



Exodus

Freed to Worship

Exodus 2:15-3:22

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Message #3 of 50



Wednesday Evening Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Exodus: Freed to Worship

Opening Comments

- Tonight, we continue a study of the book of **Exodus: Freed to Worship**
- Let's open with a word of prayer.
- Turn to **Exodus 2**.
- So far in our study of Exodus.
- The Israelites are in Egypt where they have spent the last four hundred years.
- They have grown to be a great nation - millions strong.
- Then a Pharaoh rose to power who did not remember what Joseph had done for the people of Egypt.
- He enslaved the people of Israel, but they kept growing.
- Pharaoh then thought the best solution would be to kill all the baby boys born to the Israelites.
- Then Moses is born, and his mother puts him into a reed basket and puts him into the river.
- Providentially, God arranges for Pharaoh's daughter to find Moses and she decides to raise him as her own – more of God providence at work.
- And then 37 years pass, and Moses decides to go see how the Israelites are doing.
- He sees an Egyptian beating an Israelite slave, and Moses kills the Egyptian and hides the body – the perfect crime – not quite.
- The next day he goes out and sees two Hebrew men fighting and he tries to break it up.
- **Exodus 2:14**
- Moses senses he might be in trouble, and he is right.
- **Exodus 2:15**
- Moses runs for his life.
- Midian was both the name of a person and of a group of people that descended from Midian.
- After Sarah died Abraham took another wife, Keturah.
- By her Abraham had a number of other sons, including Midian, whom he sent to live away from Isaac.

- They settled near the Red Sea.
- So, the Midianites are distant relatives of Moses.
- It is here where Moses' life resembles his ancestor Jacob's life.
- Jacob ran for his life from his brother and ended up at a well near some of his father's relatives.
- **Exodus 2:16-17**
- Jacob also drew water for a woman, his future wife.
- Moses draws water for the seven daughters of the priest of Midian.
- One of them will end up being his wife.
- Moses stands up to some bullies and delivers the women from them.
- God had put into Moses' heart a desire to see people delivered from their oppressors, whether they be his people or these defenseless women.
- Even before God called Moses to deliver the people of Israel, God had given him a deliverer's heart.
- Whatever work God is going to do in you, He begins long before he calls you to prepare you for it.
- Long before I was a pastor/teacher, even before I was saved, Kelly could see in me a gift to help people figure things out.
- She saw the teacher in me before I heard God calling me.
- Even now, I can look back over my life and see God's fingerprints on my life to get me to this point in time.
- And He does that with all of us.
- Whatever God is doing in your life right now is getting you ready for something else tomorrow.
- The girls go home and tell their dad what happened.
- **Exodus 2:18-22**
- Moses didn't seem to have a plan when he ran away from Egypt.
- But God did have a plan.
- Moses decides that Midian is as good a place as any to settle down.
- And the sense is that he was planning on staying here for the rest of his life.
- But then again, that was his plan.
- We get another fast-forward moment here between verse 22 and 23 – another forty years passes.

- Forty years of Moses living apart from his family and his people in Egypt.
- He went from living in the palace of the Pharaoh to living in the tent of the priest of Midian.
- He went from being a prince in Egypt to being a shepherd on the backside of the wilderness.
- And after forty years he has settled down into his new lifestyle.
- But things in Egypt are not going well for the people of God.
- **Exodus 2:23**
- Eighty years have passed since Pharaoh started persecuting the people of Israel.
- The king who sought to kill Moses is now dead.
- But the slavery that had been pressed upon the Hebrews continued.
- For at least eighty years they have lived under the severe taskmasters of Egypt.
- And their burdens just keep getting heavier.
- And so, the children of Israel groaned because of the slavery.
- This is not necessarily an audible expression – it is more of an inward burden that words fail to adequately describe.
- Sometimes life does get exceedingly difficult, and the burden on our soul is crushing.
- If we can pray, we would lack the words to express our burden to God.
- The Bible says it is in those moments that the Spirit prays for us

Romans 8:26

Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

- It always encourages me to know when I am struggling to pray, that the Holy Spirit within me is praying for me.
- That doesn't mean we don't need to pray.
- The children of Israel were groaning, and it says they 'cried out.'
- We may not have all the words we need, but we need to express the words we have.
- And God will respond – but maybe not in the way we want or expect or when we want.
- But He always hears the prayers of His people and He always responds.

