

# Exodus 3 Commentary

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Irving Jensen ([Online](#)) - Used by Permission  
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[View Chuck Swindoll's chart of Exodus.](#)

Summary Chart of The Book of Exodus									
<b>DELIVERANCE FROM OPPRESSION</b>					<b>PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP</b>				
Redemption from Egypt Ex 1:1-18:27					Revelation from God Ex 19:1-40:38				
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Suffering and Liberation of People of God			Guidance of God			Worship of God			
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<b>Israel in Egypt</b> Ex 1:1-13:16				<b>Israel to Sinai</b> Ex 13:17-18:27		<b>Israel at Sinai</b> Ex 19:1-40:38			
<b>God's People</b> Enduring Bondage				<b>God's Grace</b> Revealed in Redemption		<b>God's Glory</b> Manifested in Worship			
<b>Egypt</b> <b>430 Years</b> (15% of Exodus)				<b>Wilderness</b> <b>2 Months</b> (30% of Exodus)		<b>Mt Sinai</b> <b>10 Months</b> (55% of Exodus)			
<b>From</b>									<b>To</b>
<b>Groaning</b>									<b>Glory!</b>

- [Jensen's Survey of the Old Testament](#) - online

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- [Click for Excellent Map of Route of the Exodus](#)
- [Click another Exodus from Egypt](#)
- [Click for Events during the Sojourn at Kadesh-Barnea](#)

GENESIS	EXODUS
human effort and failure	divine power and triumph
word of promise	work of fulfillment
a people chosen	a people called
God's electing mercy	God's electing manner
revelation of nationality	realization of nationality

SUMMARY OF THE PENTATEUCH  
(from Believer's Study Bible)

**Exodus 3:1 Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.**

- **pasturing the flock** - Ps 78:70-72 Am 1:1 7:14,15 Mt 4:18,19 Lu 2:8
- **Jethro his father-in-law** - Ex 2:16,21 18:1-6 Nu 10:29 Jdg 4:11
- **the mountain** - Ex 3:5 18:5 19:3,11 24:15-17 1Ki 19:8
- **Horeb** - Ex 17:6 De 1:6 4:10 Ps 106:19 Mal 4:4
- Exodus 3 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**God Calls Moses, Ex 3:1–12**

Ex 3:1–6 God Unsettles Moses  
Ex 3:7–12 God Orders Moses Back to Egypt

**God Reveals a New Name, Ex 3:13–22**

Ex 3:13–15 God Reveals a New Name to Moses  
Ex 3:16–18a God Sends "the Name" to Israel  
Ex 3:18b–22 God Sends "the Name" to Pharaoh (Janzen)

PROBABLE LOCATION OF MIDIAN

## ENCOUNTERING GOD IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

**Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro** (called Reuel in Ex 2:16, 18 but reason is uncertain) **his father-in-law, the priest of Midian** - Moses went from the Palace to the Pasture! Moses was taking care of business. Luke quoting Stephen writes "After forty years had passed, AN ANGEL APPEARED TO HIM IN THE WILDERNESS OF MOUNT Sinai, IN THE FLAME OF A BURNING THORN BUSH." Acts 7:30+) As an aside one has to wonder if Moses thought he no longer had any role to play in God's plan.

**THOUGHT**- Are you experiencing a delay in what you thought God was going to do in your life or through you? Moses experience teaches us an importance spiritual principle that **God's delay does not mean denial**. His timing is always perfect even through we don't understand His delays. I came to Christ at age 39 and have often pondered, why did I not come to a saving knowledge of Christ earlier? I prayed for two of my prodigals for 40 years and within the last 5 years God has graciously bought both into the Kingdom of God and why did they not come to Christ many years earlier? I don't have the answers and await the fulfillment of 1 Corinthians 13:9-13. As one writer has said "The glory of God, the arrangements of Providence, and our own good, may render delay expedient; but **delay is not denial.**" **Thomas Boston** adds "Let us remember that delay is not denial. Abraham prayed for an heir, yet fifteen years passed before the answer came (Ge 15:3-4; Ge 17:25; Ex 2:23-24; Da 9:23).... And the reason of this is manifold. (1) To keep us at the throne of grace (Pr 15:8; Song 2:14). (2) To try our graces (James 1:12; Job 27:10; Luke 18:7). God delights in our faith. (3). To prepare and fit us for the answer (Ps 10:17). (4). That we may have them at the fittest time, and when they will do us most good (Joh 11:14-15; Joh 2:4)." It's not always easy to be patient, but God can be trusted. Wait patiently for Him.

**ILLUSTRATION** - A wealthy woman phoned the manager of a concert hall and asked, "Have you found a diamond pendant? I think I lost it in your building last night." The manager replied, "No, we haven't found it, but we'll look. Please hold the line." During a quick search, the valuable diamond was located. When the manager returned to the phone, however, the woman was no longer on the line. She had hung up. She never called again, and the expensive jewelry went unclaimed. We would fault that woman for her impatience and lack of persistence, but we sometimes act just like that when we pray And in doing so, we give up something much more precious than diamonds. We lose the opportunity to have the God of the universe help us with our problems, meet our needs, or lead us to do His will. If your request is in keeping with God's will, keep praying and don't fail to "hold the line."

Praying, resting, waiting, trusting—  
These are words that tell a story;  
As we wait for God to lead us,  
He responds, "Just seek My glory."  
—Hess

Delay is not denial—pray on!

One writer points out that the mere fact that Moses oversees the flock so far from Jethro's camp demonstrated great trust for this flock was literally "the ranch," or Jethro's capital in toto.

**THOUGHT** - Shepherding sheep in a hot, dry desert was not a wasted time, for God was training Moses to be a leader, a "shepherd" of some 2 million people who would in many ways would prove more difficult than dumb sheep. So after 40 years of shepherding furry sheep in the wilderness, Moses would soon spend 40 more years shepherding fickle "sheep" in the same wilderness -- a bit of divinely directed "deja vu!"

**Cole on pasturing the flock** - "The Hebrew suggests that this was his habitual occupation." (TOTC-Ex) This would certainly be compatible with the Septuagint translation which uses the verb [poimaino](#) (for **pasturing**) (literally one who takes care of a group of animals, especially shepherding a flock) is in the [present tense](#) indicating this was Moses' habitual practice.

**And he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God** Once again we see the providence of God interacting with the will of man. Moses moves west to an area where he will meet God. Horeb is another name for Mount Sinai (cf Ex 19:10-11, Dt 4:10). Traditionally this mountain has been identified with [Jebel Musa](#) (meaning "Mountain of Moses").

**NET Note** - There is a good deal of foreshadowing in this verse, for later Moses would shepherd the people of Israel and lead them to Mount Sinai to receive the Law.

**Mountain of God** - Exod. 3:1; Exod. 4:27; Exod. 24:13; 1 Ki. 19:8; Ps. 68:15; Ezek. 28:14; Ezek. 28:16

**Believer's Study Bible** - In Semitic thought one always faced east instead of north when giving directions. The Hebrew phrase "the back of the desert" (Ex 3:1KJV) may thus be translated "the west side." The verb "led" is a participle indicating a continuing occupation. Moses had not traveled there expecting to find God; he was looking for fertile valleys. Thus, Horeb is called "the mountain of God" only as Moses writes in retrospect. It has been suggested that Horeb may be the mountain range and Mount Sinai a peak of that range, or Horeb and Sinai could be another example of two names for the same mountain (Ex 3:12; Dt. 5:2). Here the Sinai covenant (MOSAIC COVENANT - "TEN COMMANDMENTS") was to be established. A tradition as old as the fourth century A.D. identifies [Jebel Musa](#) ("the mountain of Moses," elevation 7,363 feet), at the southern end of the Sinai peninsula, as Mount Sinai/Horeb. Although many different locations have been proposed in various parts of the southern, central, or northern peninsula, in Midian (Arabia), and in Edom (e.g., Jebel Sin-Bisher and Jebel Helal), the southern Sinai is still the most likely location for "Horeb, the mountain of God."

#### Related Resources:

- [What is the significance of Mount Horeb in the Bible?](#)
- American Tract Society [Horeb](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Horeb](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Horeb](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Horeb](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Horeb](#) [Horeb](#)
- Hitchcock Bible Names [Horeb](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Horeb](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Horeb](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Horeb](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Horeb](#)

**Exodus 3:2** The Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and **behold**, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed.

- **The angel** - Ex 3:4,6 Ge 16:7-13 22:15,16 48:16 De 33:16 Isa 63:9 Ho 12:4,5 Mal 3:1 Lu 20:37 Ac 7:30-35
- **bush was burning** - Ge 15:13-17 De 4:20 Ps 66:12 Isa 43:2 53:10,11 Da 3:27 Zec 13:7 Joh 1:14 Ro 8:3 2Co 1:8-10

<https://www.preceptaustin.org/sites/default/files/images/burnbush.gif>

## APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH

**The Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush**- The **Angel** was in the fire. Angel means The **Angel of the LORD (note)** is not a created angel but from Ex 3:4-5 is God Himself and most writers consider this to be a **Christophany** (OT appearance of Messiah), a pre-incarnate appearance of the divine Word Who became a Man (Jn 1:1-2, 14+).

**Hannah - Fire** was a symbol of God's presence, seen later when He descended upon Mount Sinai (Ex. 19:18+). (Borrow [Bible Knowledge Commentary - Old Testament](#).)

**Mackay** has an interesting note - When Jacob reached Beersheba on his journey to Egypt to join his son Joseph there, on the night before he left the promised land, God appeared to him to encourage him (Gen. 46:1-4). Since then there had been over four hundred years of silence in which there had been no further direct revelation from God. But now that God has decided that the time has come to rescue his people from the oppression of Egypt, he signals that change by appearing to the man he has chosen to lead his people out of slavery. (MC-Ex)

**NET Note on fire** - Fire frequently accompanies the revelation of Yahweh in Exodus as he delivers Israel, guides her, and purifies her. The description here is unique, calling attention to the manifestation as a flame of fire from within the bush. Philo was the first to interpret the bush as Israel, suffering under the persecution of Egypt but never consumed. The Bible leaves the interpretation open. However, in this revelation the fire is coming from within the bush, not from outside, and it represents the LORD who will deliver his

people from persecution. See further E. Levine, "The Evolving Symbolism of the Burning Bush," *Dor le Dor* 8 (1979): 185-93.

**Adam Clarke on Angel of the LORD** - Clarke on the Angel of the Lord: "Not a created angel certainly, for he is called Jehovah, Exodus 3:4 and has the most expressive attributes of the Godhead applied to him...Yet he is an angel, malach, a messenger, in whom was the name of God....And who is this but Jesus, the Leader, Redeemer, and Saviour of all mankind?"

**Guzik** explains that "We say this is God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, because of God the Father, it is said No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him (John 1:18), and that no man has ever seen God in the Person of the Father (1 Timothy 6:16).

**Fire in Exodus** - Ex 3:2; Ex 9:23; Ex 9:24; Ex 12:8; Ex 12:9; Ex 12:10; Ex 13:21; Ex 13:22; Ex 14:24; Ex 19:18; Ex 22:6; Ex 24:17; Ex 29:14; Ex 29:34; Ex 32:20; Ex 32:24; Ex 35:3; Ex 40:38;

**THOUGHT** - You never know what a day may bring, so keep your eyes and ears open to the leading of the Lord. Childlike curiosity completely changed Moses' life. God calls busy people to serve Him, and He reveals Himself to them.

**Angel** (Messenger) ([04397](#)) (**malak**) is one who bears a message (a notice, word or communication, written or verbal, sent from one person to another) or does an errand. Malak is most often translated as **angel** and while usually referring to a created angel, in this context refers to the One Who Himself created the angels!

**The Angel of the LORD** - Gen. 16:7; Gen. 16:9; Gen. 16:10; Gen. 16:11; Gen. 22:11; Gen. 22:15; Exod. 3:2; Num. 22:22; Num. 22:23; Num. 22:24; Num. 22:25; Num. 22:26; Num. 22:27; Num. 22:31; Num. 22:32; Num. 22:34; Num. 22:35; Jdg. 2:1; Jdg. 2:4; Jdg. 5:23; Jdg. 6:11; Jdg. 6:12; Jdg. 6:21; Jdg. 6:22; Jdg. 13:3; Jdg. 13:13; Jdg. 13:15; Jdg. 13:16; Jdg. 13:17; Jdg. 13:18; Jdg. 13:20; Jdg. 13:21; 2 Sam. 24:16; 1 Ki. 19:7; 2 Ki. 1:3; 2 Ki. 1:15; 2 Ki. 19:35; 1 Chr. 21:12; 1 Chr. 21:15; 1 Chr. 21:16; 1 Chr. 21:18; 1 Chr. 21:30; Ps. 34:7; Ps. 35:5; Ps. 35:6; Isa. 37:36; Zech. 1:11; Zech. 1:12; Zech. 3:1; Zech. 3:5; Zech. 3:6; Zech. 12:8; Matt. 1:24

**And he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed**- For a bush to burn in the desert heat would have likely been an ordinary sight, but to not be consumed was extraordinary! Henry Morris comments that "In modern scientific terminology, the [laws of thermodynamics](#) were being violated, and these are the most inviolable of all scientific laws."

**MacDonald** writes "We should all be like the **burning... bush**—burning for God, yet **not consumed**."

"Am I ignitable? God deliver me from the dread asbestos of 'other things'.

Saturate me with the oil of the Spirit that I may be a flame.

-- [Jim Elliot](#)

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#### Related Resource:

- [Angel of the LORD](#)

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**SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION OF PLANTS** - A true story - JONESBORO, AR (KAIT) – After more than a month, the cause of a house fire in Greene County is now known. Fire investigators say a July 25th fire was caused by spontaneous combustion. "Her words were that the whole front of the house was on fire," said homeowner Brian Duncan. When investigators started searching for an origin they say it started in the same spot where the plant was sitting. "**Spontaneous combustion** is something where you have to have a lot of variables come together and it has to be just right," said Jonesboro Fire Department Fire Marshall Jason Wills. "It looked to me like someone had come up on my front porch and started a fire," said Duncan. Wills said it's rare, but spontaneous combustion does happen. "It happens in organic material in the process of decomposition," said Wills. That process lets off heat and with the help of the sun can get hot enough to catch fire. The heat of the fire caused some of the glass in the front door to break allowing the smoke to penetrate the house.

What about the fire Moses witnessed? What caused him to take a second look? The bush was burning but was not consumed! Apparently he had witnessed spontaneous combustion of plants in the desert heat, but he had never seen anything like this "brush fire!"

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#### God's Retirement Plan

The angel of the Lord appeared to [Moses] in flames of fire from within a bush. Exodus 3:1

Today's Scripture & Insight: Exodus 3:1–10

Archaeologist Dr. Warwick Rodwell was preparing to retire when he made an extraordinary discovery at Lichfield Cathedral in England. As builders carefully excavated part of the floor of the church to make way for a retractable base, they discovered a sculpture of the archangel Gabriel, thought to be 1,200 years old. Dr. Rodwell's retirement plans were put on hold as his find launched him into an exciting and busy new season.

