

MOSES IMplored THE LORD

Exodus 32:7-14

The New Testament repeatedly reminds its readers that evangelism occupies a central and non-negotiable place in Jesus' expectations. Yet that expectation makes people uncomfortable. Therefore, we have been considering features of that responsibility over the past few weeks by studying stories from the Hebrew Bible that offer us insights into Jesus' evangelistic expectations. In this lesson we will explore Moses' intercession for Israel in Exodus chapter thirty-two and consider how it models for us the intercessory role we have as Jesus' representatives in the world.

Moses, Israel, and God

- In response to Israel's cries and because of His faithfulness to the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, God announced His intention to rescue Israel from their slavery in Egypt (*Exodus 6:2-8*).
- Speaking through Moses, God told the Jewish people that His plan sought more than merely their freedom; He intended to reveal Himself to them and enter a relationship with them (*Exodus 6:7*).
- Despite witnessing God's sovereign reality in the exodus event (*cf. Exodus 6:6-7*), Israel responded by complaining about His plan and attacking His intentions (*cf. Exodus 14:10-12; 16:1-3; 17:1-3*).
- However, God remained committed to His plan and revealed Himself to the nation at Mount Sinai and entered a covenant relationship with them (*Exodus 19-24; esp. 19:11, 18*), a covenant into which the people agreed to enter (*Exodus 24:3*).
- After a ceremony confirming Israel's relationship with God (*Exodus 24:1-8*), Moses went up into God's presence on Mount Sinai where he remained for forty days receiving laws for the nation (*Exodus 24:9-18*). While he was on the mountain, the Israelites abandoned their covenant, made an idol, and worshipped it as their redeemer (*Exodus 20:2-6, 22-23; 32:1-6*).
- The people's provocative and high-handed rejection of their covenant with God solicited His announcement of immediate and severe consequences (*Exodus 32:7-10*).
- Moses stepped into God and Israel's decaying relationship and mediated between them. Notice the exchange between God and Moses after God announced His response to the nation's unfaithfulness:



- God announced His intention to punish Israel.
“**LEAVE ME ALONE, THAT MY WRATH MAY BURN HOT** AGAINST THEM AND I MAY CONSUME THEM...”
(EXODUS 32:10).¹
- Moses interceded on Israel’s behalf.
“**BUT MOSES IMPLORED THE LORD** HIS GOD...” (EXODUS 32:11).
- God yielded to Moses’ intercession.
“**AND THE LORD RELENDED** FROM THE DISASTER THAT HE HAD SPOKEN OF BRINGING ON HIS PEOPLE”
(EXODUS 32:14).
- Moses took up God’s cause.
“**MOSES’ ANGER BURNED HOT...**” (EXODUS 32:19).

Applications

Peter describes Christians as God’s “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). As God’s priests, Christians mediate between Him and the world. The intercessory role Moses played in the golden calf incident offers us insights into our role. As intercessors, we should:

- Protect God’s holy identity through behavior that echoes His character (Exodus 32:11-12; 34:6-7; cf. Romans 2:17-24).
- Teach people about God’s will and urge their obedience (Exodus 32:25-29; 34:1-2, 29; 35:1; cf. Matthew 28:18-20).
- Pray to God on behalf of those we talk to, petitioning His patience and mercy on them (Exodus 32:11-14, 30-32; 33:12-16; cf. James 5:16).

As God’s priests, **God listens to us when we intercede on behalf of others**. A failure to intercede reveals our misunderstanding – or worse, our rejection – of God’s identity (cf. Exodus 34:6-7; 1 Timothy 2:3-4). God commissions us to be conduits of His goodness and blessings in the world. Therefore, take hold of your role as God’s “royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9) and commit to living in ways that draws people into a relationship with God.

¹ All quotes from the Bible come from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version* (ESV Permanent Text Edition, Crossway, 2016) unless otherwise noted.