- **Exodus 2:24a**
- ‘God heard their groaning.’
- Do you think they waited 80 years to start groaning about what was happening to them? I doubt it!
- I am guessing that early on, groaning was happening.
- So why did God wait eighty years to ‘hear them?’
- We need to admit that there are things about God and the way He works in the world that we simply do not understand **Isaiah 55:8-9.**
“My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD.
9“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.”
- I don’t know about you, but I usually want to be rescued as soon as my troubles begin.
- The last thing I want to hear is that God is going to wait eighty years to deliver me from my problem.
- One of the ways we prove we trust God is that we don’t put God on a delivery schedule.
- We are a spoiled culture. I ordered things on Amazon and gotten them the same day!
- God is not Amazon Prime!
- We need to say something like, “God I would like to be delivered today, right now, but Your will be done, not mine.”
- And if it is your will to leave me here for another day, give me the faith to not need an explanation of why and give me the strength to stand one more day **2 Timothy 2:1-3.**

You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. ² And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. ³ You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

- We can trust God, He hears our groanings, and when the timing is perfect, He will act.
- **Exodus 2:24b**
- If you think about it, it is an odd thing to say God remembered something.
- For us humans that means that it was out of our minds for a while.
- Can anything ever go out of God’s mind? I don’t think so.
- God is omniscient – He knows everything about everything across time and space **Hebrews 11:13.**

There is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give account.*

- God didn't forgot his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- This is the covenant of the Promised Land.
- In essence this is saying that God had determined that it was time to keep His end of the covenant and bring the children of Israel into the land of Canaan.
- **Exodus 2:25a**
- 'looked upon the children of Israel...'
- He was going to focus His attention on them to bless them **Psalm 34:15.**

The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry.

- God is getting ready to do something.
- **Exodus 2:25b**
- 'God acknowledged them' is fascinating = entered into the experience of the people.
- God came down to visit them in their suffering.
- One of the elements of the incarnation of Christ is that Jesus came down to experience life as a human **Hebrews 4:15.**

For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as we are, yet without sin.

- Jesus knows what we are feeling because He has entered the experience of being human.
- God heard, remembered, looked, and acknowledged the suffering of His people and now He is preparing to do something about it.
- Anytime time God remembers or acknowledges people it seems He is getting ready to do something for them.
- In the next chapter God prepares a man to be the vehicle through which He delivers God's people from the bondage of slavery.
- The Bible is filled with examples of God using people to accomplish His will.
- He doesn't need us, but He chooses to use us.
- Moses is about to have an encounter with the living God.
- I don't know about you, but there have been many times that I have wished for an encounter with God like this.
- And usually that is when we need something from Him.
- There is a lot we can learn from Moses' encounter with God.

- Let's get into the text for tonight
- **Exodus 3:1**
- The first thing we learn about encountering God is – **God appears in the ordinary**
- Moses is going about his life doing what he has probably been doing for decades – this is just another day at the office for Moses.
- When he woke up that morning, he probably didn't think to himself, today I am going to encounter the living God.
- More likely, he had been thinking about the flock, and his mind was probably far from God.
- God is going to interrupt Moses' day with an experience that will radically transform Moses' life.
- Moses wasn't doing something spiritual.
- We don't need to go to the top of a mountain or to a specific church building to have a radical encounter with God.
- He can show up wherever we are.
- And the lesson in that is – be faithful right where you are and trust Him to get you to where He can meet with you when the time is right.
- There are a few things I want to draw your attention to in this verse.
- First, Moses was 'tending the flock of Jethro.'
- After forty years, Moses is still working for his father-in-law.
- One of the things that God did for Moses' in that forty years is to teach him humility.
- That will show up regularly in future studies.
- Second, the name of his father-in-law here is Jethro – in the last chapter it said his father-in-law's name was Reuel.
- In my studies I couldn't find a good reason for the two different names
- It is possible that he had two names.
- It is also possible that one of them was a title.
- Turn to **Exodus 24**
- The third thing is the location of this event – Horeb, the mountain of God.
- Another place was also called the 'mountain of God.'
- **Exodus 24:13-16**
- Turn back to **Exodus 3**