Moses was eighty years old when he made a fiery discovery that would forever alter his life. Though the adopted son of an Egyptian princess, he never forgot his Hebrew lineage and raged at the injustice he witnessed against his kinsmen (Exodus 2:11–12). When Pharaoh learned that Moses had killed an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew, he planned to have him killed, forcing Moses to flee to Midian, where he settled (vv. 13–15).

Forty years later, when he was eighty, Moses was tending his father-in-law's flock when "the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up" (3:2). In that moment, God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egyptian slavery (vv. 3–22).

At this moment in your life, what might God be calling you to do for His greater purpose? What new plans has He placed in your path? By: Ruth O'Reilly-Smith ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

What do you learn from Moses and his calling from God? Why is it vital to be open to something new He's doing in your life?

Holy God, be Lord of all my days as I surrender them to You afresh.

**Exodus 3:3 So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up."**

- Job 37:14 Ps 107:8 111:2-4 Ac 7:31

## MOSES MARVELS AT BURNING BUSH

**So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up."** - A literal reading and interpretation of this passage is that Moses saw a bush that was actually burning, but was not being burned up! Other explanations such as a bush with brilliant berries or leaves do not represent an honest interpretation of the literal reading. Men who hate God will fabricate anything in order to attempt to erase from their mind the possibility that He does in fact exist and He is in full control and is fully capable of performing any and every miracle imaginable (and all those that are not imaginable!)

Acts 7:31+ "When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he approached to look more closely, there came the voice of the Lord:

**NET Note** on **marvelous** - means something extraordinary here. In using this term Moses revealed his reaction to the strange sight and his anticipation that something special was about to happen. So he turned away from the flock to investigate.

**Walter Kaiser** - "To explain what happened here as a temporary mirage of reflected sunlight on some red leaves or a campfire of some Bedouin or even the phenomenon of Saint Elmo's fire is to substitute our experience for Moses' forty years in that area and his estimate that it was indeed unusual." (EBC)

**Constable** has an interesting note - Because Israel has frequently been in the furnace of affliction throughout history, though not consumed, Jews have identified the burning bush as a symbol of their race. This symbol often appears on the walls of synagogues or in other prominent places not only in modern Israel but also in settlements of Jews around the world.

**Exodus 3:4 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am."**

- **God called to him** - De 33:16
- **Moses** - Ge 22:1,11 Ge 46:2 1Sa 3:4,6,8,10 Ps 62:11 Ac 9:4 Acts 10:3,13

### Related Passages:

Genesis 22:1; 11 Now it came about after these things, that God tested Abraham, and said to him, "Abraham!"

And he said, "Here I am." 11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "**Here I am.**"

Genesis 46:2 God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "**Here I am.**"

1 Samuel 3:4; 6; 8; 10+ that the LORD called Samuel; and he said, "**Here I am.**" ...6 The LORD called yet again, "Samuel!" So Samuel arose and went to Eli and said, "**Here I am**, for you called me." But he answered, "I did not call, my son, lie down again.".....8 So the LORD called Samuel again for the third time. And he arose and went to Eli and said, "**Here I am**, for you called me." Then Eli discerned that the LORD was calling the boy.....10 Then the LORD came and stood and called as at other times, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "**Speak, for Your servant is listening.**"

Psalms 62:11+ Once God has spoken; Twice I have heard this: That power belongs to God;

## MOSES' RESPONDS

**When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God (Elohim) called to him from the midst of the bush** - God began to speak after He had Moses attention. Guzik adds "God didn't speak to Moses until He had Moses' attention. Often God's Word doesn't touch our heart the way that it might because we don't give it our attention." Some writers comment that a burning thorn bush is not uncommon in the arid desert with scorching temperatures, but Moses quickly discerned there was something unusual about this burning bush -- it was not consumed.

**And said, "Moses, Moses!"** - Moses was now an unknown shepherd in an obscure place but God had not forgotten who he was. And God knows you and He knows your name and He wants to have a relationship with you (Play the great song [He Knows My Name](#)).

**NET Note** - The repetition of the name in God's call is emphatic, making the appeal direct and immediate (see also Gen 22:11; 46:2). The use of the personal name shows how specifically God directed the call and that he knew this person. The repetition may have stressed even more that it was indeed he whom the LORD wanted. It would have been an encouragement to Moses that this was in fact the LORD who was meeting him.

**And he said, "Here I am."** - Moses' response recalls that of the prophet Isaiah when he saw the Lord high and lifted up (the pre-incarnate Christ - Isaiah 6:1-4+). John records that "These things Isaiah said because he saw His glory, and he spoke of Him." (Jn 12:41) Isaiah saw the glory of the LORD which clearly indicates that Jesus is Yahweh. Upon seeing this vision (Isa 6:8+)

**THOUGHT** - Beloved of God (1Th 1:4+), is this your answer to His call --**HERE I AM**? Are you available for your Creator's use? Let it be so LORD for all who read these notes, that we might be wholly, holy Yours, redeeming the precious, passing moments, continually energized by Your Spirit for Your good pleasure and for Your great glory (Mt 5:16+, cf Php 2:15+) in and through Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen

Notice the repetition **Moses, Moses**, which in Scripture generally indicates a message of special importance. Other examples include: Abraham (Ge 22:11); Moses (Ex 3:4); Samuel (1Sa 3:10); Jerusalem (Mt 23:37) Martha (Lu 10:41) Simon (Lu 22:31), Saul (Acts 9:4 Acts 22:7 Acts 26:14)

**Here I am** - Answer given by Abraham (Gen. 22:11), Jacob (Gen. 46:2), and Samuel (1 Sam. 3:4).

**Exodus 3:5 Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."**

- **Do not come near here** - Ex 19:12,21 Lev 10:3 Heb 12:20
- **remove your sandals from your feet** - Ge 28:16,17 Jos 5:15 Ec 5:1 Ac 7:33

## THE HOLY GOD WARNS MOSES

**Then He said, "Do not come near here** - "literally has the sense of "stop coming closer." Moses was on his way for an up-close examination of the burning bush when God stopped him short." (Guzik)

**Steven Cole** - God does not ultimately forbid men to approach him: but Moses is not yet ready, for he does not recognize the presence or nature of God. There will be times later when Moses will 'come near', to intercede for others (Exod. 32:30+), and his

greatest prayer will be to have this vision of God.

Here is a message [Show Me Your Glory](#) by [Dr Steven Lawson](#) in which he encourages us to begin to pray a prayer that we may not have heretofore considered, but one which has the power to radically impact our life. Listen and you will be blessed, edified, convicted and challenged! Moses' prayer (which Cole alludes to above) is "Then Moses said, **"I pray You, show me Your glory!"** (Exodus 33:18+)

**Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.**"- Stephen quotes these same words in his sermon to the hostile Jewish crowd (Acts 7:33-34+). This is the first use of "holy" in the Bible. It was holy ground because the Holy One was there. Where God chooses to reveal Himself is holy (**THOUGHT** - today that "*WHERE*" is our bodies, His temple 1Co 6:19-20+ --- Are you living up to the potential of your calling as a "holy one," a saint? The only way is by learning to rely on the Holy Spirit to obey His command to be holy as I am holy! 1Pe 1:14-16+). This ground was different, set apart, because of God was there in a unique way (God is of course omnipresent, but this was unique and special).

**NET Note** - Even though the LORD was drawing near to Moses, Moses could not casually approach him. There still was a barrier between God and human, and God had to remind Moses of this with instructions. The removal of sandals was, and still is in the East, a sign of humility and reverence in the presence of the Holy One. It was a way of excluding the dust and dirt of the world. But it also took away personal comfort and convenience and brought the person more closely in contact with the earth.

**Ryrie on sandals** - A sign of respect toward a superior. Slaves characteristically went barefoot (cf. Luke 15:22+). (ED: Feet in ancient world were often dirty from dusty roads.)

**Holy** (06944)(**qodesh/kodhesh**) is a masculine noun which means set apart, distinct, unique. **Qodesh** describes that which has been consecrated or set apart for sacred use and was not to be used for common or profane tasks. If it were used for profane things, in simple terms, it became "not holy."

**Qodesh in Exodus** - Ex 3:5; Ex 12:16; Ex 15:11; Ex 15:13; Ex 16:23; Ex 22:31; Ex 26:33; Ex 26:34; Ex 28:2; Ex 28:4; Ex 28:29; Ex 28:35; Ex 28:36; Ex 28:38; Ex 28:43; Ex 29:6; Ex 29:29; Ex 29:30; Ex 29:33; Ex 29:34; Ex 29:37; Ex 30:10; Ex 30:13; Ex 30:24; Ex 30:25; Ex 30:29; Ex 30:31; Ex 30:32; Ex 30:35; Ex 30:36; Ex 30:37; Ex 31:10; Ex 31:11; Ex 31:14; Ex 31:15; Ex 35:2; Ex 35:19; Ex 35:21; Ex 36:1; Ex 36:3; Ex 36:4; Ex 36:6; Ex 37:29; Ex 38:24; Ex 38:25; Ex 38:26; Ex 38:27; Ex 39:1; Ex 39:30; Ex 39:41; Ex 40:9; Ex 40:10; Ex 40:13

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**Question:** ["What does the Bible mean when it refers to holy ground?"](#)

**Answer:** The phrase "**holy ground**" is found only twice in the Bible, once in the Old Testament and once in the New. God Himself first identified the area in which He met with Moses on Mount Horeb (Sinai) as holy ground. It was there that God commanded Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand that he let the people go from bondage to Egypt. At the moment Moses came upon the burning bush out of which God spoke to him, God gave him two commands: don't come near and take off your sandals. Both commands were to impress upon Moses that he was standing on holy ground (Exodus 3:5). Joshua 5:15 describes a similar incident, but the phrase "**holy ground**" is not used.

It was not that the actual ground on which Moses stood was holy; rather, **it was the presence of the holy God that made it holy.** The direction to Moses to remove his shoes was in conformity with what was well known to Moses, for, having been brought up in Egypt, he would have known that the Egyptian priests observed the custom in their temples. Today it is observed in all Eastern countries where the people take off their shoes or sandals before entering mosques and synagogues as a confession of personal defilement and conscious unworthiness to stand in the presence of unspotted holiness. (ED: WOULDN'T IT BE INTERESTING IF WE DID THIS TODAY IN AMERICAN CHURCHES? I'M AFRAID WE WOULD PROBABLY TURN INTO A RITUAL OR SOMETHING "CULTIC!") Moses responds by not only removing his shoes, but also by hiding his face, a sign that he understood he was in the presence of the glory of the divine Majesty and was conscious of his own sinfulness and unworthiness. In fact, Moses was so aware of God's holiness that he was afraid to look at Him (Exodus 3:6).

In the New Testament, the event described in Exodus is reiterated by Stephen as he was preaching the gospel of Jesus Christ before the Sanhedrin. He recounted the history of the Jews and their dealings with the God of their forefathers (Acts 6—7). He reminded them of the incident of the holy ground on which Moses stood and spoke to God (Acts 7:33). The holy ground was rendered sacred by the presence of God, who is the very essence of holiness. The lesson for us is that we should enter the sanctuary, the place set apart for divine worship, with reverence in our hearts. Solemn awe and deep seriousness are appropriate for coming into the place set apart for the worship of God, for wherever the Lord is constitutes holy ground.



**Exodus 3:6 He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.**

- **I am** - Ex 3:14,15 4:5 29:45 Ge 12:1,7 17:7,8 26:24 28:13 31:42 32:9 1Ki 18:36 Es 3:4 Ps 132:2 Jer 24:7 31:33 32:38 Eze 11:20 Zec 8:8 Mt 22:32 Mk 12:26 Lu 20:37 Ac 7:32
- **hid** - Ge 17:3 Jdg 13:22 1Ki 19:13 Ne 9:9 Job 42:5,6 Ps 106:44,45 Isa 6:1-5 Da 10:7,8 Mt 17:6 Lu 5:8 Ac 7:34 Heb 12:21 Rev 1:17

## **MOSES REVERENTIAL FEAR OF GOD**

God reminds Moses of the covenant He made with the patriarchs.

**He said also, "I am the God of your father ([Amram](#)), the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob-** Note he does not say "I WAS" but "I AM" and in the Septuagint that is "ego eimi" which means "I am continually." By implication Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are alive! And second, note that God is mentioned before each name, indicating He is not some far off God but is up close and personal to each one! And He is the same to every believer today - UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL! Do you feel far from Him today? Guess who moved? He is calling you into a personal relationship that is real, vibrant, active, fulfilling, exciting, etc, etc. If you do not know Jesus as Savior then you do not know the God of Abraham. You need to place your trust wholly in Him, not just for today in time, but forever in eternity.

God testifies He is the same God had spoken with the patriarchs. His mention of the 3 patriarchs is clearly an allusion to the **covenant** (Ex 2:24) God had made with Abraham (Ge 12:1-7+, Ge 15:13-18+) and which was passed to Isaac (Ge 26:1-6) and then to Jacob (Ge 28:10-15 who was given a [name change](#) to Israel in Ge 32:28). Notice the inclusion of Moses' **father** indicating that [Amram](#) was a recipient of the [covenant made with Abraham](#). Presumably Moses would have been aware of God's full covenant name used here (having been taught by his mother - see note on Ex 2:10 "**The child grew**").

God's opening words, although important for Moses to hear, point the reader back to Exodus 2:24—showing that the God of Israel has remembered His people and has begun to take action

**NET Note** - This self-revelation by Yahweh prepares for the revelation of the holy name. While no verb is used here, the pronoun and the predicate nominative are a construction used throughout scripture to convey the "I AM" disclosures – "I [am] the God of...." But the significant point here is the naming of the patriarchs, for this God is the [covenant God](#), who will fulfill his promises.

**Believer's Study Bible** - Based upon the grammatical form of this expression, Jesus spoke of the continued existence of the patriarchs after death (Matt. 22:32). The immediate theological significance is that Moses was not introducing another religion, nor bringing a new god to Israel; he was being called by the one true God to fulfill the covenant promises already made to the nation (cf. Ge 9:13).

**Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God-** This reminds me of John's reaction on the Isle of Patmos when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him - "When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man." (Rev 1:17<sup>+</sup>, cf Ezekiel - Ezek 1:28<sup>+</sup>)

Luke gives us a parallel description quoting Stephen who in turn quoted God who said

**"I AM THE GOD OF YOUR FATHERS, THE GOD OF ABRAHAM AND ISAAC AND JACOB.'Moses shook with fear and would not venture to look."** (Acts 7:32<sup>+</sup>)

What a contrast with those who have entered the New Covenant, for example Jude writing in a prayer

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and **tomake you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy**, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." (Jude 1:24-25<sup>+</sup>).

