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## MOSES INTERCEDES

“Get out of my sight!” I can still remember the great terror and deathly fright I immediately experienced upon hearing those words from my mother, having provoked her to astronomic levels of frustrated hostility towards me (can you possibly imagine someone as completely innocent as I even being capable of evoking that kind of wrath from their own mother? Me neither!) It wasn’t just the words that I can still hear ringing in my frightful ears, but it was the tone. Ah yes, the distinct tone that I often imagine was very much like that of the demon possessed man, who, when asked his name replied, “My name is Legion! For we are many!” Nothing I have ever experienced in my life thus far has caused me to feel even a close resemblance of the panicked fear I felt when I heard those deadly words from my

mother. So this is the reference point which often floods my mind when I read of the burning anger God felt towards His children after their episode worshipping the golden calf while Moses was getting commandments from God to instruct Israel. Just to give us an idea of the level of anger God felt towards them, here is God’s immediate reaction to the scene: *“The LORD said to Moses, ‘I have seen this people, and behold, they are an obstinate people. Now then let Me alone, that My anger may burn against them and that I may destroy them; and I will make of you a great nation,’”* (Ex. 32:9-10). This would be the equivalent of disobeying your parents in such a provoking manner that before they practice the “laying on of hands” on you, they look at your brother or sister standing

in the corner with their mouth open in horrified dismay, and promise they can have your room after they're done with you, because it'd be a pity to have a nice bed like that and no one to sleep in it. After Moses changes God's mind and calls upon all those who were for the LORD to execute the remaining guilty in the camp (Ex. 32:11-14,25-29), God sends them along, stating He cannot go with them, for the mere sight of them prompts Him to unthinkable wrath. *"Then the LORD spoke to Moses, 'Depart, go up from here...Go up to a land flowing with milk and honey; for I will not go up in your midst, because you are an obstinate people, and I might destroy you on the way.' When the people heard this sad word, they went into mourning, and none of them put on his ornaments. For the LORD had said to Moses, 'Say to the sons of Israel, 'You are an obstinate people; should I go up in your midst for one moment, I would destroy you,'"* (Ex. 33:1,3-5). This is when I can still hear those dreadful words of anger and disappointment years ago, "Get out of my sight!" When you look at the history of His children from their deliverance up to this point, it's not hard to understand God's anger. Three

days after they passed through the divided waters of the Red Sea, they started to complain there wasn't anything to drink. *"Then Moses led Israel from the Red Sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness and found no water...So the people grumbled at Moses, saying, 'What shall we drink?'"* (Ex. 15:22,24). How'd you like to be the one who after saving a family from the burning wreckage of their totaled car, hears them in the backseat of your rescue vehicle say, "In case you're wondering what the horrific noises coming from back here are, it's the sound of us DYING OF THIRST!!! A pit stop wouldn't kill us you know." Two months and fifteen days later, they're upset because there's nothing good to eat (Ex. 16:1-3), and even after being sufficiently provided for in every circumstance, they again complain about a lack of water further in the journey (Ex. 17:1-7). Later, after promising to drive out their enemies from the land of Canaan in exchange for their devoted obedience (Ex. 23:20-33), they solemnly place themselves under oath to listen to and obey Him. *"All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!"*

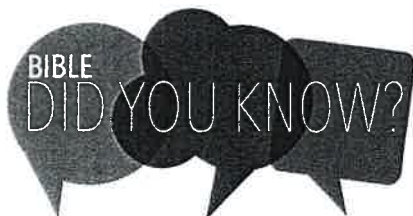
Eight chapters later they're singing and dancing around a calf fashioned out of their jewelry thanking it for delivering them from Egypt. Enter God's wrath...and His disappointed frustration essentially saying, "Get out of my sight!" And in the middle of God's fierce irate fuming anger with them, there is Moses, begging, pleading, interceding on behalf of His children, turning His wrath into mercy.

*"Then Moses entreated the LORD his God...So the LORD changed His mind about the harm which He said He would do to His people," (Ex. 32:11,14). "Moses said to the people, 'I am going up to the LORD, perhaps I can make atonement for your sin.' Then Moses returned to the LORD, and said... 'If You will, forgive their sin – and if not, please blot me out from Your book which You have written!'" (Ex. 32:30,31,32).*

*"Then he said to Him, 'If Your presence does not go out with us, do not lead us up from here...Is it not by Your going with us, so that we, I and Your people, may be distinguished from all the other people who are upon the face of the earth?'" (Ex. 33:15,16). As you read this occasion of God's hot seething anger being cooled off and His wrath changing to*

mercy from the interceding work of Moses, you may begin to say to yourself, "Where would they have been if not for Moses!" In that moment, quickly put yourself in Israel's shoes and Jesus in Moses', and we have an accurate depiction of how desperate we are in need of the interceding work of Jesus on our behalf. You really can't begin to appreciate how vital and necessary the interceding mercy of Christ is for us until we appreciate and assess the level of wrath and doom we face without Him standing in-between. *"It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God," (Heb. 11:31).*

- Daniel Ruegg



**Most people assumed Jesus was the actual son of Joseph, rather than miraculously born to a virgin. "When He began his ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph," Luke 3:23**



# MONTHLY CHALLENGE

**DIRECTIONS:** Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.

## 1) Theophilus Challenge

**1 Cor. 1:26** *"For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble."* Paul reminds the Corinthians not to make too much of certain teachers and brethren since most of their brethren weren't even of any notable position in life any way. Most of the people who were responding to the gospel were of low positions and not prominent at all. However, this does not mean that noteworthy and important people were not responding to the gospel. They were. Luke is writing to the "most excellent Theophilus," a title commonly given to high ranking Roman officials. Given the work Paul and Luke did in spreading the gospel in Rome, it is very likely the Theophilus that Luke is writing to is a Roman official of some prominence who is wanting to know about the truth of the gospel. Among those commonly overlooked when planting the seed of the gospel are those who hold such important and high ranking positions in life, assuming the gospel is so far beneath them that they would never be interested. Set a goal this month to purposely make an effort to bring up the truth of the gospel to those who we assume would never be interested...the boss at work, the physician, college professor, elected official, CEO, etc.

## 2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

### *Luke 19:1-10*

"He entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and was unable because of the crowd, for he was small in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree in order to see Him, for He was about to pass through that way. When Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, 'Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house.' And he hurried and came down and received Him gladly. When they saw it, they all began to grumble, saying, 'He has gone to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.' Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, 'Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much.' And Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.'"