

The once proud prince of Egypt is now an 80-year-old shepherd in the wilderness of Midian. The invisible hand of Providence has led him to "the mountain of God", Mount Horeb.

There he encountered the Lord of glory. The Lord told him He had seen the affliction of the Israelites and had heard their cry and remembered His covenant. He knew!

Our text last week ended with God commissioning Moses to come to Egypt and bring the people out. Then he was to guide them to the Promised Land.

Have you ever had an old dream that you had given up on, stir again in your heart, but because of the pain associated with the past failure, you just didn't want to even consider it again? After 40 years of doing what was once detestable to him, Moses must have felt that way.

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

"Who am I? Just a broken down nomad with a flock of sheep that aren't even my own. Been there and done that and failed big time! All due respect, but You've got the wrong guy."

That was a sign that God had the right guy. What if we heard, "OK, it's about time. I've been waiting until You saw how all my training made me the perfect candidate for the job"? For an ordinary job that might be a good sign, but for a supernatural God sized job it would be a definite eliminator. (John 15:5) Moses not only knew what he was up against but he also knew who he was. Who am I to do a job like that? (1Peter 1:24)

Before we are too hard on Moses for his lack of faith and hesitation, we should think about that call. A man in Arizona recently went to North Korea to tell Kim Jung Ill to let the people of North Korea go. By the grace of God he was returned alive, but nothing changed. That guy had guts! What if you truly believed that God was telling you to go stand before Ahmadinejad and tell him to end his nuclear program, or worse yet to remind him of his Jewish roots? I would ask, "Why me?" Wouldn't you?

12 He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." This is the great qualifier. "I will be with you!" At the moment, Moses doesn't know the extent of what that means. Later in the journey, he will tell God, "If you aren't going, then I'm not going!" (Exodus 33:15-16) He learned by experience that with God all things are possible.

Commented [Paul Wall1]: John 15:5 (NIV)
5 "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

Commented [Paul Wall2]: 1 Peter 1:24 (ESV)
24 for "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,

Commented [Paul Wall3]: Exodus 33:15-16 (ESV)
15 And he said to him, "If your presence will not go with me, do not bring us up from here.
16 For how shall it be known that I have found favor in your sight, I and your people? Is it not in your going with us, so that we are distinct, I and your people, from every other people on the face of the earth?"

Without Him, good luck, because that is about all you have. **If you are going to do a God sized job, you better be sure God is with you to do the job through you.** (Matthew 19:26)

Who am I? Who are you? With God, we are a majority. With God, we can do all things as He strengthens us. (Philippians 4:13) With God there is no obstacle that will not be moved. (Hebrews 13:21) We have so many examples in Scripture of God's call including the phrase, "I will be with you." (Joshua 1:5; Judges 6:16; Jeremiah 1:8) His call is the promise of His presence. Just be sure it is God's call. That is so often our point of failure. **Good ideas and God ideas can be worlds apart!**

Isn't it fascinating that God gave Moses a sign that would not be seen until after he stepped out in faith. He had to confront Pharaoh before he could see the sign. He had to do the task described, at least in part, before he would see the proof. It's kind of like saying, "Trust me, and you'll be able to look back and know I was there." Why does God so often desire to stretch our faith and make us so uncomfortable? Well, it's because faith pleases Him AND earns you a heavenly reward, which also delights His heart. (Hebrews 11:6)

The sign itself is also something we should consider. **You shall serve God on this mountain.** Wasn't Moses about to begin serving God in Egypt? And wasn't the destination the Promised Land? What is so special about serving God on the mountain? Well, that is where Moses would receive the Law. For Israel, this is a greater historical moment than the expansion of the physical kingdom under King David. This is the climax of Israel's history until Jesus came. (Galatians 3:24) It affected the entire western world because those laws are the basis of our own. That is the greatest service that man could ever perform, receiving the very words of God for the world. That is why this is such a special sign that would convince Moses that this was truly God with him.

I would have thought that the plagues and the miracle of a nation pulling out of enslavement would have been THE sign. God sees things from a timeless and worldwide perspective. We are caught up in the moment. The receiving of those laws was the greatest sign of the presence of God until the time that the word was made flesh. (Psalm 138:2; John 1:14)

13 Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" This is a loaded question. Is Moses really considering disobeying a direct command from Almighty God, "IF I come..." He's not talking to someone with Whom he can bargain. If God tells you to come, you better say, "When I come" not "If I come"!

Commented [Paul Wall4]: Matthew 19:26 (ESV)
26 But Jesus looked at them and said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."

