

God's Compassion for His People

God faithfully keeps His promises to His people and is compassionate towards them in their suffering.



GOD'S STORY
THE TRANSFORMATION FOR ADULT LIFEGROUPS

Exodus 2:23-3:20

March 22, 2020

(Exodus 2:23-25) ²³ During that long period, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out, and their cry for help because of their slavery went up to God. ²⁴ God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. ²⁵ So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.

(Exodus 3:1-20) ¹ Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. ³ So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up." ⁴ When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." ⁵ "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. ⁷ The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. ⁸ So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ⁹ And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. ¹⁰ So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt." ¹¹ But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" ¹² And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain." ¹³ Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" ¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'" ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The Lord, the 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, the name you shall call me from generation to generation. ¹⁶ "Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. ¹⁷ And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites—a land flowing with milk and honey.' ¹⁸ "The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifices to the Lord our God.' ¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. ²⁰ So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

COMMUNITY – CONNECTING WITH ONE ANOTHER

- Have you ever seen a child who lost their parents in a public place? Has this ever happened to you?
- If you had trouble finding your child in a public setting, do you think you could pick out your child's voice? Why or why not? Encourage learners to recall times when they had to respond to a painful or fearful cry from one of their children—or when their parents responded to their cries.

Many parents have experienced hearing their child's cries for help in the midst of many other cries or voices, and many testify to their ability to distinguish their child's cries from those of other children. A parent's natural instinct is to listen to the cries of her child and to respond. This instinct is rooted in God-given love, and most parents are willing to do whatever it takes to meet their children's needs. In a similar way, God listens to the cries of His children and His commitment to work on their behalf.

CONTENT – EXPLORING GOD’S STORY

Have a volunteer read Exodus 2:23-25

- How did the Israelites respond to their oppression at the hands of the Egyptians? What action words describe God’s response?
- What prompted God to take action on behalf of the Israelites?
- God’s remembering His covenant does not imply that He had forgotten it. Rather, it means that He chose to put His promises into effect. What is the relationship between the cries and prayers of the people, and God’s promises?

We may wonder if God hears our prayers. Suffering can make us desperate enough to pray, yet discouraged enough to conclude nothing can be done, even by God. When we find ourselves in difficult situations, we can take confidence because we know God knows about our suffering. He hears our prayers and acts to bring us courage, patience, peace, comfort, and help.

Have a volunteer read Exodus 3:1-6

Horeb, the mountain of God, is located in the south-central part of the Sinai Peninsula. It has been identified by some with the mountain known today as Jebel Musa. Horeb and Sinai were apparently two different names for the same mountain where the Lord God would later give the Law to Moses (Ex. 19:20; Deut. 5:2).

- Why did the Lord tell Moses to remove his sandals? Joshua was told to do the same near Jericho (Josh. 5:15). What do you think made these places “holy ground”?
- What did God disclose about Himself to Moses in these verses?
- How did Moses respond in verse 6 to God’s revelation? Why do you think Moses was afraid?
- Moses was nearly eighty years old when the Lord appeared to Him (Ex. 7:7). He was also a fugitive from justice, having killed an Egyptian man (Ex. 2:11-15). What does this tell us about the person God can use?

Have a volunteer read Exodus 3:7-10

- How did the plan God disclosed differ from the kind of relief the people likely hoped for when they cried out to God because of their difficult labor (Ex. 2:23)?
- What role was Moses going to have in fulfilling God’s plan? How do you think he felt?
- How has God worked in surprising ways in your life? When has He used unexpected people to minister to your needs? How might you be part of His compassionate action in someone else’s life?

God knows our situation and needs. In our difficult times He provides us with strength, patience, and guidance. He sends others to minister to us. Sometimes God acts in our times of difficulty by calling us to minister to others. He uses our background, gifts, and knowledge of life’s tragedies and difficulties to strengthen us and to help others through their difficulties.

Have a volunteer read Exodus 3:19-20

- What was God’s ultimate goal in these verses?

- What were the obstacles that needed to be overcome? What additional obstacle would God overcome for His people? How would He do this, and for what purpose?

