

WINTER 2023-24

YOU



**A NAME LIKE
NO OTHER**

+ + +

**OWNING A FAITH
THAT MATTERS**



A BIBLE STUDY ABOUT THE NAME OF GOD

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In this study we will consider the power found in God's name in several aspects. We will reflect on the importance, majesty, love, salvation, righteousness, and protection found in God's name. As a result, we should develop a deep, humble reverence for Him.

God's name is important as it demonstrates His supremacy over everything. While God transcends everything found in creation, He is also deeply concerned about what happens and how events affect the people of God. This study will help us to trust in God whatever we encounter.

Worship is the proper response when we consider the majesty of God's name. Remembering God's mighty acts on behalf of Israel motivates David to compose the psalm examined in this study. Reviewing it, we can recall the mighty acts God has performed in our lives as well.

The love expressed in God's name reveals He is not just powerful, but personal. David reflects on the many ways that God demonstrates love for all of His people. In this study, we will gain assurance that we can depend on God because of His love for us.

Humanity can find salvation in God's name. The story of the birth of Jesus, whose name means "God saves," makes it clear, God is the source of salvation. While engaging in this study, we can gratefully celebrate the salvation that God has given us through Christ Jesus.

God alone is the standard for righteousness. Considering the state of sinful humanity in light of God's righteousness demonstrates our need for God's intervention. This study will help us appreciate the magnitude of the gift that God has given us in making us righteous.

Protection is promised for those who trust in God. The psalmist discusses a number of threats that ultimately cannot harm the ones who rely on God for protection. As a result of this study, we will more deeply trust God to strengthen us in the face of adversity.

As we learn more about God through sessions in this study, we are reassured of our position in Him. God's name is truly a name like no other!

THE IMPORTANCE OF GOD'S NAME

Leader pages on pp. 102-105

THE POINT:
 GOD'S NAME REVEALS HE IS THE ALL-POWERFUL GOD WHOM WE CAN COMPLETELY TRUST.

EXODUS 3:1-6,9-15

¹ Meanwhile, Moses was shepherding the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. ² Then the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire within a bush. As Moses looked, he saw that the bush was on fire but was not consumed. ³ So Moses thought, "I must go over and look at this remarkable sight. Why isn't the bush burning up?"

⁴ When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called out to him from the bush, "Moses, Moses!" "Here I am," he answered.

⁵ "Do not come closer," he said. "Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." ⁶ Then he continued, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Moses hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.

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⁹ So because the Israelites' cry for help has come to me, and I have also seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them, ¹⁰ therefore, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh so that you may lead my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt."

¹¹ But Moses asked God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" ¹² He answered, "I will certainly be with you, and this will be the sign to you that I am the one who sent you: when you bring the people out of Egypt, you will all worship God at this mountain."

¹³ Then Moses asked God, "If I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what should I tell them?" ¹⁴ **God replied to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you."**

MEMORY VERSE

¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say this to the Israelites: The LORD, 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 name forever; this is how I am to be remembered in every generation."

KEYWORDS

Angel of the Lord (v. 2)—This name (Malak Yahweh) appears in the Old Testament fifty times. It often appears to designate a theophany, or appearance of God to humanity.

God (v. 4)—The Hebrew term is *Elohim*. It emphasizes the majesty and infinite nature of God.

I AM WHO I AM (v. 14)—The translation of the personal name of God—Yahweh. This name comes from the Hebrew verb for "to be." It emphasizes God as being both self-existent and self-sufficient. Nobody created Him, and He needs nothing outside of Himself to exist.



WHAT DOES GOD'S NAME COMMUNICATE TO YOU?

Many of us remember watching the film adaptation of *Roots* at some point. In a famous scene, the character Kunta Kinte is repeatedly whipped as a slave driver seeks to force him to accept the name his enslaver has given him. Interestingly, both the enslaver and the enslaved understand the importance of one's name. A similar attempt to use names to separate individuals from their heritage occurs in the Old Testament. Daniel and his friends Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah are exiled from their homeland in Babylon and their names are changed (Dan. 1:1-7). While their Jewish names honor God, the Babylonian names of Belteshazzar, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are meant to honor Babylonian culture and religion.

