

Exodus 2:11-3:22

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Last week we began a fresh study of the book of Exodus, the second book in the Bible, which was written by Moses, recording events that took place around 1600-1500 years before Christ. And those six verses that we just heard read from the book of Acts, that are part of Stephen's sermon in Acts chapter seven, really summarise the first chapter and a half that we studied *last* week.

And what he notes is that God's people ended up in Egypt. And by way of reminder for *us*, this followed God calling Abraham out of Ur in chapter twelve of Genesis to dwell in a land that He would give to his descendants, which was the land of Israel in the Middle East (Abraham finally moving there after initially moving to Haran in modern day Türkiye as you can see on the map below).

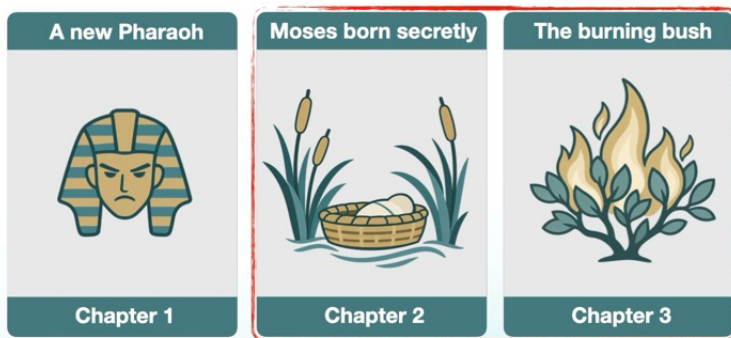


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And following Joseph (Abraham's great grandson) being sold into slavery in Egypt by his own brothers, his family followed through an incredible act of God as Joseph was effectively made Prime Minister of the country, saving not only his *family* from certain starvation, but all of Egypt too, having been revealed the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams by God.

But now, as Stephen also notes, Joseph had died, and there was a new Pharaoh. One that didn't know Joseph, or have any respect for what had happened by his hand. And with Jacob's descendants (that is also Joseph and his brother's descendants, who would become known as the children of Israel, and the Jews) now rapidly multiplying and growing in strength, this new Pharaoh was worried, and so put them into slavery, making bricks, and forcing them to build the cities of Pithom and Raamses, as we looked at last time. Yet the more they were afflicted by these conditions of slavery, the more they prospered, and the more they grew.

Chapter overview of Exodus



And so Pharaoh made a drastic, and foolish move, and ordered any baby boy born to the Jews to be murdered. But through a series of events that only God could engineer, that led to Moses' mother to hide him for three months, then put him in a watertight basket at the edge of the river Nile, where Pharaoh's daughter found him, had compassion on him, and even had Moses' own mother nurse him until he then came to live with her as her son (as Stephen further records) — that is, Pharaoh had sought to destroy all the Jewish boys, but now had one growing up in his *own* household!

And, that's as far as we got last time, getting as far as verse ten of chapter two. But this morning, we'll conclude that chapter, and all of chapter three too. So what will we read?

Overview of chapters two & three

Overview of chapter two

- **v1-10** — Moses is born, hidden, but then put in God's hands
- **v11-25** — Moses tries to protect his countrymen, but ends up fleeing

Well, in the second half of chapter two we'll see Moses, now aged forty, try and protect his own countrymen, in his own strength, but ends up fleeing from Pharaoh and from Egypt as a result.

Overview of chapter three

- **v1-22** — Moses at the burning bush

Then, in chapter three, with Moses now living in Midian (which is what we know as Saudi Arabia today), we'll first see him encounter God at the burning bush, who will instruct him to go *back* to Egypt, to tell Pharaoh to let His people go. And God will even tell him how that will work out.

So then, as we pick up where we left off in chapter two, let's first read Stephen's summary of the remainder of it from his sermon in Acts chapter seven, where he writes of Moses:

Acts 7:23-29

"Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are brethren; why do you wrong one another?' But he who did his neighbour wrong pushed him away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?' Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons.

So, then, it is from this passage in Acts that we know that Moses was forty years old, and also, as we *read* earlier, that he was *"learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds."* Indeed, growing up in Pharaoh's household, Moses would have had access to the *best* education in the most advanced nation on earth at that time. And Stephen notes that he was able to communicate with ease. And, evidently, he was able to write, not only penning the first five books of the Bible, but quite possibly the book of Job too.

