

# God Hears

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 12 May 2019

Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

[ 0 : 00 ] Now, last time we looked at this chapter 2, we got just about as far as Moses fleeing from the face of Pharaoh and escaping into the wilderness of Midian.

But just by way of recap, we just recap from the verses 11 onwards that we read from. We just need to remember here the elapse of time.

The elapse of time when Moses has grown up and then goes out to see his brethren laboring in their burdens and so on. Now, Acts chapter 7 and verse 23 tells us that it was when he was fully 40 years old that he went out to see his brethren.

When he was fully 40 years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. So he's not just a youngster. He's not just a teenager or a 20-year-old.

He's 40 years old, a full-grown man of some maturity, and he goes out to see his brethren. And also, as we mentioned, just by way of recap, despite all these years, four decades of being raised in the palace of Pharaoh with all the privileges and all the education and all the blessings that he had known there, and all the way in which he had been raised, not only he knew himself to be different, to be a Hebrew, despite his Egyptian clothing and outward appearance, because he knew himself to be a Hebrew, but he was clearly also more widely known to be a Hebrew, albeit with Egyptian privileges.

[ 1 : 34 ] And this is one reason why, feeling and knowing himself to be Israelites, he felt so enraged against the Egyptian who was still treating the Hebrew, and he rose up in wrath and slew the Egyptian.

Now, nobody defends that act of murder. Nobody says, oh yeah, well he was quite right, because he was God's chosen vessel and so on. It was an act of murder. He was wrong to do it.

But the reason he did it was because he was so full of righteous and magnification for his brethren. And he felt powerless to help them by any other means. But it demonstrates to us that the Lord, when he intends to work a work of deliverance, will not do it by man's rage or man's power.

The wrath of man does not enact the righteousness of God, nor will it be in man's time. Moses perhaps thought that he would be equipped now with all his learning and all his Egyptian power and knowledge and so on, to now lead his people out of slavery and out of Egypt by his own strength and his own gifts.

And not only were his own gifts to count for nothing at this stage, but also it was not the Lord's time. We see the elapse of time here, 40 years being raised in the palace of Pharaoh.

[ 2 : 50 ] And then, as we'll see, another 40 years before he is used of the Lord to bring the children of Israel out. But he knew himself a Hebrew, and he was more widely known also to be Hebrew, albeit with Egyptian privileges.

And this, ironically, makes him not more acceptable to his brethren, but rather less respected or appreciated by his fellow Hebrews, at least by some of them.

I mean, can you imagine a Hebrew slave saying to an Egyptian taskmaster, you know, who are you to judge me? If I want to beat him up, I can do that. What are you going to do? Are you going to kill me like you kill some of my fellow Hebrews?

They would never answer back like that to an Egyptian prince or taskmaster. But because they reckoned he was one of them, he was a Hebrew, he just happened to be uppity, he just happened to be dressed in Egyptian clothing and had all the privileges of the palace, but he didn't think he was.

You know, this is always the response of the churlish, self-contained evil to that which is good. We see, for example, in Mark chapter 6, remember, we read of Jesus when the Sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue.

[ 4 : 05 ] He went into his own country and began to teach in the synagogue. And many hearing him were astonished, saying, Instead of thinking, isn't this amazing? Isn't this wonderful? What gifts? What blessings? No, no.

They say instead, is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joseph and of Judah and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

They're offended because they think of him as just one of them. Who does he think he is? Why is he coming out with all this fancy learning and so on? He's one of us. He's got no business thinking he's so uppity or so special.

And this is the response of the more churnish amongst the Hebrews to Moses here with all his privileges. Don't see him as an ally. Don't see him as a help. But see him rather as somebody who's too big for his boots.

But there's also here, we have to recognize, a deeper, not only scriptural, but spiritual lesson here. Notice it says, So clearly it's not just an ongoing scrap.

[ 5 : 22 ] There is clearly one who is the offender, the perpetrator, and one who is the victim amongst these two Hebrews. There is a right and a wrong. And he said to him that did the wrong, wherefore smitest thou thy fellow?

