 32.

! And as you read this story, you're going to see lots of things on display here.
You see man's sinfulness on display, obviously. You see their tendency to wonder and to reject the God that has done so much for them. You see a picture of Christ with Moses as this great intercessor, which we're going to get to here in a little bit.
You also see God's character on display, his full desire to show mercy, but his righteous position to show wrath on sin.
But as we look at this story of Israel, one of the things we have to ask is how did they get to this point in the first place? To this point where they were just so willing to reject God.
[1:28] And honestly, we see this as a theme all throughout Israel's history. All throughout their trek in the wilderness, we see this theme of them rejecting God and then coming back to God. Rejecting God and coming back to God.

Now for almost 500 years, we look at the children of Israel and they are just immersed in this culture of polytheistic pagan worship in Israel.
Where there was not one God, but there was seemingly an endless amount of gods. They had a God for everything in Egypt. And generation after generation after generation had grown up and had died in this culture.
And one of the things that we see in the Exodus story is that God is trying to show himself as better than all these other gods that they have been surrounded by. In all the different plagues of Egypt, God is showing himself as more powerful and superior to these false gods in Egypt.
That no doubt some of the children of Israel maybe have worshipped. Even Pharaoh, who in that culture was seen as a god, is brought into submission under the mighty hand of God from the powerful acts and the plagues that he has cast on Egypt.
[2:41] But in all these things, God is trying to show himself as trustworthy. As worthy of worship. He's trying to show the children of Israel that he is sovereign and that he is powerful.

And not only did he do this through the plagues in Egypt, But God has also fought his people's enemies for him. We see it at the Red Sea where in one fell swoop he engulfed probably the greatest superpower at that time in just a matter of seconds.
We also see him fight against the Amalekites immediately after they leave Egypt at Rephidim. God has provided water. He's provided manna. He's provided meat for the people in a desert place.
He has given them commands to follow so that they can reflect his glory in the midst of a pagan people. Because keep in mind, they were about to go into Canaan. Where they were going to be charged with conquering this land that was engrossed in some of these pagan worships that they had just come out of.
So God was trying to train his people, first of all, to love him, to follow him, and to live a life of obedience in the midst of a world that rejects him. And even in all these things, in all the reasons that God has given Israel to trust him, We also see that God gives a physical manifestation of his presence as he's leading them through the wilderness.
[4:04] We see it in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night that they follow all throughout the wilderness. So God has not merely demanded the worship of his people, which he has every right to do as a sovereign creator.

But he has shown them that he is worthy of it. He's given them every reason to trust and to love and to give all of their affection to him.
And in the story that we're going to read today, as we see this failure of Israel and failure of spiritual leadership in the midst of God's people, I hope that we can heed some of the warnings that this text

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is going to bring to our lives.
And the main point of our story of our sermon today is this. For God to be glorified by his people, he demands absolute obedience from his people.
So if you have your Bibles open, let's go and stand as we read God's word. Exodus chapter 32, verses 1 through 6 to start. When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, Up, make us gods who shall go before us.
[5:23] As for this Moses, the man who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we don't know what has become of him. So Aaron said to them, Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me.

So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. Aaron said to them, And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf.
And they said, These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. When Aaron saw this, he built an altar before it.
And Aaron made a proclamation and said, Tomorrow shall be a feast to the Lord. And they rose up early the next day, offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings.
And the people sat down to eat and drink and rose up to play. Y'all can have a seat. This is the word of the Lord. So our first point that we're going to look at today from these six verses is that sin seeks the worship of God's people.
[6:33] So let's look at what's happened here. Moses has been up on the mountain for 40 days. This is after the Red Sea. This is after the Ten Commandments. This is after the attack from the Amalekites.

