

06212020... **who am I and who is the IAM**....The first two chapters share the work of God setting up his deliverance of the Israelite nation ...through seemingly coincidental, circumstances...ending up with Moses poorly executed actions to deliver God's people in his own power...which results in him becoming a fugitive on the run... where he has another **“chance”** meeting with a Midianite priest, who was a distant relative, leading Moses' to settle down, marry, have children, sheep herding and live for the next 40 years in relative anonymity. In chapter three we fly over 40 years of life in the wilderness...when one day everything changes...God's clock moves very slow...until it doesn't...**in one day we move From God's providential and seemingly coincidental dealings in the life of the Nation Israel** the past 400 years to God's speaking directly to Moses for the first time in his 80 years of life...people sometimes tell me why does God not speak to me...I say he does in his word...but he did not speak to Israel twice for 400 years and did not talk to Moses for the first 80 years of his life...so relax...

**And when he does speak to Moses we will discover Moses asks two important questions Who am I and who are you?** these are the same questions all of us will ask in our lifetime...and the answers will either change us for the better or worse...let's explore this

**The day started out like any other.** The leather-skinned shepherd expected nothing out of the ordinary he had been doing this for forty years, Looking for richer pasture, Moses led his father-in-law's flock to the west or back side of the wilderness, to Mt. Sinai

*EX 3:1 One day Moses was tending the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian. He led the flock far into the wilderness and came to Sinai, the mountain of God.*

**(his father-in-law is now referred to as “Jethro,” which seems to mean “excellence” or “superiority”— Moses most likely used the business skills he learned in Egypt to make Jethro wealthy**

- **He knew all the grazing places and had the exact location of every water hole and well within many miles etched in his mind. An occasional viper or wild beast offered the only excitement.**
- **In the solitude of the wilderness, Moses must have had many conversations with himself and even to his sheep.**
- **Little did he know that today would be the beginning of a new chapter in his life **and a crucial turning point in the history of the nation Israel.****
- **In the distance, something caught the keen eye of Moses and snapped him out of his thoughts. Something was burning in the distance.**

<sup>2</sup> *There **the** angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the middle of a bush. Moses stared in amazement. Though the bush was engulfed in flames, it didn't burn up.* <sup>3</sup> *“This is amazing,” Moses said to himself. “Why isn't that bush burning up? I must go see it.”*

- **Apparently a typical common desert bush, the “fire” but as time passed the bush seemed unaffected by the flames. It burned, but did not burn up... he set out to have a closer look.**
- **The closer he got to the bush, the more incredible the scene became. Moses surely had to wonder about this phenomenon.**

*EX 3: 4 When the LORD saw Moses coming to take a closer look, God called to him from the middle of the bush, “**Moses! Moses!**” “Here I am!” Moses replied. <sup>5</sup> “Do not come any closer,” the LORD warned. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.*

- **The burning bush is a threshold ... A threshold ... the exit point to one space and the entry point to another!** in this case it is the exit point of the natural and the entry point of the Supernatural ...the threshold where they meet. this church is a threshold...where the natural meets

the supernatural...you are a threshold...a temple of God where the natural meets the supernatural...

- and wherever that happens it is holy ground...different set apart!
- It is the door where his-story...History changes ... and when a story changes history changes ....this is the place of holy Ground!
- **Holy Ground** is the place where a natural life meets Supernatural life... and changes forever...
- The threshold is the place where supernatural purpose begins!
- Then God warned Moses not to come any closer and instructed him to take off his sandals because the ground on which he stood was the threshold... **no man made thing is to enter the Threshold...It is where the spirit of God meets his creation.**
- Then God identifies himself...this is who is talking to you

*Exodus 3:6* I am the God of your father—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” When Moses heard this, he covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

- The God in the burning bush is the God of Moses’ forefathers, the God of the patriarchs, Israel’s God....**the God of your forefathers is now talking to you ...that is who he is...**
- Moses hid his face, knowing that looking at God could cost him his life (cf. Gen. 32:30; Jacob)
- **I am the same God who made a declaration and a promise with Abraham and reiterated it to Isaac and Jacob. this was the promise: what he is going to do...**

*GE 15:12 13* Then the LORD said to Abram, “You can be sure that your descendants will be strangers in a foreign land, where they will be oppressed as slaves for 400 years. <sup>14</sup> But I will punish the nation that enslaves them, and in the end they will come away with great wealth. <sup>15</sup> (As for you, you will die in peace and be buried at a ripe old age.)