In the same way that God knew Israel's sufferings and came down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians (v. 8), Jesus, God in the flesh, came down from heaven, to identify with our suffering and deliver us from the hand of the enemy! Note the hints of God's master plan of salvation that appears in His plan to rescue Israel:

- Just as they were in bondage to Egypt, we too were in bondage to sin and Satan (Romans 6:17).
- Just as they cried out for deliverance, so too does our soul long for deliverance (Psalm 88:1).
- Just as God hears their cries and sends a deliverer, we too receive a better Savior (Galatians 4:4-5).
- Just as their salvation was from an oppressor and into a new home, Jesus saves us from our sins and into God's family in heaven (Ephesians 2:1-7).
- List one or two major obstacles you're praying God will overcome in your life. How does Jesus' life, death and resurrection give you hope that God will ultimately act for your good?
- What promises of God do you want Him to remember for you?

COMMISSION – ENGAGING IN GOD'S STORY

- What circumstances have driven you to cry out to the Lord for help? Which of His promises give you hope in the midst of your trouble?
- How would it change your life to realize with every step you take your feet are on holy ground in the presence of the Lord? What will you do differently?
- What insights gained from this study could you share with a non-Christian who asked you, "How do you know God cares what happens to you?"

PRAYER: Close in prayer, praying for the needs of learners who are hurting or in need of God's hand to deliver them from trouble or oppression. Thank God that He notices, discloses, takes action, and works wonders for His people.

CONTINUE TO JOURNEY THROUGH GOD'S STORY

Bible Reading Plan:

DAY 1 – Exodus 8-9
 DAY 2 – Exodus 10-11
 DAY 3 – Exodus 12
 DAY 4 – Exodus 13:17-14
 DAY 5 – Exodus 16-17

KEY VERSE: Exodus 12:13

H.E.A.R. Method:

Highlight a verse or two.
 Explain what the text means.
 Apply the verse to your life.
 Respond to God.

Our team has put together Bible study resources to encourage and inspire you as you engage in God's Story. Visit chetscreek.com/gods-story for videos, study guides, and more.

OUR VISION

To be a church
 for the unchurched,
 here and around the world.

ADULT LIFEGROUPS

Gospel-centered communities that aim to KNOW
 GOD together and BE CHANGED by Him in a
 way that will CHANGE THE WORLD.

Exodus 2:23-25

2:23. As long as Egyptian kings remembered how Joseph had saved their nation from famine, the Israelites received good treatment. That treatment changed when an Egyptian king rose to power who did not know or want to know what Joseph had done. Pharaoh [FEHR oh], a word meaning “great house,” served as a title for the Egyptian king. The Israelites used the title as a personal name for all Egyptian kings. The new Pharaoh decided to oppress and enslave the Israelites. When they continued to multiply, he decreed that all sons be killed immediately after birth. However, two Hebrew midwives protected the newborn boys, and God blessed them and the people (Ex. 1:1-22).

2:24. The use of the verbs “heard” and “remembered” do not mean God had ignored His people’s earlier cries or had forgotten His covenant with Abraham. Both of these Hebrew verbs include the idea of acting on what is heard or remembered. During the oppressive Pharaoh’s reign, God had brought Moses, His future deliverer, into the world. Moses’ birth was God’s next step in fulfilling His ancient promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (see Gen. 12:2-3,7).

2:25. The Hebrew verb translated “took notice” typically carries the meaning “to know” and reflects a personal, intimate knowledge of another. God was intimately involved with His people. He knew and understood their oppression and would soon deliver them.

Exodus 3:1-20

3:1. Moses was born into the tribe of Levi in Egypt. When his parents could no longer hide him, his mother placed him in a watertight basket and floated the basket down the Nile River. One of Pharaoh’s daughters found the baby and adopted him.

Later, when Moses was grown, he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. Moses killed the Egyptian. The next day Moses tried to settle an argument between two Hebrews, and one of them revealed he had witnessed Moses’ crime. Moses escaped to Midian [MID ih uhn] where he met Jethro [JETH roh](also called Reuel), a priest. Moses married Jethro’s daughter and became a shepherd for his father-in-law (2:1-22).

Midian lay east of the Gulf of Aqaba [A kuh buh] in the northwestern corner of Arabia. One season as Moses traveled toward Egypt to find pastures for the sheep, he arrived at Horeb [HOH reb], another name for Mount Sinai, located in the south-central part of the Sinai peninsula. At Horeb God would call Moses to shepherd His people.

3:2. As Moses tended his flock, he noticed a flame of fire burning within a bush, but the branches and leaves were not turning to ash. The burning bush was no natural phenomenon but rather signaled the presence of the Angel of the Lord. God’s appearance in the fire in the burning bush anticipated His later appearance in the fire on Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:18). The word translated “bush” also sounds similar to the name Sinai, another tie between Mount Sinai and God’s revelation.

