

Exodus 3

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 06 March 2018 11:46

In this chapter we find the Hebrews realising how terrible their position is, and so they cry out to God for help. And God helps them. Not straight away, but in the time that is good for His plan. That means, it is good for them, too.

Many years divided the time from when the Hebrews were enslaved to the time they were freed. No doubt those who genuinely worshipped God did not falter in their devotion to God. But, I also have no doubt that many of them, nevertheless, also felt as though they were in a very dark pit at times, when joy was far away. I know this is true, because it has happened to me. And if it has happened to me, it has happened to others! We are humans together.

It does not mean we stop what we do, when all sense of joy has been covered by immense pressures. We must continue what we have to do, whether we lay exhausted on our beds, or I drive onwards in ministry. There may not be the joy we sincerely desire, but to know we are doing the Lord's work keeps us going.

This is what must have happened in Moses' day. He was busy working hard for his father-in-law whilst, hundreds of miles away, his brethren were dying and slaving, waiting for the hand of God to overcome their captors. As they wait, they suffer and groan. They once knew fresh air, freedom and joy. Now they cry out in spiritual and physical pain. Have you felt like this? I have, and often still do. Dealing with evil, head-on, can affect Christians deeply. It can sap away their strength and joy, whether they want it to or not. Illness and intense, unrelenting pressure can do the same thing.

But, though they, and I, knew, or presently know, this lack of joy and deep grief, it does not make a difference to faith. Those who say that if we had faith we would know joy, have evidently not gone through the valley of death! These times come, but, more importantly, they also go again! It is yet another time of trial, given only to those whom God loves. For myself, I do not want this time, nor did I seek it. But God, in His divine will, has decided I need it. He was moulding the Hebrews, so that when the time came, they would be ready to do His bidding.

Are you in despair and think God has left you, because you have no joy? Do not succumb to fear or anxiety about it. Do not think you feel thus because of sin. If you know you have not deliberately disobeyed God, then accept this time as a trial.

Exodus 3

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 06 March 2018 11:46

A trial is to work through, not to fall by. The trial may even be extremely long in terms of time. But it is from God, for your good. We might not truly feel it to be so yet, but we know it is true! Love God and continue in faith, though you feel currently that you are lower than a worm. God is with you and will keep you. Right now, you feel as though you were left alone in a very dark mine, without lights. Or, that black clouds have destroyed the sun.

For now, accept that your joy, like the brilliant sunshine, is hidden behind a black cloud. It will return to you when God sees fit to release it again. Clouds do not destroy the sun – they just hide it for a while. Meanwhile, trust God and work through your pain and distress. Be dogged in your refusal to give in to sin or to despair. No doubt you will experience moments of that despair, but it will not last. The end result will be more than worth it.

Besides all else, Christ went through far more. We cannot succumb when what we go through, arduous though it might be, is of far less significance than what Christ endured. God bless you and I as we endure! Those who watch on should pray that if they are put to trial, they also will endure. Meanwhile, pray for those whose trials are long and hard. Bring them comfort and compassion.

Though necessary and good, it is relatively easy to comfort someone whose partner has died; or to give a bunch of flowers to someone in hospital for a brief time, or to clean someone's home if they have a broken leg; but to give long-term support and care is quite another thing, because it means loss of your own benefits, time and sometimes money. Some have been on beds of sickness for many years. They tell me how they see no-one. God bless all who offer long-term care! I have no doubt it is a gift from God.

Verses 1 - 4

1.

“Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

2.

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

Exodus 3

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 06 March 2018 11:46

3.

And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

4.

And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I."

Moses became a shepherd, staying with his new wife and family in Midian. He probably thought this was his final place of abode, the problem in Egypt now a far distant memory. He did not like what was happening to the Hebrews, but he was one man. One man cannot do anything to free a whole nation! So, he kept quietly to himself. Is this not how most people live? Is this not how most Christians live? They prefer silence and 'keeping their heads down', in the hope that the thing they fear will somehow disappear. But it never does. A fear unfaced becomes even worse. An enemy not fought becomes stronger. Moses had not yet met with God! A day was coming when the man who tried to be anonymous became the centre of a storm!