And this brings forth a swift and vehement rejection, both of the rebuke and of him who asked the question. Oh, are you going to kill me like you did the Egyptians?

All he did was ask the question, why are you hitting him? You know, for all that Moses knew, there might have been extreme provocation. For all that Moses knew, there might have been some serious crime committed against the other guy by the one who's getting hit now.

He might be guilty of something horrendous. He might well deserve to get beaten up by the other guy who might be the injured party, for all that Moses knows. All that he is saying is, why are you hitting him?

Why smite the stout thy fellow? And his response, however, shows that he is ready to blow out of all proportion even this mild question.

[ 6 : 22 ] Oh, are you going to kill me? Suggesting that just by asking the question, oh, he's half the man, he wants to kill me just like he killed the Egyptians yesterday. And you find this nowadays with even those who express the mildest support for that which is righteous or God-honoring.

It's, as we've mentioned in previous weeks, it's even apparently controversial now to say only women can have babies. It's controversial to say marriage is between a man and a woman, and that's it.

That's taken, oh, that's practically, you know, so narrow-minded, bigoted, prejudiced, fascist, and so on, because this is now taken as being a big threat against what?

Against that which is in and of itself evil. This brings a swift, a vehement rejection, both of the rebuke and of him who asked the question.

And this rejection of help and of any righteousness and of the voice of justice comes from who? It comes from him that did the wrong. In other words, it is the very, the righteousness of the voice of justice which is rejected.

[ 7 : 31 ] The very presence of evil which cannot and will not abide the presence of good. It loathes to be challenged. It loathes the very presence of good amongst it.

The fact of righteousness being present at all. It will rant and rave about being judged by supposedly judgmental and allegedly self-righteous hypocrites.

Who are they thinking they're better than us? And you hear this all the time. Any time you seek to make a voice or a stand for truth or for righteousness, who do you think you are? You know, you think you're better than us?

How dare you? And so on. And that's the same response as this Hebrew gives to Moses. It's the same response as in every age. That which seeks to perpetrate evil but does not want to have the light shone upon it.

It does not want to be questioned or have the contrast between the good and evil highlighted. Evil hates good and it has always done so.

[ 8 : 32 ] Simply because evil is evil and good is good and the two must clash for they cannot peacefully coexist. The one must give way to the other.

Because just if you think in terms of, you know, at some point one has to give way. Darkness or light. You can't have both because when the light comes, the darkness must recede.

And eventually it must be dispersed. When the light comes, darkness has to vanish. When darkness comes, light recedes. And so on. The two cannot coexist at the same time. Or if they do, it's only in this brief kind of handover time when either the dusk comes as night is coming down or the grey of dawn as the sun is coming up. It is clearly the sort of blurring of the lines as the one is on the ascendant and the other is in decline. But they cannot coexist together. And this enmity of evil against good has always been the case. [ 9 : 33 ] We mentioned the last time we looked at this a fortnight or so ago in Psalm 37. We read in verse 12, for example, The wicked plotteth against the just and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. Why does he hate the just? Simply because he is just. Because evil cannot coexist with good. Verse 14, The wicked have drawn out the sword, have bent their bow to cast down the poor and needy, and to slay such as be of upright conversation. Verse 32, The wicked watcheth the righteous and seeketh to sway him. In 1 John, we read in chapter 3, we see verses 11 to 13 here. This is the message that he heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Those who in Christ will love one another, because God is love. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one and slew his brother.

And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil and his brothers righteous. And that's all there was to it. Because his own works were evil, his brothers were righteous, and he could not abide that.

[ 10 : 37 ] Marvel not my brethren. 1 John 3, 13. Marvel not my brethren, if the world hate you. Because it's bound to evil, cannot coexist with good.

And that's what we see here with this Hebrews response to Moses. He says, Wherefore smitest thou thy fellow? Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Can't he start to kill me? As thou killest the Egyptian?