And they have now come to this mountain. And they've been here for 40 days. And they've no doubt probably remembered some of these promises that God has made about a land that was going to be theirs, that they were supposedly heading towards.
But the people had grown impatient. After 40 days of being at the base of this mountain, they have to be wondering to themselves, We're not getting any closer to the land of Canaan.
We're not getting any closer to the promised land. So rather than waiting on the Lord, who has revealed himself in many ways to the people, they make a new God for themselves.
They command Aaron, who God had selected to be the first high priest. They commanded their spiritual leader to fashion gods for them. And Aaron, as a display of weakness and probably fear giving in to the pressure of the people that were around him, he gives in.
[7:45] And the people hold a festival to these gods that they had just made. And the Bible says that they rose up to play. Now, this alludes to probably some form of sexual debauchery.

But again, we look at this, and this is something that was common in these polytheistic cultures. They often used sexual practices to worship their gods. And I want to point out several ways that sin pollutes our worship of God.
In this story, and things that we need to take note of in today's time as well. So how does sin pollute our worship of God? One of the things that's going to get you to believe, or lead you to believe, that if God is silent, then he is absent.
Now, as I said earlier, the people have been at the base of this mountain for 40 days. They haven't moved any closer to the promised land, and they have decided to take things into their own hands. And it always ends with horrible consequences when people in the Bible do this, or when we try to do this today, when we try to take things into our own hands rather than waiting on the Lord.
[8:52] This is not an uncommon problem that we see for God's elect in the scripture. One of the earliest ones would be Genesis 16, when Sarah gives her handmaiden to Abraham to help speed along God's process, or his promise, for a promised son.

The ramifications of that decision, we're still feeling them today. Saul, the first king of Israel, he took on the priestly duty of making a sacrifice before going in the battle, rather than waiting on God's man Samuel to do that, leading again to God's judgment.
Even David, the greatest king of Israel, when he was seeking to establish his kingdom, he wanted to bring the ark to Jerusalem, to the capital. Rather than patiently waiting on the Lord, reading the law to figure out how it was supposed to be correctly moved, he sticks it on an ox cart, and winds up costing the lives of one of his friends when he reached out to touch it.

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Patience and expectantly waiting is part of our walk with the Lord. David wrote in Psalm 13, which if you haven't listened to last week's sermon, I would invite you to do that.
Evan preached on this last week and did a great job on it, but Psalm 13, we see David make this plea. How long, O Lord, will you forget me forever?
[10:20] How long will you hide your face from me? From the Psalms, what we see is revered men of God struggling with waiting on the Lord.

We are day by day, minute by minute people. Impatience is often a virtue that we don't afford ourselves, that we don't seek to maintain. But as believers in a sovereign God, you know, what choice do we have but to wait on his will and his favor?
1 Peter 3, 9 says that the Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness. God does not forget his people.
He doesn't forget his promises. And if it is not the Lord that we are waiting on, naturally we are going to seek to gratify the flesh.
When we refuse to wait on the Lord, we are going to immediately seek to gratify our fleshly nature, which is what we see happening here in Israel's time. Constantly through Israel's trek in the wilderness, we see this taking place because they let their hearts wander from the Lord.
[11:32] So my encouragement to you from this is, you know, don't let waiting drive your heart to bitterness. Don't let sin tempt you to believe that because God is silent that he has somehow forgotten you, that because you are still suffering physically that somehow God is ignoring you.

That's not the case. He is sovereign. He sees what is happening to you and he loves you. And just because we can't see the bigger picture, it does not mean that God has counted us out of it.
Now, as we see from our text today, once you take that first step to gratify the flesh, what's going to happen is that it's going to demand more and more of you and only lead you farther from the true God who has blessed us all beyond measure.
Now, the next way that sin pollutes our worship of God is that godly blessings will cease to satisfy. Sin is all about gratifying the self. And when we cease to offer God our full worship and our affections, we begin to forget and even sometimes cast aside what he has blessed us with, all the things that he has given us.
Now, if you look at what happened to the children of Israel, the moment that they decided to steep into idolatry, what was the first thing that they did? They took off their earrings.
[12:57] They took off their gold. And they used it to fashion an idol. Now, where did they get all this gold? As slaves, they didn't have a retirement account in Egypt. They didn't have a savings account that they could just withdraw from.

