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March 27th: Exodus 34 & Matthew 27:1-26

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The covenant renewed and the shining face of Moses. The staining blood of the innocent Jesus.

Some passages referenced:

Genesis 6:5, 8:21 (statement as basis for both judgment and grace); Exodus 32:9, 33:3 (the stiff-necked character of the people as basis for judgment).

Matthew 23:34-36 (blood of the martyrs coming upon that generation); Zechariah 11:12-13 (thirty shekels of silver); Jeremiah 18-19, 32:6-15 (the potter and the bought field); 2 Samuel 17:23 (Ahithophel); Isaiah 53:7 (sheep before its shearers is silent); Deuteronomy 21:1-9 (the rite for unsolved murder).

Reflections upon the readings from the ACNA Book of Common Prayer (<http://bcp2019.anglicanchurch.net/>).

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Transcript

Exodus chapter 34. The Lord said to Moses, Cut for yourself two tablets of stone like the first, and I will write on the tablets the words that were on the first tablets which you broke. Be ready for the morning, and come up in the morning to Mount Sinai and present

yourself there to me on the top of the mountain.

No one shall come up with you, and let no one be seen throughout all the mountain. Let no flocks or herds graze opposite that mountain. So Moses cut two tablets of stone like the first, and he rose early in the morning and went up on Mount Sinai, as the Lord had commanded him, and took in his hand two tablets of stone.

The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord. 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. And Moses quickly bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped.

And he said, If now I have found favour in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance. And he said, Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been created in all the earth or in any nation, and all the people among whom you are shall see the work of the Lord, for it is an awesome thing that I will do with you.

Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I will drive out before you the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. Take care lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land to which you go, lest it become a snare in your midst.

You shall tear down their altars, and break their pillars, and cut down their asherim. For you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous god. Lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and when they whore after their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and you are invited, you eat of his sacrifice, and you take of their daughters for your sons, and their daughters whore after their gods, and make your sons whore after their gods.

You shall not make for yourself any gods of cast metal. You shall keep the feast of unleavened bread. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the time appointed in the month Abib.

For in the month Abib you came out from Egypt. All that open the womb are mine, all your male livestock, the firstborn of cow and sheep, the firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, or if you will not redeem it you shall break its neck. All the firstborn of your sons you shall redeem, and none shall appear before me empty-handed.

Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest. In ploughing time and in

harvest you shall rest. You shall observe the feast of wheat, the first fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the year's end.

Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord God, the God of Israel. For I will cast out nations before you and enlarge your borders. No one shall covet your land when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times in the year.

You shall not offer the blood of my sacrifice with anything leavened, or let the sacrifice of the feast of the Passover remain until the morning. The best of the first fruits of your ground you shall bring to the house of the Lord your God. You shall not boil a young goat in its mother's milk.

And the Lord said to Moses, Write these words, for in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel. So he was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights. He neither ate bread nor drank water, and he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, with the two tablets of the testimony in his hand as he came down from the mountain, Moses did not know that the skin of his face shone because he had been talking with God. Aaron and all the people of Israel saw Moses, and behold, the skin of his face shone, and they were afraid to come near him. But Moses called to them, and Aaron and all the leaders of the congregation returned to him, and Moses talked with them.

Afterward all the people of Israel came near, and he commanded them all that the Lord had spoken with him in Mount Sinai. And when Moses had finished speaking with them, he put a veil over his face. Whenever Moses went in before the Lord to speak with him, he would remove the veil until he came out.

And when he came out and told the people of Israel what he was commanded, the people of Israel would see the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face was shining. And Moses would put the veil over his face again until he went in to speak with him. In Exodus chapter 34 there is a renewal of the broken covenant.

It's important to recognise that this isn't an alternative covenant, it's a renewal of the covenant that has already been made. Many of the details that we have in the establishment of this covenant are exactly the same as we've seen earlier on. And the actual content of the covenant that is stipulated here is pretty much taken from the book of the covenant in chapters 21 to 23.