And Moses feared and said, Surely this thing is known. So this repugnance of that which is evil for that which is light. The repugnance of darkness for light.

We see again further down, it helps to explain the response of the shepherds to the daughters of the priest of Midi. But we'll come to that in just a moment. So what it demonstrates to us is that the Hebrews are not all good.

They are not all nice people. The Egyptians are all bad, the Hebrews are all good. No, they're not. We know from Pharaoh's daughter, all the Egyptians are not bad. They're not all bad people. All the Hebrews are not good people.

[ 11 : 38 ] They're not all nice people. You know, God's election, his purpose of election was never dependent upon personal merit. Because if it was, we would all be lost.

Every last one of us would be lost if it was down to our own righteousness. It is the grace of God alone that saves.

And as we see then at verse 50, when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. We mentioned how this would be a political response and not one of personal vengeance. That Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh and dwelt in the land of Miriam and he sat down by a well.

And we said that the journey is passed over without one solitary word. So we must conclude that God, the Holy Ghost, who inspired the scriptures to be written down, is saying that we should not know about this journey.

Indeed, we don't need to know about the journey. And that's quite a contrast when you think about, for example, the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness, for which we have quite a detailed and extensive narrative.

[ 12 : 41 ] You know, over that 40-year period, we've got an awful lot of narrative about what they did and the places they went and how they grumbled and moored and God's dealings with them and how he fed them and how he gave water from a rock and the different itineraries of where they moved about to in their camping.

We've got it all there. Even the orders in which they were to set forth in the camp moved and which tribes were to camp where, round about the tabernacle and all the furniture. It's extremely detailed. The first five books of the Bible there, 40 years ago. And I say, well, that's because they were wandering for 40 years in the wilderness. Of course it's detailed. I mean, Moses' journey here from Egypt to Midian, that's probably less than a week.

So, of course, there's nothing about it. Yes, but we've just had 40 years of Moses' life. Passed over with only a few lines. And then when we come to 40 more years of Moses' life during his time in Midian, because again, going back to Acts 7, verse 30 tells us that it was after 40 years, when he was 80 years old, that the Lord appeared to him at the burning bush.

And Exodus 7, verse 7 tells us that he was 80 and Aaron was 83. So he's got 40 years in Midian. Yes, he's got 40 years in Pharaoh's palace about which we are told next to nothing.

[13:59] So it's not about the amount of time concerned. It's about what we are required to know. We know almost nothing about Moses' time in the palace.

We know almost nothing about Moses' time in Midian, except the significant fact of his marriage and of his children and so on, and of the time when it comes to an end.

What are the events that bring it to an end? What are the events that bring to an end his time in Pharaoh's palace? The killing of the Egyptian. What is the thing that brings to an end his time in the wilderness of Midian? The burning bush and so on.

So the things that bring it to a conclusion, what happens during those 40 years? Past or but almost without a word. What the Lord intends us to know, he reveals to us.

What he intends us not to know, he withholds from us. I'll say that again. What the Lord intends us to know, he reveals to us. What he intends us not to know, he withholds from us.

[15:02] But what he does reveal, he intends that we should pay attention to. There tends to be an idea with some, even some Christians know that, that chunks of the Bible are a bit of a waste of space, a little bit of boring, and just lists of names or details about the laws, or the tabernacles, or the leprosy things, and the sacrifice.

My goodness, they're not really very edifying, are they? They're not very good. They're not very uplifting. I mean, what can we learn from that? If you want to learn from it, you have to look at it. You have to go to it. You have to dig a little. You have to see in it some of the details of how these sacrifices, or these details about cleansing, or about washing away of blood, or whatever it may be. All of these ultimately point us to Christ. They point to our lost condition that cannot be cleansed without sacrifice, without washing, without blood, without purifying, and so on.

They point us to our need for an intermediary, an intercessor, a mediator between God and man. All these details all have a purpose, and they will all point us to Christ.