He drove his father-in-law's sheep far into the deepest desert, alone and probably quite satisfied with his lot. One day, whilst out with the flock he came to the base of mount Horeb (*Choreb*: 'desert'), also known as Mount Sinai. The name itself signifies a place of waste or desolation, *charab*

As he walked on, he came across a burning bush. Or, rather, it appeared to be alight, but it was not being destroyed by the fire. Naturally, Moses was astonished and wanted to examine the bush further. We are told that this was an angel of God, sent as a flame. (A very similar phenomenon to the tongues of flame over the heads of the apostles in Jerusalem).

When Moses walked towards the bush God called out to him. The way God called is very similar to the way He later called to Samuel as a lad. No further mention is made of the bush burning, so it is likely God used the flame as something to attract Moses. Then, when he was close enough, the flame disappeared. God called Moses by name from the centre of the bush, which was, of course, just as formidable a mystery as a flame. And Moses replied, "*Here am I.*"

Exodus 3

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 06 March 2018 11:46

Very often, even when there can be no other explanation than God, we dismiss such ideas and insert a psychological explanation for what we have heard, or seen. So, we miss many godly interventions and explain them away in our scientific world! It is my personal contention that if God says 'yea' and science says 'nay', I will follow the 'yea' every time, regardless of earthly scorn.

Verses 5 - 8

1.

“And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.

2.

Moreover he said, I am the God of thy 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.

3.

And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;

4.

And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.”

As Moses walked closer, God warned him to stop, take off his shoes, and stay at a distance. He told him that the ground he was standing on was 'holy ground'. Have you had a situation where you were convinced God was there, making the very place you stood on 'holy'?

God reminded Moses – he was the God of his ancestors. At this, Moses hid his face. Like a

Exodus 3

Written by K B Napier

Tuesday, 06 March 2018 11:46

child who thinks covering his face makes him invisible. He was afraid to look at God, even though God as a real figure was not to be seen. Such was Moses' fear.

Without any kind of warning God then brought up the reason for calling on Moses. How many Christians ask me what their own personal ministry is? If they think they do not have one, they muddle around trying to manufacture something. Moses had not expressed such thoughts, yet here God was about to give him one of the most spectacular ministries any man could be given... leading a whole nation out of captivity to a promised land! No lead-in with Sunday school, attending meetings, being a deacon, etc. Just straight in with the biggest task imaginable. God gives ministries as He sees fit. Throughout our churches people potter about doing this and that, on a whim. But have they been called to their task? Probably not.

God told Moses He knew of the dire situation His chosen people were in, and the physical and mental suffering they endured. Now, He said, I will deliver them, and bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey. Milk can mean milk, but it can also mean 'the abundance of the land', **chaleb**. Honey - **d@bash** - sweet and nourishing. At the moment they were under intense suffering and oppression. But they would soon have their own huge land, and enjoy its fruit. God even told Moses what land it would be.

The land promised to the Hebrews was presently lived in by a number of large tribes or small nations: the Canaanites (K@na'aniy: zealous'), descendants of Ham and the Phoenicians; the Hittites (**Chittiy**: 'descendants of Heth ['terror'], second son on Canaan); the Amorites (**Emoriy**: 'a sayer'); the Perizzites (P@rizziy : 'belonging to a village') who were in southern Canaan; the Hivites (**Chivviy** : 'villagers'), also descended from Ham and living in northern Canaan near Mount Hermon; and the Jebusites (Y@buwciy : 'descendants of Jebus), who we have come across before, the original inhabitants of Jebus or Jerusalem.

Between them they were mainly located in large villages. Many of them roamed around the country. Therefore, the Middle East at that time had a fluid population, no-one really 'in charge' of any particular place. Very similarly, when the Jews re-occupied Palestine in the 1940's, the land consisted of dispersed tribes and arid desert, with no wealth or central leadership. Whatever the case, God gave the land to the Hebrews, a gift that has not been rescinded,

Exodus 3

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 06 March 2018 11:46

except for unbelief and disobedience.

Verses 9 - 14

1.

“Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

2.

Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

3.

And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

4.

And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

5.

And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

6.

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”

Because of the awful state of the people, God was going to send Moses back to Egypt to deal

Exodus 3

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 06 March 2018 11:46

with the matter. This must have come to Moses like a thunderbolt! He thought he was safe, and that he would not be called to book. Now, God was sending him back to the very place that wanted to kill him! But, God's words were specific and sure: Moses would go to Pharaoh so that he could bring the Hebrews out of Egypt.