**Was afraid** (03372) ([yare](#)) fear as when one senses a threat to one's life, but in other contexts expresses the idea of reverence and deep respect (as in Ps 25:14<sup>+</sup>). In the OT fear of the Lord involves a person's total response to the Lord. It is notable that more than 75% of the over 370 uses (see below) of yare are in the context of reverencing the Lord. In English our word **reverence** (from Latin reverentia "awe, respect," from revereri "to stand in awe of, respect, honor, fear, be afraid of; revere,") refers to a feeling of profound respect for someone or something, and with yare in the OT as noted this is most often to God. The classic use is Pr 1:7<sup>+</sup> "The **fear** (yare) of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge." Notice that a genuine holy fear of the

Lord is often equated with believers (e.g. Mal 3:16<sup>±</sup>, Mal 4:2<sup>±</sup>, Eccl 8:12-13, of the last worldwide proclamation of the Gospel which says "Fear God..." - Rev 14:6-7<sup>±</sup>)

**Yare in Exodus** - Exod. 1:17; Exod. 1:21; Exod. 2:14; Exod. 3:6; Exod. 9:20; Exod. 9:30; Exod. 14:10; Exod. 14:13; Exod. 14:31; Exod. 15:11; Exod. 18:21; Exod. 20:20; Exod. 34:10; Exod. 34:30;

**Exodus 3:7 The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.**

- **I have** - Ex 2:23-25 22:23 Ge 29:32 1Sa 9:16 Ps 22:24 34:4,6 106:44 Ps 145:19 Isa 63:9 Heb 4:15
- **because of** - Ex 1:11+ = "So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor"
- **I am aware** - Ge 18:21 Ps 142:3

**The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry(see below on tseqah) because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings.** - This is a reiteration of Exodus "Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them." (Ex 2:23-25+)

He is no passive spectator of the misery of his chosen, but his hands go with his heart.

-- C H Spurgeon

**THOUGHT** - You can mark it down dearly beloved child of God who is suffering, in affliction, etc. (1) God sees - Ex 2:25, (2) God hears (so be sure to "cry out") (3) God is aware of your suffering. It will not last forever!

**Spurgeon - I know about their sufferings.**" This is a beautiful verse. God had seen and heard, as if their griefs had had two avenues to his heart. God sees not with eyes and hears not with ears, as we do, but, "I have observed the misery . . . and have heard them crying out." And then he adds, as if to show the perfection of his sympathy with them, "I know about their sufferings." It is still true today concerning us and concerning our God—he has seen, he has heard, and he knows. When the sorrow is known, then God begins to work.

**THOUGHT** - This reminds us of [El Roi, the God Who sees](#) our afflictions and all the injustices leveled against us. He sees and He remembers and to Him alone is vengeance and the right to repay evil done to us (Ro 12:17-21<sup>±</sup>). That should be enough to give us comfort even in the midst of seemingly unremitted or unrequited mistreatment or injustice. God is aware. He is still on the throne.

**DISCIPLE'S STUDY BIBLE** - God is not distant, blind, or indifferent to the needs of His people. He is a God of compassion and love. While the love of God is a major New Testament theme, it is also a significant idea in the Old Testament. The whole story of redemption from Egyptian slavery, sojourn to the Promised Land, and subsequent development into a nation is a testimony of God's never-ending love for His people. God's concern for the Hebrews' suffering led to His choice of Moses to help liberate them. God often uses human beings to bring about His desired results. The story of the Exodus from Egypt illustrates God's willingness to work in and through human beings to alleviate unjust suffering.

**Matthew Henry** - God notices the afflictions of Israel. Their sorrows; even the secret sorrows of God's people are known to him. Their cry; God hears the cries of his afflicted people. The oppression they endured; the highest and greatest of their oppressors are not above him. God promises speedy deliverance by methods out of the common ways of providence. Those whom God, by his grace, delivers out of a spiritual Egypt, he will bring to a heavenly Canaan (**ED: AFTER 1000 YEARS IN THE [Millennial Kingdom](#)** ).

**Exodus 3:8 "So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.**

- **I have come down** - Ge 11:5,7 Ge 18:21 Ge 50:24 Ps 18:9-19 12:5 22:4,5 34:8 91:15 Isa 64:1 Joh 3:13 6:38
- **deliver** - Ex 6:6-8 Ex 12:51 Ge 15:14 50:24
- **a good and spacious land** - Ex 3:17 13:5 33:2,3 Ge 13:14,15 15:18 Nu 13:19,27 14:7,8 De 1:7,25 De 8:7-9 11:9-24 26:9-15 27:3 28:11 Ne 9:22-25 Jer 2:7 11:5 Jer 32:22 Eze 20:6

- **Canaanites** - Ex 22:23-31 34:11 Ge 15:18-21 De 7:1 Jos 9:1 Ne 9:8

GOD IS SPEAKING TO MOSES

## eMOSES' PREPARATION TO EXPERIENCE GOD

**So** - Term of Conclusion - They had cried out from bondage, groaning, affliction and because of His [faithfulness](#) to His covenant with Abraham, He heard their cry in Ex 2:24.

**THOUGHT** - We need to cry out...What a picture of OUR HIGH PRIEST today Who is able to come to the aid of those who are continually ([peirazo](#) in [present tense](#) = continually) being tested/tempted (Read Heb 2:18+ and note that the Greek word "come to the aid" is [boetheo](#) which means to run to one's aid upon hearing a cry for help! Application? We need to **Cry Out to Jesus!** - play song [Cry Out!](#))

**I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians and to bring them up from that land**- God says **I have come down**, which He had done twice in Genesis for judgment --- He came down and confused the languages at the Tower of Babel (Ge 11:5,7) and He came down to Sodom and Gomorrah (Ge 18:21ff). The purpose for God coming down is to deliver Israel. Notice that here God says that He is the One Who will **deliver** Israel from the power of Egypt, whereas in Ex 3:10 he says Moses will bring Israel out (deliver Israel out) of Egypt. So here we see God's sovereignty interacting with Man's responsibility. God could have done it without Moses but chose to use a man to bring about the deliverance.

**Spurgeon** - "**I have come down to rescue them.**" When the cry of God's children goes before him, **depend on it, something will be moving before long.** When a father hears the cries of his children, when a mother hears the cry of her baby, it is not long before there will be a movement of the heart and of the hands. I am sure, brothers and sisters, there have been crises in history which have been entirely due to the prayers of God's people. There have been singular occurrences that the mere reader of history cannot understand, but there are many still alive who wait on God in prayer, and they make history. More history is made in the prayer closet than in the national cabinet. There is a greater power at the back of the throne than the carnal eye can see, and that power is the cry of God's children.

**NET Note** on **come down** - God's coming down is a frequent anthropomorphism in Genesis and Exodus. It expresses his direct involvement, often in the exercise of judgment.

**to a good and spacious land** - "The point made in the Hebrew text is that the land to which they are going is both good (in terms of quality) and large (in terms of size)." (NET)

**Deliver** ([05337](#)) ([natsal](#)) means primarily to deliver, often by the power of one entity overcoming another. Deliverance from the hand or power (Ge 32:11, Hos 2:10). Idols and human might cannot deliver (1 Sa 12:21, Ps 33:16). The [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) of Ex 3:8 uses [exaireo](#) which literally means to take out and then means to deliver by rescuing from danger, the very word Paul selects for the "rescue mission" in Galatians 1:4+ writing that Jesus "gave Himself for ([substitutionary sacrifice](#)) our sins so that (term of purpose) He might **rescue** ([exaireo](#)) us from (preposition = [ek](#) = **out of** this fallen world, just like Israel was rescued **out of** Egypt!) this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father."

**Natsal in Exodus** - Ex 2:19; Ex 3:8; Exod. 3:22; Exod. 5:23; Exod. 6:6; Exod. 12:27; Exod. 12:36; Exod. 18:4; Exod. 18:8; Exod. 18:9; Exod. 18:10; Exod. 33:6

**To a land flowing with milk and honey** - Figuratively this is a description of the blessings of the land, especially its fertility and productivity. **Constable** adds "It pictures an abundance of grass, fruit trees, and flowers where cows, goats, and bees thrive and where the best drink and food abound."

**NET Note** adds - "milk and honey"... will be in abundance in the land, and they therefore exemplify what a desirable land it is. The language is hyperbolic, as if the land were streaming with these products.

**To the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite**- The mention of these people groups makes it clear exactly which land they were to inhabit. And yes, it was a land of **milk and honey**, but these 6 nations serve as a warning that it is also a land of **idolatry and immorality**, both of which would eventually ensnare many of the sons of Israel. Unfortunately, they had received good "training" in idol worship in Egypt (which Israel was still clinging even after they entered the promised land - see the aged Joshua giving a strong warning to the nation - Joshua 24:14-15 - note their answer in Joshua 24:16 just like they said in Ex 24:3,7! Good intentions, but weak wills). They had "tears at the altar" but there was no obedience in the crucible of the temptations and testings in everyday life!

**Land flowing with Milk and honey** - Exod. 3:8; Exod. 3:17; Exod. 13:5; Exod. 33:3; Lev. 20:24; Num. 16:13; Num. 16:14; Deut. 6:3; Deut. 11:9; Deut. 26:9; Deut. 26:15; Deut. 27:3; Deut. 31:20; Jos. 5:6; Jer. 11:5; Jer. 32:22

**THOUGHT** - God uses people who are willing to be used by Him and become involved in the needs of others. Involving Moses was His plan for redeeming Israel and involving individuals today is His plan for redeeming individual souls. Is God speaking to you? Are you listening? Are you willing to be involved in His work of redemption?

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Do you desire to experience God's presence and power and protection in your life? Henry Blackaby wrote the following seven precepts in his wonderful course [Experiencing God](#)... (see diagram above) (If you have never done this study, I highly recommend it -- it changed the direction of my ministry some 25 years ago and I have never regretted joining God in what He was doing).

1. God is always at work around you.
2. God pursues a continuing love relationship with you that is real and personal.
3. God invites you to become involved with Him in His work.
4. God speaks by the Holy Spirit through the Bible, prayer, circumstances, and the church to reveal Himself, His purposes, and His ways.
5. God's invitation for you to work with Him always leads you to a crisis of belief that requires faith and action.
6. You must make major adjustments in your life to join God in what He is doing.
7. You come to know God by experience as you obey Him, and He accomplishes His work through you.

These Seven Realities describe the ongoing experience of a God-centered life

**Exodus 3:9 "Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them."**

- **the cry** - Ex 3:7 2:23
- **and I have** - Ex 3:7 Ex 1:11,13,14,22 Ps 12:5 Pr 22:22,23 Ec 4:1 5:8 Jer 50:33,34 Am 4:1 Mic 2:1-3

**Now, behold** ([hinneh](#), Lxx = [idou](#)) God is about to take action. He reminds Moses He has not been deaf to their distress. Sometime when we experience delay in our prayers we begin to think it is as if He does not hear our cries. He always hears.

**The cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me**- In their distress they cried out to Jehovah. Distress has a way of bringing us to our knees and running to the only Rock of Salvation!

**NET Note on cry** - The word is a technical term for the outcry one might make to a judge. God had seen the oppression and so knew that the complaints were accurate, and so He initiated the "proceedings" against the oppressors.

**Cry** ([06818](#))([tseaqah](#)) refers to a cry, an outcry, a call for help, a cry of wailing and despair. E.g.,[tseaqah](#) described the cries of outrage regarding sin that went up against Sodom and Gomorrah (Ge 18:21; Ge 19:13).

The **Septuagint** translates [tseaqah](#) in this passage with [krauge](#) from [krazo](#) = clamor or cry = a word like "croak" ~ suggests a rough and guttural sound = croaking of ravens = croak or cry out with a loud, raucous voice like donkey in Job 6:5, childbirth Is 26:17, war cry in Josh 6:16) can refer to a chorus of voices (one voice in Lk 1:42) speaking loudly at the same time (outcry, shout, clamor).

**John Hartley** - BDB suggests the original meaning in Arabic was "sound as thunder." This root means to call out for help under great distress or to utter an exclamation in great excitement (cf. 2 Ki 2:12). E.g., immediately on realizing that the pottage they were contentedly eating was poisonous, the sons of the prophets cried out in anguish (2 Ki 4:40). A woman who is raped is exonerated as long as she cries for help. If she does not, she is guilty of consenting to adultery (Dt. 22:23-27). Israel's leaders often had to petition God earnestly for help. As a leader, **Moses faced numerous difficult situations which caused him to cry out in desperation to Yahweh for direction** (cf. Ex 17:4). One time God's response to Moses was simply for Moses to cease crying and get into action (Ex 14:15). Further it describes the response of Esau to the loss of his blessing and of the nation Israel to the loss of the ark of the Philistines (Ge 27:34; 1 Sa 4:14). This word often refers to the cry of

those plundered and ravaged in war (cf. Jer 49:21). A strong outcry frequently indicates that righteousness is absent or judgment is being executed. Even though Yahweh established Israel as a nation to produce justice and righteousness, he discovered bloodshed and a cry; i.e., the city was oppressing the unfortunate (Isa 5:7). The righteous lament in loud cries over the loss suffered by their nation (cf. Isa 33:7; Lam 2:18). They intercede for forgiveness by repenting of the sins which led to this calamity and seeking God's help for the future. **God listens to the cries of men, particularly when the righteous cry out under inaction.** The Hebrews cried under the weight of their bondage in Egypt (Ex 3:7). God heard their cry and came to deliver them through the mighty deeds at the Exodus. Because of the cry of the oppressed in Sodom and Gomorrah, God came to judge the oppressors (Ge 18:21; Ge 19:13). God especially promises to hear the cry of the afflicted, the alien, the orphan, and the widow (Ex 22:22f.; cf. Ps 9:12 [H 13]). The fact that God hears the cries of his people and delivers them from their distress distinguishes him as the true, living God; for men cry to idols, but they do not respond (Ps 107:6, 28; Isa 46:7).

God, however, returns punishment to the wicked in kind. In response to the outcry of the Hebrews, the Egyptians uttered a great cry because of their sorrow over the death of their firstborn (Ex 11:6; Ex 12:30). In the end times a portion of the punishment of the wicked will be crying from a painful heart (Isaiah 65:14). God's suffering servant accomplishes his task differently than earthly rulers who seek reform and office. He will not cry in the streets (Isaiah 42:2); i.e. he will not seek through rhetoric to arouse the multitudes to move against their present rulers. In the Niphal and Hiphil *ṣā'aq* means "to be called into assembly" (cf. Judges 7:23f.). A leader may summon the people together to pursue their enemies. Saul was the first leader since the Conquest who was able to assemble the entire nation, to go to battle against their enemies (1 Samuel 13:4). The people could also be called into assembly in order for their leaders to present an important matter. Samuel gathered such an assembly at Mizpah in order to install Saul as king (1 Samuel 10:17). (Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament)

**Tseaqah** - 21x in 20v - cry(14), cry of distress(1), outcry(6). - Ge 18:21; Ge 19:13; Ge 27:34; Ex 3:7; Ex 3:9; Ex 11:6; Ex 12:30; Ex. 22:23; 1 Sa 4:14; 1 Sa 9:16; Neh 5:1; Job 27:9; Job 34:28; Ps 9:12; Isa 5:7; Jer. 25:36; Jer. 48:3; Jer. 48:5; Jer. 49:21; Zeph 1:10

**Furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them-** God had not missed the oppression/affliction described in Ex 1:11,13,14,22. The Hebrew words emphasize the fact that their suffering was like being squeezed or pressured "which led to its later use in the Semitic languages for torture. The repetition in the Hebrew text of the root in the participle form after this noun serves to stress the idea." (NET)

**Oppression** (03906) (**lachats**) distress, oppression, affliction. Tribulation from difficult circumstances. When the people arrived in the Land of Promise, Moses commanded each family to bring an offering of firstfruits to the priest (Dt. 26:7). Part of the presentation involved a recognition that God had seen their oppression in Egypt and rescued them.