[16:11] If God did not require us to know them, he would not have revealed them, because there is plenty that he doesn't reveal. Plenty that he just keeps withheld from us.

But we must take it that what he does reveal, he intends that we should know, and that we should pay attention to. All of God's word is worth reading, because it has been written.

If it has been written down, it has been written down with the intention that it should be read. If it is to be read, it is with the intention it should be understood. If it is to be understood, then it must be that it is God's intention that it should benefit us.

Therefore, just as little children may be made, perhaps, to eat their vegetables or their greens, when they'd rather move straight on to dessert and to sweet stuff and so on, but they have to chow through their greens and their vegetables and the things they don't really like, because it's good for them.

And they will not know about the different nutrients that they have to take in if their bodies are to be healthy. They just want to get on to the sweet stuff. But those who love them and seek to bring them up in a healthy and disciplined manner will ensure that they also eat these things too, that they have a balanced diet.

[17:28] And spiritually, we also need a balanced diet, the Old Testament and the New, the law and the gospel, so that we can see the one feeding into the other. And we see the nourishment for our souls with the whole counsel of God.

That which he reveals, he intends us to know. If we don't need to know it, he has withheld it from us. So on then to verse 16. A priest of Midian had seven daughters.

Now, when we read of the priest of Midian, we think, okay, well, Aaron hasn't been made a priest yet. The tabernacle doesn't exist yet. The Ark of the Covenant hasn't been made yet. So in what sense is he a priest?

Almost certainly, he's a priest not unlike Melchizedek, whom we read about in Genesis 14, who was the king priest of Salem, that is the site of what became Jerusalem.

And he was priest of the Most High God. Now, being in the Holy Land there, and obviously descendants of the family of Noah, and just as the Midianites here, this is the priest of Midian, were descendants of Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar, the Egyptian.

[ 18 : 41 ] So there is a sense in which amongst some of these peoples, the worship and knowledge of the true God had still been preserved.

And however imperfectly we might say they worshiped the true God, it was still him that they worshipped. Clearly, Melchizedek is a priest of the true God in Genesis 14.

Abraham accepts his blessings, his bread and wine that he brings out to him. He won't take a thing from the king of Sodom, but he will receive from the king of Salem, the priest king Melchizedek, and he gives him tithes and so on, of all his bounty that he has taken from the war with the kings.

So this recognition by Abraham, that Melchizedek is a priest of the true God, God Most High, who blesses him in the name of that God. And so likewise, we must take it that the priest of Midian is a priest of the true God.

And the worship of the true God has still remained amongst some of the Midianite people. Now, the Midianites, as we said, were descendants of Ishmael.

[ 19 : 49 ] And the reckoning is that this people group spread not only across the Sinai Peninsula and into the Arabian Peninsula to the east, but also west, across the Red Sea, into Upper Egypt, that is, Southern Egypt, and down into Ethiopia.

Remember, of course, that Agar, who was the mother of Ishmael, who was the father of the Midianites, was Egyptian, so it's not, it's not, no, unreasonable that they should mingle in with these people.

The Kushite peoples, or the word Kush is translated in our translations as Ethiopian, these, they would have mingled with these people and probably moved backwards and forwards across the Red Sea and into Sinai and into Arabia, sort of moving across these different lands.

And almost certainly, the priest of Midian himself is of this Kashite, or Ethiopian, stock. One reason that we say this is because in Numbers chapter 12, and verse 1, we read, Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian, or Kashite, woman, whom he had married, for he had married an Ethiopian woman.

Now, clearly, it doesn't mean Ethiopian in the sense of he went down into Ethiopia, got a wife, and married her. Rather, it is that she is of the Kashite stock and her father, the priest of Midian, clearly, the Midianites having spread both west into Kash, into Ethiopia, east into Arabia, and have continued to move and to mingle and so on amongst these peoples, he is of this Kashite stock, his daughter, Zipporah, is of this Kashite stock, and this is one reason why she's described as Ethiopian.

