

3rd September 2017

Trinity 12

Proper 17 Green



Collect

Let your merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of your humble servants; and that they may obtain their petitions make them to ask such things as shall please you; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen**

Exodus 3:1-15 English Standard Version (ESV)

The Burning Bush

3¹ Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, “I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.” ⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.” ⁵ Then he said, “Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” ⁶ And 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 at God. ⁷ Then the LORD said, “I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you

may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.”¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?”¹² He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”¹³ Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”¹⁴ God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.”^[a] And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”¹⁵ God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: ‘The LORD,^[b] the 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 thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

Footnotes: a. or *I am what I am*, or *I will be what I will be*. b The word *Lord*, when spelled with capital letters, stands for the divine name, *YHWH*, which is here connected with the verb *hayah*, “to be” (& “I am”) in verse 14.

COMMENT: Two main themes stand out in this reading: the call of Moses and the nature of God who calls. Moses’ experience resembles very closely the call of the prophet Isaiah (Is. 6:1-8). This is not surprising since the narrative likely took its final shape about the same period of Israel’s history, the 9th and 8th centuries BC. The pattern follows the same typical literary form: a vision, a response of awe mingled with initial receptiveness, the divine mission stated, and instructions given on the means of carrying out the mission.

Matthew 16:21-28 English Standard Version (ESV)

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

16²¹ From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.²² And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord!^[a] This shall never happen to you.”²³ But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance^[b] to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

Take Up Your Cross and Follow Jesus

²⁴ Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”²⁵ For whoever would save his life^[c] will lose it, but whoever loses his life

for my sake will find it. ²⁶ For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. ²⁸ Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

Footnotes: a. or “[May God be] *merciful to you, Lord!*”. b. Greek *stumbling block*. c. The same Greek word can mean either *soul* or *life*, depending on the context; twice in this verse and twice in verse 26.

COMMENT: These few verses contain two prophecies of different kinds. First there is Jesus telling the disciples about his pending death and resurrection. We must remember that Matthew wrote this with fifty to sixty years of hindsight, so he knew what had actually happened. Undoubtedly, this coloured his report of the prediction. He does give a reality check, however, taken directly from Mark’s account (Mark 8:32-33), by including Peter’s abrupt rejection of the prediction and Jesus’ equally severe rebuke (vss. 22-23). Luke’s parallel passage excludes the incident (Luke 9:21-22), but does tell of the prediction of Jesus’ suffering, death and resurrection as part of his admonition following Peter’s messianic confession. The fact that Jesus’ teaching about his death is found in all three gospels indicates that it had a very strong oral tradition behind it.

Psalm 105:1-6,23-26,45b *Confitemini Domino*

℟ The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

¹ Alleluia!

Give thanks to the Lord, tell his name,
make known his deeds among the peoples. ℟

² O sing to him, sing his praise;
tell all his wonderful works!

³ Be proud of his holy name,
let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice. ℟

⁴ Consider the Lord and his strength;
constantly seek his face.

⁵ Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, the judgments he spoke. ℟

⁶ O children of Abraham, his servant,
O sons of the Jacob he chose.

²³ So Israel came into Egypt;
Jacob lived in the country of Ham. ℟

²⁴ He gave his people increase;
he made them stronger than their foes,
²⁵ whose hearts he turned to hate his people
and to deal deceitfully with his servants.

℟ The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.

²⁶ Then he sent Moses his servant
and Aaron the man he had chosen.

⁴⁵ Alleluia! **℟**

**Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.**

COMMENT: The story of God's providence to the Israelites in the wilderness is recalled in this hymn of thanksgiving. We have no clues as to the occasion, which inspired this song. The great events of Israel's history seen from the perspective of faith form the theme of many other psalms. The events have been idealised, cleansed of such distractions as the people's waywardness and complaints. A profound theology of history comes through clearly nonetheless. In all of Israel's history, the psalmist is saying, God's hand has guided us and provided for us. The psalm must be read as a celebration of faith, not a statement of historical facts.

Post Communion

God of our pilgrimage, you have willed that the gate of mercy should stand open for those who trust in you: look upon us with your favour that we who follow the path of your will may never wander from the way of life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Blessing

God the Father, by whose glory Christ was raised from the dead, strengthen you to walk with him in his risen life; and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, rest upon you now and forever, **Amen.**