- **God keeps his promises to His people... though it may seem like he does not because they die...But since they really don't ... and they live forever, whenever he fulfills it is the right time.**
- **Jesus made this clear one time...speaking to the Sadducees who did not believe in the resurrection...**

*MK 12: 26 Now about the dead rising--have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' ? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"*

- **It is not a new and different God who is here made known to Moses, but the God of his forefathers, the God of Israel. There is no new plan, but simply the outworking of the old plan, revealed to Abraham.**
- **this is how he identify with his people...I am concerned about them...and I will do something about it...**

*EX 3: 7 Then the LORD told him, "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live. 9 Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them.*

- **As compared to chapter 2...the people have had enough pain, they are crying out...this long time has caused them to want to be saved...Ah that was God's plan...**
- **"I have certainly seen the oppression of my people**
- **I have heard their cries of distress**
- **I am aware of their suffering**
- **So I have come down to rescue them**
- **to lead them out of Egypt...into their own land**

- For 400 years, God appeared to be distant and removed as far as the Israelites must have thought. They would probably have thought of God as more transcendent (distant, removed, uninvolved in the world), rather than imminent (directly concerned with and involved in the affairs of men).
- I am going to lead them out of bondage...How? you are going to lead them out...

Exodus 3: <sup>10</sup> Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt."

- The God of the burning bush is a God who commissions people to participate in His purposes at the threshold

EX 3: <sup>11</sup> But Moses protested to God, "Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?"

He ask God...Who AM I ...there is much more to that question than what is presented...Moses believed in the God of Abraham , Isaac, and Jacob.....and therefore a member of that lineage and the God of that lineage... that is who he was... who are you? me a child of God....

However there is more to you than that... what you have been made to identify with is unique to you...it is your role identity as an Ambassador of the Kingdom...

Part of who you are is what you are called to identify with in this world, and by connection what you are to do because of that connection

Paul in... Gal 1:<sup>15</sup> But even before I was born, God chose me and called me by his marvelous grace(Who I am). Then it pleased him <sup>16</sup> to reveal his Son to me<sup>[a]</sup> so that I would proclaim the Good News about Jesus to the Gentiles. (my call who I identify with)When this happened, I did not rush out to consult with any human being.

God had set him apart from birth to be his... but the call his identity ...who he would identify with happened at a certain time...and he knew it...and did not need to consult any human about it..

- The first question, is a good one “Who am I?,” for forty years he had faith he belonged to God..... Then Moses had made a very critical decision concerning who he identified with. God's people!

*Heb 11:24* It was by faith that Moses, when *he grew up*, refused to be called(*identified with*) the son of Pharaoh's daughter. <sup>25</sup> He chose to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin.

- He had determined that he would identify with God's people who oppressed by the Egyptians and thus could not be known any longer as the son of Pharaoh's daughter
- Having made this decision, based on his identifying with them... that he would attempt to deliver his people, which resulted in the slaying of the Egyptian.
- which leads to his third identity...what he identified with as a fugitive..and a refugee...
- and his fourth identity... a husband and a dad and a sheep herder....business man....
- *Good question who am i? my identity... who do I belong with... what am I made to do...he was made to identify as a deliverer!*
- Moses belonged to God, and identified with God's people...His call was to deliver them...
- it is the same question we all must answer...who am I...what do I identify with? what do I do with that
- I am a child of God...but I identify my role on this earth as a builder of lives.... I knew this at a young age.. it is intuitive....from being a leader in my neighborhood, a leader on my teams, a coach of young men... program director, Pastor , husband, father, ....I flourish when I build lives...I don't when I don't...I flow I am who I am meant to be...and in

that I am creative, insightful, hungry to know more, open to learning and experiencing...will to try new things, I am willing to fail at them... I am fulfilled when I see the results of this work and am spurred on to continue..... in doing this I pray all the time... because I need God to tell me how this is going to work...not the enemy who is telling me it is not going to work.

