*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 8 - 13

*Exodus Chapters Three and Four*

**Monday, June 8 Exodus 3:1-10**

*“God called to him from the burning bush”*

Moses is pasturing the flock of his father-in-law Jethro (also named Reuel) near Mt. Horeb (also known as Mt. Sinai). Arriving at the mountain, Moses sees an astonishing sight: an angel of God within a bush that burns without being consumed. As Moses comes closer, God calls to him by name and gives him two commands: “Do not come any closer” and “take off your sandals” because “this is holy ground.” God then announces himself to Moses as the God of his father (whose name was Amram) and of their ancient ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

God tells Moses that he has seen, has heard, and knows what his people have been enduring under Egyptian oppression. He has “come down” to rescue them, typical biblical language to describe what God does when he intervenes in human affairs. He will “bring them up” from one land and into another “flowing with milk and honey.” The person God will use to make this happen is Moses, whom God is sending to Pharaoh. He, Moses, is the one who will lead God’s people out of Egypt.

*You came down, Lord, died on a cross, and rescued us from sin. Amen.*

**Tuesday, June 9 Exodus 3:11-22**

*“But Moses protested”*

One might think that Moses would be chomping at the bit to travel to Egypt with the good news of God’s deliverance. But in a fashion more like a pouting child than a soldier singled out by his commander for an honorable task, Moses begins to question God’s wisdom. Moses’ first question is “Who am I?” He does not see himself in the role of God’s spokesperson. God responds to his lack of self-confidence by stating that he will be with Moses.

Aware of his lack of qualifications, Moses is concerned how he will be received by the very Israelites he is being sent to deliver. God tells Moses to say to them that “I AM” has sent him. God goes on to elaborate by declaring himself to be the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the God of the ancestors of the Israelites. Moses is to bring God’s message to the elders of Israel that God will bring them up out of Egypt and into the Promised Land. Then, they are to go to Pharaoh and request permission to take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the Lord their God. Pharaoh will refuse until God reveals his power, and then they will go.

*Because you are with me, Lord, I can do all that you ask of me. Amen.*

**Wednesday, June 10 Exodus 4:1-9**

*“But Moses protested again”*

Does Moses have legitimate concerns about his reception back in Egypt, or is he just trying to get out of his task? God seems to take Moses’ objections seriously by providing him with three signs that he is to perform before the Israelites. The first sign is turning Moses’ shepherd staff into a snake. God is using the ordinary to do the extraordinary. Why a snake? Likely because the snake represents a sign of Egyptian royal authority. By turning the staff into a snake and back into a staff, God is showing that his authority is greater than that of Egypt’s. The second sign is the skin disease that God first inflicts on Moses and then cures. The significance of this second sign seems to be God’s authority over disease and sickness.

The third sign, changing water to blood, is somewhat different. For one thing, it is not actually performed before Moses here as were the other two. Moreover, this is an actual preview of the first of the ten plagues. Turning water into blood symbolizes the power of Israel’s God over the power of the Egyptian gods and the Egyptian nation, who life force was the Nile.

*Your power is great, Lord, and no human authority can stand against it. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

June 8 - 13

*Exodus Chapters Three and Four*

**Thursday, June 11 Exodus 4:10-17**

*“I am not very good with words”*

Moses insists he is not an eloquent speaker; surely, anyone called to confront the king of Egypt and motivate his own people to follow must have powers of verbal persuasion. Moses seems to resist God’s call because he assumes that he is playing the central role in the deliverance of the Israelites. What Moses does not yet understand is that God is fully capable of directing the means to bring this about. It is God who will bring his people out of Egypt. Moses has not yet learned that salvation is of the Lord.

Moses, left with no further “reasonable” argument against God’s call, blurts out one final attempt to convince God of the error of his plan: “O Lord, please send someone else to do it.” Moses’ earlier objections had some legitimacy, and God met them head on, one by one. The last objection, however, is not based on some reasonable circumstance; Moses just doesn’t want to do it. God responds angrily, but he also seems to give in to Moses’ stubbornness. He assigns Aaron to Moses to be his “mouth.”

*You are greater than our inadequacies, Lord, working your will through us. Amen.*

**Friday, June 12 Exodus 4:18-23**

*“So Moses headed back to the land of Egypt”*

Moses is going to Egypt to deliver the Israelites by God’s mighty deeds. God gives Moses one last charge: He is to perform the signs before Pharaoh. Up to this point, we are led to expect that the signs are for the purpose of convincing the Israelites of Moses’ commission. Although Israelite disbelief is a theme that appears throughout Exodus, the clear conflict in these early chapters involves Egyptian opposition more than Israelite. The true conflict is about to begin – the one between Pharaoh and God.

Verse 21 introduces a theme that raises important questions about the relationship between God’s will and human will. Moses is to perform signs before Pharaoh meant to convince Pharaoh to let God’s people go, but God will harden Pharaoh’s heart (that is, make him stubborn) and he will refuse to do so. For whatever the divine reason, God’s hardening of Pharaoh’s heart will contribute to his downfall and the downfall of his nation. Thus, the deliverance of Israel from Egypt is entirely God’s doing and under his complete control.

*Every person’s and every nation’s fate is in your hands, Lord. Amen.*

**Saturday, June 13 Exodus 4:24-31**

*“They were convinced that the Lord had sent Moses”*

Verses 24-26 foretell Israel’s consequence for not obeying the command to circumcise, the sign of God’s covenant with his people that God commanded of Abraham and all his descendants. The God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will deliver the Israelites. They are, therefore, to observe the command given to them: Circumcise your male children. So, when God confronts Moses on the way to Egypt, he is angry with Moses and about to kill him because his son is not circumcised. Zipporah’s circumcision of her son appeases God’s anger and causes him to relent.

Moses meets with Aaron and proceeds to relay to Aaron the words and signs of God. After Aaron’s initial debriefing, they both go to meet with the elders of Israel. In this meeting, Aaron relays the message to the people, thereby fulfilling God’s earlier promise that Aaron will speak for Moses. The signs of God are performed, and the people accept Moses enthusiastically, thus allaying his fear of rejection. They are moved to worship at seeing how the Lord is concerned about them. Worship is the appropriate response to God’s love.

*When you came, Jesus, you spoke the words and performed the signs of God. Amen.*