Commented [Paul Wall5]: Philippians 4:13 (ESV)
13 I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

Commented [Paul Wall6]: Hebrews 13:21 (ESV)
21 equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Commented [Paul Wall7]: Joshua 1:5 (ESV)
5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you.

Commented [Paul Wall8]: Judges 6:16 (ESV)
16 And the LORD said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man."

Commented [Paul Wall9]: Jeremiah 1:8 (ESV)
8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD."

Commented [Paul Wall10]: Hebrews 11:6 (ESV)
6 And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Commented [Paul Wall11]: Galatians 3:24 (ESV)
24 So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.

Commented [Paul Wall12]: Psalms 138:2 (ESV)
2 I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.

Commented [Paul Wall13]: John 1:14 (ESV)
14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The supposition is based on a fear of being rejected. "What do I say? What if they don't like me this time too?" (Exodus 2:14) But we don't know anything of the fear of rejection. Right?

Commented [Paul Wall14]: Exodus 2:14 (ESV)
14 He answered, "Who made you a prince and a judge over us? Do you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and thought, "Surely the thing is known."

The question of the name may be as straightforward as it sounds, but the ancient world, especially Egypt, had very specific ideas about a name of a god. There is evidence that the region of Midian worshiped the God YHWH before the Israelites in Egypt knew the name. The Bible actually tells us that God had not revealed His name to the Hebrews yet. (Exodus 6:3)

Commented [Paul Wall15]: Exodus 6:3 (ESV)
3 I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.

The name of a god was thought to describe the attribute or action of that god. Gods had a common name and a secret name. This carries over into many cultures including the Navajo. If one knew the secret name they were thought to be able to wield the power of that god.

Moses was most likely just asking to know the official name of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but the cultural context may imply more. Certainly the Hebrew people see a name as representing character and destiny. Moses had asked, "Who am I?" (verse 11) Now he is asking, "Who are You?"

Commented [Paul Wall16]: El and Elohim were used by numerous cultures.

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' " The world of Moses' day considered gods' names to be word plays of their actions. God will reveal His name in the next verse, but the description is one they could relate to culturally. It sounds like the name that was about to be revealed. The verb "to be" in Hebrew is *hayah*. Much has been written on this. One commentator contends that God was refusing to answer the question. Others say He is declaring that He is self-existent.

As for us, we are who we were born. We are who culture and circumstances made us. We are the sum of our genes and the influences in our life. But God is who He is! He is who He has always been. He makes the circumstances. They don't change Him; He changes them! **He alone is who He is.** This is the fundamental difference between Creator and creation.

Depending on the vowels, which did not exist in writing at the time, it could be saying, "I am the One who brings things into being." I personally like the description suggesting He is timeless. "I am" includes He is and was and is to be. (Revelation 1:8) He alone did not come into being. He just is and always has been!

Commented [Paul Wall17]: Revelation 1:8 (ESV)
8 "I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

The bottom line is that His name is a mystery. Even in the next verse when God uses the form we have come to know, YHWH, we still don't have the vowels or know how to pronounce it correctly. The vowels were superimposed in the second half of the first millennium A.D. to remind Jews to say Adonai (Lord)

instead of the sacred name of God when reading the Hebrew text. Translators, not understanding this, created the name Jehovah, a name foreign to Jews.

¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people 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 thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations. Now God goes beyond the major attribute of eternal existence to the very name He is called, YHWH, the LORD. He is the same God that called Abram out of Ur and made a covenant with him. (Genesis 12:1) By describing Himself this way, He is reminding the Hebrews that He will keep His covenant. Time passes, but He is unchanged. (Malachi 3:6) His name remains the same. There is no need for Him to change. There never will be a need for Him to change.

¹⁶ Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt, Notice that Moses is to call the elders. This is that system of leadership we studied in January. Even Moses does not act alone. He works with the elders. (see verse 18) They will go with him to meet with Pharaoh. They are not always right, but they are respected and they will eventually make the right choice.

Moses is to tell them exactly what he has already heard. The God of their forefathers knows what they are going through. He hears and sees and remembers the covenant.

¹⁷ and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to ... a land flowing with milk and honey." ' God is going to fulfill the promise He made to Abraham. That land of agriculture and pasture will be theirs as God drives out these wicked nations in judgment.

¹⁸ And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' The elders will eventually listen. Good thing God didn't add the word "eventually" or Moses might have stayed in Midian. It won't end up like the last time when they rejected him. They will go with Moses to stand before Pharaoh.