**Lachats** - 10x - oppression(8), sparingly(2). Ex. 3:9; Dt. 26:7 = referring to God hearing their cry and delivering them from Egypt; 1 Ki. 22:27; 2 Ki. 13:4; 2 Chr. 18:26; Job 36:15; Ps. 42:9; Ps. 43:2; Ps. 44:24; Isa. 30:20

**Oppressing** (03905) (**lachats**) mean to physically push against someone or something, to squeeze, to crush and has the sense of pressing, crowding or tormenting. Used literally twice of Balaam's donkey in Nu 22:25 "When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she **pressed** herself to the wall and **pressed** Balaam's foot against the wall, so he struck her again." "Hold the door shut" in 1 Ki 6:32. Lachats is used repeatedly in the dark days of Judges (lasted some 1200 years!) when Israel would be oppressed by some pagan enemy and would cry out to God for deliverance. The only problem was they kept falling back into sin after a period of rest! Sounds too familiar to my life sometimes!

The **Septuagint** translates **lachats** in Ex 3:9 with **thlibo** which literally means to press, squeeze, crush, squash, hem in and then to be narrow.

**Walter Kaiser** - The word finds its most important usage in the realm of ethical theology. Israelites were not to oppress foreigners or strangers (Ex 22:21; Ex 23:9), for they once had been strangers in Egypt, that great oppressor. Oppressive treatment was strictly forbidden to all and to Israel in particular. Israel experienced a whole wave of oppressors during the period of the judges (Jdg 1:34; Jdg 2:18; Jdg 4:3; Jdg 6:9; Jdg 10:12; 1 Sa 10:18). But the Lord sent deliverers in each situation. Later he sent oppressors, (the king of Syria and others; 2 Ki 13:4, 22) against Israel on account of sin (Amos 6:14). Other nations will face their oppressors (Isa 19:20), too. But God always hears the cry for mercy and deliverance, and he will then fight daily against

those oppressors (Ps 56:1) (TWOT)

**Lachats** (verb) - 19x in 18v - afflict(1), forced(1), hold the shut(1), oppress(2), oppressed(6), oppresses(1), oppressing(2), oppressors(3), pressed(2). Ex 3:9; Ex 22:21; Ex 23:9; Num. 22:25; Jdg. 1:34; Jdg. 2:18; Jdg. 4:3; Jdg. 6:9; Jdg 10:12; 1 Sa 10:18; 2 Ki. 6:32; 2 Ki. 13:4; 2 Ki. 13:22; Ps. 56:1; Ps. 106:42; Isa. 19:20; Jer. 30:20; Amos 6:14

**Exodus 3:10 "Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt."**

- 1Sa 12:6 Ps 77:20 103:6,7 105:26 Isa 63:11,12 Ho 12:13 Mic 6:4 Ac 7:34,36

## MOSES CALLED TO BE THE DELIVERER

**Therefore, come now** - God is giving Moses an invitation to join Him in His work, in this case the work of deliverance (see notes above on [experiencing God](#))

**And I will send you to Pharaoh** - God's calling includes God's enabling. God would **send** him, but of course he still must go (God's sovereignty, man's response/responsibility).

**NET Note** - These instructions for Moses are based on the preceding revelation made to him. The deliverance of Israel was to be God's work—hence, "I will send you." When God commissioned people, often using the verb "to send," it indicated that they went with his backing, his power, and his authority. Moses could not have brought Israel out without this. To name this incident a commissioning, then, means that the authority came from God to do the work (compare John 3:2+).

**So that** - Term of purpose. God does not leave Moses in the dark and as we have seen Moses already had some inkling that he was to be a deliverer of His people Israel. Stephen says "And he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him, but they did not understand.(Acts 7:25+)

**You may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt-** Note the phrase **you may bring...out** which parallels God's declaration in Ex 3:8 that He would **deliver them** (see [note](#) there). Notice also God's use of the personal possessive pronoun "My" regarding the Hebrews. God says they are **My people**. Recall that **sons of Israel** is used as a synonym for the nation of Israel.

**Exodus 3:11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?"**

- Ex 4:10-13 6:12 1Sa 18:18 2Sa 7:18 1Ki 3:7,9 Isa 6:5-8 Jer 1:6 Ac 7:23-25 2Co 2:16 3:5

## MOSES EXPRESSES INADEQUACY WHO AM I?

He questioned his own identity and worthiness.

**But** - Term of contrast. Not a good "but!" Instead of saying like Isaiah said "Here I am Lord, send me," (Isa 6:8) he begins to show some [hesitation](#).

**Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?-** In one sense this might speak of Moses' humility, but in another sense might be an expression of his reticence to take on this overwhelming task. He is expressing his inadequacy to fulfill God's purpose. The point is that if God called Moses, God would be his adequacy. It reminds us of Paul's words in Php 4:13+ "I can do all things through Him Who strengthens ([endunamoo](#)) me." Notice we have a responsibility ("I CAN DO") but God supplies the supernatural power by His Spirit ("THROUGH HIM").

**Deffinbaugh** - Moses, we are told in Scripture, was the "meekest man on the face of the earth" (Num. 12:3). To the degree that Moses' question reveals true humility, it is legitimate. But in this instance, I fear that his humility is out of bounds. The issue here is not **who** Moses is, but **whose** he is. God has sent him, and it is God who will be with him. Moses' authority is based upon his divine call and the divine presence with him as he goes (Exod. 3:12). ([Sermon](#))

**NET** - When he was younger, Moses was confident and impulsive, but now that he is older the greatness of the task makes him unsure. The remainder of this chapter and the next chapter record the four difficulties of Moses and how the LORD answers them (Ex 3:11–12, Ex 3:13–22; then Ex 4:1–9; and finally Ex 4:10–17)

**NET on that I should go** - The imperfect tense  $\text{לָלֶךְ}$  ('elekh) carries the modal nuance of obligatory imperfect, i.e., "that I should go." Moses at this point is overwhelmed with the task of representing God, and with his personal insufficiency, and so in honest humility questions the choice.

Moses needed to read some of Paul's other teaching -

By the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me. (1 Cor 15:10 $\pm$ )

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. 10 Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong. (2 Cor 12:9-10 $\pm$ )

Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, 6 Who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. (2 Cor 3:5-6 $\pm$ )

**THOUGHT** - God is long-suffering. The Lord answered all of Moses' objections (see Ex 4:10-13+) and gave one assurance after another to encourage him. Moses said, "**I am not!**" and God replied, "**I AM!**" Faith lays hold of what (Who) God is and obeys what God says. **Faith** sees the opportunities while **unbelief** sees the obstacles. Are you arguing with God about something He is inviting you to join Him in doing?

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**J. Oswald Sanders** remarks "His inventory of disqualifications covered lack of capability (Ex 3:11), lack of message (Ex 3:13), lack of authority (Ex 4:1), lack of eloquence (Ex 4:10), lack of special adaptation (Ex 4:13), lack of previous success (Ex 5:23), and lack of previous acceptance (Ex 6:12). A more complete list of disabilities would be difficult to conjure up. But instead of pleasing God, his seeming humility and reluctance stirred His anger. "The anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses" (Ex 4:14). In point of fact, the excuses Moses advanced to show his incapacity were the very reasons for God's selection of him for the task." (Quoted by William MacDonald - Believer's Bible Commentary)

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**Deffinbaugh** - I find many of us seek to avoid immediately acting on the commands of God, excusing this by our "lack of information, knowledge, or training." How many people "want to think it over," or "pray about it," when in reality they are reluctant to obey God's leading? How many have excused themselves because they have not gone to seminary or Bible college? Very often, these are merely a smoke-screen for unbelief. We are never ready when we act on our own, but we are always ready when God says, "Go!" ([Sermon](#))

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**Exodus 3:12** And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."

- **Certainly** - Ex 4:12,15 Ge 15:1 31:3 De 31:23 Jos 1:5 Isa 41:10 43:2 Mt 28:20 Mk 16:20 Ac 11:21 Ro 8:31 Heb 13:5
- **sign** - Ex 4:1-9 Ge 15:8 Jud 6:17,21,36-40 7:11,13,14 Ps 86:17 Isa 7:14 Isa 37:30 Jer 43:9,10 51:63,64
- **you shall** - Ex 19:1-40:38 Lev 1:1-27:34 Nu 1:1-10:36

## **GOD'S PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE**

### **THE SIGN - WORSHIP AT SINAI**

**John Piper** - God called Moses and commissioned him to go to Egypt and bring his people out of bondage. Moses is frightened at this prospect and raises the objection that he is not the person to do this. God responds by saying, "I will be with you"

**And He said, "Certainly I will be with you** - Moses had asked "**Who am I?**" God could have said you are an shepherd. You are a nobody. You are in a desert wilderness speaking to sheep. God does not tell him those things or anything about who he is. It is not about Moses. It is about God. It is not about who Moses is, but about Who God is! And God promises His presence. We are nothing without Him. Moses was nothing without Him. But with Him we are more than conquerors in Christ. We are able, but only because He is able. We are adequate, but only because He is with us, for He is our adequacy. So put your name in the blank if God is asking

you to do something you do not feel you can do or really would rather not do -- "\_\_\_\_\_ (your name), I will be with you!"

God promises His presence, just as He does to all of His children declaring "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU." (Heb 13:5<sup>±</sup>) (There are 5 negatives in the Greek -- guess what? God's presence with you is guaranteed now and forever!)

Take a moment now and play this oldie but goodie - [I Will Be With You](#) (for that's Who "I Am"!!!) Listen to the words. Let them speak to your heart dearly beloved of God! Ask His Spirit to minister this truth of His presence to your deepest innermost desires and needs!!! He will!

As **Spurgeon** says "What more does Moses need? He said, "Who am I?" This showed his weakness. God said, "Never mind who you are. Certainly I will be with you." Here was strength enough for him."

**NET on certainly** - The particle כִּי (ki) has the asseverative use here, "surely, indeed," which is frequently found with oaths. The imperfect tense יִהְיֶה ('ehyeh) could be rendered as the future tense, "I will be" or the present tense "I am" with you. The future makes the better sense in this case, since the subject matter is the future mission. Here is the introduction of the main motif of the commission, which will be the explanation of the divine name. It will make little difference who the servant is or what that servant's abilities might be, if God is present. The mention of God's presence is not a simple catch-phrase; it represents abundant provisions to the believer

**And this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you-** A sign points to something, and in case the fact that Moses was sent by God.

**NET** - In view of Moses' hesitancy, a sign is necessary to support the promise. A sign is often an unusual or miraculous event that introduces, authenticates, or illustrates the message. In this passage the sign is a confirming one, i.e., when Israel worships at the mountain that will be the proof that God delivered them from Egypt. Thus, the purpose of the exodus that makes possible the worship will be to prove that it was God who brought it about. In the meantime, Moses will have to trust in Yahweh.

**When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain** - Recall this dialogue is taking place on Mount Horeb (Mount Sinai). Where Moses first receives his call is where he will be fully authenticated before the nation of Israel.

**John Hannah** - The purpose of the deliverance was that Israel might "**worship God.**" This purpose is stated frequently in Exodus (4:23; 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3, 7-8, 11, 24, 26; 12:31). The Hebrew word for "worship" is the same word for "to be a slave" ('ābad). Israel had been slaves ('ăbōdīm) of Egypt (6:6), and was in slavery ('ăbōdâh, 2:23) in Egypt ("the land of slavery," lit., "the house of slaves," bêt 'ăbādm, 13:3, 14; 20:2). Having served as slaves to the Egyptians, Israel was now to serve the Lord, worshiping Him as His subjects. (BKC)

**NET on worship** - The verb תַּעֲבֹדוּ (ta'avdu, "you will serve") is one of the foremost words for worship in the Torah. Keeping the commandments and serving Yahweh usually sum up the life of faith; the true worshiper seeks to obey him. The highest title anyone can have in the OT is "the servant of Yahweh." The verb here could be rendered interpretively as "worship," but it is better to keep it to the basic idea of serving because that emphasizes an important aspect of worship, and it highlights the change from Israel's serving Egypt, which has been prominent in the earlier chapters. The words "and they" are supplied to clarify for English readers that the subject of the verb is plural (Moses and the people), unlike the other second person forms in vv. 10 and 12, which are singular. This sign is also a promise from God—"you will serve God on this mountain." It is given to Moses here as a goal, but a goal already achieved because it was a sign from God. Leading Israel out of Egypt would not be completed until they came to this mountain and served God. God does not give Moses details of what will take place on the road to Sinai, but he does give him the goal and glimpses of the defeat of Pharaoh. The rest will require Moses and the people to trust in this God who had a plan and who had the power to carry it out.

**Exodus 3:13 Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?"**

BGT Exodus 3:13 κα ε πεν Μωυς ς πρ ς τ ν θε ν δο γ λε σομαι πρ ς το ς υ ο ς Ισραηλ κα ρ πρ ς α το ς θε ς τ ν πατ ρων μ ν π σταλκ ν με πρ ς μ ς ρωτ σου σ ν με τ νομα α τ τ ρ πρ ς α το ς

NEB Then Moses said to God, 'If I go to the Israelites and tell them that the God of their forefathers has sent me to them, and they ask me his name, what shall I say?'

NET Exodus 3:13 Moses said to God, "If I go to the Israelites and tell them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?'— what should I say to them?"



LXE Exodus 3:13 And Moses said to God, Behold, I shall go forth to the children of Israel, and shall say to them, The God of our fathers has sent me to you; and they will ask me, What is his name? What shall I say to them?

NLT Exodus 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?"

KJV Exodus 3:13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?

ESV Exodus 3:13 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?"

NIV Exodus 3:13 Moses said to God, "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?"

ASV Exodus 3:13 And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? What shall I say unto them?

CSB Exodus 3:13 Then Moses asked God, "If 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?' what should I tell them?"

NKJ Exodus 3:13 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

NRS Exodus 3:13 But Moses said to God, "If I come 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 shall I say to them?"

YLT Exodus 3:13 And Moses saith unto God, 'Lo, I am coming unto the sons of Israel, and have said to them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you, and they have said to me, What is His name? what do I say unto them?'

- **What is His name** - Ex 3:14 15:3 Ge 32:29 Jud 13:6,17 Pr 30:4 Isa 7:14 9:6 Jer 23:6 Mt 1:21,23

## **MOSES' PROTESTS HE LACKS AUTHORITY**

**Janzen** - God's reassurance and God's promise of a sign have apparently succeeded in shifting Moses' preoccupation from his own inadequacy—at least for the time being—to the problems of the potential task before him. In the remainder of chapter 3, God elaborates upon his order to Moses (3:10) as to content, approach, and result. (BCBC-Ex)

**Then Moses said to God, "Behold,** - "The particle הִנֵּה ([hinneh](#)) in this clause introduces the foundation for what comes later—the question. Moses is saying, "Suppose I do all this and they ask this question—what should I say?"(NET)

**I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.'**- In other words Moses accepts that he will go to the **sons of Israel**.

What is His name?...“What can He do?”

**Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?'**- Piper writes that "And God's response is one of the most important revelations that has ever been given to man." Moses' question implies that he needs to know that he has the authority to deliver Israel.