- **God answers to reassure him in this deliverance...I will be with you to do your call!**

*Ex 3:12* God answered, “**I will be with you.** (singular) And this is your sign that I am the one who has sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this very mountain.”

- **He is a child of the Israelite God... God therefore promises Moses that His will go with him as he obeys his calling: to lead the people out!**
- **God’s answer seeks to refocus Moses’ attention from looking at the sendee (Moses) to the Sender (God).**
- **What is important is not the instrument to do what God identifies as your call but the One in whose hand the instrument is being held.**
- **God has manifested Himself to Moses because He intends to manifest Himself through Moses**
- **The same God who was with them is with us...**
- **God manifests himself to you because he intends to manifest himself through you**
- **And the sign I am with you will be after you bring them out...you plural will worship me...in a sense this is a bigger miracle that the miracles to release them...they will worship God..**
- **You only worship God when you know Him!!!**
- He is saying that the real “sign” to Moses will be when the nation which he leads out of Egypt worships God at Mt. Sinai, which they did (cf. [Exod. 19.](#))

We would tend to think that God would have talked about all the signs and plagues he would miraculously do...but no.. **the sign which is**

promised in verse 12 will only be given after Moses acts on what God has already revealed. to worship God is quite the miraculous sign...

**So Moses says ok you will be with me...but what is your name?**

*EX 3: 13 But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”*

- those Israelites belong to you...and They are in Egypt ...exposed to many gods...what shall I tell them is your name? Names have power! Saying a name opens doors...Identifys you to people...
- **Where have you been the last 400 years? and I could have used your name 40 years ago...**
- **How shall I identify you to them....they have been exposed to many gods...tell them I am the present one**

*EX 3: 14 God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM. Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.”*

*start*

- **I am ... the one always present...and never not present...**
- **they may think I am not ...but I am**
- **and remind thme as I was with their ancestors I am with them...**

*EX 3: 15 God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh, 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 eternal name, my name to remember for all generations.”*

- **The God who is and was and will always be...**
- **2000 years later...In John 8 Jesus is asked by the Religious leaders "who do you think you are?"**
- **I am the present God... I was there when Abraham saw the future day..of deliverance of all people from sin and death...**

*NLT John 8: 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad.” 57 The people said, “You aren’t even fifty years old.*



*How can you say you have seen Abraham?”<sup>58</sup> Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, before Abraham **was even born, I AM!**”<sup>59</sup> At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus was hidden from them and left the Temple.*

• **The great I am has a name and his name is Jesus!**

**at the name of Jesus! the great I am every knee will bow...**

**end**

- <sup>Matt 16:15</sup> “But what about you?” he asked. “**Who do you say I am?**”<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”<sup>17</sup> Jesus

replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven.

- Just as Moses did not figure out who the I am is...we don't either It must be a revelation of God...
- just as Moses was drawn to God by God...we are also drawn to God by God
- John 6:44 “No one can come to me **unless the Father** who sent me draws **them**, and I will raise **them** up at **the** last day.
- 

➤ *listen to what Jesus said to his disciples which includes all those who belong to him..*

*MT 28: 18 Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19 Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations,<sup>[b]</sup> baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”*

- **and why Is He named the I am...because whatever you need I am your source!**
- Are you afraid? Jesus says I am with you...are you depressed? I am the lifter of your head

- are you in bondage? I am your deliverer...are you in need? I am your supply
- are you in sin? I am your forgiver....are you lost? I am your savior
- are you in trouble? I am your helper...are you sick? I am your healer
- are you weak? I am your strength....are you confused? I am your wisdom
- are you exhausted? I am your rest...are you defeated?...I am your victory?....are you lonely?...I am your friend
- whatever it is you need ...I am here come and receive...

