

## Exodus 3:1-6

### Introduction

1. We'll be in Exodus chapter 3 for the next few weeks which focuses on how God revealed or planned to reveal Himself to Moses, Israel and Egypt
2. This is important for at least three reasons:
  - a. First, it appears that while Moses and Israel were aware of God, they no longer knew Him as Yahweh as did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (some controversy over this)
  - b. Second, God was about to move on to the next phase of His redemptive plan by delivering Israel from their Egyptian oppressors and take them from Egypt to the land He promised Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
  - c. Third, Egypt was a pagan and polytheistic nation
3. Today we're going to focus on 3:1-6 where God reveals Himself to Moses and most of the focus is on Who or what kind of God He is:
  - a. He revealed Himself as a MIRACULOUS God
  - b. He revealed Himself as a RELATIONAL God
  - c. He revealed Himself as a HOLY God
  - d. He revealed Himself as a FAITHFUL God

### A. God revealed Himself to Moses as a MIRACULOUS God (READ 3:1-3)

1. Forty years have past since Moses fled Egypt:
  - a. During that time, he married the daughter of Jethro, a Midian priest, had a son, and worked as a shepherd caring for Jethro's flocks
  - b. This was a stark contrast to his life in Egypt where he was raised by the Pharaoh's daughter and grew up in the royal palace
  - c. But, it was also providential because throughout the Bible God used shepherds and the shepherd motif to accomplish His purpose:
    - 1) In the OT, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David were all shepherds
    - 2) In the NT, shepherds were the first to receive the announcement of Jesus' birth by the angel, and the first to visit him in the manger
    - 3) The shepherd motif is also used throughout the Bible with Israel's leaders and God Himself being referred to as shepherds, the Messiah is depicted as a shepherd, and Jesus referred to Himself as the Good Shepherd
    - 4) So, as a shepherd Moses was not only in good company, but his forty years of experience caring for flocks likely served him well for what God is about to call him to do—shepherd His people
2. One day, while he was pasturing the flocks his rather ordinary day was interrupted in a rather extraordinary way:

- a. He was pasturing the flocks at the base of Mt. Horeb:
  - 1) It's referred to here as "**the mountain of God**" but it's not clear if that was its designation at the time, or if Moses refers to it that way here because of the prominent role it plays during the Exodus
  - 2) This same mountain is later referred to as Mt. Sinai and is where God revealed Himself to Israel and gave the Ten Commandments and the Law to Moses
  
- b. While he was at the base of the mountain God appeared to him in a miraculous and spectacular way (RE-READ 3:2):
  - 1) What we have here is a theophany, a physical manifestation of God:
    - a) The text says it was "**the angel of the LORD**" who appeared to Moses but throughout the rest of the chapter 3 this angel is referred to as the LORD and God over a dozen times (see 4 and 6)
    - b) This is supported by the Hebrew construct which could also be translated as "**the Angel who is the LORD**" (bound form genitive construct, probably appositional)
    - c) This is also supported throughout the Old Testament where the Angel of the LORD is repeatedly and directly identified as God
    - d) Most genuine Bible scholars believe this is a Christophany, a manifestation of the pre-incarnate Christ, especially because one of the roles of Jesus is to reveal the Father
  
  - 2) The Angel appeared to Moses "**in a blazing fire from the midst of the bush**":
    - a) This was clearly miraculous because the text also says "**the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed**"
    - b) When Moses saw this he referred to it as a "**marvelous (lit. great) sight**"
    - c) Many focus on the symbolism of the fire and what it represents here, but there are as many opinions on that as there are Bible scholars and that would be an entire study on its own for a different time
    - d) For our purposes here this morning I want to focus simply on the fact that this was a miraculous event that not only displayed God's glory and power over nature, but served to inspire wonder in Moses and validate that it was indeed God who was speaking to him
    - e) As we will see in the upcoming chapters, this is something God will continue to do throughout the Exodus story from the signs He performs through Moses for the elders of Israel, to the 10 plagues, to His miraculous provisions for Israel as He leads them through the wilderness
  
3. Takeaway: We serve a miraculous God and it should result in our wonder and our praise:
  - a. Psalm 72:18-18 says, "**Blessed be the LORD God, the God of Israel, Who alone works wonders. And blessed be His glorious name forever; And may the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen.**"

- b. Psalm 77:14 says, “**You are the God who works wonders; You have made known Your strength among the peoples.**”
- c. Psalm 86:10 says, “**For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God.**”
- d. Job said, “**Who does great and unsearchable things, wonders without numbers**” (Job 5:9)
- e. Most of us haven’t experienced a burning-bush moment like Moses, but if we don’t see and aren’t in awe of the wondrous, marvelous, and miraculous works of God that surround us then we’re not paying attention!