The Exodus, we must remember, was supposed to be a manifestation of God's name and his character. God reveals himself to Moses in the burning bush at the very beginning, revealing his name. He proves his power and his glory over the Egyptians in the plagues, and he proves his character to Israel, bringing them out and taking them to himself in

the event of the Exodus and Sinai.

The Lord makes himself known to Moses, as Moses is known himself to the Lord. He declares his mercy, his grace, his slowness to anger, his steadfast love and faithfulness, and his forgiveness and judgement as integral to who he is. These are attributes of God, but they're not just attributes, they are essential to God's nature.

When we talk about God and his attributes, his attributes aren't something that's added to him, they're not accidental to him. God doesn't just happen to be loving and merciful and gracious and compassionate. Those things are integral to who he is, they're integral to his divine nature.

Moses responds by bowing and worshipping the Lord, and then requesting that God go up in the midst of them. But he gives a very strange rationale. Listen to what he says.

If now I have found favour in your sight, O Lord, please let the Lord go in the midst of us, for it is a stiff-necked people, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for your inheritance. Now the strange thing about this rationale is we've seen this description of the people as a stiff-necked people earlier on in this particular account. In chapter 32, verse 9, And then later on in chapter 33, Now the strange thing about it is that God previously gave the stiff-necked character of the people as an argument to destroy them, and then as an argument not to go up in their midst.

But here Moses presents the stiff-necked character of the people as an argument for God to go up in their midst. It's all very strange. Now I think we can be helped to understand this by looking back at the story of Noah, as we've seen as we've gone through this passage, even from earlier on in the story of Sinai.

The story of Noah is not far in the background. In chapter 8, verse 21, we read of Genesis, Now again, the strange thing about that statement is we find something similar to it just a few chapters earlier. In chapter 6, verse 5, we read, Once again, a rationale for judgement at the beginning of the story becomes a rationale for grace at the end.

How then are we to understand this? What is the logic of Moses' argument? Well it seems as if the relationship between God and his people is being re-founded on a somewhat diminished basis. A basis that takes account of, and that makes accommodation for, the deep flaws of the people. The divine expectations placed upon the relationship seem to be lowered, and also the expectations as a result placed upon the people are lowered.

Once the flaws of the people are taken into account, the burden placed upon the relationship and the role of man within it is somewhat reduced. We should be clear however that there is loss here. That God wanted an intimacy with his people that just will not be possible with such a flawed and sinful people.

Accommodation has to be made for their sin in a way that restricts the intimacy that God can enjoy with his people. Moses concludes by asking for pardon for their iniquity and that God would take them as his inheritance. Let us be your legacy, don't abandon us.

That's the message that Moses is concerned to get across. Looking back over these last few chapters, we've seen Moses interceding for the people, going through a number of different stages. First of all calling God not to destroy them, that destroying them would not serve God's ends.

Then judging the people in anger in order to express God's anger so that God would not judge them in his anger. Then aligning himself with the people so that the people will be saved by his association with them. And then even beyond that, stepping outside of the people so that he could continue the relationship with God without the people being destroyed by his presence.

And then seeking favour in God's sight and seeking the favour that God showed him to be given to the people. And now here pressing forward that final point, pleading with God to condescend to be near to a sinful and flawed people, recognising their frailty, their sin, but nonetheless going up in their midst, marking them out as his special possession and making his home among them. This final request can be made on the basis of God's own self-revelation.

He has revealed himself to be merciful and gracious, showing forgiveness and steadfast love and faithfulness. After this the covenant is reissued and the new covenant statement is roughly patterned after the first four of the Ten Commandments and in terms of the commandments that we find within the book of the covenant in chapters 21 to 23. The first four commandments concerning having no other gods before the Lord, not making grave an image, not taking the name of the Lord in vain and remembering the Sabbath day.

