

I Am: Part 1

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John 8:58 NLT

58 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I AM!"

This was not merely a statement but a declaration. This declaration places Jesus as part of the Godhead. In Genesis 1:26 "26 Then God said, "Let us make human beings in our image, to be like us.

Within this series we will uncover the mystery of God's holiness. But to first uncover it we must know what holiness is. Turn with me to Exodus 2:5

Exodus 3:5 NLT

5 "Do not come any closer," the LORD warned. "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.

Although the word holy is found in Genesis 2:3, but in Exodus this is the first mention that made the word holy in relational to His presence. As we all know the story about Moses encountering God but to build the foundation for this series we must forget what we have know and see this in a new light.

"Take off your sandals, for you are on holy ground." The call from God to remove what was common to Moses. The call to take away what would separate Moses from God's presence.

We have all understood that Holy means to be separated and/or set apart. And what God spoke to Moses was in the reference of that truth. The very thing that was common among man had to be removed in the presence of God. The common separates us from His presence! And this same call was given to the child of Israel.

Leviticus 20:22–26 NLT

22 "You must keep all my decrees and regulations by putting them into practice; otherwise the land to which I am bringing you as your new home will vomit you out. 23

Do not live according to the customs of the people I am driving out before you. It is because they do these shameful things that I detest them. 24 But I have promised you, 'You will possess their land because I will give it to you as your possession—a land flowing with milk and honey.' I am the LORD your God, who has set you apart from all other people. 25 "You must therefore make a distinction between ceremonially clean and unclean animals, and between clean and unclean birds. You must not defile yourselves by eating any unclean animal or bird or creature that scurries along the ground. I have identified them as being unclean for you. 26 You must be holy because I, the LORD, am holy. I have set you apart from all other people to be my very own.

The call to remove what is common for man. The call to be HOLY, because He is holy. God has called each of us to be a duplicate of Him. He created us to be in His likeness and image! This call is not a one time event just as His holiness is not a one time event. We see this truth in:

Revelation 1:8 NLT

8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega—the beginning and the end," says the Lord God. "I am the one who is, who always was, and who is still to come—the Almighty One."

From Beginning to End, He is unchanging. His holiness does not change, therefore His call to Holiness does not change. So to better understand this call to holiness we must go deeper.

Exodus 3:1–6 NLT

1 One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up. 3 "This is amazing," Moses said to himself. "Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it." 4 When the LORD saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, "Moses! Moses!" "Here I am!" Moses replied. 5 "Do not come any closer," the LORD warned. "Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground. 6 I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

SO much to unfold within these few verses but if we could lend our heart and cry out for wisdom, God will not deny us to know Him deeper. Moses was about his everyday routine of attending to the flock. But one day while he ventured to the place that we know as Mt. Sinai, something caught his eye. And within scripture we know that the eye is the reflection of the heart. His heart was drawn to something that was not common. It is the holiness of God that captures our attention. It is the holiness of God

that is calling us. Notice in verse 4, When the Lord saw Moses coming to take a closer look. This interpretation actually states that Moses turned aside. Moses stopped what he was doing. So what was he doing beforehand? He was tending to the flock but he turned away from what he was doing. But notice the next part of that verse: then God called out to Moses. An invitation to come into His holiness. But the removing of what would cause Moses to not experience the call. Notice that Moses turned aside and then God required that more must be removed. When we turn aside to come towards God we must be aware that the call to come closer will require us to separate from the common.

In verse 6 we see the subtle hint of “I AM”. I Am the God of your ancestors. The ancestors knew God as the “I AM” but so much had passed by that no one had been in God’s presence or the place of Holiness, that God had to reintroduce. And as we stated on Wednesday night that Moses meet God in a situation of impossible. This is where God reintroduced Himself to me! I was in an impossible situation and as I turned aside God told me to remove what was common. The position of turning everything off that did not involve Him.

Exodus 3:9–15 NLT

9 Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them. 10 Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt.” 11 But Moses protested to God, “Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?” 12 God answered, “I will be with you. And this is your sign that I am the one who has sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this very mountain.” 13 But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?” 14 God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. 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: Yahweh, the God of your ancestors—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you. This is my eternal name, my name to remember for all generations.

As God continued to give Moses these hints of “I AM and I will be”. I will be with you is the sign that I am the one who sends. The call to come closer and remove the common that we are accustomed to. As we act or draw near with this reverence we are presented with the task to bring others into holiness. To bring them to the I Am.

Hebrews 11:6 NLT

6 And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.

The writer of Hebrews (most likely Paul) speaks a powerful declaration that we must all come to grips with. As we read this verse we must understand the gravity of how the “I Am” spoke this to his heart. Paul then relays this same word to us but his wording is in relation to giving a word. If we could bring into perspective the very word that God spoke to Paul it would sound like this. “Anyone who wants to come to me must believe that I Am and that I Am a rewarder to those who turn aside and remove what is common”. This act of faith in believing that I Am does exist and that He rewards those that pursues Him. This is the order of His holiness. His reward for our removing what separates us is not what we may perceive as fame or riches but the reward of being a part of the plan for mankind. Moses was not endowed with the fortune of man but of the redemptive plan of God. Not only to deliver the Israelites from Egypt but to bring them back to the place of Holiness, His presence. To come face to face with “I Am”.

But look at how they responded when given the chance to come close to God.

Exodus 20:18–21 NLT

18 When the people heard the thunder and the loud blast of the ram’s horn, and when they saw the flashes of lightning and the smoke billowing from the mountain, they stood at a distance, trembling with fear. 19 And they said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen. But don’t let God speak directly to us, or we will die!” 20 “Don’t be afraid,” Moses answered them, “for God has come in this way to test you, and so that your fear of him will keep you from sinning!” 21 As the people stood in the distance, Moses approached the dark cloud where God was.

A defining and displaying of God’s holiness will acquire one of two actions. Either they will draw near or they will maintain their distance. The call to holiness scares so many because it defies their comfort. But just as we spoke about in our last series, that God did not call us to comfortable because there is nothing comfortable about carrying our cross.

I Am is calling out to you today to come closer but the call requires that you remove what separates you from His holiness. Moses did eventually put his sandals back on but when He picked them up he knew that his outlook on these sandals would be different from now on.

Hebrews 12:1–2 NLT

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. 2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.

Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne.

Each of the individuals within the hall of faith knew that answering the call to come near to the "I Am" would result in removing any or everything that would slow them down or hinder them from fulfilling what God had orchestrated for them to bring others to the place of holiness. The call to know I Am is not a call that can be taken lightly. We will either be the one that will draw near or the one that is comfortable with maintaining a distance. And as we look at the results of Moses and the Israelites, whose life was far more rewarding? Which of the two will you be moving forward? Will you draw near or will you maintain?

Let me pray with you today!