[ 21 : 35 ] In not dissimilar way, we might say, for example, that those of maybe West Indian or of, you know, we might say, Pakistani or Indian origin now in our own country, of course, they're Scottish people, but, you know, we know by their names and their skin colour and the fact of the extended families amongst whom they moved, that their origins would not be in this country.

Obviously, they're equal with the rest of us, but their origins would be of a different people group. So, likewise, although he's in the Sinai Peninsula and east of it, the priest of Midian, his ethnic origins would be from amongst the Kashite or Ethiopian people.

Hence, what we have in Numbers chapter 12, verse 1, that Moses' wife is described as an Ethiopian woman. She's not from Ethiopia, but she is of that people group stock in that sense.

But still, amongst this people group and amongst the Midianites, there is this remnant of worship of the true God. And another reason, two further reasons, you might say, for suggesting that the priest of Midian is a priest of the living and true God.

First of all, it's what we talked about before. The enmity of evil against good. Notice the irreverence and enmity of the shepherds against the priest's daughters at the well.

[ 23 : 05 ] They chase them away. They will not let them water their flock. They chase them away. They only let them come when they themselves are finished and so on. They have absolutely zero respect for the priest or for his daughters.

Now, if he were a pagan priest of a false god, then almost certainly they would be all referential for selfishness. They'd say, oh well, if he'll do a sacrifice for us and he'll say that this God will bless us in our flocks and herds and so on, oh well, then that's okay.

We'll be nice to his daughters. But no, there's zero respect for his daughters because there is zero respect for the priest himself. And we would suggest that these evil men, the shepherds, are at enmity with the priest and his family because evil recognizes good and hates it.

It is always at enmity with good. And these shepherds are at regular enmity with the priest's daughters. They regularly bully them and chase them away.

How do we know this? Because their father says to them at verse 18, how is it that you come so soon today? And they said, an Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds and drew enough water for us and water the flock.

[ 24 : 21 ] He said, what shepherds? You mean, you're getting grief from these men every day at the well. That's why you're so late every day. Well, I never knew about this. Well, I'm going to sort them out.

No, not a word. When they say, oh, well, somebody drove away the shepherds. Oh, the shepherds might. So he knew that every single day his seven daughters were getting grief from these men. Every single day they were hassling and moving on and effectively bullying the daughters of the priest of Maria. And if he was a priest of the true God, then those who are themselves evil will be at enmity with him and with his family.

Their delay and their ill treatment each day was a regular all but daily occurrence so that their enmity, in other words, the enmity of evil men, and they are effectively bullies.

How do we know that they're bullies? because when one man stands up against him, oh, they all melt away into the background. If they were real tough guys, they would say, oh, well, come on, he's only one guy, there's plenty of us, come on, let's show him who's boss, but no, no, one guy stands up against them and instead of seven little girls, they've got a man facing them down.

[ 25 : 37 ] so, then suddenly they melt off into the background. Suddenly, he's able to draw water for the girls for as much as they need. One man can see off these bullies which demonstrates their cowardice, demonstrates the evil of what they have been up to up until now and it also implies that the daughters of the priest are daughters of the true priest of the Most High God.

The second reason why we would think that he is a priest of the true God is the priest's name. It says, verse 18, they came to their father, Ruel. Ruel is also described in chapter 3, verse 1, as Jethro and in chapter 18 of Exodus he's also described as Jethro.

Now, both of these names imply the honour of God. The name Ruel means friend or companion of God.

The L at the end is the generic term for God. So, like when Jesus cries on the cross, L-E, L-E, it's my God. The E is personal, individual, my God.

L-E, L-E, lama sabachthani. Whereas the U at the end Jethro, Jethro, Jethro, or Jethro, is our, it's a plural, our advantage, or our abundance.

[ 26 : 59 ] We'll come to that in a second. But Ruel means friend, companion of God. Or, it comes from a root which means one who quivers or trembles, i.e., in the presence of God.

One who quivers or trembles before God. The only people who would tremble before the true God would be the worshippers of the true God. The name Jethro, chapter 3, verse 1, is from a root meaning abundance or advantage.