As for deeds, the Jewish historian Josephus notes that (in his first forty years) Moses was put in command of the Egyptian war against the Ethiopians and conquered them completely (the record even states that he also took a wife from Ethiopia during that campaign, after she fell in love with him — which makes sense of Miriam and Aaron's displeasure with him over that woman, as the Bible records in the book of Numbers).

But there's possibly even more. One Bible commentary I read says *"Although the identification of the Pharaoh of the oppression is a controversial subject and a matter of speculation, Pharaoh's daughter may have been the oldest daughter of Rameses II, or she may have been his sister. According to the Egyptian customs of the day, her firstborn son had the right to the throne. [Therefore] Moses would have been the next Pharaoh had Rameses II and his queen remained childless."*

So, this is quite the position that Moses was in. Indeed, Moses had every reason to be confident in himself. But that was actually a problem, as we'll see. For we read in verse eleven:

Exodus 2:11

Now it came to pass in those days, when Moses was grown, that he went out to his brethren and looked at their burdens. And he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren.

And as an aside, if we want to have *any* hope of seeing, knowing, or understanding the afflictions that *our* Christian brothers and sisters are going through in their lives, then we'll *also* need to get out of our homes — and fellowship with them. Or at the very least, we ought to have them round to our homes. If you feel you don't know others in this church, then you need to do something about that.

But here, of course, Moses, leaves the palace, well aware that his people were enslaved, but makes the effort to go and see their burdens for himself. This wasn't an accident. This was intentional. And that tells us, that while Moses no doubt dressed like an Egyptian, and lived among them, he very clearly knew that he was *not* an Egyptian. Maybe someone in Pharaoh's household had never let him forget that. But also, let us not forget, that his own mother had nursed him during his formative years — feeding him not only with milk, but I'm certain with the knowledge of the Lord, and of who he was. That he was not Egyptian, but of the children of Israel.

And, rightly *angered* by seeing one of his own countrymen being beaten, he wrongly *acts* by killing the one doing the beating. We read:

Exodus 2:12

So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

In other words, he knew what he was doing. And he took matters into his own hands, for, as Stephen notes, *"he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand"*. But again, here is the issue. Here's Moses; eloquent, skilled, educated, battle tested, and placed right in the heart of the most powerful nation on earth. He seemed perfectly qualified. But he wasn't ready. And as we'll see, he fails. Why? Because though God indeed wanted to rescue Israel from slavery, and even would choose Moses to be a part of that, the rescue would not depend upon Moses' strength, but upon God's strength. And it would take the next forty years for Moses to go from a man of self-confidence, to a man of no-confidence in himself. It would take forty years for Moses to be ready for God to use him.

And we must surely consider our own lives and ministries in light of this. Do you feel perfectly equipped for a particular ministry? And if so, are you frustrated that God isn't using your skills? Are you even planning how God can use you? Well, friends, there's a danger in that. For there's a danger that we think we are ready, when we're not. And a sure fire test is whether we're trying to do things in our own strength, like Moses was here. Indeed, if you think you can do something for the Lord because of your own abilities, then you're not in the right place.

On the other hand, if you've come to the end of yourself, if you're thinking you have nothing to give the Lord, or there's no-way He would or could use someone like you, then you may well be ready for what God has for you to do. For God doesn't call the equipped, he equips the called. And as we read on this morning we'll see how much Moses changes between this chapter, and the next.

But here and now, Moses has taken things into his own hands, assumed that God would use him to save his people starting right at this moment, and acted in a way even contrary to what God would have had him do. And so, not only did God not have His hand on this, but we even see that his fellow countrymen didn't understand what he was trying to do. We read:

Exodus 2:13-14

And when he went out the second day, behold, two Hebrew men were fighting, and he said to the one who did the wrong, "Why are you striking your companion?" Then he said, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you intend to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" So Moses feared and said, "Surely this thing is known!"

So then, Moses had been rejected by his own people at his first time of coming to them; a shadow of how Jesus would also face the same. But also, the cat was out of the bag, so to speak.

And, we read in verse fifteen:

Exodus 2:15

When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he sought to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

So, the news travelled quickly. And not only amongst the Hebrews, but amongst the Egyptians too. And now that Pharaoh knew, Moses fled; for his life was in danger (indeed capital punishment was often used by the Egyptians for premeditated murder). And Moses took refuge in the land of Midian, which is in what we know as Saudi Arabia today, and as you can see on the map here:



And this land was so-called because the Midianites, the descendants of Midian, lived there. Who was Midian? Well, it turns out he was one of Abraham's sons, born to him through Keturah, his second wife, who he married after Sarah had passed. And so, while not quite home from home, this wasn't an illogical place to flee to. And we read on:

Exodus 2:16-17

Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters. And they came and drew water, and they filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away; but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock.