Like most of us when confronted by a godly demand, Moses began to bluster and make excuses, in an effort not to go. I'm nobody, said Moses, so how can I do what you ask? God reassured him – *"I will be with thee"*. God told him that He would give Moses a sign... when he had brought the Hebrews out of the land, He would take him up this very same mountain to 'serve' Him, a reference to the making of the Ten Commandments.

Moses tried another excuse – who shall I say sent me? What can I say when they ask *"Which god are you talking about? What's his name?"*

God then gave Moses His name, one with the deepest unfathomable meaning: "

I AM THAT I AM

", or

"I AM (the) I AM",

or

hayah

repeated.

Basically, it means self-existing, or *"I am the self-existing One Who is established and Who has come"*. Therefore, said God, tell the Hebrews that *"I AM/ the self-existing One has sent you."*

All Christians are sent into the world by 'I AM'. We need no other reason or name to do our work and ministries. Nor should we be ashamed to say it. From the greatest scientist to the lowest road sweeper, each is sent by 'I AM'. It does not matter how much supposed 'evidence' there is to discredit this idea – God sent us, and that is that!

Verses 15 - 19

1.

"And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

Exodus 3

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 06 March 2018 11:46

2.

Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:

3.

And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

4.

And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.

5.

And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

We now hear God speaking of the “*children of Israel*” (descendants of the patriarchs). Moses was to tell them “
*The God of your
ancestors has sent me to you, and He said ‘I AM’ is my eternal name, which is my name
forever.*”

Moses was to gather together all the elders of the Hebrews. The elders were the local head-men or tribal leaders, the **zagen**. This would be no mean feat, as they were all in slavery. And many would have to come from a distance. Moses was then to explain what had happened at Mount Sinai, and instruct the Hebrews in what was to follow. He was to tell them that God was watching and had noted their dire straits. He would bring them out of their affliction and give them a wonderful, wealthy land for their national abode.

Exodus 3

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 06 March 2018 11:46

God told Moses that the elders would listen. Then, all the elders would go with Moses to see Pharaoh. The plan was simple, direct and humanly audacious. Though slaves, they would say to Pharaoh *“Our God is with us, and wishes us to go into the desert to worship and sacrifice to Him for three days. Please give us permission.”* But, though God told them to say this, He also advised Moses that Pharaoh would not allow it, not even under force.

Very often we struggle in a personal ministry, sometimes for a very long time. We see no real movement, yet we carry on. This is because God is with us. It is not our task to check on what is going on or when. God will complete His business as and when He sees fit. It may not even be in our lifetime. It is up to us to carry on and do what we are commanded to do.

Verses 20 - 22

1.

“And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

2.

And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty:

3.

But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.”

Following on from what He just told Moses, God then said He would *“stretch out (his) hand”*, or shoot out His power, and hit Egypt hard. He would show the Egyptians such events and powers they had never seen before, to convince them to let the Hebrews go. The word ‘smite’, *nakah*, is one of violence. Even in our modern day, see how God has struck down homosexuals worldwide for their evil sexual choices! This will continue and grow... but there is probably far more God is going to inflict them with. At any rate, their evils will be well rewarded by eternal hell, if they do not repent.

Exodus 3

Written by K B Napier
Tuesday, 06 March 2018 11:46

Not only will God crush the Egyptians with many wondrous signs of His power, but He would also give the Hebrews wealth to go away with. They would do it by gently asking their Egyptian neighbours for a loan of gold and silver jewellery, as well as fine clothing, etc. God would make sure the Egyptians were well-disposed toward their neighbours, so that such transactions could take place. All the jewels and clothing would be put on the Hebrew sons and daughters (probably meaning all the Hebrews).

It is obvious that these 'loans' would never be repaid, as the word 'spoil' implies... *natsal*, to 'tear away' or to 'snatch away', to strip or plunder. In God's eyes this would be a just payment for the many years the whole nation of Egyptians made misery of the Hebrews.

Interesting points in this narrative are deceptions and non-repayment of loans. Once again, I suggest that these were acts of war, rather than of civil crime. And this appears to be acceptable. Indeed, it is God Who called for their instigation, so it cannot be wrong! I think that religious men are afraid to offer their own public acceptance of these acts of God, for fear of ratifying war and those acts that accompany war.

Can we even go farther and say that we may use subterfuge to fight other kinds of war, such as social evils that impinge upon Christians? A thorough investigation of such thoughts would bring very interesting results, I am sure. More than that, I believe we are now at a time when such subterfuge may be necessary. Think hard, my friends.

© September 2006

---oOo---

{loadposition btm_address}