“…by no means…”



*February 9*

**CONTEXT: As we’ve explored** God’s self-revelation to Moses in Ex 34 we’ve seen some pretty amazing characteristics of the LORD. These are very positive. Yet, you cannot have good news without bad news. Today’s focus is a sobering end to our study on this key passage— Ex 34:6–7, “but who will by no means clear the guilty…”

**FIRST, A.M. SERMON RECAP** (Gen 22- Idolatry)

* Describe the story of Abraham and Sarah thus far.
* What does it mean for God to test, what was He testing?
* What is idolatry?
* Discuss Calvin’s quote that our hearts are “idol making factories.”
* How can even good things, like family, become an idol?
* How did Abraham respond to the test?

**REFRESHER:** Can someone explain the context/recap our last session?

**RE-READ:** Ex 34:6–7

**QUESTIONS:**

1. **If we had to come up with one word/attribute to cover the last portion of our passage, what would it be?**
2. Who by no means
   1. Even though God is merciful, slow to anger, etc, what is this phrase getting at? ***Some like to paint a caricature of God in one extreme or another.* What are those two extremes? How do they not represent the fullness of who God is? What negative affect does this have?**
3. Clears the guilty- (“to clear”= to empty or clean)
   1. What is guilt? (Ja 2:10; Ro 3:23)
   2. Why are all humans naturally guilty (Ps 51:5; Ro 5:12)?
   3. Why is punishment the consequence of sin? (Ro 6:23a)
   4. **How is punishment related to God’s character of justice/righteousness (Dt 32:4; Isa 30:18)?**
   5. **Why can God not let the guilty go unpunished?**
   6. **Can you think of any examples to illustrate this?**
4. Visiting iniquity- (mustering, appointing, bringing/punishment for guilt)
   1. *This largely echoes the previous statement.*
   2. How does a sense of natural justice reflect the justice of God? (How can it also misguide if God’s standard is not the bench mark of fairness? Isa 45:19?)
   3. **How have views on crime and punishment changed in modern Canada? How does this compare to 50 or 70 years ago? (What shift allowed this to happen?)**
   4. Why should we likewise praise the Lord that He is a God of justice?
5. Of the fathers on the children and the children’s children to the third and fourth generation
   1. *This is a difficult passage to understand, especially in light of verses like Dt 24:16 and Ezk 18:20 that seem to suggest the opposite. Many explanations have been offered.*
      1. *In the 10 Commandments (Ex 20:4) this is mentioned with reference to those who hate God.*
   2. **One explanation is the generational effect of sin (e.g. a bad tempered grandfather, son and grandson). Can you think of any examples of this?**
   3. Another is that it is more like a curse, like upon Amalek (Ex 17:14; 1 Sam 15:2).
   4. What can break the effect of sin?
   5. Contrast the generations of sin and of His steadfast love. Which is longer? What encouragement should this be to repent and believe?
6. **How can the guilty receive mercy? (Acts 3:19)**
7. **How is our passage a warning against unbelief and an encouragement to believe?**

**NEXT TIME:** Feb 16th- Exploring the Biblical basis of the Apostles’ Creed— the oldest Christian confession.