Where did they get all this gold from? As they were leaving Egypt, God had put fear in the hearts of these people and they were giving them all of this stuff as they were leaving to speed them on their way.
This was plunder from a victory that God had won for them. These were gifts, physical blessings of the Lord from what he had done for them. And the moment they decided to gratify the flesh, they cast all of these things aside to make an idol for themselves in an act of complete rejection of God.
The altar of self-indulgence, which is what Israel was at right now, it still demands sacrifices of godly blessings today.
Just as some practical examples of maybe how this might manifest in our lives, maybe rather than tithing on the income that God has blessed us with, we want to invest that in other things that make us happy.
[14:08] Maybe instead of loving our spouse that God has blessed us with, we seek satisfaction through means of pornography or other means. Maybe instead of gathering with the church that God has established as a gift for us on this earth to glorify him, we want to use that extra day for something for ourselves.

Maybe to sleep in. Maybe an extracurricular activity. Maybe pulling extra hours at work to make an extra income. The baseline truth that we have to look at here, and this is also our next point, is that sin pollutes our worship.
And we know this because God's commands no longer demand our absolute obedience. When God is no longer the complete object of our worship and our affection, we begin to make concessions on obedience.

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And you know that you're struggling that when you can hear yourself say things like this, whether you say it verbally or you say it in your heart. I know that the Bible says this, but insert sinful action here.
Church, we have this going on a lot in our culture today. There is a direct attack on absolute truth in every corner of our nation. We live in a world where absolute truth is seen as oppressive.
[15:36] It's seen as hateful language. We live in a country that doesn't even know how to define gender anymore. A country where we spend billions of dollars to go find bacterial life on Mars, but we're also going to donate billions of dollars of our tax funds to abortions to end life here.

Truth has become whatever gratifies you internally, whatever makes you happy. And it is sad to see that many of our leaders in the church follow this same example of Aaron in this story.
When faced with the pressure of the culture that was around him, Aaron just gave in. There was no argument. There was no, well, wait a minute. Let's look at the 10 commandments that God has already passed down to us.
No. He immediately said, yeah, give me your jewelry. Give me the things that God has blessed you with from Egypt, and I'll make a new God for you. How sad.
Church, we need strong biblical leadership. And the strength of our leadership, whether you're a pastor behind the pulpit, you're a Sunday school teacher in the classroom, or you're a husband that's sitting at the dinner table, the strength of your leadership is always going to be determined by your absolute adherence to God's word.
[16:53] As a pastor, I have no personal authority on my own. Any authority that I speak on, it's from the word of God and the truth that he has established.

And should I ever depart from that, or should your Sunday school teacher ever depart from that, it is time for new leadership. When the people who are supposed to represent God forsake his absolute truth, what hope does a lost world have of hearing it?
This is not just a message for pastors or spiritual leaders. We all stand on the authority of God, on the authority of his word.
We all have the charge to speak it, to stand on it. The world's going to say you're being judgmental. The world's going to say you're being intolerant. But what we are doing is we are being obedient to the absolute truth that God has passed down to us in his word.
We cannot wait around for a Christian to take office in the White House. Yes, it would be great if something like that happened. We can't depend on local authorities to determine the new basis for morality.
[18:01] What is going to shift the culture in this country isn't a good president, but it's going to be good homes. Where parents are dedicated to bringing their children up in the truth.

Not only teaching them the truth, but also exemplifying it in their lives. Showing them how to love the Lord with their whole hearts. the only hope for this nation is a return to the absolute truth of God's word.
And I'm not just speaking about a revival of the lost. I'm also speaking about a revival of the church because so many churches are moving away from God's word as the absolute standard of authority. Let's continue reading.
Verses 7 through 10. And the Lord said to Moses, Go down for your people whom you brought up out of the land of Egypt.
They have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside quickly out of the way that I commanded them. They have made for themselves a golden calf and have worshipped it and sacrificed to it and said, These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt.
[19:11] And the Lord said to Moses, I have seen this people and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. Now therefore, let me alone that my wrath may burn hot against them and I may consume them in order that I may make a great nation out of you.