**Cassuto** - "According to the conception prevailing in the ancient East, the designation of an entity was to be equated, as it were, with its existence: whatever is without an appellation does not exist, but whatever has a denomination has existence." (A Commentary on the Book of Exodus)

**Janzen** - God has introduced himself to Moses as the God of your father(s) (Ex 3:6). This appears insufficient to Moses as a basis for announcing and confirming his mission before Israel. He lacks an adequate name for God. A **name** means more than a verbal label. For biblical people, a name often embraces the whole reality that it covers. Thus the Name Commandment, You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD, is directed against the abuse of religion, of everything covered by the LORD's name

(Ex 20:7). Important changes in a person's life are appropriately marked by a change of name, such as Abram to Abraham (Ge 17:5), Jacob to Israel (Ge 32:28), or Simon to Peter (Matt. 16:17–18). **Moses' request for an adequate name for God is a request for adequate knowledge of God relating to the task ahead.** How will this God, even if known to the ancestors (lit., fathers) in certain ways and contexts, be adequate to a confrontation with Pharaoh? Durham is correct, if not literal, when he renders, *What is his name?* as "*What can he do?*" (35). One might also say, "*What is his character?*" (Ibid)

**Janzen** adds this note on **NAME** - Throughout the Bible, a name often embraces the very essence or character of its bearer. Name changes are appropriate when significant identity changes occur, as from Jacob to Israel (Ge 32:22–32), or Simon to Peter (Mt. 16:13–20). God reveals to Moses his new name, **Yahweh/the LORD**, a name that shall replace the older names, such as **God** ('Elohim/Elohim; Ex 3:6) of the/your father(s) and God Almighty ('El Šadday/Shaddai; Ex 6:3). This means nothing less than that God will now reveal a new core understanding of His identity or character (Ex 3:1–15; 6:2–8). Since the name essentially stands for God, various attributes of God can be associated with it, such as power (Ex 9:16), blessing (Ex 20:24), goodness (Ex 33:19), or jealousy (Ex 34:14). God's name (identity, character) is revealed to Israel for specific purposes, especially to become God's people in covenant.

Regarding the verb **say** "The imperfect tense here has a deliberative nuance ("should"), for Moses is wondering what would be best to say when the Israelites want proof of the calling." (NET)

**NET Note** - There has been considerable debate about the name of Yahweh in the Pentateuch, primarily because of theories that have maintained that the name Yahweh was not known in antiquity (see also 6:3 and notes there). The argument of this whole section nullifies that view. The idea that God's name was revealed only here raises the question of what he was called earlier. The word "God" is not a name. "El Shaddai" is used only a few times in Genesis. But Israel would not have had a nameless deity—especially since Genesis says that from the very beginning people were making proclamation of the name of Yahweh (Gen 4:26; 12:8). It is possible that they did not always need a name if they were convinced that only he existed and there was no other God. But probably what Moses was anticipating was the Israelites' wanting to be sure that Moses came with a message from their God, and that some sign could prove it. They would have known his name (Yahweh), and they would have known the ways that he had manifested himself. It would do no good for Moses to come with a new name for God, for that would be like introducing them to a new God. That would in no way authenticate to them Moses' call, only confuse; after all, they would not be expecting a new name—they had been praying to their covenant God all along. They would want to be sure that their covenant God actually had sent Moses. To satisfy the Israelites Moses would have had to have been familiar with the name Yahweh—as they were—and know that he appeared to individuals. They would also want to know if Yahweh had sent Moses, how this was going to work in their deliverance, because they had been crying to him for deliverance. As it turned out, the Israelites had less problem with this than Moses anticipated—they were delighted when he came. It is likely that much of this concern was Moses' own need for assurance that this was indeed the God of the fathers and that the promised deliverance was now to take place.

**Spurgeon on what shall I say to them** - God's servants report God's words. Words spoken on your own account, without reference to your Lord, will fall to the ground. When the footman goes to the door to answer a caller, he asks his master what he has to say, and he repeats what his master tells him. You and I are waiting-servants in the house of God, and we are to report what our God would have us speak. The Lord gives the soul-saving message, and clothes it with power: He gives it to a certain order of people, and under certain conditions. **has sent me to you."**

**Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"**

- **I AM has** - Ex 6:3 Job 11:7 Ps 68:4 90:2 Isa 44:6 Mt 18:20 28:20 Joh 8:58 2Co 1:20 Heb 13:8 Rev 1:4,8,17 4:8

## **I AM WHO I AM EXISTENT AND INVOLVED**

In this section God defines Himself, Who He is and what He is like. And in essence He gives Moses two names **I Am** and **"LORD"** (Jehovah/YHWH). He is the center of the story of redemption. Moses is His instrument.

**God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"** - MacArthur says it means "denotes "I am the One who is/will be....The significance in relation to "God of your fathers" is immediately discernible: He's the same God throughout the ages!" (MSB) "God is not simply asserting His existence; He is declaring **His involvement**: "I am with you, and nothing will ever change that about Me. It's just Who I Am!" (Ortlund)

**Wiersbe** - God explained that the name Jehovah is a dynamic name, based on the Hebrew verb "to be" or "to become." He is the self-existent One who always was, always is, and always will be, the faithful and dependable God who calls Himself "I AM." (Bible Exposition Commentary – Pentateuch)

**NET Note** - The verb form used here is הָיָה ('ehyeh), the Qal imperfect, first person common singular, of the verb הָיָה (haya, "to be"). It forms an excellent paronomasia with the name. So when God used the verb to express his name, he used this form saying, "I AM." When his people refer to him as Yahweh, which is the third person masculine singular form of the same verb, they say "he is." Some commentators argue for a future tense translation, "I will be who I will be," because the verb has an active quality about it, and the Israelites lived in the light of the promises for the future. They argue that "I AM" would be of little help to the Israelites in bondage. But a translation of "I will be" does not effectively do much more except restrict it to the future. The idea of the verb would certainly indicate that God is not bound by time, and while he is present ("I AM") he will always be present, even in the future, and so "I AM" would embrace that as well (see also Ruth 2:13; Ps 50:21; Hos 1:9). The Greek translation of the OT used a participle to capture the idea, and several times in the Gospels Jesus used the powerful "I am" with this significance (e.g., John 8:58). The point is that Yahweh is sovereignly independent of all creation and that his presence guarantees the fulfillment of the covenant (cf. Isa 41:4; 42:6, 8; 43:10–11; 44:6; 45:5–7). Others argue for a causative Hiphil translation of "I will cause to be," but nowhere in the Bible does this verb appear in Hiphil or Piel. A good summary of the views can be found in G. H. Parke-Taylor, *Yahweh, the Divine Name in the Bible*. See among the many articles: B. Beitzel, "Exodus 3:14 and the Divine Name: A Case of Biblical Paronomasia," *TJ* 1 (1980): 5–20; C. D. Isbell, "The Divine Name ehyeh as a Symbol of Presence in Israelite Tradition," *HAR* 2 (1978): 101–18; J. G. Janzen, "What's in a Name? Yahweh in Exodus 3 and the Wider Biblical Context," *Int* 33 (1979): 227–39; J. R. Lundbom, "God's Use of the Idem per Idem to Terminate Debate," *HTR* 71 (1978): 193–201; A. R. Millard, "Yw and Yhw Names," *VT* 30 (1980): 208–12; and R. Youngblood, "[A New Occurrence of the Divine Name 'I AM.'](#)" *JETS* 15 (1972): 144–52.

**And He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you'"**- Piper writes "In other words, the great, central, Biblical name of Yahweh is explicitly rooted by God himself in the phrase "I am who I am". Tell them, the one who simply and absolutely is has sent you. Tell them that the essential thing about me is that I am....And the one who never had a beginning, but always was and is and will be, defines all things. Whether we want him to be there or not, he is there. We do not negotiate what we want for reality. God defines reality. When we come into existence, we stand before a God who made us and owns us. We have absolutely no choice in this matter. We do not choose to be. And when we are, we do not choose that God be. No ranting and raving, no sophisticated doubt or skepticism, has any effect on the existence of God. He simply and absolutely is." (John Calvin)

"When God identified Himself as I AM WHO I AM, He stated that, no matter when or where, He is there. It is similar to the New Testament expression in Revelation 1:8, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.'" This is true of Him for all time, but it would have been especially appropriate for a message in Moses' day to a people in slavery and who could see no way out. I AM was promising to free them, and they could count on Him!" (Gotquestions)

**Ray Ortlund** on God's Name "I Am" - Moses' stubborn reluctance to accept God's call makes it obvious whose presence will really make the difference for God's people!

**J Ligon Duncan** has an interesting view on this section - as we look at this passage, as tempting as it is and as you often hear this passage set forth, and I don't say that it's illegitimate, you often hear this passage as a passage about Moses, that it's a passage that tells you about this man of God that the Lord is choosing, how humble he was, how self effacing he was, etc, etc. But as you look at this passage closely, it's quite clear, that it's all about God. The passage is not about Moses, it's about God. It's not about Moses' struggles, it's about God, and what He is, and what He's about to do for His people

"I am" statements of Jesus:

- John 6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.
- John 8:12 Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life."
- John 10:9 "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.
- John 10:11 "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.
- John 11:25-26 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?"
- John 14:6 Jesus \*said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

- John 15:5 "I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.
- John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

#### Related Resource:

- Discussion of [Jehovah and Jesus](#)

I love J Ligon Duncan's prayer as he begins his message on Exodus 3:13-22:

O Lord, sanctify us by Your truth. Your word is truth. Reveal Yourself to us, cause our hearts to be lifted up with joy and to marvel at this glorious, biblical presentation of who you are for us. We pray that as we contemplate you and all your benefits that we would be humbled, encouraged, built up, rooted, strengthened, equipped to serve, moved to praise. We ask, oh God, that you would open our eyes to see Your truth and to see yourself. In Jesus' name, Amen.

#### Immutable authority

- I. Moses on entering upon a great mission naturally inquires the CONDITIONS upon which he proceeds.
- II. In the REVELATION made to Moses, "I AM hath sent me unto you," we have being distinguished from manifestation. "I AM" is the summary of Being.
- III. The ANSWER which Moses received from Almighty God was an immutable authority for the greatest of missions. Only let us be sure that we are doing God's errand, and Pharaoh and Caesar, and all names of material power, will fall before us, never again to rise. (J. Parker, D. D.)

#### The Divine name

- I. As only revealed by the Divine being Himself.
- II. As only partially understood by the grandest intellects.
- III. AS SUFFICIENTLY COMPREHENDED FOR THE PRACTICAL SERVICE OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. We know enough of God to give strength, responsibility, hope, to our Christian work and life. (J. S. Exell, M. A.)

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The name of the Lord

The answer is twofold. It repeats the idea that He is the God of their father; but it connects that with the idea that He is Jehovah.

I. THE ETERNAL NAME. "God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. Say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." The word is that from which Jehovah comes. It expresses the idea of existence. In announcing Himself by this name the Divine Being excludes all notion of any commencement or termination of His existence, or that He is indebted for it to any other. It is self-existence, necessary existence; His non-existence is an impossibility and cannot be entertained. Jesus Christ "the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever." "The Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last." "He who was, and is, and is to come." Perhaps the most helpful conception we have of permanence is given by the spectacle of the lofty mountains which stand unmoved and unchanged for centuries and millenniums. We call them the everlasting hills. But He was before the mountains, and will continue His undying existence when they have disappeared in the final dissolution.

II. THE ABIDING RELATIONSHIP. "The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." The two names are closely connected, because He could not be the one God of successive generations if He were not Jehovah--the Everlasting.

1. You will mark that He is not only Jehovah, God in Himself, as He cannot but be; He is the God of the persons here mentioned. Think what a great thing it is that He should be the God of any one! Think what a blessedness and a glory it is to have His

almightiness on your side; His love your resting-place; His throne your refuge in distress; His unchanging [Faithfulness](#) your abiding confidence.

2. Next, observe that He was the God of each of the persons named. God knows how to be the God of all His people however they differ from each other in those subtle shades of character which, like the features of the face, distinguish one man from another.

3. Then observe, further, He was the God of their successive generations. This thought is valuable in connection with the idea that God still has a people. The spiritual seed of Abraham. Also that the children of godly parents should value the blessing of having their father's God. Fear to forfeit it.

4. Nor must we overlook the important use the Great Teacher made of the statement in our text. Argument for resurrection and immortality in Mat 22:24-32.

III. THE PERMANENT NAME. God's eternity contrasts with our brief life; warrants our confidence in Him; suggests the blessedness of those who are interested in Him. (John Rawlinson.)

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## God's name of Himself

### I. Personality--"I."

1. We attach three ideas to personality.
  - (1) Essential distinctness.
  - (2) Individual consciousness.
  - (3) Spontaneity.
2. God's personality--
  - (1) Explains the unity of the universe.
  - (2) Meets the aspirations of human nature.

### II. Self-existence--"I AM."

1. The independent amidst dependent beings.
2. The Unchangeable amidst a changing universe.

### III. Un-searchableness--"I AM that I AM."

1. Mystery is essential to Deity.
  2. Mystery is a want of human nature. Stirs intellect, wakes wonder, inspires reverent awe of souls. (Homilist.)
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## God's memorial name

I. In this memorial name of God WE ARE TAUGHT HIS LOFTY EXISTENCE. "I AM that I AM" is a name synonymous in meaning with Jehovah. This name includes within its vast extent of signification all past, present and future existence and duration.

1. Self-existence is a Divine attribute.
2. Eternity necessarily follows from His self-existence.
3. His proprietorship springs from the fact of His existence.

II. THE REVELATION OF THIS MEMORIAL NAME TO MOSES HAD PURPOSE, It was a crisis in the history of Moses, and also of that of Israel in Egypt.

1. One purpose it served was to strengthen Moses in executing his work.
  2. Another purpose was to check idolatrous practices.
  3. It taught Moses the safety of the people.
  4. The revelation of this name in connection with the people's ancestry shows that they were the heirs of immortality.
  5. The revelation of this name indicated victory. (J. H. Hill.)
- 

## Allen Ross on "I AM"

Several times in the Gospels Jesus made the amazing claim to be the "I AM" of the Old Testament. In the 8th chapter of John He was debating with the Jewish leaders over identity. They claimed to be of their father Abraham, but He said they were of their father the devil (Jn 8:44). Towards the end of this confrontation, Jesus said that Abraham rejoiced to see His day (Jn 8:56). The Jewish leaders pointed out that Jesus was not yet fifty years old, and so how could He have seen Abraham. That is when He answered, "Before Abraham was, I AM." At this they picked up stones to stone Him, for they knew what He was claiming.

Likewise in the Garden of Gethsemane when they came to arrest Jesus, Jesus said to them, I AM" — and they all drew back and

fell to the ground (John 18:6,7). It was not the simple boldness of identifying Himself as the one they sought that caused this, but the claim He was making, and had been making throughout His life.

In John 10:30 Jesus declared, **'I and the Father are one.'** And there also they took up stones to kill Him.

