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We left Moses briefly last Sunday, taking the opportunity of *London Fashion Week* to discover, Joseph's amazing multicoloured coat was in fact, one of three coats in his life, and appreciated how God **clothes** us, to protect us and give us an identify us as His own, in our journey of life.

It was the same for Moses: wrapped in swaddling cloth and set afloat in a purpose-built *coracle* in the calm waters of the Nile hidden among the bullrushes, Moses is recognised as a Hebrew baby, and named by the Egyptian Princess as one who was *lifted out of the water*. What a prophetic name for a man whose life's mission was to carry 5 million descendants of Jacob's 12 sons, through the water into safety!

During our Tuesday evening Bible Study this past week, we read, "*One of the fundamental principles of Biblical interpretation is to understand our own preconceptions*".<sup>1</sup> The author provides an excellent analogy to explain this. She has before her a printed email detailing the teacher meetings she has scheduled at her daughters school, at the bottom of which are the words *Click here to make changes to your schedule of appointments*. Can you click the sheet of paper to change the schedule of teacher appointments? To read this text as a valid instruction, is to take it out of context. This is the danger we must avoid when reading the Bible. The safest way to read the Bible, is to keep asking the question, *What is the larger story, this narrative is part of?* As always, it is part of the larger story of God's salvation. The question, therefore, is as always, *What is God saying, that **we** must make every effort to understand?*

Three weeks ago we identified Moses' life in three blocks of 40 years each. Moses of course, did not know this as he lived his life, but in hindsight, reading history as we do, this is what we discover. His first forty years was lived as a Royal Prince in the lap of luxury, being the grandson of the

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<sup>1</sup> "God of Violence Yesterday, God of Love Today", by Helen Paynter (Bible Reading Fellowship, 2019) p.17 and chapter 3.

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Pharaoh. Like most adopted children, Moses wanted to know more about his family, so left the security of the palace and wandered into the place where the Hebrew people lived, and witnessed first hand, the brutality of slavery.

Moses' anger at the injustice meted out to his people exploded into a lethal attack on an Egyptian man he saw beating a Hebrew worker. Moses feared for his safety and fled several hundred miles east into Arabia. There he stayed, married and raised a family while tending his father-in-law's flock.

Our text today helps us understand how God shaped Moses character, in order that Moses follow God's plan.

There are two things that God had to burn into Moses' character about Himself, that he could draw on for the rest of his life.

The first is, **God is the Lord who Remembers; He NEVER forgets!**

During his time in the desert working as a shepherd, the king in Egypt died. God heard the cry of his oppressed people and **remembered** His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.<sup>2</sup> This act of remembering does not mean, God had forgotten about his people and suddenly woke up to a commitment He had made. When the Bible says "**God remembered**", it is a cue that He was about to act. God was concerned, the Hebrew people were not doing well in their slavery and the hardship was getting worse.<sup>3</sup>

God is ready to act and Moses needs to be brought into His plan. How then, does God get Moses' attention?

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<sup>2</sup> Exodus 2:23-25

<sup>3</sup> Exodus 2:25

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God always acts with something we can relate to. Oftentimes we miss this, because we are looking for the spectacular - if He is God, then let him move heaven and earth and I will believe.

A bush fire in the desert is not unnatural, but Moses recognised the fire burning this bush was unnatural. The fire raged, but the plant was not consumed in flames.

Moses' curiosity got the better of him and went to investigate only to be told, *'Don't come any closer! Take off your sandals; the place you are standing on is Holy ground! I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.'*

God has remembered and is ready to go into action, and Moses now knows, God has not forgotten!

The second thing God had to burn into Moses' character about Himself, that he could draw on for the rest of his life, is that He is **God! The Lord Who Redeems!** Only God can repossess that which has been lost to Him, and He does it with flawless justice.

When He has Moses' attention, God reveals His four-part redemptive purpose, a pattern which appears in various ways throughout the Old Testament and finally gives shape to the pinnacle of God's redemptive work in Jesus Christ.

First is God's work of **deliverance**. *"I will free you from the burdens of the Egyptians and deliver you from slavery to them. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm, with mighty acts of judgment".<sup>4</sup>*

God of the Hebrew people delivered his people by stepping into their world and effecting a change *"on the ground"*, setting the stage for the

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<sup>4</sup> Exodus 6:6

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Messiah Jesus, to deliver his people from their sins and break the devil, the ultimate evil tyrant.<sup>5</sup>

The second part of God's redemptive plan is, He will form a **godly community**, *"I will take you as my people, and I will be your God"*<sup>6</sup>. This declaration forms the background for Jesus who would build His **"church"**, not as a physical structure of brick or stone, but as a new community with disciples from all nations<sup>7</sup>, something for us to consider as we move into our building of bricks and mortar!

The third part of God's redemptive plan is, The Lord God will create an **ongoing relationship** between Himself and His people. *"You shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has freed you from the burdens of the Egyptians"*.<sup>8</sup>

All God's declarations of His redemptive plan begin with the word **"I"**, except this one. The onus and initiative is on us to build a relationship with God, through Jesus the Christ who declared, *No one comes to the Father, except through me!*<sup>9</sup> God has a workable plan to rescue us from the turmoil of this world, into His eternal Kingdom.

The fourth and final part of God's redemptive plan is for his people to **experience the good life**. *"I will bring you into the land I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; I will give it to you for a possession"*.<sup>10</sup>

God's work of redeeming us, is to set right His entire creation—physical environment, people, culture, economics, everything. This is Jesus' mission as he initiates the kingdom of God coming to earth, where the meek inherit the earth (the land) and experience eternal life<sup>11</sup>. Exodus

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<sup>5</sup> Matthew 1:21; 12:28

<sup>6</sup> Exodus 6:7a

<sup>7</sup> Matthew 16:18; 28:19

<sup>8</sup> Exodus 6:7b

<sup>9</sup> John 14:6

<sup>10</sup> Exodus 6:8

<sup>11</sup> Matthew 5:5; John 17:3

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sets the path for the rest of the Bible that follows, which comes to completion in the New Jerusalem mentioned in Revelation 21 and 22.

God has a plan to redeem, to regain possession of His most precious creation, you and I, we His people, which He lost to sin.

Sin is when satan, who is known as the father of lies, tells God lies about us (*we are not worth it, see all the bad they do...*), and tells us lies about God (*you cannot trust Him, He is never there when you need Him, ...*).

You see, God does **not** believe satan's lies about us, because Jesus set God's mind at rest about us when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane.<sup>12</sup>

The problem arises because we entertain, even believe satan's lies about God! ***Did God really say...? God does not care for you! If He did, you would be cured! God has left this creation and that is why we have this mess...***

Two things God had to burn into Moses' character about Himself, for him to draw on for the rest of his life, and these two things, we need to let God burn into our character:

**God remembers - He never forgets.** He will swing into action when He knows everything is coming together.

**God redeems** for Himself that which has been taken away from Him, and He will do it with awesome majesty and flawless justice.

God is acting and always ready to swing into action.

Are you ready to join Him?

**AMEN.**

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<sup>12</sup> John 17