- Horeb and Mount Sinai are the same place.
- While the exact location of this place is not certain, most place it at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula.
- Even in this we see the providence of God.
- Moses didn't stumble upon the place where God was.
- God, through the normal events of Moses' life led Moses to this place.
- The same is true of all of us.
- God is working out the circumstances and events of our life to get us right where He wants us.
- So, God appears in the ordinary – but that doesn't mean we always notice God in the ordinary
- **Exodus 3:2-3**
- The next thing we learn about having an encounter with God – **God needs to get our attention**
- Moses was doing his thing with the flock and as he glances over, he sees something strange – a bush is on fire,
- And that got his attention, but wouldn't have held his attention.
- It would be a curiosity – how did it catch fire?
- When God wants to get our attention, He will usually do it in a way that makes us certain that it is Him.
- A burning bush could be explained naturally.
- But a burning bush that wasn't being consumed, that called for a closer look.
- Before we look at Moses' response, there are a couple of things in verse 2 I want to look at.
- First, says this was an appearance of the Angel of the Lord
- And in verse 4 says God called to Moses from the midst of the bush
- This is referred to by most as a 'theophany' – a visible manifestation of the invisible God.
- A later theophany was the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night as the Israelites travelled through the wilderness to the Promised Land.
- As well as several others.
- Some believe this to be a Christophany – a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus – there is not good evidence for that.
- Second thing about the burning bush – it says some things about God.

- It reveals God's power over creation.
- Both fire and the bush were created by God.
- Fire by its very nature consumes whatever it is burning.
- And yet God is able to cause the bush to burn with fire and not be consumed.
- And the burning bush also speaks of the eternal nature of God and of His self-sufficiency.
- Everything God does in the world does not consume Him in any way – He can burn forever and not be consumed.
- He provides the energy for the fire and keeps the bush whole.
- Moses can't help but be drawn to this scene.
- Stephen relates this account to the religious leaders of Israel right before he is stoned **Acts 7:31**

When Moses saw *it*, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him...

- What is important for us in this is that God showed Moses who He was before He told Moses who He was.
- God gets our attention in whatever way is necessary so that we will be ready to hear His voice when He speaks to us.
- For a rare few, it is when God blesses them in some radical way.
- I say rare, because most would not see God in the blessing.
- For most, God is seen in the storm, or trial, or temptation.
- God doesn't bring the storm, but He uses them to get our attention.
- Often it takes sinking in the storm to get us to the point of seeing that God is trying to get our attention.
- Moses is about to have a radical encounter with the living God and his life will be changed forever.
- And not just his life – the life of his people, the Israelites too! **R. Kent Hughes**

A person never knows when his life might be changed forever by an encounter with the living God.

- I don't know about you, but that is exciting to me.
- We can watch for it, but we shouldn't wait for it.
- We ought to stay busy with whatever God has given us until He deems the time is right.
- **Exodus 3:4**

- The third thing we need to know about an encounter with God – **God will present Himself once He has our attention.**
- As long as there is anything in our life that is clamoring for our attention, we will be less likely to have a radical encounter with God.
- Too often we are hindering the Spirit of God from ministering to us because we are distracted by other things.
- I like the fact that God called Moses by name – this points to the reality that God is a personal God.
- He is Moses' God – He is my God – He is your God.
- God knows you, He knows your name, He is thinking about you.

Psalm 40:16-17

Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; let such as love Your salvation say continually, "The LORD be magnified!" ¹⁷But I *am* poor and needy; yet the LORD thinks upon me. You *are* my help and my deliverer; do not delay, O my God.

- Moses hears the voice, though at this point he doesn't know who is talking to him.
- Imagine that! Out here on the backside of the wilderness on a desolate mountain, probably all by himself.
- And he sees this bush burning but not being burned up.
- And then from the bush he hears a voice calling him by name.
- I don't know about you, but I am thinking that I would be a little freaked out by all of that.
- But Moses responds, 'Here I am.' = I am listening.

• **Exodus 3:5**

- The mysterious voice now gives Moses two instructions and a declaration.
- The instructions – do not draw near - take off your sandals.
- The declaration – this is holy ground.
- We will start with the declaration then we will come back to the instructions.
- The Lord says that where the burning bush was holy ground.
- This is the first reference to God's holiness in the Bible.
- The word 'holy' literally means separated – or set apart **Philip Ryken**
In the case of God, holiness means that He is set apart from everything He has made.
- Since God made everything, He is set apart from everything He made.

