



GOD'S GLORY
IN SALVATION
THROUGH
JUDGMENT

A Biblical Theology



JAMES M. HAMILTON JR.

God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology

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Unless otherwise noted, translations of the biblical text are my own. I have sometimes used the English Standard Version as a base text, altering it somewhat, and always changing “LORD” to “Yahweh.”

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is. When his word is broken, the creation itself is subjected to futility. In the judgment, though, comes a hint of a future salvation. Some few hold to that hint, and the hints and promises grow, waiting for the day when the seed of the woman arises to crush the head of the serpent and his seed. Sailhamer proposes that “the big idea of the Pentateuch is ‘the importance of living by faith.’”¹⁴⁴ I agree that the Pentateuch teaches its audience to live by faith, but I think this stops one step short of the center of its theology. The faith the Pentateuch teaches is faith in a God who is just and merciful, and it is not faith that is ultimate but God’s glory in the salvation through judgment he will accomplish.

The Torah gives the truth about the real world. It furnishes the framework through which life is to be read. All experience is to be interpreted in light of Torah. The central reality of this all-interpreting word is the one who proclaims his own name, putting his goodness on display, showing his glory to Moses, defining himself as patient, steadfast in love, merciful, unconstrained, exacting in justice and thorough in its execution (Ex. 34:6–7).

The Torah is a story of the glory of God in salvation through judgment. He will save his people by judging their enemies, and he will judge the sin of his people, saving them through the purifying judgment of exile. When he triumphs over the enemies of his people, he will be glorified for his matchless might. When he saves his people from their own wicked hearts, he will be glorified because he is mighty to save. No force in the wicked hearts of people, no power in heaven or earth, will keep him from winning for himself a people for his name. At the center of the theology of the Torah is the truth that God will be glorified in salvation through judgment.

*. . . And all who heard should see them there,
And all should cry, Beware! Beware!
His flashing eyes, his floating hair!
Weave a circle round him thrice,
And close your eyes with holy dread . . .*

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, “Kubla Khan”

8. Appendix: Exodus 34:6–7 in the Law, Prophets, and Writings

This list of verses (all texts here ESV) tracing the influence of Exodus 34:6–7 is “font coded,” meaning that corresponding elements are all placed in a similar kind of font. Here is a key from the constituent thoughts of Exodus 34:6–7:

Bold references to “Yahweh God”: **THE LORD, THE LORD, a God**
 Grey Yahweh passing before

¹⁴⁴Sailhamer, *The Meaning of the Pentateuch*, 22.

<i>Italics</i>	Yahweh as <i>merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness</i>
Helvetica	Yahweh's steadfast love for thousands
SMALL CAPS	Yahweh as FORGIVING INIQUITY AND TRANSGRESSION AND SIN
<u>Underlining</u>	Yahweh <u>who will by no means clear the guilty</u>
ALL CAPS	Yahweh VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN AND THE CHILDREN'S CHILDREN, TO THE THIRD AND THE FOURTH GENERATION

8.1 Exodus 34:6–7 in the Law

You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I **the LORD your God** am a jealous God, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN TO THE THIRD AND THE FOURTH GENERATION of those who hate me, but showing **steadfast love to thousands** of those who love me and keep my commandments. “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.” (Ex. 20:5–7)

The LORD passed before him and proclaimed, “**The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness**, keeping **steadfast love for thousands**, FORGIVING INIQUITY AND TRANSGRESSION AND SIN, but who will by no means clear the guilty, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN AND THE CHILDREN'S CHILDREN, TO THE THIRD AND THE FOURTH GENERATION.” (Ex. 34:6–7)

The LORD is *slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love*, FORGIVING INIQUITY AND TRANSGRESSION, but he will by no means clear the guilty, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN, TO THE THIRD AND THE FOURTH GENERATION. (Num. 14:18)

You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I **the LORD your God** am a jealous God, VISITING THE INIQUITY OF THE FATHERS ON THE CHILDREN TO THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATION of those who hate me, but showing **steadfast love to thousands** of those who love me and keep my commandments. “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.” (Deut. 5:9–11)

Know therefore that **the LORD your God** is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and **steadfast love** with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a **thousand generations**, and repays to their face those who hate him, by destroying them. He will not be slack with one who hates him. He will repay him to his face. (Deut. 7:9–10)

