

HUMILIATION'S NECESSITY

Exodus 2:11-25

Background:

To fulfill His mission, the Son of God came down and was brought low. Christian, if that humiliation (Philippians 2:5-11) was true for Christ, how much more must it be true for us? How much more do we need to be brought low before we can be used by God for His purposes?

As we continue our study in the Book of Exodus, we will see this truth just as much at work in God's people of old. This Sunday, we will examine the humiliation of Moses. Join me in preparing for our worship together with another full consideration of Exodus 1-2.

Call to Worship: Psalm 34:1-14

Introduction:

Last week we studied the birth of Moses, and observed how the Providence of God carefully 'preserved' the baby, then arranged and organized circumstances so that the Hebrew baby Moses, cast upon the Nile in 'an ark', was found by the Pharaoh's daughter, the same Pharaoh who had executed the decree that 'all male Hebrew babies should be cast into the Nile' (Exodus 1:22) And now Moses lives 'providentially' in the Pharaoh's house. All of this has been orchestrated by the Sovereign Hand of God.

Exodus 2:10

"And the child grew, and she (Moses' mother) brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. And she named him Moses, and said, 'Because I drew him out of the water'." (NASB)

Birthered, preserved, protected and named. This was Moses.

Moses' epitaph, which declared him the great 'man servant of God', is stated at the end of the book of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy 33:1

"NOW this is the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the sons of Israel before his death."

But before Moses becomes this 'great man servant of God' he has lessons to learn. The theme of today's passage is 'Humiliation'.

Humiliation's Necessity: Exodus 2:11-25

No one likes 'humiliation'. Everyone winces to think upon scenes of humiliation in their life. The memory of these low times still hurts, still stings. No one desires this. Who would view as necessary, this being brought low, broken down? GOD DOES! The Word shows us the need for this very thing. The Word shows us that it is necessary. Now we are not talking about embarrassing moments. No. Yes, embarrassing moments do sting, but they are but a scrape, and are soon over. But 'humiliation' is much more unforgettable. 'Humiliation' breaks one to their core, brings one to their lowest point in life, strips one right down of rights and privileges, takes one from the place of prestige in Egypt's Court, and relegates them to the impoverished 'wilderness' in Midian. This is 'humiliation'. This is what happened to Moses. This 'humiliation' was absolutely necessary. This 'humiliation' was 'preparation' for purpose. This 'humiliation' was preparing Moses for the work of God.

Consider David's experience in the 'wilderness' (1 Samuel 21-26). David was being hunted by Saul, and yet was also being prepped for becoming King of Israel.

Consider the three years that Paul spent in Arabia (Galatians 1:16-17). These were transition years when Saul grew into his role as the Apostle Paul.

And now today we look at Moses and his time of 'humiliation'. The account is brief, a mere twelve verses, but the 'humiliation' was not brief for it lasted forty years.

Exodus 2:11-22

"Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand. And he went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, 'Why are you striking your companion?' But he said, 'Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian?' Then Moses was afraid, and said, 'Surely the matter has become known.' When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh

and settled in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. When they came to Reuel their father, he said, 'Why have you come back so soon today?' So they said, 'An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds; and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock.' And he said to his daughters, 'Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat.' And Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses. Then she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, 'I have been a sojourner in a foreign land.' (NASB)

'Humiliation' can take time for many, more time for some than others. It is not pleasant, but it is necessary. 'Humiliation' does something to us, in us, --- it brings us low. The world recoils at such. The proud hate being brought low. They don't want to be low. They want to be self reliant, independent. They don't want their weaknesses known. They are confident they've got it.

Pride is not a worldly problem. It is a human problem. Pride is our 'default' position, and pride is at the root of all sin. Pride is 'setting yourself above God'. It is claiming confidence in one's self. It is saying, 'I am high'. We go along, quietly claiming this calculated confidence. I am able. I have a plan, I have the means. But pride goes before the fall of destruction.

Proverbs 16:18

"Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling." (NASB)

Godly things do not happen in pride, and good things get destroyed. Therefore, it is necessary for God to bring us low, to break us down, to do this to us before we can do things for God's glory and plan. It is necessary, for God does not tolerate a threat to His glory. We don't want 'humiliation', but God must bring us low, whether we like it or not, before we are ready to do things for God.