- He is more perfect than all His creation.
- There is an immense gap between God's creation and God **Hosea 11:9**

For I am God, and not man, the Holy One in your midst...

- That gap is symbolized in the first instruction – ‘Do not draw near this place.’
- It was later symbolized in the Tabernacle and then temple by the curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies.
- It was dangerous to approach God's holiness too closely.
- The account of the death of Uzziah for touching the Ark of the Covenant which was kept in the Holy of Holies pictures that.
- God tells Moses to keep a safe distance.
- The next instruction is to take off his sandals.
- This act pictures two basic things
- First, it shows respect, reverence, and subservience.
- It is a show of humility before a superior.
- Second, and more importantly, it acknowledges the holiness of God.
- Symbolically, the shoe picked up and carried the dirt and dust of the world, a picture of sin.
- By removing the sandal confessed that the person before you was holier than you.
- It is not stated whether Moses complied or not, but the obvious assumption is that he did.
- And I imagine he didn't waste any time doing it.
- It is then that God identifies Himself.
- **Exodus 3:6**
- I think it is important to comment on the fact that God asked Moses to obey before He identified Himself to Moses as God.
- I wonder if there are times in our lives where God is waiting to reveal Himself to us because we haven't obeyed Him in some simple instruction.
- It is as if God is saying obey Me then you will meet with Me.
- Too often people say, ‘Meet with me God, then I will obey You.’
- That doesn't work – obey first!
- God identifies Himself, first in a very personal way.
- I am the God of your father – Amram.

- Then God identifies Himself as the God of Moses' ancestors.
 - What isn't obvious is these descriptions are all in the present tense.
 - Which means they continue.
 - Jesus used this verse to prove the resurrection **Matthew 22:31-32**
But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ³² 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.
 - It is impossible to know what Moses believed about God up to this point.
 - Based on the beginning of this verse, we sense that his father believed in God.
 - But it is not clear how much influence Amram would have had on Moses once Moses was given to Pharaoh's daughter to raise.
 - He was raised in the court of Pharaoh.
 - The Egyptians worshipped many different false gods.
 - But he seems to know enough to respond in the correct way.
 - Says, 'Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God.'
 - Even though the burning bush was only a visible manifestation of the living God, Moses knew enough to be afraid to look upon Him.
 - This is the right response from Moses.
 - The only right way to come into the presence of a holy God is to be holy ourselves.
 - Moses knew that he was not holy – he killed the Egyptian - he was a murderer.
 - In fact, no human could ever enter into the presence of God and live.
 - God's holiness would consume our un-holiness like fire.
 - But in the book of Hebrews, we are encouraged to enter God's presence **Hebrews 4:16**.
- Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.**
- We can't do that based on our holiness or righteousness, because we don't have any **1 Corinthians 1:30**.
- ...you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption...**
- When we receive Christ as our Savior – He imputes, or credits to our spiritual account, His righteousness – His holiness **Colossians 1:21-22**.

And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled ²² in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and blameless, and above reproach in His sight...

- That is why Jesus told us that He was the only way to the Father **John 14:6**

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

- Only through Christ can we be holy enough to be in the Father's presence.
- In the Hebrews verse we were told to come boldly.
- That doesn't mean pridefully or arrogantly.
- We should come just as Moses did, first by removing our sandals = repenting of our sins.
- And second with our face hidden – humbling ourselves before Him.
- The idea of coming boldly means we can come with the confidence of knowing that God will not reject us ever, or for any reason, because we are in Christ, His Son.
- As Moses stands there with His face hidden, the Lord begins to reveal why He is talking to Moses.
- It is in that state that Moses is prepared to hear from God.
- If we want to hear from God we must seek to be as holy as God is holy, repenting of anything we find that is not holy in our lives and hearts, and humbling ourselves before Him daily.