In the Old Testament God revealed Himself to Moses as **'I AM that I AM'** (Exod. 3:13-16:14); and that name was then put into the third person form to be used by the people of God: **"Yahweh."** Throughout the Old Testament this name **"Yahweh"** revealed the Lord God as the one who was sovereignly independent of all creation. And as the Lord Himself used the name, it came to express His complete provision for all of the needs of the people: **I AM—your healer, your rock, your redeemer, your sustainer, etc.** In Isaiah 41:4 He revealed Himself as the first and the last, an expression that Jesus used to describe Himself in the Revelation (Rev 1:8+) to John (see again Isaiah 44:6). In fact, throughout the Gospel of John Jesus followed this Old Testament use of the "I AM": I am the bread of life (John 6:32-35); I am the light of the world (John 8:12-20); I am the door (John 10:7-10); I am the good shepherd (John 10:11-16); I am the resurrection and the life (John 11:25-27); I am the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6); and I am the vine (John 15:1-8). These are largely statements that only God could make; and the use of "I am" in each underscores that connection.

Jesus was claiming to be divine, and that is why they killed Him. People today often say that Jesus never really claimed to be God. But the leaders crucified Him, and the charge was blasphemy. The people of His day surely understood the claim. He was in fact making that claim, because He was, and is, in fact, the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel.

**If the Lord Jesus Christ is the great I AM, then it was He, in a pre-incarnate appearance, who appeared to Moses at the burning bush as "I AM."** It was He in a pre-incarnate appearance who met with Moses on Mount Sinai as a man speaks to a friend, who put Moses in the cleft of the rock as He passed by, who caused Moses' face to shine with His glory (compare the transfiguration in Matthew 17). It was He whom the Israelites saw when they "ate with God" the peace offering on the slopes of Sinai (Exod. 24:10). What they saw was a glimpse of the God of glory, the expanse that was the base of His throne, something of what Isaiah saw (Isaiah 6), or Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1), or John on Patmos (Rev. 1).

And if our Lord is the I AM of the Old Testament, then Old Testament references to "Yahweh" could just as easily refer to Him as to the Father. That is why the New Testament writers often quote Old Testament passages that refer to Yahweh and interpret them to mean Christ. Hebrews 1 is an explanation of who Jesus truly was and is. And after rehearsing the Old Testament passages that predicted His messianic kingship, the writer refers to Him as the Creator by applying Psalm 102 to Jesus: "In the beginning, O Yahweh, you laid the foundations of the earth." The passage goes on to say that they will all wear out, but our Lord remains the same forever.

The writers came to understand that there were three persons in the Godhead, a trinity. One God, but three persons. If the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, is in truth the second person of the trinity, if the title "Son of God" means more than a title for a king, then we should not be surprised at all to see Him revealed in the Old Testament Scriptures (see Proverbs 30:4, "What is His [God's] name, and what is His Son's name?"). After all, the second person of the trinity is the one who reveals the Godhead to all of mankind. So before the Son of God entered the human race in Bethlehem, He did in fact come to earth in various ways in the Old Testament. And He did reveal Himself as the "I AM," as "Yahweh," in the Old Testament. Such an identity for Jesus ought to inspire greater devotion from us, and greater trust as well, for He is the One who can provide all our needs, not only spiritual but physical as well.

JESUS IS JEHOVAH (Yahweh)		
OF JEHOVAH	Mutual Title or Act	OF JESUS
Isa 40:28	Creator	John 1:3
Isa 45:22, 43:11	Savior	John 4:42
1Sam 2:6	Raise Dead	John 5:21
Joel 3:12	Judge	John 5:27, cf Mt 25:31-46
Isa 60:19-20	Light	John 8:12
Exodus 3:14	I Am	John 8:58, 18:5-6
Ps 23:1	Shepherd	John 10:11

Isa 42:8, 48:11	Glory of God	John 17:1,5
Isa 41:4, 44:6	First and Last	Rev 1:17, 2:8
Hosea 13:14	Redeemer	Rev 5:9
Isa 62:5, Hos 2:16	Bridegroom	Rev 21:2, cf Mt 25:1ff
Ps 18:2	Rock	1Cor 10:4
Jer 31:34	Forgiver of sins	Mark 2:7, 10
Ps 148:2	Worshiped by Angels	Heb 1:6
Throughout OT	Addressed in Prayer	Acts 7:59
Ps 148:5	Creator of Angels	Col 1:16
Isa 45:23	Confessed as Lord	Phil 2:11

**Question: [What is the meaning of I AM WHO I AM in Exodus 3:14?](#)**

**Answer:** God appeared to Moses in the burning bush and told him to go to Egypt to lead the Israelites out of slavery. In response, Moses said to God, "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?" (Exodus 3:13).

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:14).

The phrase translated "I am who I am" in Hebrew is ehyeh asher ehyeh. The word ehyeh is the first person common singular of the verb to be. It would be used in any number of normal situations: "I am watching the sheep," "I am walking on the road," or "I am his father." However, when used as a stand-alone description, I AM is the ultimate statement of self-sufficiency, self-existence, and immediate presence. God's existence is not contingent upon anyone else. His plans are not contingent upon any circumstances. He promises that He will be what He will be; that is, He will be the eternally constant God. He stands, ever-present and unchangeable, completely sufficient in Himself to do what He wills to do and to accomplish what He wills to accomplish.

When God identified Himself as I AM WHO I AM, He stated that, no matter when or where, He is there. It is similar to the New Testament expression in Revelation 1:8, "'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.'" This is true of Him for all time, but it would have been especially appropriate for a message in Moses' day to a people in slavery and who could see no way out. I AM was promising to free them, and they could count on Him!

Moses and Aaron delivered the message to Pharaoh: "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Let my people go, so that they may hold a festival to me in the wilderness.'" Pharaoh replied, "Who is the LORD, that I should obey him and let Israel go? I do not know the LORD and I will not let Israel go" (Exodus 5:1-2).

Pharaoh stood in opposition to the LORD. Pharaoh was not willing to concede that there was a power higher than himself. He was not willing to yield his plans to the One who was all-powerful and all-sufficient. In essence, Pharaoh was saying "I am who I am, and therefore I will not yield to another." This seems to be the besetting sin of humanity. God is "The Great I AM," but we continually want to be our own "I AM." We make plans and determine that we will fulfill them no matter what. Even evidence to the contrary does not readily convince us of our weakness and contingency.

One of Frank Sinatra's signature songs was "[I Did It My Way.](#)" The final lines of the song, written by Paul Anka, express a common refrain of mankind:

For what is a man, what has he got?  
 If not himself, then he has naught  
 To say the things he truly feels  
 And not the words of one who kneels  
 The record shows I took the blows  
 And did it my way.

Likewise, the final stanza of the poem "[Invictus](#)" by William Ernest Henley expresses much the same sentiment:

It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.

God is the only One who can accurately describe Himself as "I AM." Jesus claimed the title I AM for Himself in John 8:58. **For the rest of us, "I am" is a false claim to self-sufficiency. We are not eternally constant or ever-present.** Our only hope is to abandon claims of our own sovereignty and sufficiency and cast ourselves upon the mercy of I AM. (Source - Recommended site - [Gotquestions](#) )

#### Related Resources:

- [What are the seven I AM statements in the Gospel of John?](#)
- [What did Jesus mean when He said 'I AM'?](#)

**Exodus 3:15 God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons 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 this is My memorial-name to all generations.**

NEB And God said further, 'You must tell the Israelites this, that it is Jehovah the God of their forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, who has sent you to them. This is my name for ever; this is my title in every generation.

BGT Exodus 3:15 κα ε πεν θε ς π λιν π ρ ς Μωυ ς ο τω ς ρ ε ς το ς υ ο ς Ισραηλ κ ριο ς θε ς τ ν πατ ρων μ ν θε ς Αβρααμ κα θε ς Ισαακ κα θε ς Ιακωβ π σταλκ ν με π ρ ς μ ς το τ μο σπιν νομα α νιον κα μνημ συνον γενε ν γενεα ς

NET Exodus 3:15 God also said to Moses, "You must say this 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, and this is my memorial from generation to generation.'

LXE Exodus 3:15 And God said again to Moses, Thus shalt thou say to the sons of Israel, The Lord God of our fathers, the God of Abraam, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, has sent me to you: this is my name for ever, and my memorial to generations of generations.

NLT Exodus 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.

KJV Exodus 3:15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

ESV Exodus 3:15 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.

NIV Exodus 3:15 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.

ASV Exodus 3:15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

CSB Exodus 3:15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the Israelites: Yahweh, 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; this is how I am to be remembered in every generation.

NKJ Exodus 3:15 Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD 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 this is My memorial to all generations.'

NRS Exodus 3:15 God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say 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, and this my title for all generations.

YLT Exodus 3:15 And God saith again unto Moses, 'Thus dost thou say unto the sons of Israel, Jehovah, God of your fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you; this is My name -- to the age, and this My memorial, to generation -- generation.

- **The LORD** - Ex 3:6 4:5 Ge 17:7,8 De 1:11,35 4:1 2Ch 28:9 Mt 22:32 Ac 7:32
- **This is My name forever**, -Ps 72:17,19 135:13 145:1,2 Isa 9:6 63:12
- **this is My memorial-name** - Ps 102:12 Ho 12:5 Mic 4:5 Mal 3:6 Heb 13:8

## יהוה YHWH - JEHOVAH

**YHWH** is known as the "**tetragrammaton**." (See [note](#)) YHWH is the most common name for God in the Old Testament where it appears over 6800 times. Elohim (a plural noun) is also widely used, appearing over 2300 times. "These letters are the same as those in the Hebrew word '**he is**' corresponding to the 'I am' of the previous verse....By this name God personally identifies himself as the covenant King of Israel who has committed himself to fulfil his promises to them" (Mackay)

**God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD (Jehovah/YHWH), the God (Elohim) of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you -** What is the "key word" in this passage? It is clearly God, Whose Name is the **LORD, Jehovah or YHWH**. He is always the central figure in redemption whether of Israel from bondage in Egypt to give them a land or believers today from bondage to [Sin](#) to give us a life ([in Christ](#)). Notice that after God gives Him His Name we see the first of three missions God assigns to Moses - (1) First he is to go to the people of God, Israel, the sons of Israel. (2) Secondly he is to go to the elders. (3) Thirdly he is to go Pharaoh.

**NET Note on LORD** - "Yahweh," traditionally rendered "the LORD." First the verb "I AM" was used (v. 14) in place of the name to indicate its meaning and to remind Moses of God's promise to be with him (v. 12). Now in v. 15 the actual name is used for clear identification: "Yahweh ... has sent me." This is the name that the patriarchs invoked and proclaimed in the land of Canaan.

**This is My Name forever** - Yahweh [Elohim](#). Clearly this speaks of His attribute of [eternality](#) and in the context of the [Abrahamic covenant](#) speaks of His [faithfulness](#), yesterday and today and forever (Heb 13:8+). Jehovah is **forever faithful** to His covenant. The Hebrew word for **forever** is [olam](#) (Lxx = [aionios](#)) and is used in one of God's great Names, [El Olam, the Everlasting God](#) (Play Chris Tomlin's [Everlasting God](#)).

**THOUGHT** - If Jehovah is [eternally faithful](#) to His covenant, then for those of us who by grace through faith in Christ (Eph 2:8-9+) and [belief](#) in His [Gospel](#) have entered into the [New Covenant](#) in Jesus' blood (Lk 22:20+), this truth means we can rest confidently in Jehovah's covenant, knowing our salvation is secure and our fellowship is forever. If you think you can lose your salvation, then somehow you are thinking you are the one responsible for keeping your salvation, which is a distortion of the Biblical truth. No, God is [eternally faithful](#) to keep you for as Peter writes we "are protected ([present tense](#)) by the [power](#) of God (Whose power?) through faith for a [salvation](#) ready to [be revealed](#) in the last time. (1 Pe 1:5+). Jude adds "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." (Jude 1:24-25+) May these unchanging truths transform us and renew our mind (Ro 12:2+, cf Eph 4:23+, Col 3:10+). Even now you might consider taking a pause to ponder ([meditate on](#)) this truth and thank Jehovah that your salvation in Jesus is secure because of His [eternal faithfulness asking His Spirit to enable](#) you [to rest](#) in this truth, truth which (enabled by the same Spirit) should motivate you in love to pursue holiness (Heb 12:14+) with a passion to please our Father in Heaven. (Amen)

### Related Resources:

- [How can I have assurance of my salvation?](#)
- [What are some of the signs of genuine saving faith?](#)
- [How can I stop questioning my salvation?](#)

**And this is My memorial-name to all generations** - Literally this reads "this is My name -- to the age, and this My memorial, to generation -- generation." "The name would recall His acts of covenant fulfillment....Our need for a reminder is met in "This do in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:24-25)." Memory is a good thing when it comes to remembering Who God is because "Remembering this name will enable the Israelites to keep in mind the reality of what God is like and what he has undertaken to do. In this way they will be able to move forward in faith and obedience, trusting the One they know." (Mackay)

**J M English** - In the revelation of His "**memorial name** "Jehovah has emphasised the significance of memory. He is not an abstraction, a far-distant personality, even, but "the Father of Abraham, of Isaac and Jacob"--a historic God. (Biblical Illustrator)

(Ps 102:12) But You, O LORD, abide forever, And Your name to all generations.

**NET on memorial-name** (NET = "this is my memorial") - The words "**name**" and "**memorial**" are at the heart of the two parallel clauses that form a poetic pair. The Hebrew word "remembrance" is a poetical synonym for "name" (cf. Job 18:17; Ps 135:13; Prov 10:7; Isa 26:8) and conveys the idea that the nature or character of the person is to be remembered and praised (S. R. Driver, Exodus, 24).

**NET on all generations** (NET = "generation to generation" - The repetition of "generation" in this expression serves as a periphrasis for the superlative: "to the remotest generation"

**Memorial** (02143)(**zeker**) means to remember. A recognition of meritorious deeds in the past. Baker writes that " God has given His people many things as remembrances: Himself (Ps. 102:12); His name (Ex. 3:15; Hos. 12:5[6]); His works (Ps. 111:4); His goodness (Ps. 145:7); His holiness (Ps. 30:4[5]; 97:12); His deliverance of the Jews (Esth. 9:28). God also promises the remembrance of the righteous (Prov. 10:7) but often cuts off the remembrance of the wicked (Job 18:17; Ps. 34:16[17]; 109:15; Prov. 10:7); wicked nations (Ex. 17:14; Deut. 25:19; 32:26); and the dead (Eccl. 9:5; Isa. 26:14). In several instances of this word, it is used synonymously with šēm (8034), meaning name, because one's name invokes the memory (Ex. 3:15; Prov. 10:7; Hos. 12:5[6])."

**Zeker** - 23x in 23v - memorial-name(1), memory(12), mention(1), name(4), remembered(2), remembrance(2), renown(1). Exod. 3:15; Exod. 17:14; Deut. 25:19; Deut. 32:26; Est. 9:28; Job 18:17; Ps. 6:5; Ps. 9:6; Ps. 30:4; Ps. 34:16; Ps. 97:12; Ps. 102:12; Ps. 109:15; Ps. 111:4; Ps. 112:6; Ps. 135:13; Ps. 145:7; Prov. 10:7; Eccl. 9:5; Isa. 26:8; Isa. 26:14; Hos. 12:5; Hos. 14:7

#### Related Resource:

- Study of the Name [Jehovah](#)

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**Arthur** - When you feel discouraged, when you lack courage, when you think you can't do it ... can't handle it ... can't survive it ... then remember that "with God nothing is impossible." Remember that "I AM" is our Lord's memorial name to all generations, including yours and mine! He is everything and anything you will ever need. You can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens you; therefore discouragement never comes from God. (As Silver Refined)

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**Question:** "[What is YHWH? What is the tetragrammaton?](#)"

**Answer:** The ancient Hebrew language that the Old Testament was written in did not have vowels in its alphabet. In written form, ancient Hebrew was a consonant-only language. In the original Hebrew, God's name transliterates to YHWH (sometimes written in the older style as YHVH). This is known as the **tetragrammaton** (meaning "four letters"). Because of the lack of vowels, Bible scholars debate how the tetragrammaton YHWH was pronounced.

