

Sermon Notes Exodus 3

21/2/2021

Moses called and assured of God's presence with him.

Introduction. The second half of Ex. 2 records an episode in Moses' life where he defends a fellow Hebrew which results in him killing and secretly burying an Egyptian. Moses discovers others know about his actions, so he flees to Midian. Moses marries Zipporah and has a son, who he names Gershom (the name sounds like 'for a foreigner there' in Hebrew). Moses was lamenting that he felt like a foreigner in Midian but his people in Egypt groaned under the yoke of slavery and cried out to God for help. Chapter 2 finishes with hope because, 'God heard their groaning, and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob' (24).

2:1-22 God's plan to rescue his people and the call of Moses.

1-3. Moses meets the 'angel of the Lord'. Moses had now been in Midian for about 70 years when God appeared to him while he was tending his father-in-law (Jethro's) flock. On the mountain of Horeb the 'angel (messenger) of the Lord appeared to him in flames from within the bush'. The 'angel of the Lord' is probably the Lord himself as it is God Himself who calls Moses from within the bush (4b). Other references to the Angel of the Lord in Exodus, 14:19; 23:20-23 seem to affirm that he is God Himself in the mode by which the divine person can dwell with his people. **[The true manifestation of God – the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ]**. This burning bush is clearly a dramatic and supernatural event which caused Moses to stop and look. Then God called to him, Moses! Moses!

4-6. Moses meets God. Moses meets God in the burning bush and God introduces Himself as 'the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob'. That is, the true God of Moses' ancestors who has been with His people throughout their history. Moses hides his face 'because he is afraid to look at God' (6).

7-12. Moses assured by God that He will act through Moses. The Lord assures Moses that He has heard the cries of His people in Egypt and that He is about to rescue them and bring them to the land he promised them. The Lord plans to use Moses in His rescue plan. Moses, as a mere shepherd in a foreign land, responds by saying 'who am I' to lead the people out of Egypt? Moses is given the assurance from God, '**I will be with you**'. The 'sign' given to Moses, the people worshipping God on this mountain (Horeb), is sure, '**when** you have brought the people out of Egypt' but it will only be confirmed after the rescue has occurred. Moses faces the challenge to believe God now for a future rescue.

13-15. Moses given further reassurances. But Moses still lacks confidence that he will be accepted as God's appointed leader to rescue His people. Moses fears that they will challenge his credentials, have you really been called by God? Moses wants to know God's 'name' to convince them. God responds with the idiomatic phrase 'I am who I am' (14, or 'I will be what I will be'), so tell them that 'I am has sent me to you' (14). That is, the One who always was and always will be the One true eternal God has sent you. To support Moses further God reminds Moses that He is 'the Lord, the God of your fathers – the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob' (15). This is another play on words as the word 'Lord' here sounds in Hebrew like the phrase 'I am' (14).

16-17. God's rescue plan. Moses is to go to the elders to tell them that God had appeared to him and sent him to them. Moses has to pass on a message of assurance and yet also a difficult message from God, 'I have been watching over you and have seen what has been done to you'. The elders could well have responded by saying, 'Why has God allowed our suffering to go on for so long if He has been "watching over us"'? **[God's timing is not our timing]**

18. The Elders will listen to Moses. Moses is assured that the 'elders will listen to you'(18), but, see 4:1ff, Moses still has doubts!

19-22. God's rescue plan. God assures Moses that He will perform mighty acts in Egypt that will force Pharaoh to let God's people go. Further, that the people will leave with 'silver and gold and clothing' (22) given by the Egyptians to encourage the Hebrews to leave!

Reflection/Response. What greater assurance do we need than God promising, 'I will be with you'? Like Moses we too easily lack trust in God, yet He graciously keeps on reassuring us. What does it mean to be available to God for Him to achieve His plans? How does the coming of God in Jesus Christ and the gift of His Spirit give us assurance of God's abiding presence with us?