And these roughly correspond to the case laws that are given within this particular section. What is underlined in this section is the way that the covenant is about a bond between God and his people. It's not just about moral laws or requirements.

At the very heart of the covenant is a relationship between God and his people and all the rituals, all the rites, everything else, the tabernacle, everything like that is designed for God to relate to and be near to his people. And so at the very heart is faithfulness. God is a jealous God.

God loves his people and he has a love that will not let go of his people. And for that reason his people must be faithful to him. They must not whore after other gods.

They must not build idols. And there is the warning here against gods of cast metal, which of course refers back to the golden calf. The laws concerning the feast of

unleavened bread and the firstborn of their sons refer to the events of the Passover.

God has claimed his people for his own. They are his firstborn son. And for that reason they need to give God his due.

This is a statement I think of the third commandment that we should not bear the name of the Lord in vain. God has placed his name upon the people. He has placed his claim upon the people as his own and they must honour that in their behaviour and their practice.

And that I believe is at the very heart of what the third commandment means. The next section from verse 21 following refers to the law of the Sabbath. This is the way in which they honour the Lord by remembering his great deeds of salvation, his deeds in creation and give rest to their servants as he has given rest to them.

And this also expands out into festal occasions, not just the original Sabbath but the feasts that extend that Sabbath principle. There aren't included in this section any of the commandments that really relate to the horizontal relationships of the people. It's interesting we don't have the fifth commandment here.

Rather the commandments here underline the vertical relationship between God and his people, that very part of the relationship that has been compromised by the events with the golden calf. This story ends on a very strange note. Indeed in many ways it ends with themes that are similar to where the story of the golden calf begins.

With Moses being given the tablets after 40 days and nights on the mountain, then descending with them to the people. As Moses goes down the mountain, unbeknownst to him his skin is shining. However the word for shining is a strange one.

It's related to the noun used for instance the horns of the altar. It's a word that could mean to grow horns. We've seen this actually within images.

If you've ever seen Michelangelo's Moses, Michelangelo's Moses has, strange things, horns growing out of his head like a bull. Why is this word play here? Might there be some significance to it? I believe there is some significance to it. The story starts off with a golden calf designed to replace Moses after he has been on the mountain for 40 days and 40 nights and has not appeared.

It ends with a shining bull. One who's shining as if he were golden. One who has, as it were, horns.

And it's playing off the beginning of the story. The golden calf was a replacement for Moses. It was designed to be a god or a power before the Lord that they could relate to instead of relating to the Lord.

But now Moses comes down from the mountain. He comes down as one who is set up not as a calf but as a bull. One who has grown horns.

One who's shining. One who's golden as it were. The people were concerned about Moses the man.

And Moses the man seemed to be mortal and to have failed to have died in the presence of the Lord. And so they wanted a sort of cast metal object to relate to. That they could relate to that and it would be a blast shield to protect them from the Lord.

But now Moses comes down from the presence of the Lord shining. Proof that he's been in the very presence of God himself and that he has survived. This is a god that a human being can relate to.

This is a god that mankind can come close to. This is a god who is not far off. A god who is not distant.

But a god who wants to come near to and relate to his people. And so Moses the man is proof of something of the intent of the covenant. The intent of the covenant was always that God's people would come near to him.

That they would relate to him. Not relate to him from a distance behind blast shields of golden calves and other idols. Protecting them from encounter with the divine.

No the intent was that God would have fellowship with his people. That he would be their God and that they would be his people. And that God would be close to them and that they would be close to him.

Aaron and the people respond once again. But now they respond in fear to come close to Moses. But Moses calls them near and he speaks to them and addresses them with God's word.

And after he has declared God's word to them he covers up his face with a veil. Thereafter when Moses spoke with the Lord he would remove the veil, turn to the Lord and speak to him. And once he had spoken to the Lord he would come down and speak to the people.

And then once he had finished speaking to the people he would put the veil upon his face again until he spoke to the Lord once more. There might be some parallel here between the description at the very beginning of this story and the very last words of chapter 31. When God finished talking to Moses he gave him the tablets.

