

**July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2020**  
**I AM WHO I AM**  
**Exodus 3-4**

**BIBLE IN A YEAR READING PLAN**

June 28 Psalms 78-79	July 2	Psalms 96-102
June 29 Psalms 80-85	July 3	Psalms 103-105
June 30 Psalms 86-89	July 4	Psalms 106-107
July 1 Psalms 90-95	July 5	Psalms 108-114

**Lesson Introduction:** Last week we began our study of Exodus by seeing God's providence over the life of Moses. He had been kept alive through very unlikely circumstances and found himself wandering in the wilderness, where he would find his wife and make a family. This week we will see how God appeared to Moses and called on him to return to Egypt, to set His people free. As we study, we will see that God is all-sufficient and all-powerful in Himself, able to accomplish His purposes, and how He chooses and equips unlikely people to do just that.

**FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS:**

- ***God is Holy (3:2-6)***
- ***God is eternally self-existing (3:14)***
- ***God equips His people to accomplish His purposes (4:1-17)***

**Read Exodus 3-4**

***Discussion Section 1: Take Off Your Shoes (3:1-6)***

- What is significant to the LORD appearing to Moses in flame?
- Why did Moses remove his sandals and hide his face?
- How does our behavior in the presence of God compare with that of Moses?

**Note:** Moses had settled in nicely in Midian. He had found a wife and was shepherding the flocks of his father-in-law, seemingly able to leave the past in the past. But as he was going about his normal, everyday task, something extraordinary and unexpected happened... God appeared to Him in a burning bush!

Throughout the Scriptures, we see fire associated with God time and time again. Pastor Tony Merida points out, ***"The "fire" is representative of God's holy presence. Fire appears later in Exodus and in other Scripture—in a pillar of fire that leads God's people, fire at Mt. Sinai, in the tabernacle, and the Day of Pentecost. When God forbade idolatry later in Deuteronomy, Moses said, "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God" (Deut 4:24). The author of Hebrews used this language also in describing how to worship (Heb 12:29). Fire is appropriate because we know that we are drawn to fire and amazed by fire, but we also tell children, "Don't play with fire." Fire is to be taken seriously. And so is God. He is holy" (Merida, Exalting Jesus in Exodus, pg. 51).***

It is good for us to be reminded that God alone is holy. To be holy is to be set apart, to be pure, to be perfect. As we can see in this passage, we are separated from God because of His holiness and our sinfulness. Moses had to take off his shoes and hide his face in the presence of Holy God! He was not worthy to come into His presence, and thus acted accordingly. We, like Moses, are sinful people, unworthy to be in the presence of God, yet we have been told to approach God's throne of grace with boldness (***Hebrews 4:16!***)

***Hebrews 12:4*** reminds us that no one will see the Lord without holiness, yet we are promised that one day we will see Him face to face and told now to approach His throne with boldness! How can this be? Thankfully, unlike Moses, we live on this side of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ! Christ has bought holiness for us with His blood (***2 Corinthians 5:21***), thus making it possible for us to approach God with boldness, and one day live in His presence without hidden face, forever. Although all of this is true, we should look to Moses as an example of how we approach God. He is high above us, perfect in all His ways, and worthy of all praise. Just because Christ has purchased holiness for us and allowed us to come before His throne with boldness does not mean that we should forget Who we are talking to. Every time we pray, we are standing on holy ground, and should never forget that we are talking to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob... The Great I AM. May we approach Him with reverence, with humility, even as we approach Him boldly, recognizing that our holiness has been purchased by Him through the blood of His Son.

***Discussion Section 2: I AM WHO I AM (3:13-22)***

-Why does God refer to Himself as “**I AM**”?

-Why does God refer to Himself as “**The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob**”?

-How should our understanding of God as **the Great I AM** shape the way we think about Him, and the way we live our lives?

**Note:** God gives Moses an incredible task to fulfill by telling him to go back to the land which he had fled from, and lead His people out of the land of Egypt to the land which He had promised their fathers. As we will see later, Moses had many objections. His first question was simply, “**Who am I that I should go to the Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?**” (V. 11). Moses shows that his focus was in the wrong place from the start, for his ability to carry out this task truly had nothing to do with who *he* was, but *Who* he was talking to. Immediately in **verse 12**, God tells Moses that He will be with Him. In other words, He was saying, “it does not matter who *you* are, because *I* will be with you. But even this response was not enough for Moses, as he then asks, “what should I tell them your name is?” (paraphrase of V. 13).

Perhaps more than being concerned about helping the Israelites know who it was sending him to rescue them, he was wanting to know for himself. Moses may have been thinking, “ok, I know you say you will be with me, *but who are you anyway*, that I should be comforted by the fact that you will be with me?” The name God gives for Himself may seem strange to us, but it is a beautiful depiction of Who He is, and understanding this name should bring great comfort and confidence to us when we are called by God to do scary things.

Tony Merida explains:

**“God revealed His name “Yahweh” in verse 15 (corresponding to the four Hebrew consonants YHWH, translated “Lord” in most English Bibles). It is connected with the verb hayah, “to be,” mentioned three times in verse 14, which is rendered “I AM” in English. Great mystery exists here. No one knows for certain how to pronounce YHWH, and the meaning is mysterious also, but the meaning seems to be related to the idea of this verb “to be.” God is. He is central. He has no beginning. He causes everything to be. He is God” (Merida, Exalting Jesus in Exodus, pg. 58).**

What an incredible comfort! The God who was sending Moses, the God who has saved us, the God who calls us to go and spread His word to the nations and promised to be with us always (**Matthew 28:16-20**), He IS! He always has been and always will be. He is completely sufficient in and of Himself. He does not need us. He is happy in Himself, and He is able to do all things on His own. In his sermon on September 16<sup>th</sup>, 1984, Pastor John Piper stated, “**In Jesus Christ, we who are born of God have the unspeakable privilege of knowing Yahweh as our Father — I AM WHO I AM — the God Who exists (eternally)... Whose personality and power is owing solely to himself... Who never changes... From Whom all power and energy in the universe flows... And to Whom all creation should conform its life.**”

### **Discussion Section 3: No Excuses (4:1-17)**

-How many excuses does Moses give God concerning why he should not be the one to go before Pharaoh?

-What do God’s responses to Moses’ objections tell us about Him?

-What excuses have you made when it comes to following God’s will for your life, and how might this passage encourage you to trust Him more fully?

**Note:** Understanding God in light of His glorious name – **I AM** – should keep us from making any excuses when it comes to living out what He has called us to. Throughout this passage, Moses continually makes excuses about why it should not be him that goes before the Pharaoh to deliver God’s people. He starts out by asking the question, “**who am I that I should to Pharaoh...?**” (**3:11**). Moses recognized that he was not capable of this task in and of himself. But even after the LORD assured him that He would be with him, that the I AM would go before him, Moses still doubted. Chapter 4 shows us all of the excuses that Moses made... **they won’t believe me... I am not eloquent... someone else would be better!** (**4:1-13**). God is incredibly patient with Moses, but finally His anger is kindled (**4:14**). Still, the loving Father that He is, He continues to show Moses that he will be with him. As we close out this passage, may we remember how patient the LORD is with us, and how it is Him that equips us for every good work (**Ephesians 2:10, 2 Timothy 3:17**). The Great I AM is on our side! His strength is made perfect in our weakness (**2 Corinthians 12:8-10**). May we stop making excuses, and live out what He has called us to, by His strength and grace alone!