And so, Moses sets a good example here, with a right and protective attitude toward women. And with their father's flock given the water they need, his daughters return home. And, verse eighteen:

Exodus 2:18-19

When they came to Reuel their father, he said, "How is it that you have come so soon today?" And they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds, and he also drew enough water for us and watered the flock."

So then, first, this man — Reuel — is also called Jethro in the next chapter. And that's not unusual even today, as I've noted before (with Jon also known as Gunny, John also known as Tig, and my cousin Dave, also known as Frank!). Second, Moses was clearly still looking like an Egyptian at this point — maybe haircut, or clothing — even though he actually shared the same great, great, great, great, grandad as them. But third, and significantly here, Reuel (or Jethro) here, didn't miss the details of why his daughters were home earlier than expected, for we read:

Exodus 2:20

So he said to his daughters, "And where is he? Why is it that you have left the man? Call him, that he may eat bread."

Thousands of years later, and you still hear some parents talk in this way, right? Always looking for a potential spouse for their child! And it's not a bad thing, but parents, I think your energy is best spent teaching your child *what* to look for in a spouse (should they wish to marry), than it is trying to set them up with (or worse, pressure them into meeting) each eligible person that comes their way — for, remember, marriage will not complete your child any more than it completes you. So, if you are more interested in seeing your child marry than you are seeing them come to Christ, you have your priorities in the wrong order!

Here, Jethro has Moses round for dinner. But, that quickly turns into more. We read:

Exodus 2:21

Then Moses was content to live with the man, and he gave Zipporah his daughter to Moses.

Now, maybe it was the fact that Jethro had seven eligible daughters that made this an easy move for Moses! However, consider what it really meant for Moses to be content here. He had grown up in the palace in Egypt with all its luxuries, all its benefits, all his extravagances. He would have wanted for nothing. But here he's happy to live with a family of a shepherd. And you know, despite Moses' shortcomings (of which we will see more as we go through this book), he is a wonderful example, and here he embodies what the Apostle Paul was also able to say in writing to the Philippians, that:

Philippians 4:11b-13

I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

So, are you content? Are you? Would you be content with more? Would you? Would you be content with less? Would I? We should be content with whatever God has blessed us with. I think there is *space* for healthy ambition, and for a certain amount of drive when it comes to our work and studies. But if we're lacking in contentment, then that surely says more about our hearts, than it does our bank balance or net worth.

Here, Moses was content to live with Jethro, and, we see, Jethro entrusted him with one of his own daughters as his wife (which, as an aside means Moses, having been rejected by his people, took a gentile bride, before the time when he would visit his people again, and being accepted by them, would save them — another shadow of Jesus!).

And we read of Zipporah, Moses wife;

Exodus 2:22

And she bore him a son. He called his name Gershom, for he said, "I have been a stranger in a foreign land."

And Gershom, being the firstborn, is the only one mentioned here, though Moses and Zipporah also had another son during this period, called Eliezer, as Exodus eighteen tells us. But the meaning of Gershom's name essentially meant *stranger*, as we read here. And, indeed, though Moses now had a wife and two sons here in Midian, his people, indeed God's people were still in Egypt.

We read next:

Exodus 2:23

Now it happened in the process of time that the king of Egypt died. Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage.

And so, the Pharaoh that had made the Israelites his slaves, died. And just maybe the Jews thought that at last now something would change. But nothing did, and Pharaoh's son, who now ruled in his place, made no such change in policy. And therefore, we read in this verse of the Israelites' groaning in their labours, and how they cried out to God (the Hebrew word behind this indicating a shriek, such as from anguish or danger). And God heard them. So note that. Note that there is no record of *articulate* or *long* prayers. But honest ones. And that's what God wants from us. We read:

Exodus 2:24

So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.

Now, God had not forgotten this covenant. But rather now, at this point, He brought it to mind. Why now? Because this was *His* timing, for as we read last week, He had promised Abraham in Genesis chapter fifteen that in the *fourth* generation his descendants would return to the land God promised Abraham. And this is that generation that Moses was part of.

Exodus 2:25

And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged them.

So then, the children of Israel had endured slavery for over forty years, and with nothing they could do about it, and no hope of Egypt letting them go, they were now desperately crying out to God.