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**and two questions must be answered before anything more can happen... they are identity issues...as Moses will ask Who am I... I one time he had an identity...Pharaohs grandson... he lived it ....and he also had another identity ...a Hebrew...and he tried to assert that...and he lost both....Now who is he?**

- **At first, the burning bush was but a curiosity, something novel to which Moses was drawn. Now, the bush (or rather, God, who was manifested in the flames encompassing the bush) was an object of fear and reverence.**
- **This occurred when God twice called Moses by name, to which he answered, “Here I am.”**

- **I doubt that Moses stooped to loosen his sandals. Like others who have beheld the glory of the living God, he may have fallen to the ground, prostrate.**
- **The flames which encompassed (but did not consume) the bush, along with the warning issued by the Lord from within the flames, emphatically impressed Moses with the holiness of the One who was manifesting Himself.**

*MK 12: 26 Now about the dead rising--have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' ? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"*

**This is who Jesus claimed to be and what ...and what put him in trouble with the Jews**

*51 I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."*

*JN 8:52 At this the Jews exclaimed, "Now we know that you are demon-possessed! Abraham died and so did the prophets, yet you say that if anyone keeps your word, he will never taste death. <sup>53</sup> Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"*

*JN 8:54 Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. <sup>55</sup> Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and keep his word. <sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad."*

*JN 8:57 "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!"*

*JN 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "**before Abraham was born, I am!**" <sup>59</sup> At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds.*

➤ **The same God who was with them is with us...**

➤ **God has manifested Himself to Moses because He intends to manifest Himself through Moses**

➤ **God manifests himself to you because he intends to manifest himself through you**

**end**

*JN 8: 38 I am telling you what I have seen in the Father's presence, and you do what you have heard from your father. "*

*JN 8:39 "Abraham is our father," they answered.*

*"If you were Abraham's children," said Jesus, "then you would do the things Abraham did. <sup>40</sup> As it is, you are determined to kill me, a man who has told*

*you the truth that I heard from God. Abraham did not do such things. <sup>41</sup> You are doing the things your own father does."*

*"We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "The only Father we have is God himself."*

*JN 8:42 Jesus said to them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and now am here. I have not come on my own; but he sent me. <sup>43</sup> Why is my language not clear to you? Because you are unable to hear what I say. <sup>44</sup> You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. <sup>45</sup> Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! <sup>46</sup> Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? <sup>47</sup> He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God."*

*JN 8:48 The Jews answered him, "Aren't we right in saying that you are a Samaritan and demon-possessed?"*

*JN 8:49 "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me. <sup>50</sup> I am not seeking glory for myself; but there is one who seeks it, and he is the judge. <sup>51</sup> I tell you the truth, if anyone keeps my word, he will never see death."*

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- **The same God who was with them is with us...**
- **God has manifested Himself to Moses because He intends to manifest Himself through Moses**
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*MT 28: 18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

**What is it you need ...I am Afraid ...I am your strength Lonely...I am your friend**

**Sick...I am your healer Lost...I am your guide Proud ...I am your humbler**

**Poor...I am your provider Sinner ...I am your Savior depressed....I am your counselor I am your all in all**

**In Revelation ...Jesus says Yes...I am coming soon...**

**end**

**alternate end**

**At the burning bush Moses asked the voice in the burning bush...who are you?**



**Exodus 3:6** *Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.*

**2000 years later...In John 8 Jesus is asked by the Religious leaders "who do you think you are?"**

*NLT John8:53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. **Who do you think you are?"***

*<sup>54</sup> Jesus answered, “If I want glory for myself, it doesn’t count. But it is my Father who will glorify me. You say, ‘He is our God,’<sup>55</sup> but you don’t even know him. I know him. If I said otherwise, I would be as great a liar as you! But I do know him and obey him. <sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad.”*

*<sup>57</sup> The people said, “You aren’t even fifty years old. How can you say you have seen Abraham?<sup>[j]</sup>”*

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**The great I am has a name and his name is Jesus!**

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Are you afraid? Jesus says I am with you...are you depressed? I am the lifter of your head

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are you in sin? I am your forgiver....are you lost? I am your savior

are you in trouble? I am your helper...are you sick? I am your healer  
 are you weak? I am your strength...are you confused? I am your wisdom  
 are you exhausted? I am your rest...  
 are you defeated?...I am your victory?  
 are you lonely?...I am your friend  
 whatever it is you need ...I am here come and receive...

