

Exodus 3:16

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:

Analysis

Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt (לֹךְ וְאִסְפַּת אֶת-זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל... וְהִנֵּה אֱלֹהִי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם נִרְאָה אֲלֵינוּ... פָּקֹד פְּקֹדָתִי אֶתְכֶם) —God gives Moses his message and strategy. **Gather the elders** (זִקְנֵי) —work through existing leadership. The message: **appeared unto me** (נִרְאָה אֲלֵינוּ), and **I have surely visited you** (פָּקֹד פְּקֹדָתִי), pakod pakadti, emphatic: "visiting I have visited"). The verb **פָּקֹד** (pakad) means "visit for purpose"—divine intervention. **Seen that which is done to you**—God's awareness motivates action. This message assures Israel that their suffering hasn't gone unnoticed; God acts to fulfill covenant promises.

Historical Context

The phrase 'surely visited' (פָּקֹד פְּקֹדָתִי) echoes Joseph's prophecy in Genesis 50:24-25: 'God will surely visit you.' Israel's elders likely passed down this promise through generations, waiting for its fulfillment. Moses' message confirms that the long-awaited visitation has begun. Working through elders respected existing tribal authority structures that would govern Israel's camp organization during the wilderness journey.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's 'visiting' Israel after centuries of silence encourage you when prayers seem unanswered for long periods?
2. What does Moses' instruction to work through existing elders teach about respecting legitimate authority structures when implementing change?

Interlinear Text

אֶלָּהֶם לְאֶמֶר יְשַׁרְאֵל אֶת יְהוָה וְאַסְפָּה לְךָ
and say of Israel the elders and gather
H413 H559 H3478 H2205 H853 H1980 H622

אֱלֹהִים אֱלֹהִים גָּרָא הָאֱלֹהִים אֶבְתַּיְלָם אֱלֹהִים
God God appeared of your fathers of the LORD unto them
H430 H413 H7200 H1 H430 H3068

פֶּקְדָּתִי פֶּקְדָּתִי לְאֶמֶר יְהוָה בְּצִדְקָה מֵאֶבְרָהָם
I have surely I have surely and say of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob
H6485 H6485 H559 H3290 H3327 H85

בְּמִצְרַיִם לְכָמְדָה בְּעֵשֶׂת וְיִתְּשַׁבֵּחַ אַתָּת
to you in Egypt that which is done and seen you and
H4714 H6213 H853 H853

Additional Cross-References

Psalms 8:4 (Parallel theme): What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?

Exodus 4:29 (References Israel): And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel:

Exodus 4:31 (References Lord): And the people believed: and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshipped.

Genesis 50:24 (References God): And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Acts 15:14 (References God): Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

Acts 20:17 (Parallel theme): And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church.

Acts 11:30 (Parallel theme): Which also they did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Exodus 13:19 (References God): And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you.

Exodus 4:5 (References God): That they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.

Exodus 2:25 (References God): And God looked upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.