And Moses, though once self-confident, supposing that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, was now humble, and as such ready to be used by God.

In that sense, both were now in the right place, trusting God, and not themselves. And as we head into chapter three, we'll see God's plan to rescue His people begin, Stephen summarising it like this, continuing in his sermon in Acts chapter seven, saying of Moses:

Acts 7:30-34

"And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. When Moses saw it, he marvelled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, saying, 'I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and dared not look. 'Then the LORD said to him, "Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.'"

Chapter three

So then, as we enter chapter three, Moses is now eighty years old. Eighty. So do not think that age is a limiting factor for ministry! If Samuel and David were used as kids, and Daniel and Moses were used in their 80s, then there is no excuse for any of us in the middle, right? Indeed, here, Moses is only about to *start* all that God had planned for him to do.

So never think you're too old to serve. Indeed, if nothing else, older men and women *ought* to be coming alongside the younger ones in this church to explain the things of God, to share the lessons they have learned in obedience to God, and the lessons they've learned through disobedience too. That's a Christian *responsibility* that comes as you grow in the Lord and grow in years.

Likewise, don't be too easily frustrated in the *training* years. Forty years earlier Moses thought he had everything he needed to serve God. Yet now we will see he finally realises he doesn't, which, actually, meant he was ready. So let's study this chapter. We read in verse one:

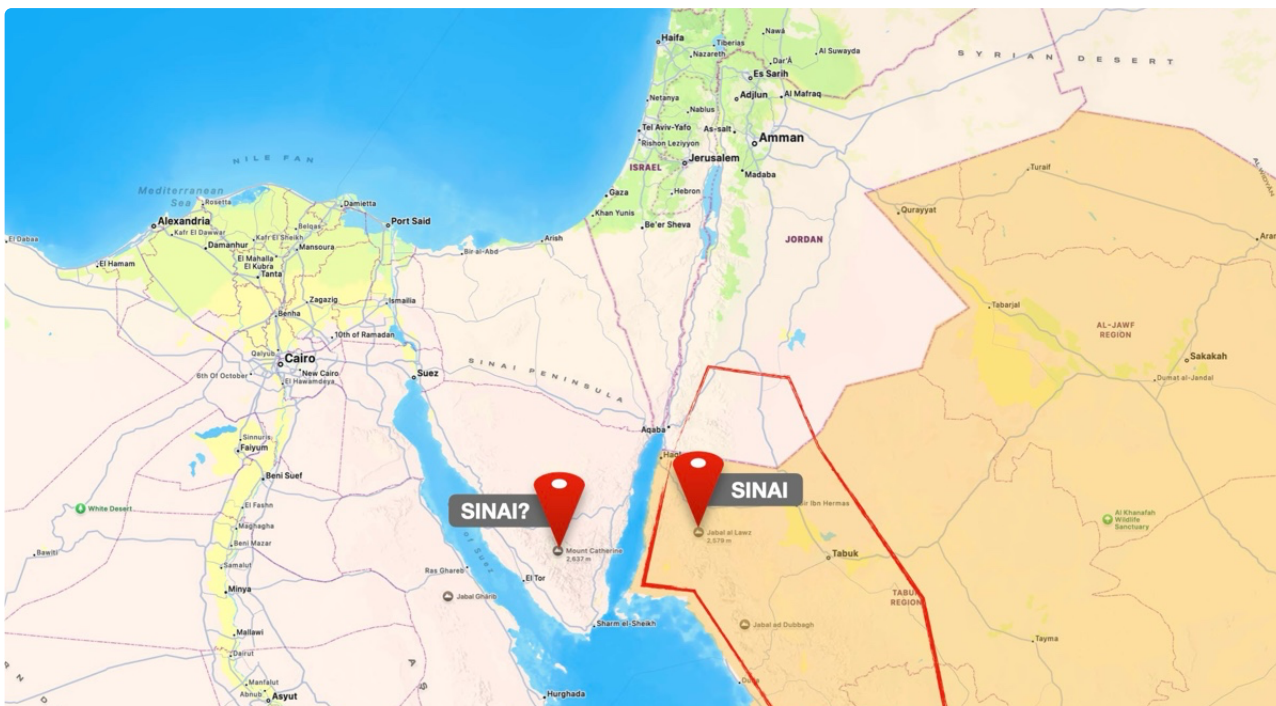
Exodus 3:1

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

This then, is the second time Jethro has been called the priest of Midian. And we'll look more at him when we get to chapter eighteen. But this morning, let us consider Moses. He had been a *prince* in Egypt, but now he's here tending to his father-in-law's sheep. He's a *shepherd*. And, it's *now* that God's going to use him. Why now? Well, first Moses attitude was now right — for he wasn't trusting in himself. But second, Moses, as a shepherd with a flock to look after and no signal to check social media, would have come to know these parts of Midian very well, something that would prepare him for all God would do in the coming years as he led God's people through this very area.