God is jealous for the worship of his people. This is the second point of our text today that God is jealous for the worship of his people. It is not because he has any need of our worship.
He has no need of our offerings. We don't add anything to God. But because he is perfectly holy, because he is our creator, he is worthy of our worship.
And we only find our purpose in our creator. And when we deviate from this truth, it kindles the jealousy of our true creator.

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who has made us for intimacy with him and him alone. It also leads us down a hole of sinful debauchery that knows no limits, seeking to satisfy a fleshly nature that God has called us to reject. [20:26] Because we serve a true God, there is a true way to worship him. God is not a figment of our imagination. He is not a personal God that we can fashion to our own liking.

That's really what the children of Israel were doing here. They never said that they did all these things. They never said we brought ourselves out of Egypt. They were still attributing these works to God, but they decided to fashion God into their own image, which was directly against the Ten Commandments, two of which we're going to read here in a second.
He is the sovereign God, and we either accept and worship him as he is, or we reject him completely. There's no in-between there. This is why God laid out the first four commandments for his people at Sinai, the base of the mountain that they were still at.
He laid out these first four commandments for them, directing their hearts to complete obedience with him. If you have your Bible still open, keep your thumb at Exodus 32, but let's flip over to Exodus 20.
I want to read these first two commands to you. Exodus 20, verses 1-6. And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.
[21:47] You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

You shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. when we share our worship with other gods or when we seek to make God into some other image that is not reflected here in scripture, that does not reflect his glory, our worship is no longer pleasing to him because it does not reflect his image.
In our time today, I want to lay out a couple of ways that, you know, today, we change the image of God and thus worship him in a way that's displeasing to him. One of the most immediate ways that I see culture doing this in some of our churches is that we eliminate parts of God's character.
We choose the things that we like about God. The most common thing that we do today is that people want to focus on the love of God, that God is love. And the problem with this heresy, yes, God is love, but he is also all these other parts of his character, is that we are led to believe that whatever we choose to love is an embodiment of God's character because God is love.
[23:32] In other words, I can love whoever I want and God is going to bless it because he is love. We clearly see that that is not the case in God's response to the children of Israel today and what they have chosen to love.

God has shown great love and compassion toward his people up to this point, and if it were not for the intercession of Moses, which we are going to get into here in a minute, we have some tough questions that we are going to tackle today. Were it not for the intercession of Moses, they would have experienced the consuming wrath of God.
Worshipping God in spirit and in truth means worshipping God as he is, not as we would like him to be. God has made us in his image, not the other way around.
We don't make God in ours. The next way that we see this happening in our culture today is that we make self the center of our worship. We see this in many churches where sermons are more centered around social justice causes, which those aren't bad things, but that's not the point of scripture.
Maybe we see them, the sermons focused on tackling people's personal problems, their financial problems, their marriage problems, their parenting problems. Again, these are not bad things to talk about.
[24:48] Scripture does address these issues, but the focus of our worship should always be God and his glory. We cannot reduce God down to a personal divine therapist that's focused on making us better and feel good about ourselves.

While God does care about our personal issues, again, I just want to say this, our worship should always be directed towards him and his glory. The way that we approach God's word should never be to find ourselves in it.

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I've read some daily devotionals and things like that where they try to teach you to do that. Find yourself in scripture. The Bible is not about us. When we approach the word of God, the purpose should be to find how is our creator revealing himself to us and how do we respond accordingly to that revelation.
We come to the word not seeking ourselves but seeking God. God's wrath was sinful. They had rightfully incurred the wrath of God.
And we see from their current state and what they were doing that no one from Israel was going to step up and ask for repentance or for mercy. Their spiritual leader, their high priest who was left in charge, Aaron, he was the one leading the charge in all this.
[26:04] So God's wrath was well deserved in this situation, which is why they needed an intercessor. Someone that was going to speak on their behalf.

