

God of the Living

Exodus 2:25-3:10

Forty years pass after Moses leaves Egypt, marries Zipporah, and settles into life as a shepherd in Midian. This makes him 80 years old, not the typical time for a third career. But God has not forgotten His people or His covenant. He is listening and hears their cry. Jesus quotes this passage to stump the Sadducees and astonish the multitudes, adding, “God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matt. 22:32). He changes us now and sends us to change the world.

God Sees

Pharaoh dies, but oppression doesn't die with him. Sometimes it takes a couple generations before God's people want to be liberated from bondage enough to cry out to Him. When the children of Israel cry out, God their Father hears, remembers, looks, and knows (vv23-25; cf. Num. 20:16; Dt. 26:7). Everyone cries out to something, but only God can deliver. A numerous and growing Israelite population has been putting up with oppression for over 80 years until something significant changes in them. This is what God sees. He knows and sees all things exhaustively, but 40 years earlier He only saw Israel rejecting deliverance. It's when we cry out to Him that He hears our cries, sees injustice, and remembers His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—His promise to make them a great nation and bring them out of bondage (Gen. 12:1-3, 15:13-14). What does God see now? Does He see us kicking back on the couch wishing He would deliver us from laziness? God is ready to bless us with the promises of the covenant, but we have to want them. He sees us confessing sin and crying out, or not. Either way we get what we want.

God Sanctifies

Moses has been shepherding faithfully for Jethro when he comes to Horeb, the mountain of God (v1). The angel of the Lord appears to him as fire in the midst of a bush that is not consumed by the fire, which cause Moses to turn and see (vv2-3). God often appears in fire: He makes His ministers a flaming fire (Ps. 104:4; Heb. 1:7); He leads Israel in the pillar of fire (Ex. 13:21); He is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29); Jesus baptizes with water and fire (Matt. 3:11). The fire of God either refines or consumes. Those who love Him and submit to His ways are sanctified by the trials He sends. Those who reject Him are consumed and warped by what they deal with. God is the fire and Israel is the bush, a common symbol for individuals and the corporate people of God (Ps. 1:3-4, 80:8-9; Rom. 11:16). God is refining Israel, making her holy, and she is not consumed. His method of burning here is oppression in “the iron furnace of Egypt... For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God” (Dt. 4:20, 24). Israel is wounded but not dead, suffering in order to be strengthened. God calls out, “Moses, Moses!” and commands him not to come close but take his shoes off because he is on holy ground (vv4-5). He calls you, too. The ground is holy because of God's presence, which is the only thing that creates holiness. The ground is cursed for Adam, but it

NOTES:

God of the Living

Exodus 2:25-3:10

becomes holy where God is so Moses needs to take his dirt-walker shoes off (Gen. 3:17-18). A holy person is not someone who went to seminary or wears certain clothes or hides himself away in a room thinking holy thoughts. We are holy when we've come to God through Christ. Jesus hadn't come yet in the Old Testament so the saints had to become ritually holy in order to approach God. But Jesus was holy already, and we come right to the Father in heaven through Him: "For Christ has not entered the holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (Heb. 9:24). Jesus has made us holy so unlike the old covenant priests we leave our shoes on. The saints make the sanctuary holy as they worship in the beauty of holiness. This building is made holy because God is indwelling His people, not because of anything in the walls. No physical object is holy in itself; it is all good and blessed by God when used for His glory. So leave aside all superstition and fear of any objects, places, or buildings. Rather, "as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15-16). You can tell a person is holy by their humility and fierce loyalty to God.

God Sends

God knows the sorrows of His people and will deliver them into a good and large land flowing with milk and honey (vv7-8). He bestows holiness upon Moses for the conquest just as the commander of the army of the Lord will do the same thing for Joshua (Josh. 5:15). Holiness is missional. God sees, He sanctifies, and then He sends us to do justice and mercy. Moses is going back into the iron furnace of Egypt for the greatest conflict of his life. Afterward will be rest and peace in a land flowing with milk and honey. This good and spacious land is like the garden of Eden but better because it's big and cultivated already. Jesus saw our bondage and left His throne in heaven to suffer with us. He touched afflicted and unholy people and they became clean. He ultimately died on the cross for the sin that kept us away from God, in conflict with others, and in bondage to death. He calls us to be His living disciples and sends us to announce the good news of freedom.