*NLT ISA 41: 4 Who has done such mighty deeds,  
 summoning each new generation from the beginning of time? It is I, the  
 LORD, the First and the Last. I alone am he.”*

<sup>8</sup>But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day.

This passage of Scripture is one that must have been well known to the Jews of Jesus' day. The account of the “burning bush” was so central to the thinking of the gospel writers, Mark and Luke, that they (perhaps like most men in their day) came to call this section of Scripture “the bush” portion ([Mark 12:18-27](#); [Luke 20:37](#)).

<sup>2PE 3:8</sup> *But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.* <sup>9</sup> *The Lord is not **slow***

*in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*

### **The God of the burning bush is a compassionate God**

*MK 12:18 Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. <sup>19</sup> "Teacher," they said, "Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and have children for his brother. <sup>20</sup> Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. <sup>21</sup> The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. <sup>22</sup> In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. <sup>23</sup> At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?"*

*MK 12:24 Jesus replied, "Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? <sup>25</sup> When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. <sup>26</sup> Now about the dead rising--have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob' ? <sup>27</sup> **He is not the God of the dead, but of the living.** You are badly mistaken!"*

<sup>7</sup> Then the LORD told him, "I have certainly seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I have heard their cries of distress because of their harsh slave drivers. Yes, I am aware of their suffering. <sup>8</sup> So I have come down to rescue

them from the power of the Egyptians and lead them out of Egypt into their own fertile and spacious land. It is a land flowing with milk and honey—the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live. <sup>9</sup> Look! The cry of the people of Israel has reached me, and I have seen how harshly the Egyptians abuse them. <sup>10</sup> Now go, for I am sending you to Pharaoh. You must lead my people Israel out of Egypt.”

<sup>11</sup> But Moses protested to God, “Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Who am I to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt?”

<sup>12</sup> God answered, “I will be with you. And this is your sign that I am the one who has sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God at this very mountain.”

<sup>13</sup> But Moses protested, “If I go to the people of Israel and tell them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ they will ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

<sup>14</sup> God replied to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.<sup>[d]</sup> Say this to the people of Israel: I AM has sent me to you.” <sup>15</sup> God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people of Israel: Yahweh,<sup>[e]</sup> 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 eternal name,  
my name to remember for all generations.

Some of the richest revelation concerning the character of God is found in verses 11-15, where God responds to two questions raised by Moses.<sup>77</sup> In essence, these questions can be summarized: (1) “Who am I?” (v. 11), and (2) “Who are You?” (v. 13). God’s response to these questions serves to clarify His character even further. Verses 14 and 15 are two of the most crucial verses in the Old Testament, for they contain one of the central truths concerning the nature and character of God.

The first question, “Who am I?,” is one that is easy to understand. Forty years before, Moses had made a very critical decision concerning his identity. He had determined that he was an Israelite, and thus could not be known any longer as the son of Pharaoh’s daughter (cf. Heb.

**11:24-26).** Having done this, Moses determined that he would attempt to deliver his people, which resulted in the slaying of the Egyptian. When Moses then tried to intervene in a dispute between two Hebrews, the guilty party hurled these stinging words at him, “Who made you ruler and judge over us?” ([Exod. 2:14](#)). While wrongly motivated, this was a question worth pondering. Moses had assumed authority which had not yet been given him. (Moses’ commission comes in chapter 3 at age 80, not in chapter 2 at age 40.) Moses had 40 years to ponder his presumption, and its consequences. Now, when God commissions him to deliver the Israelites, Moses wants to be very careful not to go off half-cocked again. His question is one which reflects a caution and a desire to receive a clear commission from God.

God’s answer seeks to refocus Moses’ attention from looking at the sendee (Moses) to the Sender (God). What is important is not the instrument in God’s hand, but the One in whose hand the instrument is being held. God therefore promises Moses that His presence will go with him as he obeys his calling: “I will be with you.”<sup>78</sup> And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain” ([Exod. 3:12](#)). From this statement we learn that Moses’ authority is wrapped up in the presence of God which is assured when he is obedient to God’s command. It has been observed that the “great commission” of the New Testament is strikingly similar to the commission of Moses in our text. The “great commission” begins with the statement by our Lord, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” ([Matt. 28:18](#)), and ends with, “Surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age” ([Matt. 28:20](#)). Divine authority is thus inseparably linked with divine presence. Moses’ question about his authority was answered by God’s promise of His presence with Moses.

