

Exodus 3

As this chapter opens, what occupation is Moses engaged in (v. 1)? He was a shepherd tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethrow (Reuel). **What other men in the Bible have been shepherds?** David, Jacob's sons, etc. **To which mountain does Moses lead his flock?** Mt Horeb. **The other name for this mountain?** Mt Sinai.

Who appeared next to Moses (v. 2)? The angel of the Lord. **In what form did He choose to appear to Moses?** A bush that was on fire but was not burned up. **Who was this "angel of the Lord?"** The Lord God Himself. This was the first time that God had revealed Himself to Moses, or anyone else as far as Scripture records, for over 430 years.¹

When Moses went closer to look at the bush, what did God tell Moses to do and why (v. 5)? To keep his distance and remove his sandals because he was standing on holy ground. The word "holy" occurs here for the first time in the Bible. It means "set apart." By removing his sandals as an act of respect, Moses acknowledged that the place was indeed a holy place.²

How did God identify Himself to Moses (v. 6)? As the God of his ancestors Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. **What did he want Moses to understand?** That He is not a new God like the gods of Pharaoh or an unknown God. **How did Moses respond?** He hid his face. He was afraid to look at God.

What was God's perspective on the condition of the Israelites (vv. 7-9)? He had seen the suffering of His people which touched His heart. He had heard their cries and seen their affliction. Now He was coming to deliver them from the Egyptians and bring them into the Promised Land.

What did God announce to Moses (v. 10)? God was commissioning him to deliver His people from Pharaoh/Egypt. This was Moses' clear calling.

After hearing God's plan what objection does Moses raise (v. 11)? He wasn't qualified. He didn't have the ability to do the job. He was undoubtedly both shocked and afraid. Moses was reluctant to serve God because he was too self-conscious, and not God-conscious enough. Our success as God's servants does not depend on our natural abilities as much as it does on our trust and obedience.

How did God answer Moses' objection (v. 12)? God responded to this objection with two promises: the promise of His personal presence and the promise that Moses would return one day to Mount Horeb to worship God. It was right here at Mount Horeb/Sinai that Moses later received the Ten Commandments.

What was Moses' concern (v. 13)? God had not revealed Himself to His people for 430 years. When Moses asked how he should answer the Israelites' question, "What is His name?" he was essentially asking how he could demonstrate and prove to them after 430 years of silence that it really was the God of their fathers who had sent him.³ Moses sensed he needed credentials before the people of Israel. Previously, he thought he had the credentials because he was a prince of Egypt. Forty years of tending sheep took away that sense of self-reliance.

When God revealed Himself to man in the days of the patriarchs it was often associated with a particular name or title for God, e.g., *God Most High* ([Genesis 14:22](#)), *Almighty God* ([Genesis 17:1](#)), *Everlasting God* ([Genesis 21:33](#)). So if Moses were to come to the elders of Israel as a representative of God, it would be logical for them to wonder, "By what name did He reveal Himself to you?"

How did God respond to Moses' concern (vv. 14-16)?

Verse 14: He identified Himself with the title "I AM WHO I AM." In effect, God was saying, "It's Me Moses! Tell the people that "I AM" has sent you."

This name “I AM WHO I AM” is connected with the name *Yahweh*. Probably ‘Yahweh’ is regarded as a shortening of the whole phrase, and a running together of the clause into one word.

God told Moses His name was “I AM” because God simply *is*; there was never a time when He did not exist, or a time when He will cease to exist. The name “I AM” has within it the idea that God is completely independent; that He relies on nothing for life or existence (Isaiah 40:28-29; John 5:26).

The underlying issue here was not who Moses was, but who God is. I believe God was saying, “I am the God of your forefathers, who proved Myself long ago as completely adequate for all their needs; so it really doesn't matter who you are, Moses!”⁴

Verse 15: The Israelites may have felt that God had left them. They had prayed for many years but God seemed to be absent. Moses must tell them that God is not absent. He was the God who had been, and who always would be—the same God that their forefathers worshipped (v. 6). He had always been there. He was there now to answer their prayers for freedom.

“I AM” is the God that their ancestors worshipped. He is Abraham’s God and Isaac’s God and Jacob’s God. By this name, (“I AM”) God’s people in the future will know him. This must be his name for all time. This name is His person, His character, His authority, and His power. He will be there always.

Verse 16: God told Moses to gather together Israel’s leaders. Moses must tell them that the Lord had met him. The Lord was the same God that their ancestors had worshipped. The Lord had not been absent. He had seen all that had happened to them in Egypt. He had seen all the terrible things that the Egyptians had done.

What specific instructions did God give to Moses (vv. 16-17)? God told Moses to go to the elders of Israel and tell them about the theophany, i.e. the appearance of God in the bush and His message of concern (v. 7) and of His plan to deliver them out of Egypt and into Canaan , the Promised Land (v. 8).

What did God promise would happen if Moses did as He said (v. 18)? The elders will listen.....an encouraging message of respect. A promise of authority accepted. This was a precious promise to Moses. Forty years before, when it seemed that he had everything going for him, the people of Israel rejected him as a deliverer for the nation. Surely, he must be wondering why they would listen to him now, when it seemed he had nothing going for him. But Moses had *God* going for him now; they would indeed listen to Moses’ message.

What did God say the elders and Moses should say to Pharaoh? Moses and the elders were simply to request permission to leave Egypt for a short trip (three-day journey) for religious purposes.....to offer sacrifices to their God.

What did God say He would do to change Pharaoh’s mind (vv. 19-20)? God told Moses that Pharaoh would not respond to his request except by the divine persuasion of God’s mighty hand. But God would perform wonders (the 10 plagues) to persuade Pharaoh to let them go.

How did God predict what their departure would look like (vv. 21-22)? The plagues on Egypt would cause the Egyptians to be favorably disposed toward the Israelites so that when asked, the Egyptians would give silver, gold, and clothing (Exodus 12:35-36) to the Israelites. God’s people were not to leave empty-handed.

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Exodus, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 33.

² William MacDonald, *Believer’s Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 91.

³ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Exodus, 2023 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 38.

⁴ Ibid. 40.