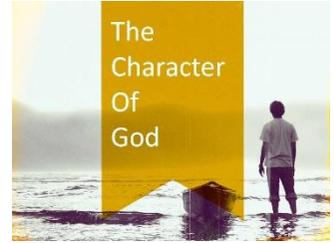




Our Mission:

“Love, inspire, equip and empower people to encounter God personally and live out His plans and purposes”



Wednesday 17th June Home Church Worship

God Reveals His Character with Colin Symes

In Exodus 34.6-7, when God allows Moses to see His back as He passes by, He reveals to Moses the depths of who He is, in words which are echoed again and again through Scripture. The Jews know these as ‘the thirteen attributes of mercy’, though it is disputed how exactly they are divided! What we can say is that God wants us to know His love and dependability, and this is why He lets Moses know these are the key elements of who He is.

This exploration is in two parts – one for Sunday 14th, followed up on Wednesday 17th. Both will be available as a podcast on the church website: www.thegatechurch.org.uk next week.

Part 2 – Ex.34.7

God Maintains Grace to Thousands – Notzer Chesed La-Alaphim

נצר חסד לאלפים

God repeats the assurance of His chesed, His covenant obligation, almost to emphasise the dependability of His promise. In Hebrew versions of this verse, even online ones, the letter N on the beginning of the word Notzer, meaning maintaining, is slightly enlarged. Hebrew does not have capital letters, and enlarged letters in the script are relatively rare, one other example being the first letter of Genesis. Repetition is always significant in Scripture. God wants to emphasise to Moses that this is part of His nature.

God Pardons Sin – noseh avon

נשא און

The word 'pardons' here is the word noseh, meaning He carries, He bears. Another word means 'forgive' usually. But here is the concept of God bearing on Himself the sins of His people, taking their failures on to relieve them of the terrible burden of guilt. And it is avon He forgives here – from a root that means perversity or crime, also meaning the guilt resulting from that crime.

God Pardons Rebellion – peshah

פשע

This word means going off track, trespassing on what is not one's property, rebellion. It is a revolt against God and a deliberate going against His wishes. God says He can carry this, He is able to rescue from it.

God Pardons Failure – Chattah

חטאה

This word means a slip-up or a mis-step, something which causes us to fall. God is specific about His ability to pardon, to carry sin, letting Moses know He is not unable to deal with evil, He is not overcome by it. He is the pardoning God, a fact known in the Old Testament as well as the New. The Psalmist says as much at the beginning of Ps.103 – The One who forgives all my sins.

God Cannot 'Turn a blind eye' – Naqeh lo Yenaqeh

נקה לא ינקה

While the Lord can forgive and clear the guilty, He cannot overlook evil, or make it what it is not. The meaning of the actual words here means 'He surely will not regard as innocent', naqeh meaning pure. Because God Himself is pure, He cannot admit into His presence what is not cleansed and forgiven, though He can deal with it. The human tragedy is that we will not turn from our evil ways and let God redeem us, coming home to Him. The next step is therefore inevitable.



God Allows Sin To Unravel – Poqed Avon Abhot

פִּקֵד אֵוֶן אֲבוֹת

Many translators have made this verse look like God is inflicting punishment for the sins of the fathers on the children, but what the word “poqed” means is depositing, passing on or ‘visiting’. The consequences of the sins of fathers affect their children, their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren. This is the maximum reach of one life, and we see again and again the effect of rebellion against God resulting in generations of suffering.

There are whole communities without adult role models... these communities are places of educational under-achievement, high unemployment, high incarceration rates and violence. This entire lifestyle is not fully of their choosing. It follows directly from decisions made by their parents and grandparents. A generation imbibed the idea of sex without responsibility and fatherhood without commitment, as if there were no victims of that choice. But there are victims, especially the children of dysfunctional and abusive families, who would never really have a chance to pursue their dreams and are mired instead in a culture of poverty, violence, prison and hopelessness. Jonathan Sacks, *Morality*. p. 68-69

The good news is that God is compassionate, favouring, full of grace and truth and able to forgive – there is a way out, there is redemption. It means turning around and coming home - this is what God wants – relationship, encounter with every person on the planet.

