

Exodus 3:7-12

Introduction

1. In my 40+ years of studying the Bible, I continue to be impressed with the number of ways the Gospel is foreshadowed and reflected in the Old Testament and we see that in today's passage
2. As I mentioned last week, a central theme of Exodus chapters 3 and 4 is God revealing Himself and His purpose and plan to Moses and the Israelites
3. Last week in 3:1-6 we saw how God introduced Himself to Moses in a burning bush and revealed to him that he was miraculous, relational, holy and faithful
4. In our passage today, God commissions Moses and reveals His plan to send him to Pharaoh and lead Israel out of Egypt to the Promise Land
5. As I studied through the passage, I was impressed with the number of ways it foreshadows or reflects the Gospel and our takeaways will focus on that:
 - a. God was intimately familiar with Israel's suffering and oppression
 - b. God came down to deliver Israel from their oppression and bring them to the land of promise
 - c. God commissioned Moses as His servant
 - d. God promised to be with Moses

A. God was intimately familiar with Israel's suffering and oppression (READ 3:7)

1. This verse harkens back to 2:24-25 (READ): notice both passages use variations of the same words: **"cry"**, **"seen"**, **"heard"**, **"know"**
2. Israel's groaning is mentioned in 2:24, but here in 3:7 it stresses the severity of their condition: **"affliction"**, **"sufferings"**, and **"oppression"** (READ 3:9)
3. But, the primary focus of this verse is that God was not only aware of their incredible suffering, but was intimately familiar with it:
 - a. Notice also the word **"surely"** or **"indeed"** (NIV):
 - a. It's repeated in the Hebrew for emphasis, something like **"to see I have seen"**
 - b. This grammatical structure is used for emphasis and stresses that there was no doubt that God had seen their affliction and suffering
 - c. He had **"surely seen"** their affliction, **"heard"** their cries, and **"knew"** their sufferings
4. Takeaway:
 - a. Like He was with Israel's struggles, God is intimately and personally familiar with our struggles and needs:
 - 1) When Jesus was teaching His disciples how to pray, He made an interesting comment: **"...your Father knows what you need before you ask Him"** (Matthew 6:8)

- 2) Later in the same chapter when He was teaching them not to worry, He said something similar, “**Don’t worry...for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things**” (Matthew 6:32)
 - 3) And God’s knowledge of our struggles and needs isn’t superficial or technical; rather, He is intimately and personally aware of them because Jesus came down, became one of us, and experienced the same temptations and struggles we face
- b. But God’s knowledge and awareness of our needs goes beyond our present, physical needs; He is aware of our greatest need and provides forgiveness and salvation through the Gospel

B. God came down to deliver Israel from their oppression and bring them to the land of promise (READ 3:8)

1. There are dozens of descriptions in the OT like this one of God “**coming down**” from Heaven:
 - a. Sometimes it’s in some supernatural form like fire at the burning bush, clouds like on Mount Sinai or the pillar of clouds and smoke that descended upon the tent of meeting
 - b. There are times when He came down in physical human form like when He met with Abraham before visiting Sodom and Gomorrah or the time He wrestled with Jacob
 - c. There are also a few instances where it’s symbolic and refers to God’s actions in delivering someone like here and when David calls on God to deliver him from his enemies in Psalm 144:5, or when God judges someone like Micah’s description of God’s judgment on the inhabitants of the earth in Micah 1:3-5
 - d. What God’s “**coming down**” in each of these instances reveals is that He is personally and directly involved with the affairs of mankind and that is certainly what we see here when it comes to Israel
2. God’s coming down had a two-fold purpose: He not only came to “**deliver them**” from their suffering and oppression in Egypt but to “**bring them up to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey...**”:
 - a. He wasn’t just going to rescue them from their oppression and misery, but take them to a place of abundance where they could prosper
 - b. This was the land of Canaan which God promised to Abraham and his descendants (Genesis 15:18):
 - 1) It is repeatedly described as a land “**flowing with milk and honey**” which was an idiom for prosperity and abundance
 - 2) Listen to the way it’s described in Deuteronomy 8:7-9 (READ)

3. Takeaway: Just like God came down to deliver Israel from their suffering an oppression and lead them to the Promise land, Jesus came down to deliver us from sin and death through the Gospel and lead us to our Heavenly home:
 - a. Jesus didn't come down just to rescue us from our misery and suffering in this life
 - b. Nor did He come down just to deliver us from sin and death
 - c. In John 10:10 Jesus said, "**I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly**"
 - d. He came to lead us to our Heavenly home, Paradise (a word used at least three times in the NT to describe God's abode where we will spend eternity; Luke 23:43; 2 Corinthians 12:4; Revelation 2:7)