B. God revealed Himself to Moses as RELATIONAL God (READ 3:4)
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1. By this I mean that God is not some distant being or force but a god who engages in relationships with people and is intimately involved in our lives and affairs
2. At first glance, it may appear that God repeated Moses’ name twice to get his attention
3. However, technically this is referred to as a repetition of endearment:
  - a. In ancient semitic culture, repeating someone’s name was a way of expressing love, affection, and friendship
  - b. There are all kinds of examples of God doing this in the Bible:
    - 1) OT Examples: Abraham (Genesis 22:11), Jacob (Genesis 46:2), Samuel (1 Samuel 3:10)
    - 2) NT Examples: Jesus used it with Martha (Luke 10:41), Simon (Luke 22:31), Saul (Acts 9:4), and even God when He was on the cross (Matthew 27:46)
    - 3) Jesus even used it to rebuke those who claimed to love Him but truly didn’t because they didn’t obey Him (Matthew 7:21-23; 25:11; Luke 6:46)
4. When God called out to Moses by repeating his name, it not only communicated love and affection for Moses, but a desire to be in an deeply personal and intimate relationship with him:
  - a. In fact, God initiated the relationship!
  - b. One of my favorite descriptions of God’s relationship with Moses is found in Exodus 33:11: “**Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend...**”
5. Takeaway: we serve a relational God who wants to be in a relationship with us—in fact, like Moses, He even initiates it:
  - a. Jesus said in Matthew 11:28, “**Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-lade, and I will give you rest.**”
  - b. In John 15:15-16, He called His discipled friends and said that they hadn’t chosen Him but that He chose them (READ)
  - c. The Bible says the same thing about us (READ Ephesians 1:3-12)

C. God revealed Himself to Moses as a HOLY God (READ 3:5)

1. As Moses approached the bush, God told him not to come any closer and to remove his sandals because he was standing on “**holy ground**”:
  - a. Joshua received a similar command (Joshua 5:15): “**The captain of the LORD'S host said to Joshua, "Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy." And Joshua did so.**”
  - b. There wasn't anything inherently special or different about the ground Moses and Joshua were standing upon; in fact, it wasn't really about the ground or the place—it was the fact that they were standing in the presence of a holy God:
    - 1) The Hebrew word qodesh (holy) technically means to be cut off, set apart or separate from other things which is the essence of holiness
    - 2) Biblically, it also means to be absolutely pure and free from sin and moral impurity
    - 3) One source described God's holiness like this: “God's holiness is what separates Him from all other beings, what makes Him separate and distinct from everything else. God's holiness is more than just His perfection or sinless purity; it is the essence of His 'other-ness,' His transcendence. God's holiness embodies the mystery of His awesomeness and causes us to gaze in wonder at Him as we begin to comprehend just a little of His majesty.”
  - c. What God revealed to Moses here was not only that He was holy but that He is to be treated as holy:
    - 1) Do you remember the Biblical account of Aaron's two sons offering unauthorized fire before the LORD (READ Leviticus 10:1-2)?
    - 2) Now, look at what the LORD said in v. 3 Moses
2. God's holiness and how He is to be treated stood in stark contrast to the Egyptian gods and how they were treated by the Egyptians:
  - a. While their gods were considered powerful, they were not benevolent, holy, perfect, or moral; they were believed to engage in a host of sins, and were depicted as and acted as both humans and animals
  - b. So, one of the first things God's revealed to Moses was that He is a holy God, separate and distinct from all of Creation, morally and perfectly pure, and He can only be approached in a way that recognizes, respects, and honors this holiness
  - c. We see a remarkable example of this when Isaiah had his vision of God sitting on his throne and exclaimed, “**Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts**” (Isaiah 6:5)
  - d. We see a similar response from Moses at the end of our passage this morning (Exodus 3:6): “**...Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.**”

3. Takeaway: God is a holy God and we should treat Him as such:
  - a. This should go without saying but I wonder sometimes if we take God's holiness for granted by failing to properly appreciate it
  - b. We know passages like Hebrews 4:16 which says that because of our position in Christ we can draw near to God with confidence, but we seem to forget passages like James 4:7-10 which tells us how we should draw near (READ)

D. God revealed Himself to Moses as a FAITHFUL God (READ 3:6)
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1. This statement by God serves two purposes:
  - a. The first purpose was simply to identify Himself to Moses as the God of his own father and that of his ancestors:
    - 1) Earlier we learned that Moses' mother feared God and now we learn that his father must have been a worshipper of God as well
    - 2) It's not clear how much Moses knew about God, but he was certainly aware of his ancestors and was likely familiar with the stories of their relationship with God
    - 3) By introducing Himself this way, God revealed to Moses that the God of His ancestors was now appearing to him—a message He told Moses to deliver to the Israelites (READ Exodus 3:15-16; 4:4-5)
  - b. The second purpose was to reveal His faithfulness:
    - 1) When the Lord refers to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob it is usually in relationship to the covenant He made with them
    - 2) This is repeated multiple times throughout Exodus and Deuteronomy
    - 3) So, by introducing Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob He was revealing something about Himself—that He is a faithful, covenant keeping God
2. Takeaway: it's hard if not impossible to rank God's attributes, but if we could His faithfulness would rank near the top
  - a. It's the basis of our own faith—we can place our faith and trust in Him because He is faithful and will do what He promised
  - b. We are assured of salvation because He is faithful (READ 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24): **“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.”**
  - c. In fact, He is so faithful that He remains faithful to us even when we struggle to remain faithful to Him (READ 2 Timothy 2:13): **“If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself.”**