- **Exodus 3:7-9**

- This is a repeat of what we saw at the end of chapter two.
- But now includes a glimpse of what Moses is going to do for the Lord.
- God intends to deliver His people, the Hebrews, and keep His promise to Abraham to bring them back into the land of Canaan.
- In verse 8 the Lord says, 'I have come down to deliver them.'
- God is going to use Moses, but it is God who will do the delivering.
- This is how God works through people – they appear to be doing the work – but it is God who is actually working.
- The people of God were in bondage in Egypt.
- About 1,400 years later God came to deliver people from bondage.
- Except instead of coming Himself, He sent His Son **John 3:16**.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

- Instead of being in bondage to a government, all people are in bondage to sin.
- Jesus came to deliver us from that sin.
- And just like Moses, we have been invited to play a role in the delivering of people from the bondage of sin **Matthew 28:19-20.**
Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.
- It is still God who does the delivering, but we as His people get the eternal privilege of being used by Him to bring people to freedom in Christ.
- Ever have someone tell you something and wonder, ‘Why are you telling me this?’
- Moses doesn’t know yet that God is going to call him to be the human instrument through which God delivers the Hebrews from Egypt.
- Next, we are going to look at God’s call on Moses’ life.
- Before we do, we should understand this idea of calling.
- Some see it as some mystical event that happens to the very special people in God’s kingdom.
- While God’s calling on some people is unique, they are not unique in the sense that God calls all believers.
- There are three common calls from God on all believers.
- The first is the call to **Salvation.**
- The most important need of all humans is to get into a right relationship with God.
- We were created for that very purpose.
- Before God does anything else with us, He calls us to Himself as an act of His grace through faith in Christ. **Acts 2:38-39**
Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.”
- God wants everyone to be saved.
- To repent of their sins and to receive God’s forgiveness.
- And once saved another calling is given – **Sanctification.**
- God takes us just the way we are, but then calls us to be like Him in our attitudes and behaviors **1 Peter 1:15-16.**

As He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶ because it is written, “*Be holy, for I am holy.*”

- Salvation is a one-time event – sanctification is a life-long process.
- We also refer to it as growing our faith.
- This means that what you know, believe, and obey about God and His Word is increasing.
- A healthy believer is always growing in faith.
- Then there is a third calling that comes at some point during the sanctification process – it is the call to **Service**.
- All humans were created and are called to serve the Living God.
- We would call this the general call to serve – Jesus modeled it.
- In John 13 Jesus washed the feet of His disciples **John 13:14-15**
If I then, *your* Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.
- All humans are called to salvation, sanctification, and service to God.
- But reality tells us that only a few respond to God’s call to salvation.
- Of those who are saved only a percentage actively respond to God’s call of sanctification.
- Of those, only a few of them respond to God’s call to serve Him.
- Everyone is called to serve.
- What we are going to see tonight is Moses’ specific call to a specific task – to deliver the people of God from Egypt and to bring them to the Promised Land.
- Not everyone gets a call like this – not given a specific task.
- Instead, they are called to serve wherever God has them in whatever way they can.
- I know that frustrates some people – they want to know what God’s specific call is for their life.
- And what I would tell them is focus on God’s second call – sanctification and to be faithful to God’s general call to serve.
- If they are faithful to do that, God will praise them to the same degree He would someone who received a specific call.
- And someone who is too focused on discovering God’s specific call for their life might be struggling with pride.
- A true servant doesn’t care where or how he serves – they just serve wherever the Master has placed them.

- And who knows if God isn't waiting to see if you will be faithful with little before He gives you much.
- Let's look at Moses' specific call to serve God
- **Exodus 3:10**
- Moses specific call = Go to Egypt and lead my people out
- It was a call unique to Moses – no one else was called to do this.
- The question is, 'Why Moses?' Why did God use Moses for this vital work?
- We could ask that question of anyone that God would choose.
- Almost always, God's sovereignty involves human activity **Philip Ryken**

Here we encounter one of the paradoxes of God's sovereign grace: God uses human beings – sinful human beings – to carry out His saving purpose.

- It is one of the radical expressions of God's grace that He will use us while we are still less than perfect.
- Then our reluctant deliverer responds.
- **Exodus 3:11**
- Starting here through halfway of chapter four Moses is going to try to talk God out of this calling.
- Moses' first of several excuses is, 'I'm not anyone special.'
- This could be genuine humility – didn't see himself as someone worthy of such a calling.
- Later the Bible will describe Moses as humble. **Numbers 12:3**
- **Now the man Moses was very humble, more than all men who were on the face of the earth.**
- Some might see a lack of faith or a sense of fear.
- After all, God was telling this lowly shepherd to go and tell the most powerful man in the world to do something Moses knew he didn't want to do.
- Pharaoh held the power of life and death – at least from a human perspective.
- I believe the thought that is closest is that Moses saw this as a task that was infinitely out of his skill set.
- God responds to Moses.
- **Exodus 3:12a**
- God doesn't respond directly to Moses – God knows His heart.

