

Exodus Chapter Three

Exodus 3:1-3

Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, "I must turn aside now, and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up."

- Revelation of God—to Moses—in the desert. Forty years spent here will prepare him for the next 40 years.
- We get the name Horeb (means: a waster) and Sinai (means: my thorns)—which is the same place—from two different traditions that effect the translation of the scriptures.
- During Byzantine empire—it was believed to be located at Jebel Musa—in the southern range of mountains in the Sinai Peninsula.
- Moses takes the flock—for grazing purposes—deep into the wilderness.
- Israel is like the Burning Bush—through years of continual persecution (fire)—they have never been completely consumed.

Exodus 3:4-6

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." Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

- Moses suddenly encounters the Presence of God—in a bush all aflame. Later, God will dwell in the midst of Israel—as a pillar of fire—dwelling in their midst without consuming them.
- Fire is a recurring symbol of God's theophany in the Old Testament.
- Deuteronomy 33:16
- Visible manifestation is followed by audible.
- Moses hears his name—given special instructions—identifies the source of the fire and the voice—the place is made Holy (first occurrence of this word in the scriptures) by the presence of the Lord. Moses needs to be careful in his response to the Lord.

Exodus 3:7-9

And the Lord said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. And now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them.

- God delivers both 'from' and 'to'
- Ephesians 2:5-6

Exodus 3:10-13

"Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain." Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, "The God of your fathers has sent me to you." Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?"

- Moses has an inventory of inadequacy: lack of capability, lack of message, lack of authority, lack of previous success, lack of previous acceptance.
- Call comes to Moses (to be deliverer) after authority of speaker is identified. Moses will repeat this pattern in Egypt (identification— establishment of authority—then the call)
- God identifies Himself as the God in covenant promise with Moses' forefathers—in the phrase—'My people'.
- 40 years previous—did not hesitate in the role of the deliverer.
- God chose the weak to confound the strong—I Cor 1:27

Exodus 3:14-16

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" And God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The Lord, the 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-name to all generations. Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt.

- This is the name that He gives to identify Himself to those who have had no evidence of His presence for the last 400 years.
- I AM WHO I AM= I AM THE ONE WHO ALWAYS IS (meaning—He can get things done). I AM WHO I AM=I AM BECAUSE I AM=I WILL BE THAT I WILL BE. This important name of God will be repeated 6,823 more times in the Old Testament. Isaiah makes significant reference in chapters 40-55 and Gospel of John does also.
- This sacred name is known as the tetragrammaton (4 letters). The English word—Jehovah—comes from the Hebrew YHWH. Jews consider YHWH too sacred to utter. The name proclaims God as self-existent, self-sufficient, eternal, and sovereign. His name as YHWH begins in this chapter.
- Ps 135:13—Thy name O Lord, endureth forever.
- God's identity is now established for Moses—but the authority to accomplish the deliverance is yet to be revealed.
- The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had accomplished the miraculous—and a miraculous display of authority will be required to confront Pharaoh.
- What is this God's credentials for what He is promising to accomplish? What is there in His reputation that gives credence to this call? (Num. 6:27, Ps 8:1)

Exodus 3:17-18

"So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey. And they will pay heed to what you say; and you with the elders of Israel

will come to the king of Egypt, and you will say to him, 'The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go a three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.'

- Egypt is a world power—Israel is no match for their oppressors.
- The Hebrews—enslaved—will need to be convinced of the power of their God—as well as the Egyptians. (Perhaps they blame God for being here in the first place)

Exodus 3:19-22

"But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. So I will stretch out My hand, and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go. And I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians."

- Asking for articles from the Egyptians—it is recompense for their enslavement—a collecting of 'back wages'.

Exodus Chapter Three Workbook

Key Words:

Harmonize:

Share three other responses that people make in the scriptures when God calls their name.

Dig:

- 1) What does Moses have in common with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?

- 2) What caused Moses to turn aside at the burning bush?

- 3) When does God speak to Moses?

- 4) What sets apart a place as 'holy' in the scriptures?

- 5) How did God identify Himself to Moses in this chapter?

- 6) How does God describe the condition of His people to Moses?

- 7) What can we learn about the nature/character of God from this encounter with Moses?

- 8) What did God intend to do to instill confidence in Moses for delivering the Hebrews from Pharaoh?

- 9) Describe the conditions of the land that the Lord intends to give to Israel.

- 10) What request is Moses sent to Pharaoh to make?

11) When will Pharaoh let Israel go?

Discuss:

- 1) Discuss the reasons why Moses is 'right' for the assignment that God is giving him.

- 2) When is it permissible to disagree/challenge a request from the Lord, or challenge an action that God is about to take?

- 3) What could be considered 'bad news' in the promises God makes to Israel in chapter three?

- 4) What role do women have in this chapter?

- 5) Is the situation in Exodus 3:21-22 similar to any event in your life?

Point of Prayer:

Make time this week to worship the Lord in the "beauty of holiness" (Ps 29:2)

Integrate:

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

Application:

- 1) Have you had a 'burning bush' experience in your life? Describe.

- 2) What is the longest situation you have had to wait on the Lord for?

- 3) Have you ever felt inadequate or intimidated by an assignment the Lord has given you?

- 4) What worship location has been 'holy ground' for you?
- 5) How do you identify with Moses in this chapter?
- 6) When have you been given an assignment from the Lord that would not be considered 'safe'?
- 7) Has someone ever shared with you an encounter they had with the Lord that caused you to be skeptical? That stirred up your faith?