When Moses finished talking to the people of Israel he put on the veil. And there may be some similarity or some connection between the tablets and the veil. The tablets in some sense veil the face of God so that we can come close, that we can approach, that

we can relate to him without being consumed or without being dazzled.

God revealed his glory to Moses but sheltered Moses in the cleft of the rock. In some ways the tablets of stone may be parts of the rock designed to protect us from the dazzling glory of God but yet to enable us to come close, to come into encounter with God. In the same way the veil of Moses hid something about the true intent of the covenant, about the true destiny of the people of God to come close to God in that way, in a way that would be transfiguring.

And yet it enabled people to have some relationship with that fact, some intimation of it, some inkling of what the covenant was all destined towards. A question to consider. In 2 Corinthians chapter 3 Paul reflects and meditates upon the story of Moses and the veil.

How can the story of Moses and the veil help us to understand the purpose of the new covenant in Paul's understanding? Matthew chapter 27 verses 1 to 26. When morning came all the chief priests and the elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death. And they bound him and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate the governor.

Then when Judas his betrayer saw that Jesus was condemned he changed his mind and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders, saying, I have sinned by betraying innocent blood. They said, What is that to us? See to it yourself. And throwing down the pieces of silver into the temple he departed and he went and hanged himself.

But the chief priests taking the pieces of silver said, It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since it is blood money. So they took counsel and brought with them the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. Therefore that field has been called the field of blood to this day.

Then was fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him on whom a price had been set by some of the sons of Israel, and they gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord directed me. Now Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, Are you the king of the Jews? Jesus said, You have said so. But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders he gave no answer.

Then Pilate said to him, Do you not hear how many things they testify against you? But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted, and they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So when they had gathered Pilate said to them, Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up.

Besides, while he was sitting on the judgment seat his wife sent word to him, Have nothing to do with that righteous man, for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream. Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor again said to them, Which of the two do you want me to release for you? And they said, Barabbas.

Pilate said to them, Then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ? They all said, Let him be crucified. He said, Why? What evil has he done? But they shouted all the more, Let him be crucified. So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, I am innocent of this man's blood, see to it yourselves.

And all the people answered, His blood be on us and on our children. Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified. In the first half of Matthew 27 we see the final cascade of events leading to the crucifixion of Christ.

Judas feels bitter remorse for what he has done, but he doesn't seem to repent. He abandons all hope and he kills himself. We should be alert to the fact that Judas' response is closely juxtaposed with Peter's denial as it is in Jesus' initial prediction of both events.

There is a fearful near symmetry between the two, while some important differences that distinguish them. It is very important to notice that Judas casts down the blood money in the temple itself. The trail of blood goes into the heart of the very house of God.

The temple has become a house of blood. And the fate of the temple is central in the concluding chapters of Matthew. Jesus is the prophet like Jeremiah who declares that the temple is doomed, a temple that has become a den for sheltering the wicked, a refuge for the bloodthirsty, for people who are brigands.

When it should be a house of prayer for all nations and a site for relationship with God. Jesus is the temple that is about to be destroyed but there is also going to be a judgement upon the actual temple. And the matter of Jesus' blood is key throughout this passage.

Judas mourns for betraying Jesus' innocent blood, placing the money he was bribed for the blood in the temple. The blood money is used to buy the potter's field, thereafter called the field of blood. Pilate washes his hands of Jesus' blood.

The people call for Jesus' blood to be on them and on their children. We should consider this in the light of Matthew 23 verses 34-36. The innocent blood of Christ is contaminating everyone in this chapter.

It is spreading and it spreads to the very heart of Israel in its temple. The story of Israel

began with the purchase of a burial place for the people in a land of strangers, the cave of Machpelah and the field of Machpelah. And now the doom of Jerusalem is declared in the purchase of a burial place for strangers in the land of the people.