3:3. God used Moses’ natural curiosity to draw him into His presence. Once God and Moses began their conversation, the bush no longer was the focus. The Bible does not reveal whether the bush burned up or the fire suddenly went out. The bush served only to draw Moses’ attention so he could encounter God and receive God’s call.

3:4. When Moses turned aside to examine the burning bush, God called out to him. In the ancient world, calling a person’s name twice expressed particular affection and friendship. God wanted Moses to realize the love He had for His people and for Moses personally. Moses answered God in typical fashion, stating his willingness to hear (see Gen. 22:1; 46:2).

3:5. As God would later command the people not to approach Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:12), He instructed Moses to come no closer to the bush. God told Moses to remove his sandals, a common practice when entering the presence of royalty. Moses needed to keep a respectful distance and to remove his sandals because he stood on holy ground.

3:6. God introduced Himself to Moses in two ways. First, God stated He was the God of Moses' father. God had a personal connection with Moses' family and Moses. Second, God stated He was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—the forefathers of all the Israelites. God had made promises to Abraham that He fully intended to keep. Having multiplied His people in Egypt, God would fulfill His other promises of giving them a land, blessing them, and punishing those who oppressed them. Moses needed to recognize God's holiness—His difference from and superiority over His creation. Yet Moses also needed to know God's commitment and faithfulness to him and to God's people. God's holiness demanded exclusive worship and commitment in thought and deed. God's faithfulness indicated His love and encouraged people to trust Him.

3:7. Although the vocabulary describing the Israelites' suffering paints the same picture as in Exodus 2:23, the words used are different. Expressing the Israelites' suffering required using the entire vocabulary of oppression and pain. The people cried out to God, hoping He would notice their terrible situation and rescue them. Earlier God had heard His people's groaning, remembered His covenant with them, and seen their affliction (Ex. 2:24-25); but God had not told His people yet that He had heard their prayers. God's statement to Moses that He knew the Israelites' plight and had heard their appeals for help indicated His readiness to act.

3:8. God stated He had left His heavenly dwelling to come down to speak to Moses and to deliver His people. The Hebrew word translated "rescue" describes a sudden snatching away. Pharaoh and the Egyptians believed they had the Israelites in their tight grasp, but God would snatch His people from the Pharaoh's clutches.

God's deliverance included not only getting His people out of Egypt but also bringing them to a new, fruitful land. God described the land as good and spacious, large enough to support the Israelites' huge population and to allow them to experience God's blessing. The phrase "flowing with milk and honey" describes abundant provisions in a place where life could be fully enjoyed (see Deut. 6:3).

3:9. God restated His awareness of Israel's plight. Perhaps like other Israelites Moses wondered why God had waited so long to act. Yet God had been acting. He had been preparing Moses to be a deliverer, the one through whom God would work to save His people and to fulfill His promises.

3:10. God commanded Moses to go, stating that Moses would not only be part of the Israelites' exodus from Egyptian slavery, he would lead them! God had been preparing Moses his entire life. Moses had learned Israelite traditions from his mother, who had served as his nurse. He had received an education as a result of growing up in the Egyptian royal court. His father-in-law, the priest of Midian, perhaps gave Moses additional insight into serving God. God planned to send Moses to face Pharaoh and to lead the Israelites out of slavery and into a beautiful land as a free nation.

3:19. Moses cited legitimate concerns regarding his mission. Moses saw himself as a simple shepherd. Furthermore, Moses feared the Israelites would be skeptical and would want to know God's name. Moses may have questioned whether God really could bring His people out of Egyptian slavery and into the promised land. God answered each of Moses' objections by promising His presence, revealing His name, emphasizing His tie to the Israelites' forefathers, and assuring that He would fulfill every promise He had made.

3:20. Though Pharaoh would yield to no human power, he would have to yield to God. God would perform extraordinary deeds in Egypt that would cause Pharaoh to free the Israelites. The use of the Hebrew word translated strike indicates God's miracles would cause destruction in Egypt. God did not announce how many plagues He would send or how severe they would be, only that His deeds would cause pain to the Egyptians. God would defeat Pharaoh and the Egyptians in their homeland, demonstrate His power and sovereignty, and force Pharaoh to let the Israelites go free. After God acted, Pharaoh would be so eager to free the Israelites that he would drive them out of Egypt.