**It is interesting that the sign which God promises Moses in verse 12 is one that will occur after Moses has acted in faith, rather than before:**<sup>79</sup> “And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain” ([Exod. 3:12](#), emphasis mine). The first “you” in this statement is singular; the second is plural. God is not promising Moses a permanent and private worship retreat on Mt. Sinai. He is saying that the “sign” to Moses will be when the nation which he leads out of Egypt worships God at Mt. Sinai, which they did (cf. [Exod. 19ff.](#)).<sup>80</sup>

**We would tend to think that God would have first performed a sign, then and there, and then have expected Moses to obey. This God did. The signs were (1) the burning bush ([Exod. 3:1-3](#)); (2) the rod which became a serpent (4:2-4); and (3) the leprous hand ([Exod. 4:6-7](#)) But the sign which is promised in verse 12 will only be given after Moses acts on what God has already revealed. While signs may be given to stimulate our faith, they are also given in response to faith, as is the case here.**

The practical application of what has taken place in this case is evident. Many of us are waiting for God to give us a sign before we are willing to step out in faith. When God has made it sufficiently clear who He is and what it is that we are to do, God may well require that we act in faith before we are given a sign of His presence and His power. Such is the case here.

**The second question** which Moses asked grows out of the answer to the first. Moses had first asked, “Who am I?”, only to be told that the important thing is not who he is, but whose he is and who is ever present with him. In other words, Moses should redirect his attention from himself to his God. If Moses’ authority is wrapped up in his God, then we can understand why Moses asks secondly, “**Who are you?**” “Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ Then what shall I tell them?” ([Exod. 3:13](#)).

How could Moses possibly ask God’s name when God has already revealed His identity so clearly in His previous statements to Moses? Notice that Moses (at least in appearance) is not asking this question on his own behalf but on behalf of any who might ask? How many times those who counsel others are asked for advice under the guise, “I have this friend who ...”

Why would the Israelites need to ask the name of the God who has sent Moses to deliver them? I can think of only two reasons. **First, due to their worship of other (Egyptian) gods (cf. [Josh. 24:14](#)), they may wonder which of their gods is answering their prayers.**

**The second reason is that one’s name is a description of one’s character.**<sup>81</sup> If Moses’ authority is wrapped up in the God who has called and commissioned him to lead Israel out of Egypt, then he may need to be able to describe the character of this God to assure them of God’s willingness and ability to lead them into the land of blessings. The name by which God chooses to identify Himself would capture the essence of His character and being.<sup>82</sup> God’s answer to this question (be it a concession to Moses’ doubts and fears or not) is, indeed, the basis for great assurance and hope:

“I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: I AM has sent me to you.” God also said to Moses, “Say to the Israelites, ‘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, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation” ([Exod. 3:14-15](#)).<sup>83</sup>

Recognizing the importance of these two verses, the scholars have spent a great deal of effort to determine the exact meaning of the expression “I am who I am.” Predictably, they do not all agree.<sup>84</sup> Personally, I have concluded that the best rendering is “I am who I am,” as rendered by the NIV and the NASB. I believe that there are certain truths about the nature of God as the

**“I AM” concerning which most conservative scholars are in agreement.<sup>85</sup> I will summarize these dimensions of the character of the God who is the “I AM.”**

**The “I AM” is the God who is, that is, the God who exists.** There were many “no gods” in both Egypt and Canaan, which were worshipped, but in contrast to all of these “gods” was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the God who is, the only true God.<sup>86</sup>

**The “I AM” is the God who exists independently.** Theologians speak of God as self-existent. God is the Creator, but has no creator. He exists apart from any dependence on anything or anyone. He is a God who does not need help, either to exist or to accomplish His will. Thus, there is nothing which can prevent God’s will from being accomplished.

