

SCRIPTURE STUDY SHEET FOR JULY 18, 2021 @ CAPC OAKLAND

Reflecting on the Second of the Six Great Ends of the Church
The Church is for “The maintenance of divine worship”

Exodus 3:1-12
COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

¹ Moses was taking care of the flock for his father-in-law Jethro, Midian’s priest. He led his flock out to the edge of the desert, and he came to *God’s mountain called Horeb*. ² The Lord’s messenger appeared to him in a flame of fire in the middle of a bush. Moses saw that the bush was in flames, but it didn’t burn up. ³ Then Moses said to himself, Let me check out this amazing sight and find out why the bush isn’t burning up.

⁴ When the Lord saw that he was coming to look, God called to him out of the bush, “Moses, Moses!” Moses said, “I’m here.”

⁵ Then the Lord said, “Don’t come any closer! *Take off your sandals*, because you are standing on holy ground.” ⁶ He continued, “I am the God of your father, Abraham’s God, Isaac’s God, and Jacob’s God.” Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

⁷ Then the Lord said, “I’ve clearly seen my people oppressed in Egypt. I’ve heard their cry of injustice because of their slave masters. I know about their pain. ⁸ I’ve come down to rescue them from the Egyptians in order to take them out of that land and bring them to a good and broad land, a land that’s full of milk and honey, a place where the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites all live. ⁹ Now the Israelites’ cries of injustice have reached me. I’ve seen just how much the Egyptians have oppressed them. ¹⁰ So get going. I’m sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.”

¹¹ But Moses said to God, “Who am I to go to Pharaoh and to bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

¹² God said, “I’ll be with you. And this will show you that I’m the one who sent you. After you bring the people out of Egypt, you will come back here and **worship** God on this mountain.”

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

Exodus is the second book of the Hebrew Bible. It tells the story of how the Israelites went into Egypt to escape a famine, settled there and were eventually enslaved by the government of Pharaoh. Generations later, under the leadership of Moses (and his siblings Aaron and Miriam) the Israelites were delivered from their slavery and oppression, escaping through the impassable desert and sea, eventually being guided by God to the promised land flowing with milk and honey. It’s the foundational story of what it means to follow the God revealed in the story of the Exodus – Yahweh – the One who was, who is and who is to come. Today’s passage is Moses’ first encounter of this strange God.

God’s mountain called Horeb:: It’s believed that this was what we call Mt. Sinai. In ancient Near Eastern Religions (among them Judaism) deities often were considered to have their dwelling place on a mountain top. Hence our saying of a “mountain top experience.”

Take off your sandals:: We have documentation that worshippers removed their shoes in ancient religious rituals, like here, as a sign of respect and recognition of the “otherness” or “holiness” of the moment.

worship The Hebrew word used here is AVODAH עבודה which means worship, work and service. Worship isn’t just what we do one day a week. Work isn’t something that’s devoid of God. Service of one another is worshipping God.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in the text?
- How do you experience worship? How do you define what it is and what it isn't?
- Think of a powerful moment of worship you've lived. What made it powerful? How did it shape you?
- What do you expect and hunger for when you come to worship at CAPC Oakland? In your work life? How are they similar or different?
- How is the Spirit of God inviting you – or us as a church – to act, speak, be or change through this word?