

The Burning Bush and The Names of God

Exodus Chapter 3

Slides, prettier than I, Rumble even has a beard!

Continuing on in the Book of Exodus, I'd like to begin with some of the lyrics of the song Mary Did You Know

Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy is Lord of all creation?

Mary, did you know that your Baby Boy would one day rule the nations?

Did you know that your Baby Boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?

The sleeping Child you're holding is the Great, I Am.

The **Great, I Am**. This morning, we'll be looking at Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush. Moses gets an assignment and God reveals His Personal Name.

If you know me, you know that I like to concentrate on the five books of Moses – the Torah – in the Old Testament. I do this for many reasons and I'll mention just two:

- 1) Christ is found all throughout the OT, and the OT lends a great insight into Who He is.

- 2) Reading thru the OT is actually a commandment! It is one of the 613 commandments in the Torah. Deuteronomy 31:9-11 states: “[Every seven years] you shall read this Torah aloud in the presence of all Israel.”¹

So, every seven years *at a minimum*, God commanded the Jews to read through the Torah aloud. The Jews considered that this commandment to be of equal importance as all the others, because God established it.

The Jews understood the 7-year cycle to be the *minimum* cycle, and the practice at Jesus’ time was to read it aloud every three years, a little at a time every Sabbath service.

- Christian churches today **pay absolutely no attention** to this commandment – mainly because most do not even KNOW that it was a commandment because they have never read the very part of the Torah that CONTAINS this commandment.
- Even those that are aware of it, the commandment is not given any respect today. I suspect that the average congregation would never even come close to reading thru the Torah in a hundred years, let alone seven. Oh – of course, churches give *lip service* to the inspiration of the *entirety* of Scripture, but in practice, the lessons and stories in OT are looked upon today as less relevant to us than is the New Testament. But Paul said that the OT was

written for **our** benefit of us. Now – let me plainly state that we Christians are not REQUIRED to meet this commandment, as we are under grace, not under works, but I don't think that we should be so cavalier with God's expressed instruction.

We went thru the Book of Numbers over a period of three years, and Exodus will take at least another three years at our current rate of progress. **That will be two Books in six years – so we are making *some* progress.**

Now – on to Exodus. Most of us know the basic plot line of Exodus fairly well, probably due to hearing the story in Sunday School and through seeing movies like the 10 Commandments. But I suspect that, if you're like me, you have become susceptible to what has been called:

'THE LULLABY EFFECT.'²

For example – if we look at the words of your average lullaby; we'll find astonishing words like: *“Rock-a-by-baby on the tree top, when the wind blows, the cradle will rock. When the bough breaks, the cradle will fall and down will come baby; cradle and all.”*

- I myself would occasionally get Janell to sleep by softly rocking her and singing that – or maybe she just

pretended to sleep so I would stop singing. But... neither of us were listening to the words themselves.

But what if your little 3 or 4 year old actually *listens* to the *words* of the lullaby? Lots of questions could come to mind:

- 1) Who put the cradle up in the tree in the first place?
- 2) Did anyone call 911 when it fell?
- 3) Was the mother trying to kill the baby?
- 4) Why are you singing this to me?
- 5) Are you threatening to put me on top of a tree if I don't get to sleep?

We might have all these questions but nobody even bothers thinking about them because we know the story too well. We stop listening to the words and are only listening to the sound.

It's that way with these Biblical stories too. The Biblical stories are so comfortable for us, we almost don't even listen to the words anymore. *But if we did* listened to the words and ask some questions about what went on in the Exodus story, we would find it even more astounding than it is. Sometimes we need to just clear your mind of everything we know about the story, and then just read the words and let the words actually talk to you. Let them speak to you. Say to yourself, if I was reading these words for the very first time and I didn't know anything else, I had no preconceived notions, what are the questions that would come to mind? That's what I want to do with Exodus.

~~GREAT INTRODUCTION

SLIDE: Exodus 2:16–3:11

I'm starting at verse 27 of Exodus Chapter 2 and continuing on into Chapter 3 because it is one continuous story.