**The “I AM” is the God who exists independently and unchangeably.** As the “I AM,” God is not the God who **was** anything, in the sense that He changes. Whatever He was, He continues to be, and He will be forever. The God who is exists not only really, and independently, but also unchangeably. Therefore, whatever God has begun to do He will bring to completion, because there are no changes which necessitate any alterations in His original plans and purposes.

On the human level, we know only the opposite. We plan to build a house, but unforeseen contingencies usually involve considerably more time and money. Public projects are no different. Have you ever heard of a freeway, a bridge, or a new bomber being completed on schedule, and at the originally estimated cost? As the “I AM” we never need to agonize about the completion of what God has promised.

As the “I AM,” God exists, independently, unchangeably, eternally. God is eternal and unchanging. How often we have put our trust in a political candidate, only to find that he changes once he has been elected. Campaign promises often are mere rhetoric. Those few politicians who do attempt to keep their promises eventually get voted out of office or die. Consequently our hopes which are founded on men are very short-lived. God is eternal; thus each and every promise is as solid as a rock. If God is both eternal and unchanging, then nothing which He has purposed and promised to do can ever fail.<sup>87</sup>

How can Moses and the people of Israel be assured that God will deliver them from Egyptian bondage and will lead them into the promised land? Their confidence is well placed in the God whose nature and character is that of the “I AM” in [Exodus 3](#). That this is the point of this passage is evident from our consideration of two later Old Testament texts.

But now, this is what the Lord says—he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames

will not set you ablaze. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior; I give Egypt for your ransom, Cush and Seba in your stead” ([Isa. 43:1-3](#)).

In this text, intended to comfort Israel and to assure the nation of God’s promises, God refers to the past experiences through which Israel has gone to assure her of future blessings as well. The “passing through the waters” is an allusion to the exodus and the passing through the Red Sea. Just as Israel was not swallowed up by the sea, neither will she be swallowed up by her present and future affliction. And neither will she be burned when she passes through the fire. Just as the burning bush was not consumed by the “fire” of the “angel of the Lord,” so Israel will not be consumed by the fires of affliction and adversity, now or forever.

“But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner’s fire or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. ...So I will come near to you for judgment. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive aliens of justice, but do not fear me,” says the Lord Almighty. “I the Lord do not change. So you, O descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed” ([Mal. 3:2-3](#), 5-6).

**The nation Israel, God said through the prophet Malachi, was to go through “the fire” as it were, in order to be refined. The “fire” is, on the one hand, the affliction imposed by the cruelty of foreign nations. In the final analysis, however, it is the fire which God Himself has brought to purify His people. Malachi’s consolation for Israel is that while God’s purifying “fire” may appear to be consuming them, this will not be the case. Indeed, it will purify them and save them in the final analysis. The basis for Israel’s preservation is, as in [Exodus 3](#), the character of God as the “I AM,” the God who does not change ([Mal. 3:6](#)).**

**At the burning bush Moses asked the voice in the burning bush...who are you?**

[Exodus 3:6](#) *Then he said, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob.” At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.*

**2000 years later...In John 8 Jesus is asked by the Religious leaders "who do you think you are?"**

*John 8:53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?”<sup>54</sup> Jesus replied, “If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you*



*claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.* <sup>55</sup> *Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word.* <sup>56</sup> Your father Abraham *rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad.”*

<sup>57</sup> *“You are not yet fifty years old,” they said to him, “and you have seen Abraham!”*<sup>58</sup> *“Very truly I tell you,” Jesus answered, “before Abraham was born, **I am!**”*

**The great I am has a name and his name is Jesus! the I am sent Moses...The I am who sent Moses is the I AM Jesus...**

**and why Is He named the I am...because whatever you need I am your source!**

Are you afraid? Jesus says I am with you...are you depressed? I am the lifter of your head

are you I bondage? I am your deliverer...are you in need? I am your supply

are you in sin? I am your forgiver....are you lost? I am your savior

are you in trouble? I am your helper...are you sick? I am you healer

are you weak? I am your strength....are you confused? I am your wisdom

are you exhausted? I am your rest...

are you defeated?...I am your victory?

are you lonely?...I am your friend

whatever it is you need ...I am here come and receive...