

Exodus 3 - Thursday, August 7th, 2008

3:1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

- Moses is 80 years old now, and for the last 40 years, he has been tending his father-in-law, Jethro's, sheep in complete obscurity.
- This is interesting because Moses won't be the first one God places in desert; there will be many who will go to this university of sorts.

1. Elijah was a man of the desert.

2. John the Baptist grew up in the desert regions of the Dead Sea in southern Israel.

3. The Apostle Paul spent three years in the deserts of Arabia after his conversion on the road to Damascus.

4. John the Revelator was banished to the desert island of Patmos, which is about 50 miles off the coast of modern day Turkey.

2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed.³ Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

- Moses may have thought that he would spend the rest of his life on the back side of the desert tending to a flock that isn't even his own.
- Imagine what that may have been like to, all of a sudden, see a bush he had seen thousands of times before on fire but not consumed.
- It's not the bush on fire that gets his attention it's that it's not being consumed. One likened this to Israel in the fire, but not consumed.

- Other commentators have suggested that the burning bush that burns but isn't consumed pictures God's grace drawing us to Him.

- The thorn-bush is a picture of the thorns and thistles from the earth that were brought forth when, through Adam, sin entered the world.

- The burning with fire is a picture of God's judgment, but the burning not consuming the bush is a picture of God's grace and mercy.

- Then, Moses, as we'll see in the next verse, turning and drawing near to the bush is a picture of repentance and coming to the Lord.

4 So when the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."

- Interesting, and you can miss it at first, but notice that the LORD doesn't speak to Moses until he turns towards and looks at the bush.
- Like with Moses, when we turn towards Him and draw near to Him, He in turn draws near to us, so as to speak to us.
- It's similar to when we as parents speak to our children. We are not going to communicate to them until we have their attention.

- Also, notice that this is the LORD, which means it's a Christophony, or a pre-Bethlehem appearance of Jesus Christ Himself.

- Interesting that God will call him by name, twice. Here's a nobody, out in the middle of nowhere, who has nothing, and God knows him.

5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground."⁶ Moreover He said, "I am the God of your father -- the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

- God tells Moses two things, to stand back, and to take the sandals off his feet because he's standing on holy ground in God's presence.
- One reason for Moses taking off his sandals was that he was entering into God's presence. It's similar to entering someone's house.
- Moses realizes that God Himself is speaking to him and reminding him of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

- Notice that Moses hides his face from God because he was afraid to look upon God. He knows he has sinned greatly against God.

- He probably can't forget how bad he messed up back in Egypt 40 years prior when he committed murder. He knows that God knows.

- Perhaps his fear is that God is now going to punish him for this sin, as he sort of has for the last 40 years on the back side of the desert.

7 And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows.⁸ So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites.⁹ Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.¹⁰ Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

- The LORD now tells Moses that He has seen the oppression of His people the Israelite's, and knows their sorrows.

- It's interesting that He says that He has come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians to bring them into the land.

- He tells Moses twice that the Israelite's cry has reached His ears and that He's going to send Moses to Pharaoh to deliver them.

- God didn't need Moses to deliver the Israelites from the Egyptians. He has chosen to use human vessels to accomplish His work.

- God desires to use us as part of His plan of redemption however; He does the work in us before He does the work through us.

11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"

- Instead of Moses saying; "here am I," he's asking; "who am I." Instead of; "here I am to save the day," it's; "who am I, no way!"

- Actually, Moses is now useable to the Lord, because he has come to nothing, and now the Lord, through him, can do anything.

"The more fit a man is for God's work, the lower is his esteem of himself."

Charles Spurgeon

12 So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this shall be a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

- Notice that the Lord doesn't actually answer Moses' question of "Who am I?" God wants the focus off of Moses and on Him.
- The Lord responds to Moses by telling him that He will "certainly" be with him, and that he will give him a sign so he knows for certain.
- The sign will be that when he brings the Israelites out of Egypt, they will serve Him here at this very mountain, Mt. Horeb, or Sinai.

13 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

- This is interesting because what Moses is concerned about never comes to pass. No one ever asks him what God's name is.
- They do however, question whether or not God is with Moses, and if He's using Moses to deliver them from the hand of the Egyptians.
- Be that as it may, God will tell Moses Who He is in the next verse. This will communicate to Moses the name and nature of God.

- Before we look at verse 14, I would like to try and answer the question of why Moses would ask God for his name to give the Israelites.
- One reason is that Moses knew he would need to have some credibility before the Israelites in light of how he had lost his own prior.
- Also, as with the Patriarchs before him, God has revealed Himself to Moses, and it's associated with a newly revealed name and title.