As important as human names are, the name of God is even more so. God's name provides us with insight into His concern for us and connection to us. The name God uses in speaking to Moses at the burning bush expresses just how awesome He is. Regardless of the power and position of those who are oppressing God's people, the oppressors do not have the final word.

God's name is important because it reminds us that God is ultimately in charge.

God Is Continual // Exodus 3:1-6

"Meanwhile, back at the ranch." Many western stories change scenes with that phrase. The term meanwhile ties what happens in one place with an important event elsewhere. The opening word meanwhile in verse 1 ("now" in some translations) helps us transition in time from the previous chapter as the Hebrews desperately cried out to God. The Lord had not forgotten His people. While they sought God's deliverance, He was preparing a deliverer.

Having killed an Egyptian, Moses fled the palace and found shelter among the tents of Jethro, a Midianite priest. Marrying Jethro's daughter, Moses traded the silk robes of royalty for the humble clothes of a shepherd. God used Moses's exile to prepare him for a historic act that would display the Lord's holiness and trustworthiness.

THE POINT:

GOD'S NAME REVEALS HE IS THE ALL-POWERFUL GOD WHOM WE CAN COMPLETELY TRUST.

Similarly, we may find ourselves hiding out from the sins of our past. Shame and guilt often chase us into fugitive wastelands. Sometimes our flight is not physical, but we retreat emotionally. Like Moses, we seek shelter in the most unlikely places.

God guided the errant prince to Horeb, the mountain of God, on the far side of the wilderness. Here Moses encountered an incredible sight, a burning bush that was not being consumed by the fire. From the midst of the bush came the voice of the angel of the Lord. Some writers think Moses encountered the preincarnate Christ there. Others separate the appearance of the Angel of the LORD and the voice of God. The important truth is that God spoke to Moses and called him personally.

The phrase "When the LORD saw" doesn't suggest Moses caught God by surprise. God designed every aspect of Moses's life for His purposes. Like Moses, we might not recognize God when He calls us. Moses simply said, "Here I am." He didn't know the identity of the One who spoke, nor did he fully comprehend the holy moment he had entered. People who are far from God sometimes find themselves in a similar state.

When Moses responded, God introduced Himself as "the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." He began by using what would be a vital identifier: "I Am." God isn't merely the Lord of Hebrew history. He's the ever-present One who transcends history. He is the God who was and is and always will be. And He knows us by name too.

In God's presence, Moses's casual presumption met the clashing reality of God's holiness. Where Moses stood was "holy ground." Not because the dirt was special, but because God was in this place. God told Moses to remove his sandals, an act of humility and respect. Too often we rush into God's presence carrying the dust of the world and its cares. Pausing to recognize His holiness, we must set aside everything that hinders our encounter with our Lord.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR SOMETHING TO BE HOLY?

God Is Concerned // Exodus 3:9-12

Whenever we think God doesn't know our situation, we should remember His response to Moses. The desperate cries of His people had indeed reached His ears. This anthropomorphic reference doesn't mean God has physical auditory organs. It affirms that God hears and knows what is happening with His people, especially in their distress. God had also seen. He wasn't blind to the oppression the Egyptians laid on the Hebrews. They were His people. He was sensitive to their plight.



DIGGING DEEPER A LONG RELATIONSHIP

In Exodus 3:6, the Lord refers to Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. These patriarchs of Israel had their own experiences with God. Their stories, recounted in the book of Genesis, were messy. They consisted of faith and drama. Nevertheless, God remained faithful to the promises He made them. By the time of Moses, many years and generations have passed. However, the Lord shows Moses that in the midst of the ordeal in Egypt, He has not been absent or unaware. The promises made to Israel's ancestors will come to pass, and God indicates that Moses has a role to play. Moses' service will help carry out the promises God had made long before Moses and the rest of the Hebrews in Egypt had even been born.

Why do you think that God identifies His relationship with Israel's ancestors before discussing Israel's current situation?

