

The Exodus Series- God's Name (Yahweh)

-Chapter Highlights:

- In this chapter we meet God in a newly revealed way, with a newly revealed name.
- God's name is revealed as Yahweh.
 - Exodus is the "story about who God is"- and his name being revealed makes this one of the most significant sections in all of Scripture because God's *name* tells a lot about *who he is*.
- God sees and God knows (the sufferings of his people and the evil of Egypt).
- God *acts* by meeting with Moses to send him in his name.
 - God is working, although *no one knows* that he is- God will "surprise" everyone.
- Moses interacts with "sacred spaces" as God's manifest presence is revealed to him at Mt. Horeb, on the holy ground, with the burning bush and the Angel of the LORD.
- God will show himself to be "the God of your father(s)" who remembered his covenant with Abraham and would deliver his people from evil of Egypt and into a land flowing with milk and honey which he had prepared for them.
- God partners with Moses (to bring about his purposes and utilize Pharaoh's hardness of heart to show his *wonders* in Egypt).
 - This is a consistent narrative through Scripture; the "Divine and human partnership" of God with humans, working God's good purposes in the world.
- Moses' humble and yet resistant approach- though Moses' "inabilities" highlight Yahweh's *infinitude*.

Exodus 2:23-25

- God saw and God knew, and he would *work* in an *unseen* manner.
- The next section happens "simultaneously" to the narrative at the end of chapter 2, God is working in an *unseen place* and in an *unexpected place* (the desert).

Exodus 3:1-22

Verse 1

- Now Moses was keeping the flock-
 - New identity- no longer a prince of Egypt, but a lowly shepherd. Casting off his Egyptian identity, embracing the nomadic identity of his forefathers.
 - Zeal for deliverance has seemingly waned after 40 years in the desert.
- Mt. Horeb- "the Mountain of God"-
 - Horeb is another name for Sinai. It probably indicates a range of mountains rather than a particular mountain peak.
 - This was the mountain Moses was probably *typically* by, as he was herding his livestock, however it would become to him and to all of Israel "the mountain of GOD."
 - In this sense- God will *claim this space* for a special manifestation of his presence and glory.

Verse 2-3

- Significance of the burning bush- What happens at the burning bush is a “*theophany*” - a visible manifestation of the invisible God.
- The fire was *in* the bush, but not *of* the bush. This was the *supernatural element of it*.
- This burning bush will show God’s presence as *transcendent* above the created order.
- This introduces us to the visual element of *fire*. Fire will also be a key theme in this book:
 - It is representative of God's holy presence:
 - Burning bush, pillar of fire that guides Israel, the fire at Mt. Sinai, fire in the tabernacle and over it.
- The Angel of the LORD
 - In the Exodus narrative as well as other sections of OT, *this seems to be a specific angel*. This is God’s “name angel” and when you approach him, you are approaching something very much like the holiness of Yahweh.
 - **Exodus 23:20-21 ESV** - 20 "Behold, I send an angel before you to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared. 21 Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my name is in him."
 - **Exodus 3:4** When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush.
 - **Exodus 13:21 ESV** - 21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.
 - **Exodus 14:19 ESV** - 19 Then the angel of God who was going before the host of Israel moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud moved from before them and stood behind them,
 - In these cases, it was not *God himself*, but the Angel of the LORD who is so closely associated with God’s presence that it simply says “God” did this.
 - And yet, Moses recognized the angel as distinct from God himself; **Numbers 20:16** And when we cried to the LORD, he heard our voice and sent an angel and brought us out of Egypt...

Verse 5

- “do not come near...”- Moses was approaching God’s *manifested* presence... God warns him not to continue to approach in the way that he was.
- “For the place on which you are standing is holy ground”- The holy ground is because of God’s *presence* there. This theme is throughout Exodus that shows that God is holy, and he declares people and places as holy, especially where he dwells. He “claims spaces” due to a form his holy presence dwelling there.
 - God is making Moses aware that he is suddenly in a “sacred space” of holy ground!
- Take off your shoes- shows humility in approach and also removes separation between God and man in the shared holy space.