And as we say, the U at the end for Jethro or Jethro means our abundance, our advantage, which almost certainly is a reference to the Lord.

Remember, God doesn't change. Throughout all the generations and millennia, God doesn't change. And if his people in these ancient times are describing God as our advantage and our abundance, yeah, wait a minute, you know, it doesn't say God is his abundance, it's just a reference to his abundance.

Well, what do we read from the Apostle Paul? 2 Corinthians, chapter 3, verse 5, not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God.

[ 28 : 16 ] Our sufficiency is of God. Our sufficiency, our abundance, our advantage, Jethro. That's what it means. Our abundance, our advantage.

Our sufficiency is what? Our sufficiency is of God. Whether in the Old Testament or the New, God does not change. And the sufficiency, the advantage, the abundance that he supplies does not change either to those who are his people.

So the priest of Midian is there worshipping the true God, the most high God, keeping the worship of the true God alive there in the desert. He has these seven daughters.

We don't know their ages. We don't know, you know, whether Moses took a particular shine to one of them or she took it to him or whatever. The name Zipporah means little bird.

And although, you know, again we've got this telescoping of time, verses 21 and 22, this sort of telescoping of the years, remember that it is 40 years that he spends in the desert in Midian before he comes back to Egypt.

[ 29 : 21 ] In that time, Zipporah is given to him to wife. In that time, eventually, he has a son and then another son in due course, as we'll come to that. The way verses 21 and 22 are described, it sounds almost as though, you know, he spent the evening with the priest of Midian and the next day, he thought, I know, I'll give you my daughter to wife, that'll be good.

And the next day, she has a baby. You know, the Bible often speaks in these terms, you know, that so-and-so took himself a wife and she conceived and gave a son and called his name such and such and they took a wife for him as though it was all happening within a day.

So all the years become telescoped and all that happened in them, the Lord is saying, you don't need to know about these details. What matters is, Moses dwelt with the priest of Midian all these years.

What matters is, that he took a wife from amongst his daughters, her name was Zipporah. What matters is, in the fullness of time, as she was given to him eventually, remember that it's 40 years he spends there, if she is given to him after, you know, 12, 15 years maybe, it means that she was no more than a child when Moses first appears at the well in Midian.

One reason we know that it will have taken many years before their first son comes along is that where we have this curious episode in chapter 4 of Exodus where we read about, you know, the Lord, that God is speaking about or an angel or whatever, verse 24, met him at the inn and tried to kill him.

[ 30 : 50 ] Zipporah took a sharp stone or flint, cut off the foreskin of her son, cast it at his feet, that is at Moses' feet, said, surely a bloody husband art thou to me. So he let him go.

Then she said, a bloody husband art thou art because of the circumcision. Now that would imply that at the time when Moses goes back into Egypt and takes Zipporah and Gershon, well and Gershon is still a child.

If he was a young man, he wouldn't be going back with his parents into Egypt. He'd be staying probably in the desert. He wouldn't be, as a full-grown adult, he wouldn't be as a child there. But the implication is he's still a child, perhaps a very young child, 40 years down the line. And clearly, when one son comes along, then in due course another one comes along, but not yet. Because again, the implication of chapter 4 is with the incident with Gershon and the circumcision, he is spoken of as though he is the only child. As though he's the only child in that situation.

[ 31 : 49 ] And yet, chapter 18 of Exodus, once the Israelites are out and into the desert, let's just read the opening verses. Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses' father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel, his people, and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt.

Then Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, took Zipporah, Moses' wife, after he had sent her back and her two sons, of which the name of the one was Gershon, for he said, I have been an alien in a strange land, and the name of the other was Eliezer, for the God of my father said he was my help and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh.

So by then, by Exodus 18, he has got two sons. So clearly, Zipporah and Gershon come with Moses into Egypt to begin with, but the likelihood is that once things begin to turn nasty with all the plagues and with the unrest amongst the Israelites and then the Egyptians and things really coming to a head, he probably sends her back to her father before it gets too dangerous.