By the way, there were no “chapters” or “verses” in either the original OT or NT. Don Rumble mentioned this when he last spoke here. Each book was written without any breaks from the beginning to the end. The first occasion of the entire bible published with chapter and verse division was in the 1500s with the Latin Vulgate.

Many Jews use the Christian chapter system just because it is so common. However, they also have a system of dividing the Torah into portions called parashah. The Torah has 54 chapters but only 54 parashah. Chapter and verse divisions are convenient for reference and quotation purposes because they make it easier to find certain statements and accounts in Scripture. But, they can cause a number of problems because they are sometimes arbitrary, and they sometimes interfere with the sense of the passage.

The original authors of Scripture did not intend that their writings be divided up into chapters or verses. They intended that the books be read straight through from the beginning.

- So, a first step in Bible interpretation is to **ignore** the modern chapter and verse divisions because they are human-made and **NOT authoritative in any sense of the term.**³

And, dividing up the Scripture into chapters and verses encourages people to read only small parts at a time. The best way to discover what the author is trying to say is to read thru several chapters at a time.

Chapter 2 vs.16:

One day, as he was sitting by a well, the seven daughters of the priest of Midyan came to draw water. They had filled the troughs to water their father's sheep, when the shepherds came and tried to drive them away. But Moshe got up and defended them; then he watered their sheep. When they came to Re'u'el their father, he said, "How come you're back so soon today?" They answered, "An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds; more than that, he drew water for us and watered the sheep." He asked his daughters, "Where is he? Why did you leave the man there? Invite him to have something to eat."

Moshe was glad to stay on with the man, and he gave Moshe his daughter Tzipporah in marriage. She gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom [foreigner there], for he said, "I have been a foreigner in a foreign land."

After a long time the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery their cry for help rose up to God. 24 God heard their groaning, and **God remembered** his covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God looked upon the Israelites, and God took notice of them."

Continuing in Exodus chapter 3:

Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 **There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush**; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed.

Then Moses said, 'I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up.' 4 When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here I am.' 5 Then he said, 'Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' 6 He said further, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Then the Lord said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, 8 and

I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. 10 So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.'

But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?' 12 He said, 'I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain.'

SLIDE: MOSES IN MIDIAN – REUEL

Moses fled Egypt to a land called Midian and eventually married a daughter of a person described as a “*priest of Midian*”. His father-in-law was alternately named as Yitro (Jethro) and 'Reuel', which means “*friend of el*” – “*friend of god*”. (Reuel is probably the name of one of many Midianite clans. Jethro is but a member of that clan.) Now, I don't believe that that meant, *necessarily*, that he was a worshiper of Yahweh – but he probably had a respect for Him.

click: MOSES IN MIDIAN

Moses settled into the life of a Shepherd. He had been raised as a prince of Egypt, and although he was Hebrew and had nothing against shepherds personally, native Egyptians HATED shepherds, so Moses probably had no training in BEING a Shepherd before he fled to Midian.

Interestingly, it appears that Moses did NOT own animals of his own – after 40 years exile in Midian, this former prince of Egypt was still tending his father-in-law’s sheep. So, unlike the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, it does not appear that Moses personally became prosperous.

click: MOSES IN MIDIAN – WIFE AND KIDS (2)

Moses wife was Tzipporah (Zipporah), one of the daughters of Reuel that he defended when he first arrive in Midian. It doesn’t say that he fell madly in love with her as Jacob did with Rachael, but they married and had two sons.

- Now, that wasn’t the smartest thing he ever did in his life.
- The name Tzipporah means “bird”, and she apparently pecked at him the whole time.

- She doesn't seem to share the great vision that God gives to him, and during their journey back to Egypt, Moses sends her and his two sons back home. (Exodus 18:2).

Click> As I mentioned, Moses and Tzipporah had two sons.

Click> His first son he named Gershon, which means a stranger in a foreign land, an exile or an alien. Oftentimes, people then named their children as to how they felt at the time.