Up to this point, Moses was hopeful. You can almost hear him say, "That's right, God. Go get 'em." To his surprise, God told Moses, "Go. I am sending you." The Lord's command was an imperative, not an invitation. The last thing Moses expected (or wanted) was to be sent back to Egypt. To return might mean his execution (Ex. 2:11-22). When God calls us to His service, it rarely involves something easy.

To make matters worse, God's commission involved an imposing tyrant and an impossible task. Moses was being sent to Pharaoh. By now, he had been in his desert exile for forty years. He was eighty years old. What could an old castaway do to sway the mightiest ruler of the land?

Moses's impossible task involved leading God's people to freedom. How could one man overcome the forces of Egypt? Then, even if he could find a way to lead the people out, who was Moses to demand they follow? In fact, once Moses had secured an exit permit, the people constantly rebelled. They moaned and groaned about their hardships, blaming everything on Moses.

Moses asked, "Who am I?" Who was he in comparison to the Pharaoh, who was worshiped as a god by the Egyptians? Who was he among the elders of Israel? Who would listen to a shepherd from Midian? He was no longer a prince of Egypt.

We can identify with Moses's dilemma. When God presents us with a seemingly insurmountable task, we quickly ask, "Why me?" Surely others are better educated, more qualified, stronger, or more influential. God would do better assigning this job to someone who not only could do it, but who wanted to do it.

WHAT REASONS DO YOU HAVE FOR TRUSTING GOD?

God's answer to us is the same as His response to Moses. It's not about us; it's about Him. Moses was right; he was inadequate for the task, but God was fully capable to accomplish His purposes. This omnipotent God would be with Moses as he obeyed the Lord.

God Is Changeless // Exodus 3:13-15

Moses had another dilemma; he really didn't know God. He couldn't undertake this mission under his own authority. He had none. Interestingly, Moses didn't ask God in whose name he should approach Pharaoh. Moses was notorious among the people of the palace. The Israelites were a different story.



If Moses went to them under the authority of the "God of your ancestors," he needed to answer their questions about who God is. The first question would be: What is His name? Egyptians worshiped many pagan gods. Under Amenhotep IV (1353-1335 BC), later known as Akhenaton, Aton the sun god was elevated above all other deities. Later, a similar sun god, Amen-Re, became the favorite of Tutankhamen. Other kings came and went, dynasties rose and fell, but their gods remained. Some deities related to natural elements like earth and air, while others supposedly ruled spiritual realms like the dead. No wonder Moses needed to be specific when the people questioned him about who he represented.

Instead of rebuking Moses for asking His name, the Lord responded with a self-descriptive phrase: "I AM WHO I AM." Various sources offer several renderings from "I will be who I will be" to "I am Being." All models revert to the same idea—the omnipresent God. He can't be defined by any dictionary or comprehended by human philosophy. Unlike created things, God has life in Himself. He is self-existent, without origin or end (John 5:26).

THE POINT: GOD'S NAME REVEALS HE IS THE ALL-POWERFUL GOD WHOM WE CAN COMPLETELY TRUST.

WHAT DOES GOD'S RESPONSE TO MOSES REVEAL ABOUT HIS CHARACTER?

God made it even simpler for Moses. When the Israelites demanded who had sent Moses, he was to say "I AM" had sent him to them. This four-letter word has been translated as Yahweh or Jehovah. In most English Bibles, it is represented by the word LORD written in all capital letters. The Hebrews felt the name of God was so holy, they refused to speak it aloud.

God went further and told Moses that he could identify their God as the Lord who was "God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Unlike the Egyptian gods who fell in and out of favor with successive dynasties, the Lord was forever the same. The One who had guided Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would now lead them out of bondage into a land of prosperity and freedom. Yahweh was not only the God of their past (Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob), but He was also the God of their future. The ever-present One would be with Moses and with God's people. And He'll be with us too. We can trust Him because His divine nature is true, consistent, and dependable.

HOW DOES THE WAY GOD WORKED IN THE PAST INFORM THE WAY WE WALK IN THE PRESENT?

DID YOU KNOW?