By then, she is either expecting or has already brought forth their second son, Eliezer. Now, as we said, Gershon, it means I have been a stranger in a strange land, or literally, Gershon means a stranger here.

And this is what he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land, verse 22. Eliezer means my God is help. Eli, my God, Ezer, help.

[ 33 : 19 ] As in Samuel, the rock, Ebenezer, Egon, Ezer, the rock of help or the stone of help. So my God is help. So, but at this stage, Eliezer hasn't turned up.

It's only Gershon who in the fullness of time is born to Moses and Zipporah and we have a telescopic of the years. Came to pass in the process of time, verse 23, that the king of Egypt died and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage and they cried and their cry came up

unto God by reason of the bondage.

Now, it doesn't say in verse 23 explicitly that they cried to God, just that they cried out in their bondage. But, again, looking ahead to Numbers 20, verse 16, when the Israelites are wanting to pass to Edom, they say, Numbers 20, verse 16, when we cried unto the Lord, he heard our voice and sent an angel and hath brought us forth out of Egypt and behold, we are in Cadiz.

So, whether or not it's explicitly to God, it doesn't say it is here in Exodus, but they mourn, they cry, they sigh and the Lord does, as we see at verse 24 and 25, God does four things.

See the four things and the way it is broken up here. He heard their groaning. He remembered his covenant.

[ 34 : 44 ] He looked upon the children of Israel and he had respect unto them. Whether or not they cried explicitly to him, still he heard and had respect unto them.

That means he knew them, he owned them as being his. Had he previously rejected him? Had they withdrawn from him or he from them? Well, we looked at in previous weeks how the Israelites were steeped in almost as much idolatry as the Egyptians around them after between two and four hundred years.

Of course, they had become acclimatized to the idolatry of Egypt. and where the Lord is not being honored and worshipped, he will simply withdraw. So if he had withdrawn from them, of course, then in a worse and worse case.

But now we read to these closing two verses, these four things. He heard their groaning. first of all then, we notice that God is not deaf.

When we mourn, when we cry, even when we do not cry explicitly to him, he hears the cry of the poor, of the needy.

[ 35 : 55 ] He recognizes their mourning and their grief. God heard their groaning. So you need never fear that God has forgotten you or God isn't bothered or God doesn't hear.

He hears. He hears the sigh of every heart. He knows the burden of every soul. He understands. God heard their groaning.

And if he heard theirs in Egypt, then you can be guaranteed that he will hear yours in your time of need. God heard their groaning. And he remembered his covenant.

He remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. Now you might think okay, but Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are long since dead. These are idolatrous Hebrews now in Egypt. Some of them obviously reject even Moses as their prince. They're not particularly good people. Why should God take notice of them? Why? Because he remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

[ 36 : 56 ] The Hebrews had broken his covenant. They had turned away from him. They had worshipped other gods. They had forgotten all about him. Does that nullify his covenant? No, it does not because God is the major party to the covenant.

Not them, but God. Also, we see that his covenant is not made explicitly with them. It is made with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. In other words, with another party.

Not just with them, but with others who you might say stand on their behalf. Now, where the Lord redeems his people and remembers his covenant of grace, it is not because he has respect to you and me.

It is not because he looks down from them and says, oh my, that poor suffering soul, what a good person they are. See how they've always tried to do their best. See how they're kind to other people and how sometimes they go to church too and how you know, they give money to charity.

What a nice person. I think I should help them. God does not remember his covenant because of us. He remembers his covenant because of the one with whom it is made.

[ 38 : 08 ] And the covenant is ultimately made not even that with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, although they stand, as it were, surety for their descendants. The covenant of grace is between the Father and the Son.

It is between the mediator, Jesus Christ, and the God of all justice and grace. God the Son is the one who stands surety for his people whom he redeems.

It is because of his perfection and the Father's relationship with him, the Son, that the covenant is worthy of being remembered.