So let's continue reading back to chapter 32 verses 11 through 14. But Moses implored the Lord his God and said, O Lord, why does your wrath burn hot against your people whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand?
why should the Egyptians say with evil intent did he bring them out to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people.
Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, your servants to whom you swore by your own self and said to them, I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven.
In all this land that I have promised, I will give to your offspring and they shall inherit it forever. And the Lord relented from the disaster that he had spoken on bringing on his people.
[27:24] Moses did a lot of great things in the life of Israel. God worked a lot of miracles through Moses. But perhaps one of the greatest things that Moses did for the people of Israel was being this intercessor for them.

pleading for mercy on their behalf. When God was ready to blot them out of the face of the earth, Moses stood in the gap. And we see even in this passage that God was going to wipe out Israel and continue his promise through the line of Moses.
And the third point of our text today is that God works through the intercession of his people. What a great truth that is. God said, when God had made this proclamation to Moses, I'm going to wipe Israel out and I'm just going to start over with you.
Moses had, he could have taken the response of, you know what, God, that sounds great. Just me and you. I don't have to deal with this rebellious people anymore. You know, I love, love all my kids. Titus is pretty cute though. when all the kids are, you know, out causing a stink in the living room. The other day I was, I've been dealing with just kind of the aftermath of COVID and I was kind of laying in bed just relaxing for a little bit.
[28:48] I heard the screaming and the kerfuffle that was going on in the living room, knowing that Titus was at the center of it. He always is. But as I'm laying there doing my little breathing treatment, I see Titus' head poke around the corner.

He's just kind of looking at me and looking around. He's looking over at his sisters to make sure that they're still cleaning up whatever mess that he's made. And immediately when he knows that he's in the clear, he rushes in and shuts the door and just shuts everyone else out and he gets in bed with me.
Because he wants to be by himself with his dad. Now if I were in Moses' shoes, the selfish part of me would probably have taken that approach. God, that sounds great.
Blot them out and it can just be me and you going forward from here. I don't have to leave the mountain. But instead, Moses steps into his greatest role in the life of Israel.
The intercessor pleading for mercy from a wrathful God. And his wrath was rightly kindled. But as we look at this text today, there's a couple of tough questions that have to be asked.
[30:00] did God need Moses to change his mind? Would God have really wiped Israel out?

Or was he just trying to get Moses to step into his role as an intercessor even more? A couple of other questions. If God is sovereign in his will, then why do we pray?
And perhaps the most perplexing question for me is that how could God covenant with such a sinful people in the first place?
all of these are deep questions. That if we're going to do a good expository study of the text, we have to ask these questions.

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And you know what? We shouldn't be afraid to ask the tough questions when we are coming to God's word. We shouldn't be scared of these. Because God knows that his ways are higher than ours.
[30:57] He knows that we're going to have questions about him. God knows that we will ask these questions of him when we read his word. And as we seek the answers to these questions, if we seek them through God's word, if we seek to explain scripture with scripture, the pursuit of these answers, which is going to be a pursuit of God, is going to lead us in a deeper walk with him rather than into more doubt.

So don't be afraid of the hard questions. You know, don't be content with simply not knowing. Pursue the Lord. desire to know him.
Because one of the greatest truths that I can tell you all is this. God has a deep and abiding love for you. And he wants you to know him. He wants you to know him to the fullest extent possible until one day we get to see him face to face in glory.
So let's look at some of these questions. The first one was this. did Moses change the mind of God? No.
And when this answer normally comes up, the cynical question then arises, well, was God lying then? Was he really planning to spare them all along?
[32:19] Why did God listen to Moses? There's a truth here about intercession that we need to understand. God hears and works through the prayers of his people.