And we read that at this time he brought the flock to the back of the desert, to a place called Mount Horeb, called here the mountain of God — and better known to us as Mount Sinai.

So where *is* Mount Sinai?



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Well, we know at this time that Moses is in Midian, an area that is roughly marked out on the map that you can see on screen here. And we also know that the Apostle Paul, in the book of Galatians describes Mount Sinai as being in Arabia — that is, Saudi Arabia as we know it today, which you can see in the darker colour on the right hand side of the map here.

So then, Sinai must be over *here*, right? Wrong. For while that is the so-called traditional site, it is based on the naming of the mountain by the Roman Emperor Constantine's mother, Helena (on one of her expeditions), rather than based on the facts of where this took place. So, before your book a holiday to climb up to see Saint Catherine's Monastery, you should know that that's not where chapter three of Exodus took place.

Rather, the real Mount Sinai, or the area right next to it, is in Arabia — as shown on the map here. And it can be found on maps today by it's Arabic name, *Jabal al-Lawz*, which means Mountain of Almonds. Now, we'll spend some time looking at this place in more detail as get to chapters nineteen, twenty, and beyond, as God gives Moses the Ten Commandments and more. But for now, let's simply note that what we're about to read is taking place at the same location as those later events, and this location is not on the Sinai peninsula (as it gets called), but in modern day Saudi Arabia, which is where the Midianites, including Jethro, lived. We read:

Exodus 3:2

And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.

So then, as we have in several other places in the Old Testament, including with Abraham's visitors in Genesis eighteen, and also in the fiery furnace that Daniel's friends were thrown into in Babylon, this is a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus. And like that fiery furnace didn't consume Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, here the bush is not consumed by the fire at all. And, you don't need me to tell you — that's unusual! And so we read in verse three:

Exodus 3:3

Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

And with this incredible sight capturing Moses full attention, despite it not being on TikTok or YouTube, we read:

Exodus 3:4

So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

And how fascinating is this?! God waited until Moses turned aside to look *before* He spoke to Him. That should challenge us, and trouble us a little, I think. For wouldn't you and I *love* to hear God speak to us more regularly, or at all. Well, what if the reason He is not doing so is that we haven't given Him our full attention? What if we're so distracted by the busyness of life and the things of this world, that He knows we wouldn't listen to Him. That *should* trouble us. It troubles *me*!

Even the busyness of ministry somehow makes it hard to simply sit in God's presence, meditating on His Word, praying to Him, but listening to Him. I don't know what needs to change in your life, but I know I need to be more intentional about this. About simply getting time alone with the Lord. And that's not time alone with the Lord and my smartphone. It's time simply, purely with Him.

And friends, we have a great promise, don't we — that if we draw near to God, He *will* draw near to us. The problem is, what we define as near to God is often merely scratching at the surface of what we ought to be doing. So let us, like Moses, turn aside to look upon our God.

Here, Moses, in doing so, hears God say "Moses, Moses". And just like when God said "Abraham, Abraham" and "Jacob, Jacob", Moses also responds by saying "Here I am". In other words, I'm available for you to say what you want to me, to do what you want through me. And we read:

Exodus 3:5-6

Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

And so, Moses was to take off his sandals — not because this specific place had some special properties, but because Moses was in the presence of God. And God makes clear just who He is, that He is the God of the living, not the dead (as Jesus Himself noted in Matthew twenty two, referencing this passage and others), for He is the God of the eternal. He is the One true God, who sits outside of time. And recognising this, and aware of his own smallness, his own inadequacies, Moses hides his face.

Exodus 3:7-8

And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.

So then, God had *heard* the cry of His people. But note, before that He says he had *seen* the oppression they were under. And so it is with us. We may go to God with our concerns, our worries, our strife — but He has already *seen* what is going on. That doesn't mean we *shouldn't* go to God with our needs, but rather it means that when we *do*, God is not going to be caught off guard by what we tell Him. Here, God revealed His plan to Moses, that He would bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, and give them the land that He had promised to Abraham some 400 years before.