- Moses didn't need to know who he was, he needed to know who God was.
- It was not about Moses going to Egypt – it was about Moses going with God to Egypt.
- Too often we look at the things of life and think we can't do it.
- We're right, God isn't asking us to – He wants us to go with Him to do it.
- And if we know who God is, then we know there is nothing He can't do.
- Even though Moses doesn't ask for it – God gives Moses a sign – a promise.
- **Exodus 3:12b**
- This is an unusual sign – it is given before Moses obeys to reassure him.
- God gives Moses a sign that will come to be after he has obeyed.
- This sign was going to require faith **2 Corinthians 5:7**
- **For we walk by faith, not by sight.**
- Most of the time these kinds of things follow obedience, not precede it.
- It is as if God is saying, 'You have to finish the job to see if what I am saying is true.'
- Many of the things the Bible tells us to do don't come with signs in advance.
- We have to do the work of obedience to prove that what God says is true.
- Being faithful in relationships and work.
- Trusting God when it is hard to trust God.
- Moving forward in life when ahead is dark and scary.
- In the sign was a promise – your mission will succeed – and we know that it did because Moses will come back to this very spot with the whole nation of Israel.
- Moses still isn't convinced.
- **Exodus 3:13**
- It is hard to say for certain why Moses asked this.
- Could be that Moses wasn't convinced that the Hebrews would believe his story.

- Tending my flock, burning bush, didn't burn up, spoke, holy ground, go – lead My people out of Egypt.
- Maybe thinking they would ask, 'Who told you that?'
- I think Moses is underestimating the suffering of the Hebrews.
- They have been crying out to God for 80 years.
- It could also point to the reality that Moses had been raised in Egypt and exposed to the false worship of false gods.
- The Egyptians had many gods.
- It might be that Moses expected the Hebrews to ask him which one of those gods he was talking about.
- The Lord answers Moses with a response that has kept Bible scholars talking for over three thousand years.
- **Exodus 3:14**
- 'God' = 'elohim' – title = God
- It is interesting here that the Hebrew word being used is in the plural form.
- 'I AM' comes from root word 'to be' = being or existing
- This speaks of several elements of God's unique nature – but primarily of His self-existence.
- God does not exist as a result of any outside force other than Himself.
- God exists because God exists.
- Only God can make that statement.
- If we were making a similar statement we would say something like, 'I am what I have become', or 'I am what circumstances have made me', or 'I am what I was born', or some similar statement
- Only God can say, 'I AM.'
- God tells Moses to tell the Hebrews, 'I AM has sent me to you.'
- From this the phrase came to be associated with the God's deity.
- One day Jesus was taking with some religious Jews **John 8:57-59a**
Then the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸ **Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."** ⁵⁹ **Then they took up stones to throw at Him.**
- As far as they were concerned Jesus had just claimed to be God, which He was.
- To them it was blasphemy for a man to make a claim like that and the penalty was death by stoning.

- I have heard people say that Jesus never claimed to be God – Yes, He did – more than once.
- God has more to say about His name.
- **Exodus 3:15**
- The name ‘LORD’ is used nearly 8,000 times in the Bible.
- In the Hebrew it is four letters – YHWH – the tetragrammaton.
- The Hebrews considered God’s name so holy that it couldn’t be uttered or written out for fear of taking His name in vain.
- These four letters would have also included vowels.
- The medieval church added vowels and came up with the word “Jehovah.”
- Many believe that the correct way to say it is ‘Yahweh.’
- But the proper way to pronounce it has been lost over the millennia.
- That is probably best, since people already use God’s name in ways that are very blasphemous.
- There is another Hebrew word that is translated as ‘Lord’
- As we are reading it is good to know what we are reading
- Psalm 110 is a psalm of David that Jesus used to describe His deity
- **Psalm 110:1**

The LORD said to my Lord, “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”