Matthew says that this is fulfilling Jeremiah but he quotes Zechariah 11 verses 12-13. This is all very strange. In Zechariah 11 verses 12-13 we read, So what's going on? It seems to me that Matthew isn't stupid.

He knows his Old Testament scriptures and he presumes that his readers do too. Matthew wants us to hear the Zechariah citation within the resonance chamber of Jeremiah 18-19 and chapter 32 verses 6-15. So in Zechariah chapter 11 God withdraws his favour from the people.

The prophet performs the part of an unfaithful shepherd, shepherding the people doomed for slaughter and then breaking his staffs that signify the covenant, asking for his wages and then he's given 30 shekels of silver which he throws down in the house of the Lord to the potter. The reference to the potter there may seem strange and odd but Judas seems to play much the same role. He's paid 30 shekels of silver for destroying the Lamb of God.

However Matthew's reference to Jeremiah challenges us to hear this text against the background of another series of passages concerning the fate of Israel as the pottery of the Lord. There is a message of judgement but with a silver lining of blessing. In Jeremiah chapter 18 God compares his people to a piece of pottery that he works with and in chapter 19 he says to Jeremiah But the valley of slaughter.

And in this place I will make void the plans of Judah and Jerusalem and will cause their people to fall by the sword before their enemies and by the hand of those who seek their life. I will give their dead bodies for food to the birds of the air and to the beasts of the earth and I will make this city a horror, a thing to be hissed at. Everyone who passes by it will be horrified and will hiss because of all its wounds and I will make them eat the flesh of their sons and their daughters and everyone shall eat the flesh of his neighbour in the siege and in the distress with which their enemies and those who seek their life afflict them.

Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you and shall say to them thus says the Lord of hosts so I will break this people and this city as one breaks a potter's vessel so that it can never be mended. Then if we go forward a number of chapters to Jeremiah 32 in verse 6 and following we read Jeremiah said the word of the Lord came to me behold Hanamel the son of Shalom your uncle will come to you and say buy my field that is at Anathoth for the right of redemption by purchase is yours. Then Hanamel my cousin came to me in the court of the guard in accordance with the word of the Lord and said to me buy my field that is at Anathoth in the land of Benjamin for the right of possession and redemption is yours buy it for yourself.

Then I knew that this was the word of the Lord and I bought the field at Anathoth from Hanamel my cousin and weighed out the money for him 17 shekels of silver I signed the deed sealed it got witnesses and weighed the money on scales then I took the sealed deed of purchase containing the terms and conditions and the open copy and I gave the deed of purchase to Baruch the son of Neriah son of Masiah in the presence of Hanamel my cousin in the presence of the witnesses who signed the deed of purchase and in the presence of all the Judeans who were sitting in the court of the guard I charged Baruch in their presence saying thus says the Lord of hosts the God of Israel take these deeds both the sealed deed of purchase and this open deed and put them in an earthenware vessel that they may last for a long time for thus says the Lord of hosts the God of Israel houses and fields and vineyards shall again be bought in this land. So there's a message of judgment but also a hint of blessing. Matthew then wants us to read the story of Israel the story of Judas the story of Jesus against this very carefully orchestrated allusion to Old Testament scripture both Zechariah and different parts of Jeremiah.

Could also see this passage as connecting Judas and Ahithophel. Ahithophel is a close friend and counsellor of David but during the rebellion and the coup of Absalom he joins Absalom and serves him as counsellor and this was seen as a great betrayal by David and spoken of in Psalms and elsewhere and is connected with Judas as Psalm 41 verse 9 is applied to both Ahithophel and Judas in John chapter 13 verse 18. In 2 Samuel chapter 17 verse 23 Ahithophel's advice is rejected for Hushai's and Ahithophel seeing that the plot has gotten away from him responds by taking his own life.

When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed he saddled his donkey and went off home to his own city. He set his house in order and hanged himself and he died and was buried in the tomb of his father. The similarities with Judas should not be hard to see.

