

Series: The Name of God #1660

**Title: Exodus 2, Various Scriptures
God's Covenant**

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. Let me say off the top that I appreciate the responses I have recently received after my invitation for you to write to me. Many of you did, and as I said to you by way of response, *thank you*. And if you had intended to drop me an email or letter but forgot, it is never too late to do so. My email is mark spelled with a K, mark@godisministry.org and my mailing address: God Is, PO Box 802, Winchester Massachusetts 01890. These addresses are repeated at the end, so stay tuned, note them, and write. In fact, why delay? Write *today!*

We return today to the second Book of the Bible, Exodus and the end of chapter 2. When we last left off, Moses was in the land of Midian and he is with his new family. He's come a long way from Egypt – to which he will soon return, although he doesn't know when, nor the circumstances – and he has settled in with Jethro his wife Zipporah's father and he has a son now. The boy's name is Gershom (which means "a stranger there"). As Moses said in verse 22, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land." His son's name reflects his circumstances.

At this point, Exodus 2, verse 23 the narration switches the reader back to Egypt and the condition of the Israelite people. Last we found them, in the text, they were in rough shape surviving under the heavy hand of the Pharaoh. Well, as it turns out, things are not better but worse! I am reading Exodus 2, verse 23, "**Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God.**" Notice that even though the king of Egypt has died, still the condition of the Israelite slaves has not improved and so out of desperation the people sigh, and they cry out for help to God out of their bondage. At the very end of verse 23 are these key words, "their cry for help...rose up to God."

Let me read verses 24 and 25 to end the chapter. "**So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.** ²⁵ **God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them.**" Friends, let me tell you, these two verses are crucial to our understanding of who God is and the significance of the name He is about to give to Moses and the Hebrews in the forthcoming chapter 3. Mark these verses. Keep them in your mind for what's coming. If you are looking at the text along with me now and even if you are an attentive listener, then you will have noticed this.

First, God heard. Second, God remembered. Third, God saw. And fourth, God took. In response to the crying and groaning of His people, God heard their groaning. God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel. And God took notice of them. Using anthropomorphic language, speaking of God in human language that we can understand, the Lord is about to respond to them.

I want to focus, with the limited time we have, on this: "God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." We are going to hear about these three Patriarchs again. And throughout the Bible we hear about them again and again and again. Why? Because these are the men with whom God established, made, and kept His covenant. This was the unilateral, that is a covenant dependent on *God*, that we read about three times being made to Abraham, and then affirmed to Isaac and affirmed to Jacob. In this covenant God promises *land*. The Promised Land. The land of Canaan. The land that is still there to this very day, the disputed geography and territory where war is fought and is so much in the news.

Let's get a sense for this covenant that God remembers in Exodus 2.24 by sampling it in Genesis. I am reading Genesis 12, verses 1-3, "**Now the Lord said to Abram, 'Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father's house, to the land which I will show you; ² And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great; and so you shall be a blessing; ³ And I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.**" This is the covenant God made with Abram. (Genesis 12.) And you heard the promise for *land* there. Then, listen to Genesis 15, and I will draw out only some verses there.

Actually, we have been quoting from a portion of this as we discussed a promise from God that Moses' parents surely often reminded him of. Genesis 15, I'll read beginning in verse 1 then moving around in the chapter. **"The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, 'Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; your reward shall be very great.'" Then verses 5-7, "And [the Lord] took [Abram] outside and said, 'Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.' And [God] said to [Abram], 'So shall your descendants be.' 6 Then [Abram] believed in the Lord; and [God] reckoned it to him as righteousness. 7 And He said to him, 'I am the Lord who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess it.'" Again, you hear the promise for *land*.**

And now verses 12-16 of Genesis 15. **"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.'"**

We know from our recent reading in Exodus that the descendants of Abram are strangers in a land that's not theirs (Egypt) and they are being enslaved and oppressed there. But, verse 16, "in the fourth generation they will return here." Where is "here"? It is the land of Canaan. Let me add verse 18. **"On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, 'To your descendants I have given this land..."** There is the promise of the *land* again.

Stick with me. We have had Exodus 2.24, "God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." And we are, quickly, recounting the covenant to Abram in Genesis 12 and 15 and now listen to the covenant affirmed in Genesis 17. I'll just take time to read a couple of verses that again emphasize the *land*. Genesis 17, verses 7 and 8. The Lord says, **"I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. 8 I will give to you and to your descendants after you, the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."** There it is! "All the *land* of Canaan."

And this covenant is given again to Isaac (Abram's son) and to Jacob (Abram's grandson). I do not have time to read each of these passages, so let me be very selective. In Genesis 26, verse 2 to Isaac God says, **"I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your descendants I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath which I swore to your father Abraham."** And then to Jacob, in Genesis 28, verse 13, God speaking to Jacob, **"I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie, I will give it to you and to your descendants."**

Go back to Exodus 2, verses 24 and 25. God remembers His covenant to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and that covenant is a covenant to give His people the *land* of Canaan. But in Exodus 2 they are still in Egypt. Ah yes. Correct. They're sighing and crying and groaning in Egypt. But God's covenant says they will not stay there in that condition. So, there has to be a change. And it is here in Exodus 2.24 and 25, when God heard, remembered, saw and took notice of His people that God begins to act to bring about dramatic change! This is a necessary introduction and set-up to Exodus 3 and we have to understand all this.

So next time, I promise, we start in Exodus 3, verse 1. God acts again in the life of Moses and His people, which leads us to the name God uses for Himself. Please be with us as we continue to discover who God Is.

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