

## February 2-3

### Week 5: The People God Wants

#### Exodus 1-3

**PLEASE NOTE:** *If the people in your class are doing the daily reading, they will have read these chapters on Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup> so it should be fresh in their minds.*

In our first four weeks of our 52 Weeks of Knowing the Bible we have already covered 2 Eras.

The Creation Era where we saw how it all began from Adam and Eve leading up to Abraham.

It was Abraham and his family, where we were introduced to the Patriarch Era.

During this time, God became the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We learned how God moves in the lives of people through all kinds of circumstances. For example, Joseph was ostracized by his brothers to the point of being put in a pit and ultimately sold into slavery, but through various detours, God prepared a path to the palace where Joseph became Prime Minister of Egypt. What his brothers meant for evil, God used for good.

And then there is Job. Over the past two weeks we have seen how suffering can draw us even closer to God, even in the face of dire circumstances that are often beyond our control and that even the righteous can experience suffering.

Today we kick off the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the 14 Eras; The Exodus Era.

In this Era, we will look at the books of Exodus, Deuteronomy, Leviticus and Numbers. We are not going to do a survey of these books, but we will look at specific and practical lessons learned during this Exodus Era. We want to encourage you to continue doing your daily reading of the Bible and using the resources available through CBT. In our lessons we are going to “zero in” on one particular passage from all the assigned reading. And if for some reason you have not started or kept up with your daily reading, don’t beat yourself up. Just simply jump in today and read on from here.

It is during this Exodus Era that God’s people are in bondage, search for purpose, wander in the wilderness, as well as receive direction and parameters from God, which sometimes they ignore. This Era reflects the world which we live in even today.

February 1<sup>st</sup>, pg. 122 (Exodus 1) in your Chronological Bible.

#### **God’s People:**

The Setting of Exodus is Important: It has been several hundred years since Joseph was Prime Minister of Egypt. There is a new Pharaoh, who has no attachment or sense of gratitude to the Israelite people. Joseph has long been dead; this new Pharaoh uses the Israelites as slave labor to build his own empire. In the Patriarch Era, the Lord told Abraham that one day his descendants would live as captives in a foreign land and that He would deliver them. That time was now, as we enter the Exodus Era.

God’s People are tired, overwhelmed and defeated. Perhaps there are those here today who feel tired because of circumstances at work or home. Perhaps some feel overwhelmed with the

beginning of a new year, new goals, new deadlines, new challenges, new obstacles, etc. Others may be feeling defeated physically, emotionally, mentally and even spiritually.

Although none of us are enslaved the way the Israelites were in Egypt, we can become enslaved to our feel tired, overwhelmed and defeated. It is during those times we wonder where God is in “all this”.

God’s people, the Israelites had been in Slavery; Bondage for Generations. The Israelites were living in Egypt or perhaps more accurately, working and existing in Egypt. They were very familiar with the name Pharaoh.

Their lives revolved around the one who had the name Pharaoh. Pharaoh had their Attention, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, decade after decade and even generation after generation.

Make No Mistake about it the one named Pharaoh had their attention. And today as we kick off the Exodus Era, all that changes. Moses enters the picture!

Most of us are familiar with the story found in Exodus; though most of the familiarity probably comes from the movie “The Ten Commandments” more than the actual book of Exodus in the Bible. When Moses was born it was not safe to be a male Israelite. They were killing new born males and the mother of Moses made a true sacrifice. (see Exodus 1: 22, *February 1<sup>st</sup> pg. 121*)

She wanted to spare the life of her son, so she had to give him up. She put him in a basket and put him in the Nile River. The Daughter of Pharaoh saw this baby boy in a basket floating in the River and had a maidservant pick up the boy. As it turned out Moses’ own mother got to nurse him and as he grew and was weaned the boy was given back to the daughter of Pharaoh who is the one who named him Moses, which means “drawn out of water”.

Moses grew up as royalty though always knowing he was an Israelite. And yet he was treated and educated as a son of Pharaoh, with the best education of the day.

It would seem that Moses had everything a young man could ever want. He had education, he had authority, he had responsibility; he was living the life of royalty. But he never forgot that he was a Hebrew, an Israelite. Every day he saw other Hebrews existing and working as slaves, while he was living a life of privilege.

