

3. God of eternity

6/18/2006

Wherever you travel, you go into the countryside of the each nation, you will be able to find some sorts of idols which the local people worship. You can find them in Alaska, Tahiti, Ireland, Brazil, Australia, Sudan, Japan, China, Congo, Egypt, Iraq, France, America and everywhere else.

You might say, "Oh, that was when people didn't know better. That is deep inside of primitive jungles." I beg you the difference. I am sure I can find the modern day people's idols and gods in the concrete jungles in any metropolitan city around the world. Those gods may have shapes of money, cars, homes, business, even shape of humans.

Whether people admit or not, they still have idols somewhere in the countryside, in the house, in the business, wherever their time and efforts are consumed while they ignore the one true eternal God.

Unlike our loving God who gave up His only begotten Son Jesus while people still reject Him, the gods people idolize demand sacrifices from people without giving anything to them. Those gods are selfish, vile, carnal and violent without reasons.

A. MOSES THE SHEPHERD IN MIDIAN DESERT

Exodus 3:1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

By now, it was 40 years that Moses lived as an obscure shepherd out in the backside of Midian desert. At this point his life was so simple that he didn't even have a flock of sheep to call his own – the sheep belonged to his father-in-law.

Now his forty years in Midian have come to an end. All of his schooling in Egypt was not enough to prepare him for his great work of delivering Israel from bondage. God equipped him for this task by forty years of preparation in the desert.

Moses brought the sheep to this mountain, also later called Mount Sinai. Horeb probably means "desert" or "desolation," and the name gives an idea of the terrain like Gila Bend in Arizona.

B. THE BURNING BUSH

Exodus 3:2-6 And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn." 4 So when the Lord saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." 6 Moreover He said, "I am the God of your 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.

As you all know it is not uncommon for a plant like this to spontaneously ignite out in the desert due to dry lightning or simply high temperature.

The burning bush had a threefold significance:

1) It was a picture of God.

Deut. 33:16 With the precious things of the earth and its fullness, And the favor of Him who dwelt in the bush. Let the blessing come "on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him who was separate from his brothers.'

It revealed His glory and power, yet it was not consumed. Moses needed to be reminded of the glory and power of God, because he was about to undertake an impossible task.

2) The bush symbolized Israel going through the fire of affliction, but not consumed.

How often nations around the world have tried to exterminate the Jews, yet have failed! One of the greatest proofs of the accuracy of Scripture is the existence of the nation Israel. As the Bible prophesied about the existence of the nation of Israel many thousand years ago, this little country is still existing because of God's protection, even though she is surrounded by the extremely hostile countries.

Note that Moses was brought to the place where he bowed before God and adored Him in wonder, because this is the true beginning of Christian service.

Servants who know how to take off their shoes in humility can be used of God to walk in power. If you think that God needs you, because you are so spiritual, I guarantee you that He will not use you until you come to Him in humility.

I must talk to you all about the fear of God. That is not being scared of God. It is about reverence and respect of who He is. Jesus is not, I repeat, Jesus is not one of your homeboys whom you can talk down to. You don't dare to say Him, "Yo JC, what up, homie?"

Psalms 111:10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever.

C. A PERSONAL GOD

Exodus 3:7-10 And the Lord said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8 So I have come down to deliver them OUT OF the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land TO a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. 9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

Our God is a personal God who sees our trials and difficulties, hears our cries and laughs, speaks wisdom to guide us and touches our hearts to make His presence known. What an amazing God with full of grace! However, when His children, the born-again believers get persecuted, He takes it personally and chooses to take vengeance in His time.

Please note how God is speaking to Moses in v8:

When God redeems, He not only redeems from something, He always redeems unto something. We have been saved from sin unto holiness and heaven. God has

raised us up and given us a position in Christ. We have been brought out of hell, and put into heaven. That is redemption: it is 'out of' and 'into'.

D. WHO, ME?

Exodus 3:11-12 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" 12 So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

40 years before, Moses thought he knew who he was: he was a prince of Egypt and a Hebrew, God's chosen instrument to deliver Israel. After forty years of chasing sheep around the desert, Moses didn't have the same self-sure confidence that he once had.