He doesn't have to, but he has chosen to. Matthew 21 verse 22 says, and whatever you ask in prayer, you will receive if you have faith.
Philippians 4 verses 6 and 7 says, do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
The last one here, John 14 verses 13 and 14 says, whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it.
So there are numerous other instances in the Old Testament and in the New Testament where faithful men have pleaded to God and God acted through their prayers. Does God need our prayers?
[33:31] No. But God has sovereignly chosen to work through the faithful intercessions of his people. God does not command us to pray simply just as an empty exercise.

He is a God who hears and he is a God who responds. even if it is not always the way that we would have prayed for him to respond, he hears and he acts.
So God responding to Moses' plea, it shouldn't fill us with confusion, but it should fill us with hope. Knowing that part of God's character is his willingness to hear our pleas and our intercessions.
Now to work through these other questions, we need to understand a couple of things about God. The dilemma is not with God in this text, it's in our understanding of him.
I mentioned earlier that God's ways are higher than ours and he knows that. In Romans 11, 33-34, oh the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable his judgments and his paths beyond tracing out.
[34:41] Who has known the mind of the Lord or who has been his counselor? So is Moses God's counselor here? No, no he wasn't.

God is eternally wise. He's eternally sovereign. He is not bound by time. So to accuse God who has already ordained the future of changing his mind or lying, it just doesn't add up.
Did God know how this whole conversation with Moses was going down? Of course he did. So to assume anything otherwise, it would be a challenge to God's omniscience. So why the sudden change of action?
God was getting ready to obliterate the people and Moses stepped in between God and Israel. Again, this dilemma is solved in a correct understanding of God's very nature.
So I want to address this question by asking a couple of other questions. was God within his righteous character to choose mercy on sinners?
[35:50] Absolutely. Something that we should be grateful for every day. God has declared himself the just and the justifier of those that are in sin.

He's the only one that can do that. So God can and does show mercy on sinful people. And we should praise him for that every day.

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All of us should. Ezekiel 33, 11. This is 900 years almost after the time of Moses. And God is speaking to Israel through his prophet Ezekiel in chapter 33, verse 11.
As surely as I live, says the sovereign Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live, turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?
900 years later, God is still waiting for a perfectly obedient Israel. He is still putting up with their sin. [36:59] He is still calling them to repentance. God's mind, it wasn't changed by Moses because we clearly see from the text that God doesn't delight in the death of the wicked.

Even though we deserve it, even though God is perfectly righteous to do so, he does not delight in that. So what if Moses hadn't stepped in? Would God have obliterated Israel?
Well, let's answer another question. is it against God's nature to punish the guilty, to punish the unrepentant?
Does that contradict his character to do that? No. Exodus chapter 34 verses 6 and 7, I want to read this interaction between Moses and God.
Moses had made this great request of God to see his glory. And God granted it by pushing Moses in the cleft of a rock because nobody can look on the face of God and live.
[38:06] And then as God was passing by Moses, he said this about himself. And he passed in front of Moses proclaiming the Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

Yet, he does not leave the guilty unpunished. He punishes the children of their children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.
You see, a lot of times it's easy to hear the accusing voice saying, well, God's contradicted himself. But the truth is, God's holiness is just as much on display in his wrath as it is his mercy.
God's will and desire has been accomplished through mercy on Israel as it would have been through his wrath. There's no contradiction in this passage. God has not changed his mind or the desires of his heart.
There's a beauty in the story of Moses and God and the journey that they take through the wilderness together. God is leading his children through the wilderness. God is constantly revealing new aspects of his character to them.
[39:30] He hears. He provides. He forgives. He disciplines. And he speaks.

God desires to be known and makes it possible in every way to know him. yet still an entire nation in just two months time has turned to an idol that can't do any of these things that God has shown himself able to do.
So the greatest question for me in this is how does God covenant with such a sinful rebellious people? Because God is merciful.
And we see a picture of how God covenant with such a people and the very role that Moses is playing for the people as an intermediary as an intercessor constantly interceding on behalf of the people.
This was not the only time that Moses did this. This was a constant part of his ministry. Moses was constantly interceding for the people, whether it was up on the mountain or in the tent of meeting. [40:38] He was speaking on their behalf, constantly pleading for mercy. And the people needed this. Because they were so sinful and rebellious, they couldn't approach God's throne.