Let’s pick up the story in Exodus 2: 11 (Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, pg. 122)

**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. <sup>12</sup> So he looked this way and that way, and when he saw no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. <sup>13</sup> 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?” <sup>14</sup> 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!” <sup>15</sup> 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.

Moses had everything and then lost it.

He was tired, overwhelmed and defeated. He “fled from the face of Pharaoh”. Moses put on his running shoes (sandals) and left everything he had ever known behind. No longer was he living a life of privilege. He was now an anonymous Israelite living in Median, perhaps the most educated shepherd in the entire region, if not world!

We are told that Moses “sat down by a well”. The well in any city was a gathering place, usually centralized for easy access for all the people to share. In Median there was a Priest named Jethro. He had 7 daughters who had gone to the well to draw water. Fast forward (vs. 16-21) Moses married one of his daughters named Zipporah, and settled down in Median, had a family and became a Shepherd.

The First 40 years of Moses life was spent in royalty in Egypt. The second 40 years of Moses life was spent in Median as a Shepherd, husband and father. And now at the age of 80 something or should I say *someone* would capture his attention.

Let’s continue by looking at Exodus 2: 23-25 (pg. 122; Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>)

**Ex. 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. <sup>24</sup> So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup> And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.

The people crying out, groaning; they were at a complete loss.

Sound Familiar?

We have all been in those kinds of situations.

- Perhaps it was at a hospital, receiving the news from the doctors; you were crying and groaning.
- Perhaps it was at the office and you called into your supervisor’s office; you hear that they are having cutbacks and you have been cut. You were crying and groaning, on the inside if not the outside.
- Perhaps it was when you heard the words, “I want a divorce”. You were crying and groaning.
- Perhaps it was about 18 months ago when Harvey came, and your home got flooded; you were crying and groaning.

Sadly these kinds of situations are not uncommon. They capture our attention and cause us to cry out and groan in the depths of our being. Those feelings and emotions are real; not to be denied. But don’t forget what happens in vs. 24.

**Ex. 2: 24** So God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. <sup>25</sup> And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.

Vs. 24 God Heard their Groaning.

- There is No Shame in Groaning
- There is No Shame in Crying Out

God Created us as Emotional Beings God hears your groaning; God hears your crying out.

The fact God hears is an incredible Promise of God. And though easier said than done, it should give each of us a peace that surpasses understanding, a supernatural peace in the midst of the difficulty that God hears our hearts.

Notice also in vs. 24, we see God remembered His Covenant

- First--God Heard
- Second--God Remembered

God had established a covenant with Abraham during the Patriarch Era, do you remember reading it back on January 5<sup>th</sup>?

**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. <sup>14</sup> And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. (January 5<sup>th</sup>)

That covenant did not cease with the generations of Israelites in slavery in Egypt.

Perhaps there are those here that feel abandoned by God. Perhaps feeling that God has forgotten about them because of the circumstances you are facing. Rest assured that God has not forgotten; God has not forsaken You. God remembers His covenant that reaches all the way to Houston, TX in 2019.

God remembered His people and He remembered His promise! He who neither slumbers nor sleeps providentially raised up Israel’s future leader right under Pharaoh’s own roof. And then in the fullness of time, He heard their groaning. He remembered His covenant and thirdly, He acknowledged them.

- First--God Heard
- Second--God Remembered
- Third --God Acknowledged them, He took notice of them. Look at vs. 25

**Ex. 2: 25** And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God acknowledged *them*.

There are times when we feel like no one acknowledges us, we feel abandoned and forsaken. There are times we feel invisible and isolated. The good news of the Gospel is the fact that God has taken notice of all that has happened in your life this week, this month, this season; And God is STILL taking notice and acknowledging you in eternity.

## 2. God's Servant Leader

As God heard; as God remembered; as God took notice; Moses was being a Shepherd.

Moses was not doing anything spectacular that would otherwise be noticed by anyone. For 40 years as a Husband, Father and Shepherd. He was simply going about daily routines; getting into a rhythm of life. No Surprises. Life was Good

Look at Exodus 3: 1 (Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, pg. 123)

**Ex. 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.

Moses was living a very natural, normal, uneventful, life (some would say boring) He was shepherding the flock in the wilderness in Midian, which is modern day Saudi Arabia and he came to Horeb, the Mountain of God. There was absolutely nothing unusual in this situation. It was perhaps something he had done on many occasions.