- You will notice Lord appears twice – they are two different Hebrew words.
- Notice the first one is in all caps = ‘YHWH’
- The second one is upper case L and lower case ‘ord’ = ‘adonai’ and has to do with authority and ruling.
- ‘adonai’ can be used with a human ruler or authority but YHWH is only used of God.
- Also, this is another Scripture Jesus used to prove to the Jewish religious leaders that He was the Messiah – the Son of God.
- God’s name is unchanging just as His character and nature are unchanging.
- And because He is unchanging, we can depend upon Him for everything always.
- The Lord repeats His call of Moses in verse 16.
- **Exodus 3:16**

- I don't know about you, but I think it is interesting how often God repeats Himself to His people.
 - Have ever heard someone say in frustration, after they have been asked to repeat themselves, 'I shouldn't have to repeat myself!'
 - It is an example of God's grace and mercy that God doesn't feel and act like that.
 - He repeats Himself over and over again.
 - If God doesn't have a problem repeating Himself until we get it, we should exercise some grace and repeat ourselves humbly, as often as is necessary.
 - Lord says, 'I have surely visited you and seen...'
 - The Hebrews were in an oppressive situation.
 - The Pharaoh had laid a heavy burden upon them to try to keep them from growing as a population.
 - It wasn't working – and Pharaoh kept making life harder and harder.
 - They might have started to wonder if God was watching - if He cared about them at all.
 - God wasn't blind to it – He knew what was going on **Proverbs 15:3.** **The eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.**
 - Whatever we might be going through in our lives, the Lord is not blind to.
 - Nothing happens outside the view of God.
 - But the Bible does teach us that He pays particular attention to certain people **1 Peter 3:12.**
- For the eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers...**
- And to be righteous, we come to God through Jesus and repent of any known sin in our life.
 - This is not for perfect people, there aren't any.
 - It is for people who put their trust in God and are actively cooperating in the work of sanctification.
 - And we are told not to come empty-handed to God **1 Peter 5:6-7** **Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷ casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.**
 - We don't need to bring an offering like the Israelites would later be told to do.

- The offering has been once and for all in the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.
- As long as we have accepted Jesus' sacrifice for our sins and have repented of any known sin, we are righteous and God eyes and ears are on us – That is cool!
- The Lord then gives Moses the second half of the message for the Hebrews in Egypt.
- **Exodus 3:17**
- 'I will bring you up out of the affliction.'
- God had told Abraham about the Hebrews affliction in Egypt **Genesis 15:13-14.**

Then He said to Abram: "Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is not theirs*, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

- God had told them it was going to happen, and he told them how long it was going to last.
- He also told them in advance that he was going to deliver them.
- It was going to be all God – They weren't going to have to fight their way free – God was going to do all the work to free them.
- This is so true for us all today as well.
- Sometimes we feel like we are trapped in a bad situation, or circumstance, or a bad relationship, or a bad job – whatever.
- And then we start working to get ourselves free from that thing.
- Instead of waiting on God to deliver us **Psalm 27:13-14.**

I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living. ¹⁴Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!

- It is always better to wait on the Lord.
- That doesn't mean you sit around and do nothing – do what is good and right – listen for the voice of the Holy Spirit, and do what He says.
- Also would like you to notice something in verse 17 – 'I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt...to a land flowing with milk and honey'
- God is a delivering God – God loves to save people out of the oppression and affliction of this life.

- When God saves us out of something, He always is looking to deliver us to something better.
- It always causes me concern when I hear people say something, ‘God is calling me out’ – ask them where to, ‘Don’t know, just out.’
- Even when God called Abraham out of his country it was to ‘a land that I will show you.’
- Sadly, some who God is calling out, leave before He has shown them the ‘land flowing with milk and honey’ and they end up walking around in the wilderness until God is ready to bring them into what he intends for them.
- This is the second time in chapter 3 where we have seen the phrase ‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’
- It is a phrase that us city dwellers might not get.
- Milk is produced when animals are reproducing.
- Honey is made by bees when flowers are in bloom.
- The idea of both flowing pictures a highly fruitful place.
- Where the animals are free to reproduce without stress or fear.
- Not only would that mean lots of milk, but also meat and skins and wool, would be abundant.
- And where the plants, especially the fruiting plants are well watered and thriving.
- Which would mean that in addition to the honey there would be fruits, vegetables, and, because grapes flourish there, wine.
- It symbolizes prosperity and also safety – because a land does not flourish when it is in conflict.
- **Exodus 3:18-19**
- When Moses shows up and tells them what the Lord is going to do, they will believe Moses.
- With the elders of Israel, Moses and Aaron will go to the Pharaoh and ask them to let the people go.
- It is interesting to me that God tells Moses to ask for Pharaoh’s permission for the people to leave.
- Even though God already knows how Pharaoh is going to respond.
- Even in that there is a glimpse of the grace of God.
- God was giving Pharaoh a chance to obey God and glorify Him.