The root word of 'humiliation' is the word 'humility'. This is a word we find more comfortable than 'humiliation'. We like the outcome, but we don't like the process. Therefore we need a passage like this one that details the 'embrace of 'humiliation'.

There are three features of 'HUMILIATION' to be considered, for pride is our battle, if we are sons of Adam and daughters of Eve.

I THE CAUSE OF HUMILITY: (vv11-15)

Exodus 2:11

"Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren." (NASB)

Moses is now a man, grown up, though the Exodus passage does not reveal his actual age, however, we gain insight into the years that have passed from the New Testament, from the martyr, Stephen, who speaks about Moses before the Council in Acts.

Acts 7:21-22

And after he had been exposed, Pharaoh's daughter took him away, and nurtured him as her own son. And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds." (NASB)

Such an existence for Moses! He was given the best, access to libraries and resources and education, all that was 'impossible' for the person in slavery, and now he has become a powerful man, well spoken, and very capable in deeds. And Stephen tells us that Moses had almost reached the age of forty when these 'next' events happened to him.

Acts 7:23

"But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel."

In spite of his education and power and accomplishments, Moses has not forgotten his people, the Hebrews. The humble man never forgets where he comes from, 'who he is' on the inside. He remembers his people, and he feels for them. He does not just observe them, he does not look down on them with pity. No. He sees the cruel time they are experiencing. He sees this cruel beating that is taking place, and he has compassion. Stephen tells us:

Acts 7:24

"And when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian." (NASB)

But Moses' killing of the Egyptian proved to be a 'premeditated' killing, a planned killing. It was not an accident. It was not a matter of self defence. No. First, Moses looked around, checking for witnesses to what he was about to do. Second, Moses made a deliberate choice and 'struck the man down', killing the man. Thirdly, Moses, tried to hide his actions by burying the dead man in the sand.

Exodus 2:12

"So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand." (NASB)

Actions have consequences. And Moses' actions that day set into motion a 'domino effect' of subsequent events.

Exodus 2:13

"And he went out the next day, and behold, two Hebrews were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, 'Why are you striking your companion?'" (NASB)

Moses sees two of his own people fighting. He chooses to, strives to, reconcile them, tries to be a 'peacekeeper', asking why they are fighting, why they are "injuring one another?" Acts 7:26 (NASB) But he receives a puzzling response. Stephen explains that Moses "supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand." Acts 7:25 (NASB) And the aggressor, the "one who was injuring his neighbour pushed him away" Acts 7:27a (NASB), and said to Moses,

Exodus 2:14

" ... 'Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian?' Then Moses was afraid, and said, 'Surely the matter has become known'." (NASB)

Moses realizes that his sin is known. The aggressor has turned it all around on Moses, simply by posing two small questions.

1. 'Who made you a prince or a judge over us?'
2. 'Are you intending to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian?'

Both questions 'foreshadow' things to come. It is as if God is 'preparing' Moses for things to come in the days ahead. Something in his 'humiliation' is something he will see again in his life ahead.

And once again we find 'irony' in how the 'Providence of God' has worked out the details, for a little further along in Exodus we read that Moses 'does become a judge over the people', but requires help, and his father-in-law Reuel, also called Jethro, counsels Moses in how to 'more effectively' serve the people. (Another 'humbling' experience.)

Exodus 18:13-23

"And it came about the next day that Moses sat to judge the people, and the people stood about Moses from the morning until the evening. Now when Moses' father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, 'What is this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit as judge and all the people stand about you from morning until evening?' And Moses said to his father-in-law, 'Because the people come to me to inquire of God. When they have a dispute, it comes to me, and I judge between a man and his neighbor, and make known the statutes of God and His laws.' And Moses' father-in-law said to him, 'The thing that you are doing is not good. You will surely wear out, both yourself and these people who are with you, for the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone. Now listen to me; I shall give you counsel, and God be with you. You be the people's representative before God, and you bring the disputes to God, then teach them the statutes and the laws, and make known to them the way in which they are to walk, and the work they are to do. Furthermore, you shall select out of all the people able men who fear God, men of truth, those who hate dishonest gain; and you shall place these over, as leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens. And let them judge the people at all times; and let it be that every major dispute they will bring to you, but every minor dispute they themselves will judge. So it will be easier for you and they will bear the burden with you'." (NASB)