But then we come to verse 2....

**Ex. 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.

On this natural mountain; going for a natural, normal, everyday walk, as shepherds tend to do on a regular basis; and then something supernatural happens; a burning bush that is not consumed.

That is NOT a natural event. It can't be compared to anything else.

It was absolutely supernatural.

And Guess What?

That which was supernatural in a natural world captured the attention of Moses.

For the longest time I thought it was the voice of God calling "Moses, Moses" out of the burning bush that captured his attention. But it wasn't the voice of God; in fact, it was the supernatural in the natural that captured the attention of Moses.

**Ex. 3:3** Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

When something happens to us that we don't see coming, we don't expect or anticipate; we have a choice to make in how we respond. Many of us go numb; we pause whether we wanted to or not, which is not necessarily a bad thing. When we pause, it allows God to do something extraordinary.

Notice what happens when the supernatural causes Moses to pause.

**Ex. 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.”

It wasn't until Moses paused, that God spoke. Notice this is not a dictatorial monologue; rather this is the beginning of a dialogue.

In the midst of something supernatural, something so “out of the ordinary” that we didn't see coming; if we dare to pause and shift our attention for a moment, we allow God to speak.

God had heard the cries of His people. God had remembered the covenant He made. God had noticed and acknowledged their suffering. And God was ready to respond in a way that no one could have ever predicted, by using Moses, who had been gone from Egypt for 40 years living a very ordinary life as a Shepherd.

But when God spoke, Moses said, “here I am”. Imagine what would have happened or perhaps not happened if when Moses heard God call out his name, he turned and kept walking. But something inside of Moses stirred to the point that in front of this supernatural, out of the ordinary, burning bush, Moses had the courage to say, “here I am.”

**Ex. 3: 5** Then He (*God*) said, “Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground.”<sup>6</sup> 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.<sup>7</sup> 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. (*sufferings*)

Did you notice how God referred to Himself with the Patriarchs? In vs. 6 God said, “I am the God of your father---the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

There is this beautiful and timeless connection with God from the Patriarch Era. Now in the Exodus Era, the same God continues to move, work, deliver and redeem. In the very next verse (vs.7) God says He has “surely seen”, which means “given heed, am aware, have acknowledged and taken notice” of your situation.

God is not distant in times of crisis, even with whatever you or your family may be going through; God has surely seen what is happening and how you may be suffering. God wants to move in your life in significant ways.

**Ex. 3: 8** 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.<sup>9</sup> 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.

The land of promise was not the land of perfection. The land of milk and honey had occupants that were enemies; the Hittites, Amorites, etc. We often think the grass is greener on the other side; another job, another relationship, another doctor; and it will all be better. But even the land of promise had obstacles and challenges.

Then God said he would deliver His People and was going to use Moses to do it.

We pick up the conversation in vs. 13

**Ex. 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?” <sup>14</sup> 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.’”

What is His Name? Good Question. His name is: I Am who I Am.

I AM all that you need whenever you need all that I am.

- Tell the sons of Israel...I AM has sent me to you.
- Tell those who are Crying out...I AM is here.
- Tell those who are Groaning...I AM is here.

Look at vs. 15

**Ex. 3: 15** 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.’”

I AM = LORD, (Jehovah)

His name is His memorial. A memorial name for all generations.

Whatever we face this week; Whatever it is that causes us to cry out and groan; Let us never forget the name I AM; the memorial name for all generations, including ours!

Jehovah, the Great I AM!

The God of the Patriarchs (*Abraham, Isaac, Jacob*) is the God of Exodus (*Moses and the Israelites*) is the same God of 2019.

God hears. God remembers. God acknowledges. God delivers.

**Special NOTE:** Please encourage everyone to continue the daily reading, which will take them through familiar stories of God’s deliverance out of Egypt. But also let them know that next week, we will be studying Exodus 32, though they will not have read it by weekend Bible Study class, based on the daily reading schedule.