You might say that Moses was suffering from a so-called poor self-image. What was God's answer for that? "I will certainly be with you." The same God who made Himself available for Moses is available for all of us. No matter who you are, God is available to give you peace, hope and love through Jesus Christ.

Bible tells us that in the last days difficult times will come and men will be lovers of themselves according to 2 Timothy 3:2. We love ourselves too much. You may say, "I don't have a good self-esteem." I don't think so. If what you said is true, why did you look at yourself one more time in the mirror before you walked out of your home? How about this, when you receive a group photo that includes you, whom do you seek first? Yourself! Need I to say more? We certainly love ourselves.

It is a God's promise that He will be with us no matter what. He is not a fair weather friend. He sticks with us through thick and thin.

E. I AM WHO I AM

Exodus 3:13-15 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.'"

Rightfully, Moses sensed he needed credentials before the people of Israel. Before, he thought he had the credentials because he was a prince of Egypt. 40 years of tending sheep took away his sense of self-reliance.

God told Moses, "I am who I am." God means that He is all that we will ever need. He was actually speaking of that eternal aspect of His character. He is the Eternal One. He is who was, who is and who is to come. He is past, present and future.

With God, there is no past nor future. It is all NOW. He does not dwell in the fourth dimension that is bound by time. God is outside of our time limit. That is what we see Genesis 1:1.

Genesis 1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

How can there be God before the beginning? Because He is the One who created time and He is not limited by it.

Malachi 3:6 For I am the Lord, I do not change; Therefore you are not consumed, O sons of Jacob.

He doesn't view history as a progression of centuries, but as a single photo. He captures your life, your entire life, in one glance. He sees your birth and burial in one frame. He knows your beginning and your end because he has neither.

God's name is "I AM". How did this name come to be pronounced 'Jehovah'? The pious Jews of later years did not want to pronounce the name of God out of reverence, so they left the Hebrew vowels out of His name and simply said the word Lord 'adoni' instead. If the vowels of the word 'adoni' are put over the Hebrew consonants for 'YHWH', you can get the name "Jehovah."

The idea behind the name 'I Am' is the sense that God is "the becoming One". God becomes whatever is lacking in our time of need. The name 'I Am' invites us to fill in the blank to meet our need – when we are in darkness, Jesus says, "I am the Light"; when we are hungry, He says, "I am the Bread of life"; when we are defenseless, He says, "I am the Strong Tower." God is the becoming One, becoming what we need.

F. THE COMMISSION OF MOSES

Exodus 3:16-18 Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt; 17 and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" 18 Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The Lord God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.'

God was going to do the deliverance, but He still wanted to use Moses. God could do it all by Himself, but it is God's plan to work with and through people – we are workers together with Him.

2 Corinthians 6:1 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain.

After four hundred years in Egypt, Moses had the job of announcing that now was the time for the children of Israel to go back to Canaan, and take the land God promised to their fathers.

This was probably totally contrary to what the elders and people of Israel desired. In four hundred years, they set down roots. They probably had no desire to return to the Promised Land. All they wanted was to be made more comfortable in Egypt.

Just like that many Christians would rather remain in this carnal selfish world systems. They are not excited about following God with all of their hearts, minds and souls. How do I know? Majority the Christian works are done by the 10% of the congregation and the church expenses are met by the those same groups tithes and offerings while the rest of the congregation sit on their hands and expect somebody else to serve them.

G. A PREVIEW OF THE EXODUS

Exodus 3:19-22 But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand. 20 So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. 21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed. 22 But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians.

The Lord gave Moses a glimpse of the Exodus He is going to pull through him. We will study more in details in the future.

H. APPLICATIONS

- 1) Our God is a personal God who sees our trials and difficulties, hears our cries and laughs, speaks wisdom to guide us and touches our hearts to make His presence known.
- 2) Servants who know how to take off their shoes in humility can be used of God to walk in power.
- 3) God can do it all by Himself, but it is God's plan to work with and through people – we are workers together with Him.