

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN THE AFFAIRS OF MEN

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Exodus 3:3-12

1. This passage can teach us much about God and what our response should be to His activity towards us.
2. For forty years Moses had been living in the wilderness near Mount Horeb (Sinai), the mountain of God.
3. Up to this point his proximity to this holy place had not had any impact on his life.
4. When Moses began his day I expect he thought that it would be just like any other day; not the day that it turned out to be.
5. Moses was about to be recruited by God to be His instrument in the accomplishment of God's sovereign plans and purposes for the Jewish people.
6. Many years prior to the events of this particular day, God had appeared to a childless man named Abram and announced the following. Gen 15:12-16

Now when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and behold, terror and great darkness fell upon him. 13 God said to Abram, "**Know for certain** that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where **they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.** 14 "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 "As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you will be buried at a good old age. 16 "Then in the fourth generation they will return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

7. Notice that God has a calendar, and He never forgets to keep an appointment because later in Exodus we read, "Now the time that the sons of Israel lived in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years. 41 **And at the end of four hundred and thirty years, to the very day**, all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." Exodus 12:41-42

NOTE: There are many examples of God's calendar in the Bible, all of which clearly teach that God is sovereign over the affairs of men. Isa 25:1

O Lord, You are my God; I will exalt You, I will give thanks to Your name; for You have worked wonders, plans formed long ago, with perfect faithfulness.

NOTE: Notice also that no earthly power was able to prevent God from doing what He promised to do on the very day He intended from all eternity to do it. Psalm 33:10-11

The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. 11 The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of His heart from generation to generation.

8. On this pivotal day Moses' life was about to change forever, because he was about to find out that God's sovereign plans included him.
 - a. Moses was divinely protected at his birth.
 - b. Moses became a prince of Egypt, but later identified with his people and tried to become their protector.
 - c. While defending one of his brethren he killed an Egyptian and was forced to flee for his life.
 - d. By what appeared to be circumstance he became a part of Jethro's family and family business.
 - e. Then one day he had a life-changing encounter with God.

I. A determined decision.

- A. Moses was doing what he had been doing for forty years; herding sheep for Jethro his father-in-law.
- B. When Moses encountered the burning bush that was not being consumed he could have:
1. Ignored it.
 2. Run from it.
 3. Investigated it.
- C. He chose the third option and made a life-changing decision, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up."
- D. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ it is because one day God got your attention, and in response to God's activity towards you, you repented.
- E. Everything changes when a person genuinely turns towards God in response to God's overtures, God's initiative.
- F. In the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Jesus showed a different approach on God's part.
1. The father allowed his son to acquire his inheritance, waste his inheritance, and come to the end of himself.
 2. But everything changed for the Prodigal when he made a determined decision; "But when he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have more than enough bread, but I am dying here with hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men.'" Luke 15:18-19
 3. However the son had viewed his father in the past it all changed when he arrived home. Luke 15:20-24
- "So he got up and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion for him, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. 21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet; 23 and bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and has come to life again; he was lost and has been found.' And they began to celebrate."
- NOTE: Until we make a determined response to God's overtures towards us He will remain a mystery to us.

II. A direct dialogue.

- A. When the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the burning bush and said, "Moses, Moses!"
- B. In response Moses said, "Here I am."
- NOTE: When God first spoke to Samuel he responded, "Here I am," and followed that up with, "Speak for your servant is listening." 1 Samuel 3
- C. At that moment a life-long dialogue began between God and Moses.
- D. Paul's testimony related to His encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ is similar in several ways. Acts 22:6-10
- "But it happened that as I was on my way, approaching Damascus about noontime, a very bright light suddenly flashed from heaven all around me, 7 and I fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to me, '**Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?**' 8 "And I answered, '**Who are You, Lord?**' And He said to me, '**I am Jesus the Nazarene, whom you are persecuting.**' 9 "And those who were with me saw the light, to be sure, but did

not understand the voice of the One who was speaking to me. 10 "And I said, '**What shall I do, Lord?**' And the Lord said to me, 'Get up and go on into Damascus, and there you will be told of all that has been appointed for you to do.'"

NOTE: Like Paul God has a purpose for our lives. Ephesians 2:10

"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them."

E. When a person genuinely repents and turns to God it leads to a lifetime of listening, learning, leaning, and living life for a whole new purpose.

III. A divine directive.

A. As God and Moses dialogued Moses found out that he was no longer in control of his future.

B. He was about to become the human instrumentality through whom God would accomplish His sovereign will on behalf of His enslaved people.

NOTE: For the record God did not save you and me just to deliver us from the consequences of our sinful, self-serving lives. Like Moses we have become God's instruments related to the accomplishment of His will.

C. After an extended argument with God Moses yielded his life up to God and became God's instrument; even God's friend.

APPLICATION

1. Notice some of the things God told Moses.

a. "The place on which you are standing is holy ground."

b. "I am...God."

c. "I have seen the affliction of My people...and have given heed to their cry...and am aware of their sufferings...and have come down to deliver them."

NOTE: God knows the mess our world is in, and He knows the condition of the church in the world, and when some of us get desperate enough we will see Him act on our behalf, and we will see Him use us in extraordinary ways.

2. I think up to this point Moses was all in until God said, "Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt."

NOTE: Sadly, for the majority of professing Christians today, it is all about them being where they want to be, doing what they want to do, when they want to do it.

3. I wonder what next, great event is on God's calendar?

4. I wonder what God wants to do right here locally?

5. A life characterized by prayerful expectancy and faithful service prepares us to be ready for whatever God has planned.