The Fisk Jubilee Singers are a group originally organized to raise funds for Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee through music. Since their beginning shortly after the American Civil War, the Fisk Jubilee Singers have traveled extensively and won a Grammy in 2021. They may be most well known for their renditions of African American spirituals. Enslaved African Americans created spirituals in response to the conditions that they faced and frequently related their experiences to their faith in God. One famous spiritual is "Go Down Moses," which discusses the Hebrews' exodus from Egypt. Enslaved African Americans drew parallels between their experiences and those of the ancient Hebrews, seeing themselves and the Hebrews as both being people of God.

Biblical Truth: Spirituals expressed hope that God would intervene to deliver them as He had done for His people throughout scripture (Ps. 34:17).

What similarities and differences do you notice between enslaved Africans and the Hebrews in Egypt?

LIVE IT

How can you demonstrate appreciation for the importance of God's name in your life?

Recognizing the importance of God's name means honoring it. God's name is closely related to His character. We know more about who God is as we see and understand what He does. As we trust Him and follow Him, we show others how they can follow Him too. God's name reveals He is the all-powerful God whom we can completely trust. Choose one of the following applications to experience this truth:

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- **Listen.** Listen to God's voice. Put yourself in a place where you are most likely to be able to hear Him speak. Prayerfully seek His guidance about how you can glorify Him.
- **List.** Pause and examine your situation. List ways you can be God's ambassador where you are, so that others can come to know Him. **Look.** Discover additional opportunities to take God's name to people outside your current influence. This could mean serving in your community or even going on an overseas missions' trip.

DAILY READINGS

1. INFINITELY I AM // PSALM 90:1-2

Moses's words in Psalm 90:2, "...from everlasting to everlasting you are God" were written sometime after God revealed an unknown name for Himself in Exodus 3—I AM. Meaning He would be everything Moses needed when and wherever needed.

And without fail, God did exactly that. He became Destroyer in chapters 7-11 of Exodus. Deliverer in chapter 13. Supplier amid hunger in chapter 16... Lawgiver while the children of Israel danced with lawlessness in chapter 32. The I AM displayed His everywhere, all the time, through anything type of power in countless ways over Moses's lifetime. No wonder Moses declared, "...from everlasting to everlasting you are God." We can declare the same.

The I AM and His ability and willingness to be all remains infinitely available to this generation and beyond.

2. YADA`, DETAILED KNOW // EXODUS 3:7-8

The average person describes yada as non-essential details or boring repetition. A description that fails miserably. When God says of the Israelites in Exodus 3:7, "...I know [yada] about their sufferings." It denotes a detailed, active understanding of their agony. Their layers of suffering ran deeper than even they knew, but God knew. He said, "I have come down to rescue them..." This reveals something else. Yes, God knew the intricacies of their suffering and came down, but He also walked with them as He delivered them. How amazing is that? God yada's His children with a knowing so intimate that it goes beyond surface understanding straight to the heart of what is necessary for deliverance.

There is no place He will not venture to, known or unknown, to rescue us from danger.

3. DIFFERENT, BUT SAME // HEBREWS 11

Hebrews 11, known as the Faith Hall of Fame, points to something greater than the actions of the Biblical characters so admired by many. Hebrews 11 shows God as steady. He shows up in the lives of these people in very different ways and yet, His

personal description, I AM, never changes. The changeless God is rich with different attributes that reveal themselves at appointed times. Those traits can be trusted because Yahweh God displays each with His eternal knowledge, everlasting love, and infinite mercy. Nothing and no one can ever change God's steadiness. His stability stands even in the face of humanity's unstable actions. What an incredible assurance. God is different, but the same.

He shows up armed with what we need, but never without who He is. Hallelujah and amen.

4. FIRST LOVE // 1 JOHN 4:7-19

When we think of love, especially our first, pitter-patter heartbeats, silly grins, or butterfly flutters tend to come to mind. Some might say those are the defining attributes of first love. Yet, the Bible refutes that claim. God is quite literally the defining source of first love. Physical sensations fall short when we realize how true that is. God loved us first. Without His love - love wouldn't exist. Which makes Him the truest form and definition of first love. The next time your heart goes pitter patter aflutter with love beats over a new baby or spouse, remember that you can love because God loved you first.