Verse 6

- God is the “ELOHIM” of your father (the generic word for a god-being, “god”). This would tell Moses WHO he is talking to... the Elohim of Abraham.

Verses 7-10

- The anthropomorphisms (i.e., the attribution of human characteristics or behavior to God) in verses 7-8 of God's 'seeing,' 'hearing,' 'knowing,' and 'coming down' became graphic ways to describe divine realities of God's involvement in human affairs.
- God would *do* these things:
 - Firstly- deliver them *out of* the hand of the oppression of Egypt.
 - Secondly- bring them *into* a land flowing with milk and honey.
 - They would soon go from oppression and slavery to rest and blessing.
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Verse 10

- The divine and human partnership:
 - God doesn't just "fix it all" with a single powerful word... since humans were the ones who *forsook his good way* in the Garden of Eden, by *humans* he will also work his *redemptive purposes!*

Verse 11

- Earlier an Israelite had asked Moses, "Who made you a prince or a judge over us?" (2:14). Now Moses asked the same thing of God: "Who am I that I should . . . bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?"
 - Moses' "inabilities" will highlight Yahweh's infinitude...

Verses 12-15- YAHWEH revealed

- "I will be" in Hebrew is eh-yeh or eh-weh.
 - This is in the sense of that "I am and will be with you."
 - In essence, God is showing Moses that it doesn't really matter who he [*Moses*] is, but that it matters who GOD is, and that God "is" and "will be" with him.
 - Moses' "inabilities" will highlight Yahweh's *infinitude*.
- "what is his name"- since Egyptians believed in many gods, it was important know the identity of the one true God, the God of their fathers.
 - In ancient times, to know someone's name is to know something very *essential* about them- thus it is not only what they are *called by*, but what they *represent*, and *who they are*.
- In response to "what is his name" God says "I AM WHO I AM"... then he says "I AM" sent you.
 - This word in Hebrew is *EH-YEH* (*Eh-yeh* is the first-person form of *hayah*, "to be.")
 - This word means "to be" or "to become" or "to exist."
 - The sense is that God is saying "I am" and "I will be", and will continue to be what I am.
- It is connected the idea that God's *being*, that he is eternal, unchanging, and self-existent, and self-sufficient.

- **Revelation 4:8** And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"
- In learning God's name, he is teaching us that he is *unlike anyone else* because he is utterly faithful to be "who" he "is." He is *unchanging* and is always who he is and his ACTIONS are consistent with his nature:
 - This is different than humans, and different from what humans have experienced of their own being
 - But, God says "I AM WHO I AM" because he both exists and acts in perfect consistency of his own nature and characteristics.

Verse 15- THE LORD

- "the LORD" - this is the English *distinction* that refers to the Hebrew word Yah-weh.
- This what Moses is to say who sent him... Yah-Weh (HE will be) has sent me...
 - Moses cannot say "'I AM' has sent me" because Moses isn't God...
 - So in Hebrew he says "**HE** IS (has sent me)." That's the difference between Eh-weh (I am) and Yah-weh (HE is).
- "this is my name forever" - this is how God is to be known, this is the divine name that represents shows *who he is* (his *name* tells us of *his person*).
 - "The LORD (Yahweh), the God (Elohim) of your fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob..."

Verse 16-17

- God's name (Yahweh) connected to God's word and actions: I *promise* (word), I will *bring you up* (actions).

Verse 18

- The king of Egypt would likely not be impressed by Yahweh, the Elohim of the Hebrews, a slave people! Remember, for Egypt, their entire society revolved around the concept of Pharaoh as a chief god, that he is place where the divine and human come together.

This will be a process:

- At first, God *asked...* later it will become; thus says the Lord God, "let my people go!" in *command* form.
- Finally, it will be "he *will* let my people go" when he pours out the final sign of the destroyer.

Verse 19-22

- The *slaves* becoming the *conquerors* by plundering the Egyptians.
- God's mighty hand conquering Pharaoh king/gpd would show his power and wonder to all; that he is the true God with *all authority*, even over the greatest authority in the world; Pharaoh.
 - Soon they would see God's character and name on display in his mighty hand and actions.