And then, in the matter of the second question, as Stephen points out, the Hebrews had misunderstood the intentions of Moses when he stood up for the Hebrew, trying to aid him, killing the Egyptian. Yet these 'blindnesses', and this action of the people 'questioning' Moses is to become a 'common place' situation in the days/years ahead. Thus, the 'two questions' foreshadow events to come. We read in Numbers, for example, how Aaron and Miriam rise up against Moses, 'questioning' his leadership, and later still, Korah and his men rise up in rebellion against Moses and Aaron, even though God had called Moses, specifically, to be their

leader. Once again they miss the point of Moses' intentions, and even more importantly, they miss the 'big picture' of God's intentions.

Numbers 12:1-9

"Then Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married (for he had married a Chushite woman); and they said, 'Has the LORD indeed spoken only through Moses? Has He not spoken through us as well?' And the LORD heard it. (Now the man Moses was very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth.) And suddenly the LORD said to Moses and Aaron and to Miriam, 'You three come out to the tent of meeting.' So the three of them came out. Then the LORD came down in a pillar of cloud and stood at the doorway of the tent, and He called Aaron and Miriam. When they had both come forward, He said, 'Hear now My words; If there is a prophet among you, I the LORD shall make Myself known to him in a vision, I shall speak with him in a dream. Not so, with My servant Moses, He is faithful in all My household, With him I speak mouth to mouth, Even openly, and not in dark sayings, And he beholds the form of the Lord, Why then were you not afraid To speak against My servant, against Moses?' So the anger of the LORD burned against them and He departed."

And a few chapters later, Korah, who is not content with his important tabernacle duties, is joined by 250 other arrogant leaders, who have their own complaints, and they rise up in indignation that Moses is going 'too far' as their spiritual leader, and that he has taken them from a land of milk and honey in Egypt, but has failed to lead them to the 'promised land' (They fail to remember their enslavement).

Numbers 16:1-14

"NOW Korah the son of Izhar, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, with Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab, and On the son of Peleth, sons of Reuben, took action, and they rose up before Moses, together with some of the sons of Israel, two hundred and fifty leaders of the congregation, chosen in the assembly, men of renown. And they

assembled together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, 'You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, everyone of them, and the LORD is in their midst, so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD? When Moses heard this, he fell on his face; and he spoke to Korah and all his company, saying, 'Tomorrow morning the LORD will show who is His, and who is holy, and will bring him near to Himself; even the one whom He will choose, He will bring near to Himself. Do this; take censers for yourselves, Korah and all your company, and put fire in them, and lay incense upon them in the presence of the LORD tomorrow; and the man whom the LORD chooses shall be the one who is holy. You have gone far enough, you sons of Levi!' Then Moses said to Korah, 'Hear now, you sons of Levi, is it not enough for you that the God of Israel has separated you from the rest of the congregation of Israel, to bring you near to Himself, to do the service of the tabernacle of the LORD, and stand before the congregation to minister to them, and that He has brought you near, Korah and your brothers, sons of Levi, with you? And are you seeking for the priesthood also? Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD; but as for Aaron, who is he that you grumble against him?' Then Moses sent a summons to Dathan and Abiram, the sons of Eliab; but they said, 'We will not come up. Is it not enough that you have brought us up out of a land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness, but you would also lord it over us? Indeed, you have not brought us into a land flowing with milk and honey, nor have you given us an inheritance of fields and vineyards. Would you put out the eyes of these men? We will not come up!'" (NASB)

Because of their rebellion, because they "spurned the LORD" Numbers 16:30 (NASB), "the ground that was under them split open; and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, and their households, and all the men who belonged to Korah, with all their possessions. So they and all that belonged to them went down alive to Sheol; and the earth closed over them and they perished from the midst of the assembly." Numbers 16:31b-33 (NASB)