A love, defined by His actions, solidified by His continual compassion, and justified by Jesus on the cross. If that isn't first love, what is?

5. MAJESTY COMPELLED // 1 CHRONICLES 29:11

The south and north poles of a magnet pull toward one another. In close proximity, they cannot be kept apart. The draw is stronger than the forces that would pull them away because the distance between the two is minimal. God's majesty kind of compels us in that way. His name encompasses so much, all of what we need to be exact, that once we get closer to Him, the knowledge of who He is grasps us. We don't have a choice in that we are overtaken by His wonder. In His presence, we bow down because we know there is none other worthy enough for us to bend our knees, lay prostrate before, or lift holy hands with lowered heads to.

His majesty compels.

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Dig Into the Text

Read and study the scripture text for the lesson. Take time to delve into the historical context provided in a study bible and consider reading different versions of the scriptures to broaden understanding. This may also help when expounding on the verses with the learners.

Discover I AM

Who is I AM? Familiarize yourself with who I AM became in the life of Moses and his ancestors. Reflect the importance and power in God's name and be fully aware of who I AM truly is. Make note of who I AM is in your own life.

LOOK BACK

Briefly review the previous sessions content from Psalm 65:1-13. Remind the learners of The Point: "We have so much to thank God for." Reiterate that God's blessings are expressions of His love and grace for us.

Allow learners to share something that they thank God for that occurred since the previous session.

Transition by reinforcing that God deserves our thanks and prefacing this session will expound on God's name: "A Name like No Other."

TEACHING PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Introduce yourself and any unique circumstance or meaning behind your name and then allow the learners to do the same as outlined in the "Object Lesson" (p.103-104). Point out any common themes or impressions from the information shared.

EMPHASIZE: No name or brand carries greater value or importance than God's name. Inform learners that this unit will reflect on and give them a better understanding of the importance, majesty, love, salvation, righteousness, and

protection found in God's name. Encourage learners to use the knowledge they gain to draw them closer to God and help them to completely trust him.

PACK ITEM: Use **Pack Item 1: "A Name Like No Other"** poster to provide a preview of the session titles for this study.

DIG INTO THE TEXT

God is Continual // Exodus 3:1-6

READ: Invite a learner to read Exodus 3:1-6.

ASK: Has there been a time when you hid, retreated, or went a different direction in life due to a misdeed, shame, or guilt? If so, did you have your own "burning bush encounter?" Explain how the encounter with God set you back on course. As the facilitator, be prepared to share your own experience.

DISCUSS: Direct learners to verse 4. Notice that God calls out to Moses and says Moses' name twice. Ask the learners, "What comes to mind when you consider God calling out "Moses, Moses!": the feelings emphasized from the exclamation mark? Once the learners have responded, conclude that "In Semitic culture of that time, speaking someone's name twice was know as "repetition of endearment." It was a way of expressing friendship and affection." (Commentary, p.105)

ASK: "How could Moses' sandals defile the holy ground?" Examples to consider are dirt from Moses' past and the soil and filth of sin.

DISCUSS: Direct attention to verse 5. Query the learners if they have guests remove their shoes before entering their home. Share that for many it is a cultural norm to do so. Facilitate the discussion as to why shoes are removed before entering one's home. Examples include keeping the carpet clean and for hygienic reasons so that filth, germs, bacteria, and chemicals are not brought into the home environment.

THE POINT:

GOD'S NAME REVEALS HE IS THE ALL-POWERFUL GOD WHOM WE CAN COMPLETELY TRUST.

EMPHASIZE: God's introduction to Moses and how God was identifying Himself as God and notes his relationship to Moses' ancestors. The scripture states that Moses was afraid to look at God, so he hid his face (v. 6). Facilitate a discussion around God's introduction and Moses' response. Some considerations are embarrassment, shame, guilt, vulnerability, and simply fear, unworthiness.

Reflect on how Exodus 3:1-6, most notably verse 6 demonstrates God is continual.