So how did Moses feel when his 1st child was born?

- Moses, how do you feel?
- He said, "I feel such a total stranger."
- He said, "This is not my people, it is not my land. I'm not at home here."
- And so he named his child, "*Stranger in a strange country.*"

Click> The birth of his 2nd child occurred sometime later, after the Pharaoh who tried to kill Moses died (vs 2:23). Moses named him "Eliezer", which means "*my God is help*". Exodus 18 tells us that he named him Eliezer "(for he said, 'The God of my father was my help, and delivered me from the sword of Pharaoh')." (Ex.18:4)

- **Moses never forgot His God.**

REVIVAL BREAKS OUT IN EGYPT

Back in Egypt, the Israelites appear to have hoped that the new Pharaoh would be more lenient, but he was not. They were ripe for revolution, but...

- Instead, a revival began to take place.

What was the revival? The revival was to call upon the God of Abraham: “The Israelites **groaned** under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the slavery **their cry for help rose up to God**”. And the cry rose up to God. And the Scripture says “...and God **remembered** His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

We’re not sure where the revival started. It could well have been in the tribe of Levi. We have no proof for that, but I think that it is significant that **Aaron** – a slave – was able to hear god’s inspiration and walk out of Egypt and meet Moses in Midian.

SLIDE: GOD REMEMBERED

The text says “*God remembered*”, which strikes us as somewhat odd. Did God *forget* about them and suddenly they popped back into His memory?

Is it like God woke up one morning and checked His TO-DO-LIST: 1) keep the universe running – check; 2) investigate Al Gore and Climate Change – check, I’ll make it snow during his next speech

(Gore Effect), and 3) remember the covenant with Abraham. Oh right, I have to look in on those Jews? This is how **we** remember, not how God remembers.

The Hebrew used here for “remember” is *zakar*⁴ (pronounced *zaw-kar*). And, *zakar* doesn’t mean remember like **we think of it today**. To us, the word ‘remember’ is an act of calling something up from memory⁵ that we were not thinking about. Something suddenly pops into our consciousness that “It’s Donna and my anniversary tomorrow – I better buy that **new vacuum cleaner today**.” It’s *passive* in our case – it’s something that happens to us.

But, the Hebrew *zakar* is a much more **active** term; it adds the element of involvement and action on the part of the person remembering.⁶

- Example: when someone gives us a birthday present that we hinted about but forgot, we might say in surprise, “*Ah, you remembered.*”
- It wasn’t that they forgot – we weren’t expecting it to happen.

God never forgets things – if He ever did forgot something, such as forgetting you or I, we would **WINK OUT OF EXISTENCE!** Like the lights as the electric power grid is waning and then goes off during a storm. Like *Back to the Future* photograph when people begin to fade because history

changed. As Paul argued to the pagan philosophers in Athens, we are total dependent upon God for our continued existence – Paul said: “For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’” Acts 17:28

- The only thing that God said that He would NOT remember is OUR SINS! “I, even I, am he who blots out your transgressions, for my own sake, and **remembers your sins no more.**” Isaiah 43:25
- **Story** -> **nun** who said God would talk to her, priest skeptic, “ask Him what was the last sin that I formally confessed”. Next day – “Well, what did He say?” – God said “I don’t remember”.

COVENANT

There’s no understanding of what’s going on in Exodus until we see it through the prism of covenant. The reason they could cry and be heard was because of a covenant that God had made with Abraham. God had entered into a unilateral covenant. All the troubles of Israel belonged to God. They were one. God had pledged Himself to the Israeli people. They finally could not take the weight of the oppression and so they call out to the God of their fathers.

I want to recall the specific covenant that God “remembered”. It is described in Genesis 15.

SLIDE: COVENANT

“...a deep sleep fell upon Abram...

<click> It came about when the sun had set, that it was very dark, and behold, there appeared a smoking oven and a flaming torch which passed between these pieces...” Genesis 15

There are two basic types of covenant – one that is made between equal parties and one that is made between one major party and one minor party. The customary way that a covenant was “cut” was that the terms of the proposed agreement would be stated and then the two parties would signify that they would live up to their responsibilities under the agreement by walking together in some ceremony that often was accompanied by blood.