14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

- God's answer to Moses may have been a little puzzling when He says; "I AM WHO I AM." It's like He's saying; "I just Am, that's Who!
- God is simply saying that He is because there never was a time that He wasn't, and there will never be a time when He isn't.
- Also, God is saying; "I AM," all you need. Whatever you have need of, "I AM" that for you and will be that for you. I AM all you need.

Am I worried?	I AM ...JEHOVAH-Shalom	the LORD our Peace
Am I wandering?	I AM ...JEHOVAH-Raha	the LORD our Shepherd
Am I lacking?	I AM ...JEHOVAH-Jireh	the LORD our Provider
Am I defeated?	I AM ...JEHOVAH-Nissi	the LORD our Victor
Am I guilt ridden?	I AM ...JEHOVAH-Tsidkenu	the LORD our Righteousness
Am I sick?	I AM ...JEHOVAH-Rapha	the LORD our Healer
Am I helpless?	I AM ...JEHOVAH-Shammah	the LORD our Present Help

- As one commentator noted; this was clearly Jesus Himself who was speaking from the burning bush referring to Himself as the; "I AM."

John 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" NIV

John 13:19 Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that I am... NKJV

John 18:4-8 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" 5 They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. 6 Now when He said to them, "I am," they drew back and fell to the ground. 7 Then He asked them again, "Whom are you seeking?" And they said, "Jesus of Nazareth." 8 Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am. Therefore, if you seek Me, let these go their way," 9 that the saying might be fulfilled which He spoke, "Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none." NKJV

15 Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.' 16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt; 17 and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" 18 Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'

- After 400 years in Egypt, Moses will bring the message of deliverance to the Israelites; that God is going to use him to deliver them.
- Perhaps this message of deliverance won't be very welcomed by some, namely those who want to stay and have a better life in Egypt.
- I wonder if Moses wondered if the people would even heed his voice this time. Perhaps that's why God assures him that they will.

19 But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand.20 So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go.21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed.22 But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

- God sort of gives Moses a heads up by telling him that it's not going to be easy. Pharaoh isn't going to say; "ok, I'll let your people go."
- God will have to do it for Moses, and instead of Moses, and it's not only "that" God delivers them, it's the "way that" God delivers them.
- He's going to allow the Israelites to leave with silver, gold, clothing, and the riches from Egypt as sort of due payment for their slavery.
- The Israelite's are not stealing it from the Egyptians, the Lord gives them favor in their eyes so that they give it to them willingly.

- Lesson's I can learn from Exodus chapter four:

1. You're never too old for God to use you in His service. Moses was 80 years old when God called him from out of the burning bush.
2. God may introduce me to shepherding at my Mt. Horeb on the back side of the desert in order to prepare me for the ministry.
3. God may use extraordinary means, like a burning bush, in order to get my attention and reveal to me His extraordinary plan for my life.
4. Like Moses with the burning bush; God's grace woos me to Him, thus, when I draw near to Him, He draws near and speaks to me.
5. Not only does God notice when His people are being oppressed, He hears their cry and comes down to them to deliver them.
6. I can walk through the fire, and yet not be burned. Why? Because of the presence of God. Ask Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego.
7. If I'm found faithful as a servant with a little sheep, God will entrust me with much. Jesus taught this to his disciples in a parable.

Matthew 25:21 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' RSV

8. Like Moses, I may have a self-esteem problem, but it's not a "low" self-esteem, it's that I esteem myself too highly. It's not about me!

Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. KJV

9. I may not know what it is that I really need to ask of the Lord, but like with Moses, He will always answer me with what I really need.
10. It doesn't depend on; "who am I," it depends on Him Who says; "I AM." I myself am unable, but He says; "I AM" able.
11. Often times, the things I concern myself about and worry about, never come to pass. They never ask Moses about who sent him.
12. Jesus is all you need! If you're hungry; He says; "I AM the bread of life." If you're in a dark time; He says, "I AM the light."
13. If my roots are too deep here in this world/Egypt, I may not be very welcoming of the message that the deliverer is coming again.
14. When man is unjust with me, God will take care of me. Sometimes God will lay up the wealth of the wicked to give to the righteous.

Proverbs 13:22b ...the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the righteous. NKJV

Deuteronomy 15:12-15 12 If a fellow Hebrew, a man or a woman, sells himself to you and serves you six years, in the seventh year you must let him go free. 13 And when you release him, do not send him away empty-handed. 14 Supply him liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to him as the LORD your God has blessed you. 15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and the LORD your God redeemed you. That is why I give you this command today. NIV