The **tetragrammaton** consists of four Hebrew letters: **yodh**, **he**, **waw**, and then **he** repeated. Some versions of the Bible translate the **tetragrammaton** as "**Yahweh**" or "**Jehovah**"; most translate it as "**LORD**" (all capital letters).

Contrary to what some believe, **Jehovah** is not the Divine Name revealed to Israel. The name Jehovah is a product of mixing different words and different alphabets of different languages. Due to a fear of accidentally taking God's name in vain (Leviticus 24:16), the Jews basically quit saying it out loud altogether. Instead, when reading Scripture aloud, the Jews substituted the **tetragrammaton** YHWH with the word **Adonai** ("Lord"). Even in the [Septuagint \(Lxx\)](#) (the Greek translation of the Old Testament), the translators substituted **kurios** ("Lord") for the Divine Name. Eventually, the vowels from **Adonai** ("Lord") or **Elohim** ("God") found their way in between the consonants of YHWH, thus forming YaHWeH. But this interpolation of vowels does not mean that was how God's name was originally pronounced. In fact, we aren't entirely sure if YHWH should have two syllables or three.

Any number of vowel sounds can be inserted within YHWH, and Jewish scholars are as uncertain of the real pronunciation as Christian scholars are. Jehovah is actually a much later (probably 16th-century) variant. The word Jehovah comes from a three-syllable version of YHWH, YeHoWeH. The Y was replaced with a J (although Hebrew does not even have a J sound) and the W with a V, plus the extra vowel in the middle, resulting in JeHoVaH. These vowels are the abbreviated forms of the imperfect tense, the participial form, and the perfect tense of the Hebrew being verb (English is)—thus the meaning of Jehovah could be understood as “He who will be, is, and has been.”

So, what is God's Name, and what does it mean? The most likely choice for how the tetragrammaton was pronounced is “YAH-way,” “YAH-weh,” or something similar. The name Yahweh refers to God's self-existence. Yahweh is linked to how God described Himself in Exodus 3:14, “God said to Moses, ‘I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” God's name is a reflection of His being. God is the only self-existent or self-sufficient Being. Only God has life in and of Himself. That is the essential meaning of the tetragrammaton, YHWH.

**Exodus 3:16 "Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt."**

NEB Go and assemble the elders of Israel and tell them that Jehovah the God of their forefathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to you and has said, “I have indeed turned my eyes towards you; I have marked all that has been done to you in Egypt

BGT Exodus 3:16 λθ ν ο ν συν γαγε τ ν γερουσ αν τ ν υ ν Ισραηλ κα ρε ς πρ ς α το ς κ ριο ς θε ς τ ν πατ ρων μ ν πτα μοι θε ς Αβρααμ κα θε ς Ισαακ κα θε ς Ιακωβ λ γων πισκοπ π σκεμμαι μ ς κα σα συμβ βηκεν μ ν ν Α γ πτ

NET Exodus 3:16 "Go and bring together the elders of Israel and tell them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, appeared to me— the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob— saying, "I have attended carefully to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt,

LXE Exodus 3:16 Go then and gather the elders of the children of Israel, and thou shalt say to them, The Lord God of our fathers has appeared to me, the God of Abraam, and God of Isaac, and God of Jacob, saying, I have surely looked upon you, and upon all the things which have happened to you in Egypt.

NLT Exodus 3:16 "Now go and call together all the elders of Israel. Tell them, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors-- the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob-- has appeared to me. He told me, "I have been watching closely, and I see how the Egyptians are treating you.

KJV Exodus 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:

ESV Exodus 3:16 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,

NIV Exodus 3:16 "Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers--the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob--appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt.

ASV Exodus 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, Jehovah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:

CSB Exodus 3:16 "Go and assemble the elders of Israel and say to them: Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to me and said: I have paid close attention to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt.

NKJ Exodus 3:16 "Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and seen what is done to you in Egypt;

NRS Exodus 3:16 Go and assemble the elders of Israel, and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying: I have given heed to you and to what has been done to you in Egypt.

YLT Exodus 3:16 'Go, and thou hast gathered the elders of Israel, and hast said unto them: Jehovah, God of your fathers, hath appeareth unto me, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, saying, I have certainly inspected you, and that which is done to you in Egypt;

NAB Exodus 3:16 "Go and assemble the elders of the Israelites, and tell them: The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me and said: I am concerned about you and about the way you are being treated in Egypt;

NJB Exodus 3:16 'Go, gather the elders of Israel together and tell them, "Yahweh, the God of your ancestors, has appeared to me -- the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob -- and has indeed visited you and seen what is being done to you in Egypt,

GWN Exodus 3:16 "Go, assemble the leaders of Israel. Say to them, 'The LORD God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, appeared to me. He said, "I have paid close attention to you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt.

- **elders** - Ex 4:29 18:12 24:11 Ge 1:7 Mt 26:3 Ac 11:30 20:17 1Pe 5:1
- **I am indeed concerned** - Ex 2:25 4:31 13:19 15:14 Ge 21:1 50:24 Ru 1:6 Ps 8:4 Lu 1:68 Lu 19:44 Ac 15:14 Heb 2:6,7 1Pe 2:12

## MOSES' INSTRUCTIONS TO THE ELDERS

**Go and gather the elders of Israel together** - God gives Moses a command, not a suggestion -- lead the leaders. Since there were probably about 2 million Israelites at this time, there would have been no way they could of all gathered at one time and heard his important message, so he would have to use the elders to disseminate the information. "The **elders** were the senior tribesmen of Israel, who were recognized for both their maturity and their ability to be "leaders," not necessarily for the number of years they had lived." (USB Handbook) These were the men who had leadership and authority. In sum, Yahweh now gives Moses clear instructions to first convene an assembly of the leaders of the people to whom he will explain that after 400 years NOW God had a plan to deliver of Israel from Egypt and fulfill His promise to take them back to the land promised to the patriarchs (Ge 15:13-15, 16+).

**Guzik** makes a good point that Moses' announcement of God's plan "was probably totally contrary to what the elders and people of Israel desired. In four hundred years, you set down roots (**ED: AND BECOME ENSNARED IN IDOLATRY** - which they brought with them on the 40 year wilderness journey - Acts 7:41, 42, 42+, and even after they are in the promised land = Joshua 24:14). They probably had no desire to return to the Promised Land; all they wanted was to be made more comfortable in Egypt." (Enduring Word)

**Hannah** - The instructions relate to the elders (vv. 16–17), the king (vv. 18–20), and the Israelites (vv. 21–22). (BKC)

**Mackay on elders** - We here come across for the first time a major group in Israelite society, who are to play a significant role in the following narrative (Ex. 3:16, 18; Ex 4:29; Ex 12:21; Ex 17:5, 6; Ex 18:12; Ex 19:7; Ex 24:1, 9, 14; Nu 11:16, 24, 25; 16:25). The **elders** (the word originally signified *'the bearded ones'*) were a well-known institution in society at that time. Through age and experience they were looked up to as those who were capable of leading the community. It was not the role of the **elders** to frame legislation or establish legal precedents, but to administer the agreed standards of the community and to arbitrate in disputes. By accepting the authority and judgments of the **elders** society could live harmoniously without having to resort to violence to settle disputes between individual and families. The institution of **elders** did much to promote the cohesion and solidarity of Israelite and other similar societies. (MC-Ex)

**And say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me** - Undoubtedly he would also tell them of the theophany in Ex 3:2-5. Moses is speaking for the LORD which is exactly what the later prophets to Israel would do. He, like they, would take divine revelation and speak it to the people. This is a "new thing" in God's plan for while the patriarchs received divine revelation, none of them were instructed to function as "heralds" of that revelation as was Moses. Notice that the first thing Moses is to do is to specify the new Name, **Jehovah Elohim**, emphasizing that He is the same God as the God of their patriarchs. This association of **Jehovah Elohim** with the three patriarchs in turn would call to mind the Abrahamic Covenant and the promises that the descendants would become a nation (Ge 12:2+), would be enslaved 400 years (Ge

15:13+) but would return to the promised land (Ge 15:16+). The phrase **God of your fathers** (the God of your ancestors - NLT) simply refers to the forefathers in general. Then He specifies the patriarchs stating that the God Who is named **LORD** is the same God Who **appeared** to the patriarchs and is not a new god. In other words the one now named LORD or Jehovah spoke to **Abraham**, (Ge 15:18+) to **Isaac** (Ge 17:21) and to **Jacob** (Ge 35:10-12) and cut (the Abrahamic) covenant with each of the patriarchs. This is the God Whom the elders have always worshiped. This is the same God whom we worship today because He is I Am.

**Saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt - NLT =** "I have been watching closely."  
**NEB =** "I have indeed turned my eyes towards you; I have marked all that has been done to you in Egypt."  
**NIV =** "I have watched over you." In other words Moses was to tell the elders that GOD CARES about them. Recall Joseph's last words "Joseph said to his brothers, "I am about to die, but God will surely take care of (same verb as here - [paqad](#); Lxx = [episkope episkeptomai](#)) you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob." (Ge 50:24, cf Ex 13:19 = "take care" [paqad](#)) We saw this concern in Ex 2:24-25+ (cf Ex 3:7) "So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. 25 God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them. God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them (He was aware of their suffering! And same is true for you dearly beloved of God!)."

**Concerned** (watched) ([06485](#)) ([pequddah/pāqadh/paqad](#)) means more than simply observing or casually watching. "The basic idea is that of 'attend to with care' and 'take note'. It is frequently used in technical senses relating to a superior's oversight of those under him, mustering them for battle, entrusting them with responsibilities, and punishing them when they are remiss. Here it is used to indicate the Lord's on going care of His people. He has monitored what has happened to them in Egypt. This is not just an exercise in establishing facts. In words reminiscent of Ex 3:8 the Lord tells them that he is aware of the promises that are in the (Abrahamic) covenant, and presents this to them as a focus for their hope (ED: IN THE BIBLE "HOPE" IS NOT "HOPE SO" BUT "HOPE SURE" = AN ABSOLUTE ASSURANCE THAT GOD WILL DO GOOD TO ME IN THE FUTURE! DO YOU HAVE THAT BLESSED HOPE? See [Blessed Hope](#))." (Mackay)

The Septuagint translates **paqad** here in Ex 3:16 (and Ge 50:24) with two words [episkope episkeptomai](#). The same Greek verb is used of Jesus "visit" in Lk 1:68+ "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, For He **has visited** ([episkeptomai](#)) us and accomplished redemption for His people" So even as God's "visit" in the OT would accomplish redemption for Israel from bondage in Egypt, in an even greater and of course eternal way, it was be a "visit" in the NT by the God-Man to provide redemption for mankind from slavery to sin and Satan. Hallelujah! What a Savior! Have you been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (Jn 1:29+, 1 Pe 1:18-19+)?

**Paqad** in **Exodus** - Ex. 3:16; Exod. 4:31; Exod. 13:19; Exod. 20:5; Exod. 30:12; Exod. 30:13; Exod. 30:14; Exod. 32:34; Exod. 34:7; Exod. 38:21; Exod. 38:25; Exod. 38:26

**NET** - The verb [פָּקַד](#) (**paqad**) has traditionally been rendered "to visit." This only partially communicates the point of the word. When God "visited" someone, it meant that He intervened in their lives to change their circumstances or their destiny. When he **visited** the Amalekites, he destroyed them (1 Sa15:2). When he visited Sarah, he provided the long awaited child (Gen 21:1). It refers to God's active involvement in human affairs for blessing or for cursing. Here it would mean that God had begun to act to deliver the Israelites from bondage and give them the blessings of the covenant.

**Exodus 3:17 "So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey."**

NEB and I am resolved to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt, into the country of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey."

- **I will bring** - Ex 3:9 2:23-25 Ge 15:13-21 46:4 50:24
- **to the land** - Ex 3:8 Ge 15:14,18-21

## **JEHOVAH WILL BRING OUT AND INTO**

**So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt-** Notice God's personal involvement in the deliverance - **I WILL**. So again God reminds Moses it is He Who will bring about the deliverance of Israel. Moses would be His instrument, His vessel of honor, sanctified and useful for every good work (2 Ti 2:21+). One would think this truth should have taken the pressure off of

Moses.

**THOUGHT** - Just as Moses was God's instrument, so too each believer today is God's instrument, indeed "His workmanship (masterpiece), created in Christ Jesus **for good works**, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." (Eph 2:10+) Just as God had prepared a work for Moses and prepared Moses for the work, God has saved us and prepared each of us for a special work (Don't think God does not have a special purpose for you! He does!). Are you walking in His will and His work for your life? There is nothing more satisfying than knowing you are walking in a manner worthy of the Lord to please Him in all respects (see Col 1:9, 10+, cf 1 Th 4:1+). See [Believers Are God's Masterpiece, His Poema](#).

**To the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey** - To a good land with evil inhabitants.

**Exodus 3:18 "They will pay heed to what you say; and you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt and you will say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. So now, please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'**

NEB They will listen to you, and then you and the elders of Israel must go to the king of Egypt. Tell him, "It has happened that the Lord the God of the Hebrews met us. So now give us leave to go a three days' journey into the wilderness to offer sacrifice to the Lord our God."

- **and they** - Ex 3:16 4:31 Jos 1:17 2Ch 30:12 Ps 110:3 Jer 26:5
- **and you** - Ex 5:1-3
- **The Lord** - Ex 7:16 9:1,13 10:3
- **met** - Ex 4:24 5:3 25:22 29:42,43 30:6,36 Ge 12:1 15:1 17:1 48:3 Nu 17:4 23:3,4,15,16 Isa 64:5
- **three days'** - Ex 8:27 13:17,18
- **that we may** - Ex 3:12 7:16 8:25-28 9:1 10:24-26 19:1 Jer 2:2,6

## **GOD'S PROPHETIC PROMISE TO MOSES**

**They will pay heed to what you say** - A precious promise indeed. God promises Moses the Israelites will listen to him. Jehovah's command to go, included His promise of success. Moses first attempt to speak to his brothers ended in disaster (Acts 7:24-29+; Ex 2:11-14+). It seems Moses somehow sensed he was to deliver his people, but he depended on his strength, not the of God and the timing of God. God had a "course" He wanted Moses to pass first -- it was called "Shepherding in the Wilderness!" Have you ever sensed God was calling to do something, but you made the mistake of relying on your natural power, not His supernatural power? That's a rhetorical question of course, as almost everyone has made this mistake. Thank God He is longsuffering!

