

**The Reaction of God**

1. *God puts the facts before Moses*

The people of Israel had sinned badly. <sup>□1</sup> God tells Moses all about it giving all the details. We see **the reaction of God**.

<sup>□1</sup> 32:7

1. **God puts the facts before Moses.** They have corrupted themselves. They have turned aside very speedily after all that God has done for them. They have made idols and worshipped them. They have said, "These are your Gods...." Why is God telling all of this to Moses in such detail?

It is a hint to Moses that he should accept the responsibility of intercession. God says to Moses, "**Your** people, that **you** brought out of Egypt..." <sup>□1</sup>

<sup>□1</sup> 32:8

2. *God analyses the cause*

2. In another word ("Yahweh also said"), **God analyses the cause** of the sin of the people. "I know them to be stiff-necked." <sup>□1</sup> God has been looking at His people; He knows them to be unyielding and unsubmitive to Him. Their character is stiff and resistant to His will.

<sup>□1</sup> 32:9

3. *God tells of His reaction*

3. **God tells of His reaction.** God is angry. He puts to Moses the possibility that He should wipe the Israelites out of existence and start a new people altogether with Moses. <sup>□1</sup> A new people coming out of Moses' family will, God suggests become a great nation.

<sup>□1</sup> 32:10

**Moses' greatness**

1. *Moses' great love for Israel*

At this point we see the **greatness of Moses**. God is offering amazing glory and privilege for Moses. Israel will consist simply of the descendents of Moses. Here is an offer of great honour for Moses, but not for the people of Israel as a whole. But Moses is not interested in God's offer. Here we see the humility and the self-effacing character of Moses. God is testing Moses. He is drawing out Moses' great love for his people, his sense of responsibility for them.

Instead of letting God destroy Israel, Moses begins to pray for Israel. He does not want God to disown Israel. He genuinely is burdened and grieved that they should fall into such a sin. Ever since Moses was a young man <sup>□1</sup> he had a great love for Israel and a great desire to rescue them and to care for them. Now he "sought the favour of Yahweh his God", on behalf of his people Israel. It is exactly like Jesus who ever lives to make intercession for us.

<sup>□1</sup> See 2:11-15

Moses has become self-effacing. He desires no glory for himself. He does not want that he should get honour but Israel be disgraced. He identifies with his people, and sympathizes for them, despite their very great rebelliousness.

2. *A changed man*

We remember that Moses has not always been self-effacing. In the early chapters of Exodus we remember how proud he was. But now he has changed. Suffering and painful experience have humbled him. He no longer lives for his own glory. He no longer wishes to be at the centre of everything, with everything revolving around him.

3. *An intercessor*

Moses has become an intercessor. He interceded for Pharaoh <sup>□1</sup>. He intercedes for Aaron <sup>□2</sup> and for Miriam <sup>□3</sup>. He would even pray for someone who had sinned against him. He did not become bitter against those who fell into sin. Here we see him zealously interceding for the whole of God's people. God did not actually ask

<sup>□1</sup> 8:12, 28-30;  
9:27-28,30,33;  
10:16-17

<sup>□2</sup> Deuteronomy  
9:20

Moses to intercede. He simply put the facts before Moses. It is as if God is saying "Moses might want to handle this matter by prayer. I will see what he will do".

☞<sup>3</sup> Numbers 11:3

**The Character of his praying**

1. It is argumentative

We must notice the **character of Moses' praying**. It is **argumentative** praying. He asks God questions. "Yahweh, why does your anger burn<sup>☞<sup>1</sup></sup>...?" It is very bold and daring. This is how the saints of God pray. They come to God boldly like a son giving his father his reasons for getting what he needs and what he wants. God does not mind. He is happy for His children to give Him reasons why they want what they want.

☞<sup>1</sup> 32:11

2. He pleads the relationship between God and Israel

Moses pleads the **relationship that exists between God and Israel**. God has taken Israel as His people. We note that God says to Moses "**Your** people have corrupted themselves" <sup>☞<sup>1</sup></sup>. But Moses says to God, "Why does your anger burn against **your** people<sup>☞<sup>2</sup></sup>..." God wants Moses to take responsibility, but Moses in prayer takes the responsibility back to God again!

☞<sup>1</sup> 32:7

☞<sup>2</sup> 32:11

We can pray like this. The Christian is **related** to God. We are in covenant with Him, an even better covenant than the one that Israel had. So we can use this fact in prayer. It is not that God needs persuading. He is willing to bless us, and waiting to bless us. But he likes us to take His blessings from Him a piece at a time, for others and for ourselves. God likes the personal relationship between us and Him. And he likes us to make use of this personal relationship when we talk to Him in prayer.

3. What is begun will be completed

Moses pleads the **fact that God has already started a work in these Israelites**. "Lord", says Moses, "You brought these people out of Egypt. How can you abandon them now?" God does not easily give up on something He started. "He who began a good work in you will go on performing it...", said Paul<sup>☞<sup>1</sup></sup>. If God begins something, He has plans to carry it towards completion. This too can be used in prayer. We can say to God, "God You started this work. You were the One who called me.... You were the One who took hold of me...You did this and that.... Lord please continue with the work that You have already started...."

☞<sup>1</sup> Philippians 1:6

**This is the way for us to pray**

Do we pray like this? With boldness, confidence? With mighty pleadings that God will hear us? This is the way to pray. Somehow along the many years in the wilderness, Moses had learned how to be a great intercessor. To be an intercessor is being like Jesus, for He is a great intercessor too.



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