Now we have that problem again of deception. Were the elders united in a program of trying to trick the Pharaoh that it was just for 3 days? Personally, I don't think so. I think this was the beginning of a negotiation process. They started off small. "Just let us go worship for 3 days." Pharaoh doesn't want to share his glory with any other gods. The answer to the minimum demand is,

Commented [Paul Wall18]: Genesis 12:1 (ESV)
1 Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you.

Commented [Paul Wall19]: Malachi 3:6 (ESV)
6 "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you, O children of Jacob, are not consumed.

"No!" Pharaoh wants all the glory for himself. (Isaiah 42:8) As they get toward the last plague, Pharaoh knows they are leaving for good. He is not deceived. In fact, he will drive them out. (Exodus 12:32) For a while, he won't ever want to see them again.

Commented [Paul Wall20]: Isaiah 42:8 (ESV)
8 I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

Commented [Paul Wall21]: Exodus 12:32 (ESV)
32 Take your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and be gone, and bless me also!"

¹⁹ But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. God is outlining the future that Moses is facing. It is a mystery to me why some Christians think that the future is changeable. God knows the future because He is there now. He tells us what happens because He sees right now what happens. He is declaring what He knows. It will take the hand of God to move the king of Egypt. He will have to be compelled. (Exodus 13:3)

Commented [Paul Wall22]: Exodus 13:3 (NIV)
3 Then Moses said to the people, "Commemorate this day, the day you came out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery, because the LORD brought you out of it with a mighty hand. Eat nothing containing yeast.

²⁰ So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go. God is explaining the whole process. (Isaiah 46:10) I don't think that made it any easier for Moses, but at least he knew God knew and it was all in God's hands. Even if God doesn't tell us what is going to happen, we can have the same assurance. He knows what we have to go through, and He will use it for our good and His glory. (Romans 8:28)

Commented [Paul Wall23]: Isaiah 46:10 (NIV)
10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.

²¹ And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty, ²² but each woman shall ask of her neighbor, and any woman who lives in her house, for silver and gold jewelry, and for clothing. You shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

Commented [Paul Wall24]: Romans 8:28 (NIV)
28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

"Borrow" is an unfortunate word in the KJV. The Hebrews are asking for and receiving the wealth of their neighbors. It is their pay for the years of slavery. It will be used one day to build the Tabernacle and eventually the Temple.

Plunder is usually from the defeat of an enemy. In this case it is the women that will gather it, not soldiers. When Egypt fights against God, they will be so defeated that they will allow the Hebrew women to plunder their wealth. God is humbling the pride of Egypt and showing that their gods are nothing.

Today we have seen the name of God, I Am, declared to Moses. God identified Himself as the same God that spoke to the patriarchs. About 1500 years later, a man, who when speaking with His critics declared, "Before Abraham was, I AM!" (John 8:58) They knew exactly who He was declaring Himself to be and they thought it was blasphemy. It would have been, had He not been the very One that appeared to Abraham on the way to judge Sodom and to Moses in the burning bush. He is the self-sufficient, eternal, Almighty God manifest to us as Jesus Christ.

Commented [Paul Wall25]: John 8:58 (ESV)
58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."

He had told the crowds, "You will die in your sins if you do not believe *I am* the One I claim to be. (John 8:24 — emphasis mine) No wonder in the Garden of

Commented [Paul Wall26]: John 8:24 (ESV)
24 I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."

Gethsemane when He told them that He was I AM, they fell back to the ground. (John 18:6)

We have questions, doubts, and fears like Moses had. Jesus says to go and make disciples. We answer, "Who am I?" And He answers, "Surely, *I am* with you until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20) The same One who made the covenant with Abram, the same One that went with Moses into Egypt, goes with us as we take the Good News wherever He sends us.

Questions:

- 1 Why wasn't Moses excited to obey God? Relate
- 2 How did God reassure Moses?
- 3 What was the sign?
- 4 We must know the difference between _____ ideas and _____ ideas.
- 5 What was the high point of Israel's history?
- 6 What's wrong with Moses' question?
- 7 What is the connection with I AM and JHWH?
- 8 What are the possible meanings of JHWH?
- 9 What did God promise the elders?
- 10 What did God neglect to tell Moses?
- 11 Why did God ask them to plunder the Egyptians?

Commented [Paul Wall27]: John 18:6 (ESV)
6 When Jesus said to them, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground.

Commented [Paul Wall28]: Matthew 28:19-20 (ESV)
19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."