They are Moses' people, yet they miss Moses' intent, and they miss the 'big picture'. They have 'tunnel vision'. Moses was moved to help his people, but the aggressive Hebrew only sees that Moses was angry and killed a man. He cannot see that Moses has compassion for his people. No. He can only see that Moses has an anger issue. Miriam and Aaron grumble about Moses' wife, but in truth, they are jealous of Moses' relationship with God and how he has been gifted by God. They cannot see that God is using Moses to lead the people to deliverance. The people grumble about food, about the wilderness, about the expectation for holiness, about

Moses' leadership. They complain and want to go back to Egypt. This 'tunnel vision', this limited sight, this 'spiritual blindness', is a hallmark of God's people through the ages. And this same 'short sightedness' continues to plague God's people up to today. Yet now is not the time for 'short sightedness'. The 'big picture' of God's plan needs to be observed and tended to.

So, the people, his own people, are turning on Moses. And as we return to our passage, we discover that the Pharaoh, (whichever Pharaoh it might have been these forty years beyond that initial decree in Exodus 1:22) has heard that Moses has killed an Egyptian, and now he, the Pharaoh, seeks to kill Moses.

Exodus 2:15

"When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well." (NASB)

And so Moses flees from Egypt, and Pharaoh, and ends up in Midian. Midian is east of Egypt, and southeast of Canaan. Midian is quite a distance from Egypt; quite a distance from court life, from the libraries, from the life and company that he has known all these years. And yet, here we find Moses, sitting by a well in Midian. He has moved from the highest high to the lowest low, and here he will stay, for the next forty years. In one sense, Moses has caused the problem, and has brought this state of affairs upon himself. He chose to take a life, and now he must live with the consequences. The book of Hebrews confirms that he 'chose' this humiliation, chose to be with his people, the people of God, even knowing of their being mistreated.

Hebrews 11:24-25, 26b,27

"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin ... the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king, for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen." (NASB)

But as much as we are active and as much as we submit in our own humility, yet there exists a 'first cause' and a 'second cause', and so a Providential hand is overseeing and ordaining it all. Sovereign God reigns over every detail that is happening.

Humble yourself and get low, or God will do it for you. Submit to God and get low, if in Christ, or God will do it. Remember how Moses got here? By the Sovereign Hand of God, the Providence of God. The two tracts, first cause and second cause, weave together. God sovereignly saved him, preserved him, placed him in a high place, and then brought him down to sit by a well. This is GOD ALONE working through, reigning over, the 'actions' of our lives. We must get low, must humble ourselves, must repent. God will bring on 'humiliation', for it must be; we must be brought low. It is necessary, in order to be used by God. But God must work first, for He puts the pieces in place, puts the pieces together. He worked through and orchestrated the pieces for Moses, from high to low, so that Moses was 'prepared' to do purposeful work for God. It is no different for us. To be 'humbled' is to be used by God. He brings it, we embrace it, just as Moses did.

II THE CHARACTER OF HUMILITY: (vv 16-22)

Exodus 16:22

"Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters; and they came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. When they came to Reuel their father, he said, 'Why have you come back so soon today?' So they said, 'An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds; and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock.' And he said to his daughters, 'Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat.' And Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses. Then she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, 'I have been a sojourner in a foreign land'." (NASB)

So, the setting for the story of Moses has now shifted from Egypt to Midian. The Midianites are also descendants of Abraham, not through Abraham and Sarah, but through Abraham and Keturah. We read the account in Genesis.

Genesis 25:1-6

"Now Abraham took another wife, whose name was Keturah. And she bore to him Zimran and Jokshan and Medan, and Midian and Ishbak and Shuah. And Jokshan became the father of Sheba and Dedan, And the sons of Dedan were Asshurim and Letushim and Leummim. And the sons of Midian were Ephah and Epher and Hanoch

and Abida and Eldaah. All these were the sons of Keturah. Now Abraham gave all that he had to Isaac; but to the sons of his concubines, Abraham gave gifts while he was still living, and sent them away from his son Isaac eastward, to the land of the East." (NASB)

These sons, Abraham saddled with gifts, and had sent them away to the East. But now, in Moses' time, the Midianites had become a primitive nation, with a primitive religion, and Reuel was the local priest, having seven daughters who frequented the well in order to water their father's flock. (In Judges 6-8 Israel displeases God and He gives them over to the Midians for a number of years. But Israel is oppressed by the Midians and the Lord then raises Gideon to deliver Israel, and the Midian's are defeated, 'subdued for forty years'. Judges 8:2)