DIGGING DEEPER: Direct learners to (p.13) to further demonstrate God's longstanding relationship with Moses' forefathers. Read it out loud and elicit feedback and impressions from the learners.

God is Concerned // Exodus 3:9-12

GUIDE: Briefly provide the context of Exodus 3:9-12 as outlined in the Commentary (p.105) beginning with "The Israelites' cry..."

READ: Ask a learner to read Exodus 3:9-12.

Revisit the definition of concerned. Explain that God had heard the cries of the Israelites and was so concerned that He told Moses that He was sending him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt where they were in bondage and oppressed. Moses questioned why God would send him to complete such a lofty task.

DISCUSS: Initiate a dialogue with the learners regarding the questions: Has there ever been a time when you were asked to do something that you did not feel qualified to do and you found yourself asking "why me?" What are some areas that may cause us to question whether we are the right person for an assignment?

Remind the learners that when God calls us to do something He equips us to complete the task. However, we must trust God wholeheartedly. God's promise to Moses is the same for believers. God will certainly be with us.

ASK: "What reasons do you have for trusting God?" (p.14)

GUIDE: Highlight the paragraph from the Learner

Section (p.14) that begins "to make matters worse..." which explains God commission of Moses to go to Pharaoh. Under God's authority was to demand that the Israelites be set free, Moses had been in exile for 40 years and was eighty years old. Stress to the learners that this is proof that it is never too late nor are we too old to be called by God or to fulfill God's purpose in your life.

God is Changeless // Exodus 3:13-15

READ: Encourage a learner to read Exodus 3:13-15

PACK ITEM: Use **Pack Item 2: "Names of God"** poster to discuss the name of God revealed to Moses in verse 14.

RECAP: God's response to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." Further explain the meaning of "I AM WHO I AM" and then God's abbreviated version "I AM." The paragraphs in the Commentary under the heading "I AM WHO I AM" and "I AM" (p.105) can be cited to provide further insight.

GUIDE: Clarify that God's response "is an affirmation that God is always subject, always free to be and act as God wills" (Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary) and that "God has life in Himself. He is self-existent, without origin or end (John 5:26)" (Learner section, p.14).

ASK: "How might knowing God as I AM help you to trust Him?" (Learner Section, p.15). Provide an example to guide the conversation.

SUMMARIZE: Conclude by reminding the learners that God's name reveals His character: powerful, trustworthy, continual, unchanging.



PACK ITEM 1



PACK ITEM 2



OBJECT LESSON

Everyone has a name and usually there is a story behind it. Some people are named after a parent or relative, while others are named after a famous person or given a name trending at the time of their birth. There are also those that have unique names. As the leader, give your name, how it came about, and its meaning if known. Have the learners to introduce themselves and provide the aforementioned information.

Explain that names can become synonymous with who we are or who we are perceived to be. Provide examples such as Karen, Malcolm, and Samsonite®. Ask the learners what comes to mind.

Conclude with God called Himself I AM during His conversation with Moses.

What does God's name "I AM" represent to you?

CLOSE THE SESSION

Encourage the learners to further research the name of God as I AM and how that knowledge is powerful and relevant to their lives. Suggest that they also explore the other names of God that describe His character.

PRAY: "Dear God, help us to do what You ask us to do and to completely trust you. Let us declare to all generations that You are I AM, the Lord God of all, who was, is, and is to come. Amen."

COMMENTARY

EXODUS 3:1-6

Verse 1. Egyptians did not have a high view of shepherds. They were "detestable to Egyptians" (Gen. 46:34) because they viewed shepherds as being uncultured in their nomadic ways.

Horeb was another name for Mount Sinai. Sinai was the name of the peninsula, and Horeb was a mountain located in the southern part of the peninsula. Moses referred to Horeb as the mountain of God because it was where God appeared to him and where he later received the Ten Commandments from the Lord (Ex. 19:20; 20:1-17).