In both cases there is remorse as a plot against the Davidic king gets out of hand. And there is a further parallel that could be considered. In two chapters, in chapter 17 and 18 of 2 Samuel you have two people hanging on trees.

You have Ahithophel who hangs himself and then you have Absalom the son of David who is also hung on a tree, the rebellious son hung on a tree. In Matthew chapter 27 you have two people hung on trees. You have Judas and you have Jesus and those two characters are juxtaposed in other ways.

Jesus is the son of David. He is suffering the fate of the rebellious son but he is the faithful son. And so the juxtaposition between Jesus and Judas and then the juxtaposition between Judas and Peter should all be considered.

Judas is placed here whereas in Luke's account Luke brings him forward to Acts chapter 1. It does not mention his death within the context of his account of the passion. The ways that such stories are told really matters. Jesus is tried by the Roman governor

Pontius Pilate.

Once again Jesus is notably silent in fulfilment of Isaiah chapter 53 verse 7. The lamb led to the slaughter who before his shearers is silent. Pilate's wife has dreams concerning Christ and warns her husband. Once again the language of the king of the Jews is coming to the surface.

Once again warning dreams. This is something that we saw at the beginning of the gospel in the story of the Magi. The choice between Barabbas whose name means son of the father and Jesus could be seen as the choice between two sons.

Peter Lighthouse has suggested that we should think of the two goats on the day of atonement. Jesus is the sin offering that is going to be offered to God but Barabbas is the scapegoat who bears the sins of Israel. Barabbas however is released back to Israel placing their sins back upon their heads.

In choosing Barabbas the people also choose the revolutionary over the true Messiah. A choice of a particular course of action that would seal their fate later on in AD 70. Pilate's actions are constrained by the fury and the bloodthirstiness of the crowd who are baying for Jesus' blood.

We should observe the similarity between the statement of Pilate in verse 24 and the statement of the chief priests and the elders in verse 4. In verse 24, I am innocent of this man's blood, see to it yourselves. And then in verse 4, what is that to us? See to it yourself. The response of the chief priests and the elders to Judas.

A number of commentators have observed that in the background of this particular passage is the rite of Deuteronomy chapter 21 verses 1 to 9 unwittingly being performed. That rite is atonement for unsolved murders. This is a passage lying behind the actions of Pilate who is unwittingly performing this ritual in a certain way.

However, the irony in this case is that the heifer is the Jews themselves. He washes his hands, I am innocent of this man's blood. And then the people respond, his blood be on us and on our children.

Once again, this fulfills Jesus' judgement in Matthew chapter 23 that the blood of all these people will come upon that generation. It's important to emphasise here against some later Christian readings that this judgement is fulfilled in AD 70. This doesn't refer to a curse that continues over the Jewish people.

However, Israel is supposed to bear the sin of the old creation upon it as the appointed scapegoat and sin-bearer for the nations. And what we see fulfilled in Christ is just that. So Israel suffers the fate of the blood of all the righteous slain.

But Jesus is also bearing the sins of the world. All the sins of the old creation coming

upon him. And Jesus is then led away to be crucified.

Behind this text then is a rich tapestry of Old Testament allusions that help us to see exactly what is taking place in the cross of Christ. And the movement of the blood from one party to another, the ways in which different parties are implicated in different ways, the rituals beneath the surface, all of this helps us to see how God is orchestrating his purpose for redemption for his people through the sacrifice of his son. And that in this event of crucifixion, it's not just an unjust murder.

It's a means by which atonement is being provided. A means by which God is fulfilling his purpose for Israel. And a means by which judgement is working itself out, both for those who are rejecting and for those who will accept this sacrifice.

This is the outworking of destinies. A question to consider. The role of the crowd within this particular narrative is incredibly important.

The crowd press Pilate to crucify Christ. Now they're spurred on by the chief priests and the elders but there's something about the crowd itself that deserves attention. How might we think about the relationship between Satan's agency within the story and the role of the fevered crowd?