C. God commissioned Moses as His servant (READ 3:9-11)
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1. There is a consistent theme throughout the Bible and it's that God uses human agents to accomplish His purpose:
 - a. He used Noah to rescue humankind and animals from the Flood
 - b. He used Abraham, Isaac, Jacob to establish and initiate His redemptive plan
 - c. He used Joshua to take Israel into Canaan to conquer and inhabit the land
 - d. He used judges like Deborah, Gideon, and Samson to deliver Israel from their enemies
 - e. He used Saul, David and Solomon as kings to establish Israel as a mighty kingdom, and various kings after that to lead Israel
 - f. He used prophets like Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos and a host of others to rebuke, correct, encourage, and prophesy to Israel
2. We see that same principle here as God commissioned Moses to bring His people out of Egypt:
 - a. I specifically used the word commissioned because God didn't ask Moses if he wanted to go to Pharaoh or lead Israel out of Egypt: He said, "**Come now**" (an imperative/command) and "**I will send you**"
 - b. This reminds me of Jesus' calling of the 12 disciples (READ Mark 3:13-15)
 - c. It also reminds me of Jesus' calling of Saul/Paul (READ Acts 9:3-9)
 - d. I'm not saying that Moses, the disciples and Paul didn't have a choice, but they were specifically chosen by God and Jesus and they obeyed the call and accepted their commission
3. Now, with that said, the text tells us that Moses was a bit reluctant:
 - a. Well, it was actually more than a bit—this chapter and the next record what many believe are five objections or attempts by Moses to wiggle out of what God had called him to do (3:11, 13, 4:1, 10, 13)
 - b. His first attempt was to claim that he was inadequate for the task: "**But Moses said to God, 'Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?'**":

- 1) It's interesting that God didn't get upset with Moses' first two attempts to avoid going; He didn't get upset until Moses' third attempt when he essentially refused to go and pleaded with God to send someone else
 - 2) Moses' question here seems appropriate because he spent the last forty years living in Midian as a lowly shepherd, minding someone else's flocks and God was sending him to the most powerful ruler of the known world; who wouldn't feel inadequate?!?!
 - 3) However, from a worldly standpoint, Moses was the perfect man for the job because he was raised by the Pharaoh's daughter, grew up in the palace, and spent 40 years likely living as royalty in Egypt
 - 4) But, the truth of the matter is that even with these qualifications weren't what ultimately made him adequate for the job as we'll see in a moment
4. Takeaway: just as God commissioned Moses to be his servant and carry out His plan, Jesus commissioned us to be His servants and carry out His plan in the Gospel:
- a. Matthew 28:18-20: **"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."**
 - b. In Mark 16:15 He said, **"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."**
 - c. However, like Moses, we come up with all kinds of excuses including "I'm not an evangelist" or "I'm not good at sharing my faith" or "I don't know how to disciple someone"
 - d. But, as we'll see in a minute, such excuses weren't valid for Moses because it wasn't about whether or not he was adequate for the task

D. God promised to be with Moses (READ 3:12)
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1. God didn't commission Moses because he was adequate for the task in and of himself, but rather he would be adequate because God promised to be with him: **"Certainly, I will be with you..."**:
 - A. We see this promise throughout the Bible
 - B. Abraham (Genesis 26:3), Jacob (Genesis 31:3), Joshua (Deuteronomy 31:23), Gideon (Judges 6:16), Solomon (1 Kings 11:38), and Israel (Isaiah 43:2)
2. The proof that God was the one who commissioned and sent Moses would ultimately be when Moses and Israel would worship God back at the mountain from where God called Moses, Mt Sinai
3. Takeaway: Just as God promised to be with Moses when He commissioned him and sent him to Pharaoh, Jesus promised to be with us as He sends us out into the world to preach the Gospel and make disciples:

- a. At the end of the Great Commission Jesus said, “**And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.**”
- b. In John 14:16 Jesus promised to send us the Holy Spirit: “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever.”
- c. When God commissioned Moses, it wasn’t about his own abilities or that he was adequate for the task on his own; rather, it was because God would be with him
- d. In the same way, Jesus commissioned us and sends us out into the world not because of our own abilities and that we are adequate for the task on our own; rather, it’s because He is with us through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8): “**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the ends of the earth.**”

Conclusion

1. Just as God was intimately and personally aware of Israel’s struggles, He knows our struggles and needs, including our need for forgiveness and salvation
2. Just as He came down to deliver Israel from their oppression and take them to the Promise Land, Jesus came down to deliver us from our spiritual oppression and lead us to our heavenly home
3. Just as God commissioned Moses to lead His people, Jesus commissioned us to make disciples
4. And finally, just as God promised to be with Moses on his mission, Jesus promised to be with us to the end of the age and gave us the Holy Spirit as our Helper