And in doing so there is a shadow of what He would do for us. For He wouldn't *merely* save us, but He would also redeem us *unto* something. That is, saved *from* sin, *unto* holiness and heaven.

Exodus 3:9

Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.

In other words, the Egyptians were being watched by God, and weren't getting away with anything. The same as no-one in this world today is getting away with their sin, or any poor treatment of God's people. And next we read how God was intending to use Moses, verse ten saying:

Exodus 3:10

Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

These were and are God's people. Let us not forget that. There are everlasting promises around these people. And it seems many in the Green party are completely ignorant of all this.

Exodus 3:11

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

Oh, *what* a change there had been in Moses! Forty years prior to this, he took matters into his own hands, supposing that his own people would understand that God would deliver them by *his* hand. But now, Moses is saying "who am I?!". The self-confidence is gone. The trust in his *own* abilities is gone. In fact, he's so lacking in worldly confidence that he is just the sort of man that God uses.

J Vernon McGee's commentary on this verse is thought provoking, so I want to read it to you:

One of the reasons many of us are not used of God today is we are too strong. Have you ever stopped to think about that? God cannot use us when we are too strong. It is out of weakness that we are made strong. The apostle Paul said, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27). Moses and Paul recognized that God could move through them when they were weak. It is amazing what God can do through a weak vessel.

J Vernon McGee

So then, where do you and I need to stop trusting in our own abilities, and let God have His way? And, likewise, who of you here this morning knows that God is asking you to do something, but are holding back because you don't think *you* can do it? Church, this isn't to say that God doesn't give us skills and abilities. It isn't to say God doesn't use the experiences we've had for His purposes. But our trust should not be ourselves. Rather, our confidence should be in God. For if God has told you to do something, you have the backing of God to do it! He won't leave you on your own. Indeed we read next:

Exodus 3:12

So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

God was asking Moses to do something He could not do in His own strength, so the very evidence that God had sent Moses to do it was that it would come to pass just as God said.

Exodus 3:13

Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

So, note Moses attitude now. He doesn't say *if* I come, but *when* I come to the children of Israel. Presumably he is encouraged by hearing God will be with him. But, we read, Moses has a question (and this won't be the only one that follows), asking God what His name is.

Exodus 3:14

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me to you."

Now, this stands out as it doesn't sound grammatically correct, but actually this conveys an important reality we each need to learn — that God is eternal. And He is the I AM because he simply exists. No one created Him. No one will succeed Him. He has always existed. And always will. And as such there is no greater assurance that God's people could have than to know the eternal, unchanging, and self-existing one has *sent* someone in *response* to their prayers.

Exodus 3:15-17

Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.' Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt; and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'"

In other words, there would be no doubt as to *who* sent Moses to them. For it was God's idea. And there would be no ambiguity in what God was telling them, via Moses, to do — telling them to gather the leaders of Israel together, that they might hear all that God was promising to do for them.

And, in that sense, we have a similar task — for God has told *us* to go and tell others what He will do for His people. Here, God continues speaking to Moses, saying:

Exodus 3:18

Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'

Which was a bold thing to ask a man who was set on keeping these people as his slaves. But also note, Moses opening line wasn't to be to suggest a permanent arrangement — but simply a matter of days, for this request, when denied, would reveal the unreasonableness of Pharaoh's position. And God, being outside of time, already *knew* what Pharaoh's response would be, saying:

Exodus 3:19-20

But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go.

So then, God who knows the beginning from the end, already knew Pharaoh's heart. He already knew how he would respond. It would not come as a surprise to Him, and Pharaoh's refusal, and the subsequent plagues God would send as a result, would actually play into the hands of God's people, God saying to Moses:

Exodus 3:21-22

And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. But every woman shall ask of her neighbour, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

Now with God's people in captivity, and being put to work as slaves, this may have been hard for them or Moses to comprehend — yet this is exactly what happened, as we shall see as we move through the book of Exodus. Indeed, Israel we'll see that Israel came out of Egypt with enormous wealth, in a sense compensating them for the lack of wages for the hard work they had done.

Now, for us, we know where this is headed — especially if we've read ahead. But this was breaking news to Moses. And as such, he would have more questions for God. But we'll get to those next time in chapter four. For now, let me ask you some questions.

Application questions

- Can you recall scripture as easily as Stephen did?
- Does your confidence in ministry come from what *you* can do, or what *God* can do?
- Israel's cry reached God's ears. Are we truly praying about our difficulties?

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