They couldn't approach God in person. They would have been consumed. But Moses would plead for mercy on their behalf. And while Moses was performing a needed job for the people, what he was also doing for us was painting a picture of a type of the Christ who was to come.
Christ is our true and better high priest priest, who is before the very throne of God constantly interceding on our behalf. We can look at the children of Israel and it's easy to adopt this attitude of thinking, how dumb can these people be?
It can be easy to have an arrogant attitude towards these people, but the truth is we have all adopted the same sinful nature that they have, and we are in just as much need of an intercessor.
The great thing with our situation though is that we have a better intercessor who is before the very throne of God, his son, Jesus Christ.
This new mediator, not only does he plead for mercy for our sins, he has also paid the price for our sins. In verse 32 of this chapter, I wanted to read this to you.

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[42:11] Moses even tried to do a similar action with God. Moses was back on the mountain again conversing with God, and Moses says this, but now if you will forgive their sin, but if not, please blot me out of your book that you have written.

Moses was trying to offer himself as a sacrifice for this rebellious people, to somehow stay God's wrath, life. But the sacrifice of Moses couldn't do that.
We needed a perfect sacrifice. Only the perfect son of God who had no stain of sin on his life could offer his life as a ransom for the many, to make peace between God and man.
man. Now as believers, we have this hope, we have this assurance. Because we believe in Christ, because he is our Lord and Savior, we know that his blood has paid the price for our sins.
But if you are an unbeliever that is here today, this hope is not a reality for you yet. Just as Israel's hope was in Moses' intercession, the only hope that you have is in the perfect son of God pleading on your behalf.
[43:38] We have all sinned. We have fallen short of the glory of God. And the wages of our sin, much like Israel's, the wages of our sin is death. But the gift that Jesus offers us is eternal life, and it is all received through faith in him.

You can't be good enough on your own. This salvation has to come through faith in Jesus alone. Your sin has separated you from God, and has incurred his holy wrath.
Doing enough good won't change that. It doesn't erase the debt of sin that you have. Remember, I said that in Romans, that God is both the just and the justifier. A justifying God has made a way for you to be justified.
For the debt of your sin to be paid in full. And that was through the death and resurrection of his perfect son, Jesus Christ. If he is calling you to repentance today, please respond in obedience.
If you hear the spirit drawing you, don't delay. I'll be here at the front. We'll have other elders here after the service too if you want to talk to one of them or talk to your Sunday school teacher.
[44:53] We want to show you how you can be justified through faith in Christ. So please do not leave this place today without finding out more about that. trust in him today. Let's pray.

Father, we thank you that you have made a way for us to be justified. Lord, that like Moses, you have provided a perfect and good intercessor for us to plead for mercy on our behalf.
Lord, I pray that today, Lord, as we are just celebrating what your son Jesus has done for us, Lord, if there is someone that is here today, I pray that that faith, that that reality, that hope, Lord, that you would call someone new into that today.
Lord, if there is anyone here that does not know Christ as their savior, Lord, that has never pleaded for mercy from a perfect and holy God, Lord, I pray that you would call them to repentance today.
Lord, that we would see you grow your kingdom, that we would see you call new people to yourself.
And Lord, for those of us here that are believers, Lord, I pray that just from what we've learned from this text today, Lord, that we would always strive for absolute obedience and adherence to your word.
[46:21] Lord, you are a perfect and real, sovereign God. and because of that, Lord, there is a way that you demand to be worshipped and that you are glorified. And I pray that we would always seek that.

Lord, that we would always hold to the authority of your word. And Lord, that we would glorify you through it. Lord, I pray that today that any response that comes today would be from you.
I pray for all these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

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