8.2 *Exodus 34:6–7 in the Prophets*

I will recount the *steadfast love* of **the LORD**,
 the praises of **the LORD**,
 according to all that **the LORD** has granted us,
 and the great goodness to the house of Israel
 that he has granted them according to his *compassion*,
 according to the *abundance of his steadfast love*. (Isa. 63:7)

You show **steadfast love to thousands**, but you **REPAY THE GUILT OF FATHERS TO THEIR CHILDREN AFTER THEM**, O great and mighty **God**, whose name is **the LORD** of hosts. (Jer. 32:18)

And I will betroth you to me forever. I will betroth you to me in righteousness and in justice, in **steadfast love** and in *mercy*. I will betroth you to me in faithfulness. And you shall know **the LORD**. (Hos. 2:19–20)

“ . . . and rend your hearts and not your garments.”
 Return to **the LORD your God**,
for he is gracious and merciful,
slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love;
 and he relents over disaster. (Joel 2:13)

And he prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a *gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love*, and relenting from disaster.” (Jonah 4:2)

Who is a **God** like you, **PARDONING INIQUITY**
 and passing over **TRANSGRESSION**
 for the remnant of his inheritance?
 He does not retain his anger forever,
 because he delights in *steadfast love*. (Mic. 7:18)

The LORD is a jealous and avenging **God**;
the LORD is avenging and wrathful;
the LORD takes vengeance on his adversaries
 and keeps wrath for his enemies.
The LORD is *slow to anger* and great in power,
 and **the LORD will by no means clear the guilty**.
 His way is in whirlwind and storm,
 and the clouds are the dust of his feet. (Nah. 1:2–3)

8.3 *Exodus 34:6–7 in the Writings*

But you, O Lord, are a **God** *merciful and gracious,*
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.
 (Ps. 86:15)

The LORD is *merciful and gracious,*
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Ps. 103:8)

He has caused his wondrous works to be remembered;
the LORD is *gracious and merciful.* (Ps. 111:4)

The LORD is *gracious and merciful,*
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. (Ps. 145:8)

But you are a **God** ready to forgive, *gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love,* and did not forsake them. (Neh. 9:17)

Nevertheless, in your great mercies you did not make an end of them or forsake them, for you are a *gracious and merciful God*.

Now, therefore, our **God**, the great, the mighty, and the awesome **God**, who keeps covenant and *steadfast love*, let not all the hardship seem little to you that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day. (Neh. 9:31–32)

For if you return to **the LORD**, your brothers and your children will find compassion with their captors and return to this land. For **the LORD your God** is *gracious and merciful* and will not turn away his face from you, if you return to him. (2 Chron. 30:9)

8.4 *Less Certain Allusions*

8.4.1 *In the Law*

And he said, “I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name ‘**The LORD.**’ And I will be *gracious* to whom I will be *gracious*, and will show *mercy* on whom I will show *mercy.*” (Ex. 33:19)

For **the LORD your God** is a *merciful God*. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them. (Deut. 4:31)

8.4.2 *In the Prophets*

For my name's sake I defer my anger,
 for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you,
 that I may not cut you off. (Isa. 48:9)

“For a brief moment I deserted you,
 but with great *compassion* I will gather you.
 In overflowing anger for a moment
 I hid my face from you,
 but with everlasting *love* I will have *compassion* on you,”
 says the LORD, your Redeemer. (Isa. 54:7–8)

O LORD, you know;
 remember me and VISIT me,
 and take vengeance for me on my persecutors.
 In *your forbearance* take me not away;
 know that for your sake I bear reproach. (Jer. 15:15)

8.4.3 In the Writings

Yet he, *being compassionate*,
 atoned for their iniquity
 and did not destroy them;
 he restrained his anger often
 and did not stir up all his wrath. (Ps. 78:38)

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving,
abounding in steadfast love to all who call upon you.
 (Ps. 86:5; cf. also 106:7, 45)

O LORD our God, you answered them;
 you were a FORGIVING God to them,
 but an avenger of their wrongdoings. (Ps. 99:8)

Light dawns in the darkness for the upright;
he is gracious, merciful, and righteous. (Ps. 112:4)

Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;
 our God is *merciful*. (Ps. 116:5)

I prayed to the LORD my God and made confession, saying, “O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and *steadfast love* with those who love him and keep his commandments . . .” (Dan. 9:4)

And I said, “O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and *steadfast love* with those who love him and keep his commandments . . .” (Neh. 1:5)