The well is a focal point in these times, a common meeting place. Scripture speaks of 'the well' in a number of the Biblical stories. The servant of Abraham meets Rebekah, the future wife for Isaac, at the well in Genesis 24, for example, and Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well and speaks to her about the significance of 'living water' in John 4. And the 'shepherds coming' and driving the Midian 'daughters' away (vs 17) was also an ordinary fact of life. The shepherds, being stronger, and bullies, were naturally scaring off the weaker ladies, and possibly even the lambs. But Moses comes to their rescue, and helps them, and even waters their flock for them.

Until now, we have only slightly seen Moses' character, but here we see, once again, his sense of justice and his compassion, which come to the forefront. He staves off the shepherds, protects the daughters, waters the flock. He has taken care of the flock. He is showing himself to be 'the real shepherd'. Would we have seen this if he had not been 'humiliated'? Indeed, we may not have seen it so vividly. However, Moses does happen to be at the well by God's Providence, and the 'divine instrument' that God is preparing is emerging.

With 'humiliation' one has either one of two responses. One either heads down further in humiliation, blaming, escaping, disparaging, disappearing, or, one rises up to the occasion, and does 'what is right', and creates a 'character' experience. This is a 'sanctification' parallel. Emerging character development is established, and unseen qualities begin to arise.

Romans 5:3-5

"And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations; knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance, and perseverance, proven character; and proven character hope;

and hope does not disappoint; because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us." (NASB)

Suffering produces endurance. The character is built, tested, and revealed in a trial, and while suffering, one learns what is inside, for God reveals it. And God will do something with this information.

So, we are told that the daughters have come home (vs 18), earlier than expected, and they speak to their father about the Egyptian man whom they have met at the well, and who has helped them (vs19). And again we note some characteristics about Moses. We see Moses at work, helping. He proves himself a man of excellence, and efficiency.

(We note, reading on in Scripture, that this father, the priest, is referred to by two different names. We are introduced to him as Reuel (Exodus 2:18), but then in the following chapter he is referred to as 'Jethro, Moses' father in-law, the priest of Midian' (Exodus 3:1), and later again, as noted previously above, the text refers to 'Jethro, Moses' father in-law,' (Exodus 18:12). Two names for one person, a second name, for whatever reason. We note this a number of times in Scripture. Gideon, for example, was also called by another name. We read, "THEN Jerubbaal (that is Gideon) and all the people who were with him, rose early and camped beside the spring of Harod ..." Judges 7:1 (NASB) The Apostle Peter is also known as Simon (John 21:17), and there was Saul, "who was also known as Paul". Acts 13:9a (NASB).)

Reuel questions his daughters. "Why have you come back so soon today?" (vs18b) 'Where is this man?' "Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat." (vs20) Girls, where are you manners? Go get him. Bring him back. Don't just leave him there. This speaks to the hospitality of ancient culture. At the very least, 'Come and and break bread with us.'

And so Moses was taken back to the home of the priest Reuel. He receives more than just a meal. He is given Zipporah, one of the priest's daughters, to marry, and "she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, I have been a sojourner in a foreign land." Exodus 2:22 (NASB) The child is aptly named, for it illustrates, and reflects, the context of his birth. (Stephen provides us with yet more supporting detail concerning this time. He states, "...MOSES FLED, AND BECAME AN ALIEN IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN, where he became the father of two sons." Acts 7:29 (NASB)) An important detail comes through in our passage today. MOSES WAS CONTENT. "And Moses was willing to dwell with the man." (Reuel)

Exodus 2:21a. Moses was happy enough to stay on in Midian. He was not distracted or lamenting about Egypt, not looking back at what he had, or who he once was.

Do you know of such character and contentment? Do you partner 'exile' with 'contentment'? Having been brought so low, do you associate it with contentment? Does 'wilderness' bring you contentment?