- There are some who teach that Pharaoh did not have a choice, that God made it so that the king of Egypt couldn't yield to His will.
- That is contrary to the heart and nature of God **2 Peter 3:9**
The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.
- God knows everything about everything and about every-when.
- God knows the future – He knows how Pharaoh is going to respond, and yet God still tells Moses to ask Pharaoh for permission to let the Hebrews go.
- Even before Moses leaves his encounter with the burning bush, God knows that Pharaoh's heart is hard.
- It is so hard, in fact, that even the mighty hand of God is not enough to break through.
- And instead of breaking through the hardness of Pharaoh's heart, God is going to have to break him and, not only him, but the whole nation of Egypt will suffer.
- Another thing this says to me – God is not winging it – He has a plan **Isaiah 46:8-10**
Remember this, and show yourselves men; recall to mind, O you transgressors. ⁹Remember the former things of old, for I *am* God, and *there is no other*; I *am* God, and *there is none like Me*, ¹⁰declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *things* that are not yet done, saying, 'My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure,'
- God's plan for the universe is already in place, and nothing the people of this world do, comes as a surprise and is not factored into God's plan.
- God knows that Pharaoh is hard-hearted, and He is going to use that to glorify Himself, especially in the eyes of His own people.
- God will break the hard-hearted will of Pharaoh.
- **Exodus 3:20**
- Phrase 'stretch out My hand' when referring to God always referring to His judgment upon a person or a nation.
- Pharaoh believes he is the most powerful man in the world.
- He is going to arm wrestle with God and lose spectacularly.
- God allows people to do that.
- He wants them to realize that there is a God in the universe who should be exalted above themselves.

- It is God's desire that Pharaoh would humble himself before God.
- We really have two choices – we can humble ourselves before God – Or He can humble us by His mighty hand and wonders.
- It is infinitely better to humble ourselves before God **1 Peter 5:5b-6** **“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”** ⁶ **Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time...**
- All the people of God must do is wait for God to act.
- God is going to break Pharaoh's will and then He will do what God wants him to do.
- He could have saved himself and his people a lot of hardship if only he had yielded his will to God immediately.
- **Exodus 3:21-22**
- The Hebrews were slaves living in the land of Egypt.
- But God's plan for them was to give them an awesome life in a great land.
- And so, He arranged it so that the enemies of God would provide a blessing to people of God.
- God put it into the heart of the Egyptians to bless the Hebrews as they were leaving Egypt.
- Told Moses, when the time comes to leave Egypt, tell the Hebrews to ask their neighbors for the blessing.
- And the Egyptians would give them silver and gold and clothing.
- Many of these things would then be donated for the building of the tabernacle where they would worship God.
- God always provides to His people what they need so that they can worship Him.
- This is a fulfillment of the promise that God made to Abraham when He told Abraham that his descendants would end up in Egypt **Genesis 15:12-14.**

Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, horror *and* great darkness fell upon him. ¹³ Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land *that is* not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. ¹⁴ And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions.

- This was also the basis for God's later commandment regarding the release of Hebrew slaves **Deuteronomy 15:12-15.**

If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. ¹³ **And when**

you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; ¹⁴ you shall supply him liberally from your flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. *From what* the LORD has blessed you with, you shall give to him. ¹⁵ You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I command you this thing today.

- Everything that happens is a part of God's plan.
- God is setting the people free so that they can worship Him.
- He is providing everything they need so that they can worship Him.
- It is the same for us, we have been set free from the bondage of sin so that we can worship Him.
- We have everything we need through the sacrifice of Christ and the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit so that we can worship Him.
- There might be things hindering our worship and obedience of God.
- Know that God is at work to set you free from those things.
- Wait patiently for Him to act.
- Get to know Him and His Word better as you wait.
- Listen for the instructions from the Holy Spirit and yield your will to Him.
- And then with the best of your ability, worship Him with your whole heart, soul, and strength.
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