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, is the same not true of us today, who are commissioned to ""Go therefore and **make disciples** ([matheteuo](#) in [aorist imperative](#) see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)) of all the nations." (Mt 28:19+) And just as with Moses God has given us rock solid promises Peter writing "His divine power has granted ([perfect tense](#) = enduring forever) to us **everything pertaining to life and godliness**, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted ([perfect tense](#) = enduring forever) to us **His precious and magnificent promises**, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature (more and more like Christ - progressive sanctification, cf 2 Cor 3:18+), having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust. (2 Pe 1:3-4+) Like Moses, we have no excuses to not obey and go for it does not depend on our adequacy but His Sufficiency! (cf 2 Cor 3:5-6+, 2 Cor 12:9-10+, 1 Cor 15:10+).

**And you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt and you will say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us** - So note only will the elders listen to Moses, but will come with him before the king, which was no minor matter. In ancient times, appearance before a king could end up with one losing their head if the king was having a "bad day!" And don't miss the striking contrast of Jehovah's guarantee of success and the failure of Moses' first attempt at deliverance in his own natural power, when "he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him." (Acts 7:24-29+; Ex 2:11-14+). Notice the Name God instructs Moses to use, Yahweh Elohim, the very Name He had given to Moses in Ex 3:16.

**God of the Hebrews** - The phrase used when they went to Pharaoh. Nations had their "gods" so the polytheistic Pharaoh would comprehend this as another of the gods. Exod. 3:18; Exod. 5:3; Exod. 7:16; Exod.

**ESV SB** has an interesting comment - To someone as powerful as the **king of Egypt**, Moses making a request in the name of **the Lord, the God of the Hebrews** would look ridiculous. What god would choose to be identified with a nation of slaves and then also presume to make a request from the king of the nation that has enslaved them? Given all the other equally true things that God could have told Moses to say to designate him (e.g., the Lord, the God who has created the heavens and the earth), he is evidently making the point to both Egypt and Israel that he has chosen to identify with the people of his covenant even when they appear to have little value in the eyes of the nation they serve except as forced labor.

**So now, please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.** God even tells Moses exactly what he is to say to Pharaoh. But as we shall see Moses expresses doubt in his ability to speak (Ex 4:1, 10, 13+). Notice God does not say to ask Pharaoh to let Israel leave Egypt but just go three days journey. Why? What is the purpose? **MacDonald** has a reasonable explanation commenting that "he was to test Pharaoh by requesting that the Israelites be allowed to travel **three days' journey to sacrifice to the Lord**. This was not an attempt to deceive but a minimal test of Pharaoh's willingness. It would also prevent the Egyptians from witnessing the slaying of animals that were sacred to them. God knew that Pharaoh wouldn't yield until compelled by divine power." It is notable that Moses said nothing about them returning!

**MacArthur** offers a similar explanation - The request for a 3 day journey to worship, in the light of 1) direct promises of deliverance from Egypt, 2) worship at Horeb, and 3) entrance into Canaan, was not a ruse to get out and then not return, but an initial, moderate request to highlight the intransigence of Pharaoh—he just would not let these slaves leave under any conditions (Ex 3:19)!

**ESV SB** - The Lord frames the request to Pharaoh in terms of his people being able to worship him, as he will throughout the plagues: "Let my people go, that they may serve me" (Ex 7:16; 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3).

#### **Exodus 3:19 "But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion.**

BGT Exodus 3:19 γ ὁ ὄνα τι ο προ σεται μ ς Φαραω βασιλε ς Α γ ππου πορευθ ναι ν μ μετ χειρ ς κραται ς

NET Exodus 3:19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go, not even under force.

LXE Exodus 3:19 But I know that Pharaoh king of Egypt will not let you go, save with a mighty hand;

NLT Exodus 3:19 "But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand forces him.

KJV Exodus 3:19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

ESV Exodus 3:19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.

NIV Exodus 3:19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him.

ASV Exodus 3:19 And I know that the king of Egypt will not give you leave to go, no, not by a mighty hand.

CSB Exodus 3:19 "However, I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go, unless he is forced by a strong hand.

NKJ Exodus 3:19 "But I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand.

NRS Exodus 3:19 I know, however, that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.

YLT Exodus 3:19 'And I -- I have known that the king of Egypt doth not permit you to go, unless by a strong hand,

NAB Exodus 3:19 "Yet I know that the king of Egypt will not allow you to go unless he is forced.

NJB Exodus 3:19 I am well aware that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless he is compelled by a mighty hand;

GWN Exodus 3:19 I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go, even if he is forced to.

- **will not** - Ex 5:2 7:4
- **except under compulsion** - Ex 6:1 7:1-14:31 Ps 136:11,12 Isa 63:12,13

## GOD'S PROPHETIC WARNING TO MOSES

**But I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go** - In contrast to God's promise of a receptive reaction from the elders, now God promises rejection from Pharaoh.

**Except under compulsion** - Only by divine imposition would Pharaoh agree to let them go. More literally "a strong hand." NIV says "the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him." The idea seems to be "unless he is forced by a strong hand." (CSB) God explains that it will take more than a simple request! It will take a strong hand, in context clearly His strong hand. We see similar anthropomorphic allusions to God's hand in in Ex 6:1 [twice]; Ex 13:14, 16; Ex 32:11; Dt. 4:34; Dt. 5:15; Dt. 6:21; Dt. 7:8, 19; Dt. 9:26; Dt. 11:2; Dt. 26:8).

The expression "mighty hand" is used of God's rescuing Israel elsewhere - Psalm 136:11-12 And brought Israel out from their midst, For His lovingkindness is everlasting, With a **strong hand** and an outstretched arm, For His lovingkindness is everlasting.

**Exodus 3:20 "So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go.**

NEB I shall then stretch out my hand and assail the Egyptians with all the miracles I shall work among them. After that he will send you away. Further,

BGT Exodus 3:20 κα κτενας τ ν χειρα πατ ξω το ς Α γυπτ ους ν π σι το ς θαυμασ ο ις μου ο ς ποι σω ν α το ς κα μετ τα τα ξαποστελε μ ς

NET Exodus 3:20 So I will extend my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonders that I will do among them, and after that he will release you.

LXE Exodus 3:20 and I will stretch out my hand, and smite the Egyptians with all my wonders, which I shall work among them, and after that he will send you forth.

NLT Exodus 3:20 So I will raise my hand and strike the Egyptians, performing all kinds of miracles among them. Then at last he will let you go.

KJV Exodus 3:20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

ESV Exodus 3:20 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.

NIV Exodus 3:20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go.

ASV Exodus 3:20 And I will put forth my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

CSB Exodus 3:20 I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles that I will perform in it. After that, he will let you go.

NKJ Exodus 3:20 "So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go.

NRS Exodus 3:20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all my wonders that I will perform in it; after that he will let you go.

YLT Exodus 3:20 and I have put forth My hand, and have smitten Egypt with all My wonders, which I do in its midst -- and afterwards he doth send you away.

NAB Exodus 3:20 I will stretch out my hand, therefore, and smite Egypt by doing all kinds of wondrous deeds there. After that he will send you away.

NJB Exodus 3:20 he will not let you go until I have stretched out my arm and struck Egypt with all the wonders I intend to work there.



- **stretch** - Ex 6:6 7:5 9:15 Eze 20:33
- **Strike** - Ex 7:3 11:9 De 4:34 6:22 Ne 9:10 Ps 105:27 106:22 135:8,9 Isa 19:22 Jer 32:20,21 Ac 7:36
- **after that** - Ex 11:8 12:31,39 Ge 15:14 Jdg 6:8 8:16 Isa 26:11 Ps 105:38

## GOD'S PROPHETIC PUNISHMENT OF EGYPT

Before Moses can even ask how he could accomplish the task if Pharaoh refuses, God answers any doubts.

**So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it-** My miracles refers to the 10 plagues.

**ESV SB** notes "The use of the image may represent intentional irony because ancient Egyptian texts often described the power of Pharaoh by saying that he had a "strong hand/arm" to destroy his enemies."

**And after that he will let you go-** God's promises Moses the deliverance will be accomplished.

**Exodus 3:21 "I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed.**

NEB I will bring this people into such favour with the Egyptians that, when you go, you will not go empty-handed.

BGT Exodus 3:21 καὶ ὁ ὁσώχριν τὰ λατὸν ναντὸν τὴν Αἰγυπτίων τὰν ὁ ποτρ χητε ο κ πελε σεσθε κενο

NET Exodus 3:21 "I will grant this people favor with the Egyptians, so that when you depart you will not leave empty-handed.

LXE Exodus 3:21 And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, and whenever ye shall escape, ye shall not depart empty.

NLT Exodus 3:21 And I will cause the Egyptians to look favorably on you. They will give you gifts when you go so you will not leave empty-handed.

KJV Exodus 3:21 And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty:

ESV Exodus 3:21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and when you go, you shall not go empty,

NIV Exodus 3:21 "And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed.

ASV Exodus 3:21 And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty.

CSB Exodus 3:21 And I will give these people such favor in the sight of the Egyptians that when you go, you will not go empty-handed.

NKJ Exodus 3:21 "And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, that you shall not go empty-handed.

NRS Exodus 3:21 I will bring this people into such favor with the Egyptians that, when you go, you will not go empty-handed;

YLT Exodus 3:21 'And I have given the grace of this people in the eyes of the Egyptians, and it hath come to pass, when ye go, ye go not empty;

NAB Exodus 3:21 I will even make the Egyptians so well-disposed toward this people that, when you leave, you will not go empty-handed.

NJB Exodus 3:21 'I shall ensure that the Egyptians are so much impressed with this people that when you go, you will not go empty-handed.

GWN Exodus 3:21 I will make the Egyptians kind to the people of Israel so that, when you leave, you will not

leave empty-handed.

- Ex 11:3 12:36 Ge 39:21 Ne 1:11 Ps 106:46 Pr 16:7 Ac 7:10

## GOD'S PROMISE OF FAVOR

Here we see God's sovereignty in His fulfilling His covenant promises recorded in Ge 15:14.

**I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed**

The Egyptians had enslaved the Hebrews for 400 years so they undoubtedly did not have many material possessions. One might say that this was also wages due them because of their long enslavement.

**Exodus 3:22 "But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. Thus you will plunder the Egyptians."**

NEB Every woman shall ask her neighbour or any woman who lives in her house for jewellery of silver and gold and for clothing. Load your sons and daughters with them, and plunder Egypt.'

BGT Exodus 3:22 α τ σ ε ι γ υ ν π α ρ γ ε τ ο ν ο ς κ α σ υ σ κ ν ο υ α τ ς σ κ ε η ρ γ υ ρ κ α χ ρ υ σ κ α μ α τ ι σ μ ν κ α π ι θ σ ε τ ε π τ ο ς υ ο ς μ ν κ α π τ ς θ υ γ α τ ρ α ς μ ν κ α σ κ υ λ ε σ ε τ ε τ ο ς Α γ υ π τ ο υ ς

NET Exodus 3:22 Every woman will ask her neighbor and the one who happens to be staying in her house for items of silver and gold and for clothing. You will put these articles on your sons and daughters— thus you will plunder Egypt!"

LXE Exodus 3:22 But every woman shall ask of her neighbour and fellow lodger, articles of gold and silver, and apparel; and ye shall put them upon your sons and upon your daughters,-- and spoil ye the Egyptians.

NLT Exodus 3:22 Every Israelite woman will ask for articles of silver and gold and fine clothing from her Egyptian neighbors and from the foreign women in their houses. You will dress your sons and daughters with these, stripping the Egyptians of their wealth."

KJV Exodus 3:22 But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

ESV Exodus 3:22 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."

NIV Exodus 3:22 Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians."

ASV Exodus 3:22 But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall despoil the Egyptians.

CSB Exodus 3:22 Each woman will ask her neighbor and any woman staying in her house for silver and gold jewelry, and clothing, and you will put them on your sons and daughters. So you will plunder the Egyptians."

NKJ Exodus 3:22 "But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

NRS Exodus 3:22 each woman shall ask her neighbor and any woman living in the neighbor's house for jewelry of silver and of gold, and clothing, and you shall put them on your sons and on your daughters; and so you shall plunder the Egyptians."

YLT Exodus 3:22 and every woman hath asked from her neighbour, and from her who is sojourning in her house, vessels of silver, and vessels of gold, and garments, and ye have put them on your sons and on your

daughters, and have spoiled the Egyptians.'

NAB Exodus 3:22 Every woman shall ask her neighbor and her house guest for silver and gold articles and for clothing to put on your sons and daughters. Thus you will despoil the Egyptians."

- **But** - Ex 11:2 12:35,36 Ge 15:14 Ps 105:37
- **Plunder** - Job 27:16,17 Pr 13:22 Isa 33:1 Eze 39:10

## **GOD'S PROMISE OF PROVISION BY PLUNDER**

To [plunder](#) means to take spoils from an enemy and is often used in a negative sense to describe indiscriminate taking of goods by force as part of a military or political victory. In this case the victory is the Lord's and He directs His people to plunder the Egyptians

**But every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters.** - In Genesis 15:14 we read God's prophetic words "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions."

**Thus you will plunder the Egyptians** - As noted below, the fact that they would plunder the strongest nation in the world must have been an amazing statement to comprehend. But this is exactly what happened in Exodus 12:35-36 "Now the sons of Israel had done according to the word of Moses, for they had requested from the Egyptians articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and the LORD had given the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they let them have their request. Thus they plundered the Egyptians."

**THOUGHT** - You can mark it down. God is always true to His word of promise (2 Pe 1:4). Paul would later explain the basis for certainty and confidence in God's promises declaring "For all the promises of God in Him (Christ) are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." (2 Cor 1:20KJV) All His promises will be fulfilled. See also [What are the promises of God? How do I know which of God's promises are for me?](#)

**Guzik** - God promised to arrange things not only to move Pharaoh's heart, but also to move the heart of the Egyptian people so that when Israel did depart, they would be showered with silver and gold and clothing. This was not stealing or extortion, it was the appropriate wages for the years of forced labor.

**ESV SB** - The description must have seemed inconceivable to Moses. Plundering in the ancient Near East was what victorious armies did to cities they defeated. God describes a situation in which Israel will not only be released from the most powerful nation in the region, but the people will also be given the spoils of Egypt by each woman of Israel simply asking for them.

**Plunder** (05337)([natsal](#)) means primarily to deliver, often by the power of one entity overcoming another. Deliverance from the hand or power (Ge 32:11, Hos 2:10). Idols and human might cannot deliver (1 Sa 12:21, Ps 33:16). Septuagint = **skuleuo** = to strip or despoil a slain enemy of his arms, plunder, spoil (Not in the NT. Only used in the Septuagint - Ex 3:22; Ex 12:36; 1 Chr. 10:8; 2 Chr. 14:13; 2 Chr. 14:14; 2 Chr. 20:25; 2 Chr. 25:13; 2 Chr. 28:8; Isa. 8:3; Ezek. 26:12; Ezek. 29:19; Ezek. 30:24; Ezek. 38:12; Ezek. 38:13; Ezek. 39:10; Hab. 2:8; Zech. 2:8)

**Natsal** in **Exodus** - Ex 2:19; Ex 3:8; Ex 3:22; Ex 5:23; Ex 6:6; Ex 12:27; Ex 12:36; Ex 18:4; Ex 18:8; Ex 18:9; Ex 18:10; Ex 33:6