Naturally, the answer would be no, that we do not associate it with contentment, BUT THAT IS PRECISELY WHERE 'SPIRITUAL GROWTH' HAPPENS. Moses was far from Egypt, far from luxury, far from opportunity. Such a fall, yet is contented. He sits by a well, in the wilderness, and he knows contentment. Ordained by the Sovereign Hand of God, there Moses sits. Is this all there is, Lord? I will be content. I am content. THIS IS THE CHARACTER OF HUMILITY, not getting worked up, not lamenting, but being content. God, if this is what You have ordained, I am content.

III THE CALL OF HUMILITY:

Exodus 2:23-25

"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. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them." (NASB)

And so, another long passage of time has passed. Moses has been living in exile in Midian for forty years (thus making him around eighty years old). The pharaoh who ruled when Moses was born has died, and yet another pharaoh rules. But the focus of these last three verses of the chapter are not on Moses. They are on the Hebrews who are still in Egypt, and are still suffering in slavery. In fact, their plight has become harder still. This new pharaoh has compounded the slavery, and the Hebrew people have cried out in their bondage. Left with such a hard existence, there is nothing they can do but to cry out to God. Brought low, and swimming in humiliation, they long for deliverance. Their cries for rescue are heard by God. He has not forgotten them. He remembers his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And he 'takes notice'.

This is good news for all of us. 'CRYING OUT TO GOD DOES SOMETHING'. It brings God into the scene. He 'heard their groaning' and He 'remembered His covenant' (vs 24). He will never forget His promises. And He did promise that though they would be oppressed for four hundred years, that justice would ultimately come.

Genesis 15:13-14,16

"And God said to Abram, 'Know for certain that your descendents will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed for four hundred years. But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. ... Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete.'" (NASB)

Our God 'sees people' (vs 25), and He knows. He knows His people; He has knowledge of what is happening to them. He 'takes notice' (vs 25). So when God heard their groaning, He 'remembered His promise' to them, and it moved Him to act on their behalf.

What does prayer do?

If God knows all things, and ordains all things, and God has a plan, (and we know this to be true), then prayer is 'effectual'. Prayer reflects, and reveals our 'needs', but also promotes the promises of God, and helps to complete God's plan. Prayer spurs God to move, and to fulfill His promises. Prayer is a 'trigger' to fulfillment, but only a Sovereign God of Providence can pull it together. In 'humiliation' we cry out to God. Man would not cry out to God without 'humiliation', but it is not just for the purpose of sanctification that 'humiliation' is needed. Even for Christ, the One who 'brought salvation', the One who 'took our place on a tree', 'humiliation' was necessary.

Philippians 2:5-8

"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." (NASB)

This was God Almighty, condescending, taking on flesh, taking on humanity, taking on 'humiliation', taking on death 'humbly' on the cross. He was brought low, in order to be

exalted. He took on the sacrificial job, which needed to be done to fulfill salvation, but it took God Almighty taking on flesh to do the job that we ourselves could not do. And God then exalted Christ.

Philippians 2: 9-11

"Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (NASB)

And so, if in Christ, we participate in this 'humiliation', in His 'humiliation'. We share in His sufferings, we are brought low. We experience this by dying, being buried, and like Him, will one day be raised.

Romans 6:5-7

"For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin." (NASB)

Moses knew about the coming Messiah. And in some mysterious way, He understood about the Promise. He knew he would share in Messiah's suffering, and in His reproach. He was looking to the ultimate reward. Scripture assures us this is so.

Hebrews: 11:24-26

"By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward." (NASB)

Whatever you face, whatever 'humiliation' is coming in the days ahead, 'LOOK TO THE REWARD IN CHRIST'. We likely will face more 'humiliation'.

Colossians 3:1-2

"IF then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth." (NASB)

Where is your mind fixed? Is it fixed on Christ, the Messiah? He is our hope, the hope of Israel, and the hope of the Church. We are 'humiliated', yes, but when we look to Christ, we are eternally rich, and therefore the 'humiliation' does not matter. We are reminded of Paul and Silas who were beaten and thrown into prison, 'their feet fastened in the stocks' Acts 16:23-34 (NASB), yet, about midnight, "Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them." Acts 16:25 (NASB) How could this be so? When we look to Christ, when our eyes are on Him, we too can sing. FIX YOUR EYES ON CHRIST. HE IS OUR BLESSED HOPE.

Benediction:

II Corinthians 8:9

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." (NASB)