Not because of those who might be its beneficiaries, but rather because of the one who stands as the covenant guarantee. God remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Not with all the Hebrews currently busy being idolatrous and rejecting Moses and so on, but Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, his faithful servants. And he remembers his covenant of grace ultimately with his Son, Jesus Christ, and those whom he has purchased.

[ 39 : 17 ] God does not forget. we may be inclined to think at times in our darkest days that he has forgotten us. He does not forget. He remembers his covenant.

He remembers the one with whom he has made it ultimately, his Son, Jesus Christ. If you want the benefit of that covenant, you have to enter in to relationship with the one with whom it is made, with Christ.

There is nothing worthy in you and me of that covenant. It is only in Christ that that covenant is worthy to be remembered. God heard, God remembered, and God looked upon the children of Israel.

He does not turn away. In Acts chapter 7 verse 34 it says, I have seen, I have seen the affliction, the suffering of his people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their glory, and I have come down to deliver them.

It is repeated, I have seen, I have seen. He does not turn away, he does not close his eyes, he does not look the other way, he sees, he beholds, and he recognises.

[ 40 : 28 ] God looked upon the children of Israel. You know, sometimes in some of the streets of our major cities, you get people begging by the side of the road, and maybe they've got a little polystyrene cup for change, and people will give them something, and maybe they've got their knees covered in a blanket and sitting on the freezing concrete, and so many people will just look straight ahead and walk past them, and they will ignore them, or they'll pretend they didn't see them.

Now, the first step in showing any kind of compassion, and I know there's lots of others, oh, but they'll just go and spend it on a drink, or maybe they'll just use it for drugs or something else, but what they should do is register with a lodging house mission, and so all these things may be true, but here is this soul who hasn't got a roof over their head, sitting on a freezing pavement, looking for a little bit of change, or a little bit of copper, or a little pound coin, or something like that, and it's not even the money, it is the fact that somebody stopped and noticed, that they were not actually invisible.

Somebody stopped and dropped something in their cup, and said, there you go, or how are you doing, or, you know, pick that up yourself, or whatever, they noticed, they were looked upon, they were not regarded as invisible.

God looked upon the children of Israel in their affliction. He looked upon them, he didn't turn away from them, he didn't pretend they weren't there, he looked at them, and looking upon them, he saw their meat, and he provided their deliverance.

He had respect unto them. Now the translation of that says it's that he owned them in the sense of he knew them, he recognized them as his own, he took responsibility for them.

[ 42 : 20 ] He does not turn away, he does not, you know, despise those who are his children in that sense. These descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he had respect unto them, that it was time for him to deliver them, because nobody else is going to do it.

So these four things, God heard their glory, he remembered his covenant, he looked upon the children of Israel, and he had respect unto them. Now as we say, we don't know whether they cried explicitly unto him, but if their cry into the void is heard, how much more does the Lord hear a cry that is expressed directly to him?

Isaiah 45 tells us at verse 22, look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else.

There is no other deliverance, there is no other redeemer. Look to me, says the Lord, and I will save, I will deliver, I will have respect. And what does Jesus say?

Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, for ye shall find rest unto your souls.

[ 43 : 39 ] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else. He is God, he is the deliverer, he is the means by which they are to be brought out of Egypt.

He heard their groaning, he had respect unto them, he remembered his covenant, he looked upon them, and he looks also upon the suffering and the afflicted now in this present day, and he hears

their cry, because God does not change.

And if perhaps you feel he hasn't answered you yet, let me ask you, have you directed your cry specifically to him? Have you put your trust in Christ to deliver you?

Because there is none other way, none other way by which to be saved. turn to him, look to him, and be saved, all the ends of the earth, not just Egypt, but Scalpy, and Scotland, and Europe, and Africa, and Asia, and all the lands of this earth.

He is God, the redeemer and deliverer of the oppressed, wherever they may be. Let us pray. Thank you. Let us pray.

[ 45 : 01 ] Thank you.