Verse 2-3. The term *Angel of the Lord* (*malak Yahweh*) appears in the Old Testament fifty times. It often appears to designate a theophany, or appearance of God to humanity. This seems to be the usage in Genesis 16 when the angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar and spoke to her as the voice of God. This also appears to be the case in Judges 6 where the angel of the Lord spoke to Gideon, and Gideon recognized that he had been in the Lord's presence. In Exodus 3, the angel is referred to as both Lord (vv. 2,4,7,15-16,18) and God (vv. 4,6,11-16,18).

The Hebrew word (*seneh*) refers to a small, thorny bush that populated that region of the wilderness. The presence of God was often associated with fire: a pot of fire and a flaming torch when God made a covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:17); a pillar of fire when the Lord led the Israelites at night during the exodus (Ex. 13:21). Moses described the Lord as "a consuming fire, a jealous God" (Deut. 4:24). The miraculous sighting of a bush that was burning but not consumed attracted Moses's attention.

Verse 4: In Semitic culture of that time, speaking someone's name twice was known as "repetition of endearment." It was a way of expressing friendship and affection. "Thus Moses would have understood immediately that he was being addressed by someone who loved

him and was concerned about him.”

Verses 5-6. Priests who entered temples in that day would enter barefoot to prevent bringing in dust or impurities to the place of worship. Also, an inferior removed his sandals when in the presence of his superior. God had taken a common place in the wilderness and turned it into holy ground. Because the presence of God was in the bush, Moses had to keep a proper distance from the bush and remove his sandals in acknowledgement that he was in the presence of God. God knew Moses, calling his name twice (v. 4). However, Moses did not know God. God first introduced Himself as the “God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” He also spoke in the present tense “I am” rather than “I was.” This emphasizes continuity: The same God who was with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, was now with Moses, and this was too much for Moses to endure. He “hid his face because he was afraid to look at God.”

EXODUS 3:9-12

Verses 9-11. The intensity of the Israelites’ cries for help was due to the Egyptians’ increasing demands under which the Israelites were forced to labor. God had heard their cries and remembered His covenant with the patriarchs (Gen. 12:1-3; 15); He was now acting to fulfill His promises to Abraham by delivering the Israelites from Egyptian slavery (Ex. 2:23-25). Nothing escapes God’s attention. He knows all that happens throughout His creation.

Moses was to be God’s representative before Pharaoh and the Egyptians, as well as the leader of the Israelites during their exodus from Egypt. His question “**who am I**” was a proper and respectful way of expressing humility when given such a large assignment. This question in and of itself did not suggest that Moses lacked self-confidence. However, Moses’s seeming lack of self-confidence is clearly apparent in another passage (4:10). Most likely Moses’s question expressed both respect and humility, as well as a lack of self-confidence.

Verse 12. God promised Moses that he would not be alone in accomplishing the task He was giving him. God would go with him. This is a similar promise to the one given to Christians by Jesus in the “Great Commission” where they are commanded to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:19-20). God saved the Israelites from something (slavery), but He also saved them to something (worship and witness). He delivered them from their old way of life and prepared them for a calling to worship Him, to live in community with Him, and to be a witness concerning the one, true God to the world.

EXODUS 3:13-15

Verses 13-15. Although God has different names based on the circumstances through which people came to know Him, He is still the same God who is consistent in character. The reason for Moses’s asking the name of God was so the Israelites would know the source of Moses’s calling and message. God revealed to Moses that His name is I AM WHO I AM, the translation of the personal name of God—Yahweh. This name comes from the Hebrew verb for “to be.” It emphasizes God as being both self-existent and self-sufficient. Nobody created Him, and He needs nothing outside of Himself to exist. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists. It was important for the people of Israel to know that the God who spoke to Moses is not merely some localized deity invented to boost the crops or create fertility in humans). God gave Moses a message to deliver to the Israelites. Moses was to tell the Hebrews that Yahweh was not a localized Egyptian deity but the same God who had revealed Himself to their ancestors and made His covenant with them. In reestablishing the Israelites as His people (“my people,” Ex. 3:7) and leading them to the promised land, God was continuing the work of fulfilling the covenant that He had begun in calling Abraham. Through this covenant the entire world would be blessed (Gen. 12:3).

Note: Additional commentary can be found at you.lifeway.com.