In this case, Abraham had sacrifice a heifer, a goat and a ram and then cut them in half to form the path to walk between. But then God put Abraham to sleep. God then “walked” between the pieces by Himself, promising that from Abraham’s seed would be born the chosen nation. “And I will make of thee a great nation” (12:2) and that **the land** of Canaan is delegated to Abraham’s descendants (15:18–21).

<click> The point I want to emphasize here is that God **caused a deep sleep to fall upon Abraham** and God walked through the blood sacrifices by Himself.

- The Covenant was executed UNILATERALLY.
- Abraham was asleep!

SLIDE: UNILATERAL

- The responsibility to fulfill this covenant was therefore entirely upon God.
- Everything promised from this covenant was up to God to make happen.
- Abraham's ONLY responsibility was to agree with it.
- It was sort of what happens with someone's last will and testament. The *beneficiary* of the will has the right to *refuse* the terms of the will (e.g.; refuse to **accept** money or property or whatever), but if they accept, then the terms of the will go into effect.

I mention this because I have heard speakers sometimes say that the NT Covenant was a covenant between EQUAL parties – God the Father and God the Son. **This is incorrect.**

- Jesus was acting as OUR representative.

Action breakout if needed

When the Holy Spirit was choosing words to include into the NT, there two different types of covenant were described by two different greek words:

1. *Synthēkē* – a covenant made between “two equal parties”
2. *Diathēkē* – A *diathēkē* had to do with an individual’s disposition of his goods or property for himself; that is, it referred to his sovereign determining of his heirs. It was used essentially as a will, which we say today “**last will and testament**”.⁷ **THIS IS WHY THE OLD AND NEW SECTION OF THE BIBLE ARE CALLED TESTAMENTS.**

The ordinary substitute for the last will and testament in Jewish law answers to the “**gift by reason of death**”.⁸

Hebrews 8:6–13

New Testament authors specifically chose *diathēkē* precisely because it meant that the one making the covenant (God) sovereignly made the choice about what He is going to do without any help of the benefactors.

Hebrews 8:6–13 “... now He (Jesus) has obtained a more excellent ministry, by as much as He is also the mediator of a **better covenant**, which has been enacted on better promises.”

RC Sproul: “If the covenant was *synthēkē* – a covenant made between “two equal parties” – all would be lost. Our role in maintaining the covenant relationship would be fully equal to His. But we are sinners who cannot keep covenant perfectly. A *synthēkē* would mean no salvation.

A *diathēkē* is different. Because it is God’s sovereign administration with an unequal party, the onus for the fulfillment of the covenant’s promises is on the GREATER party—the Lord Himself. He swore by Himself to uphold the covenant (Gen. 15; Heb. 6:13–20).

- His honor is on the line, and if He fails, His glory suffers.

But we know that God cannot fail, that He will not surrender His glory (Isa. 48:11). In the Lord’s *diathēkē*, or covenant, He guarantees the fulfillment of His Word for His name’s sake, which means the redemption of His people is secure.”⁹

- So, Jesus’ last will and testament (so to speak) was that *the benefits of His shed blood would be ours*, that His blood would cover our sins
- End action breakout

BURNING BUSH

OK– Moses moved his father-in-law’s flock of sheep to pasture land on the western side of Mt. Horeb which is called the Mountain of God and later Mt. Sinai.

Moses sees a bush burst into flame. Now, that was nothing unusual. They were spiky acacia bushes, very durable wood, and with the heat of that desert, it was not unusual that they would spontaneously burst into flames, nothing uncommon.

But, after watching it for a while, it wasn’t being consumed. Curious. The bush was burning but the bush was not consumed.

Why does a bush burn? A bush burns because it is burning on the gases that are coming out of the wood, which reduces the wood to ashes. And when it’s been reduced to ashes, there’s nothing more for the flame to feed on and, therefore, the flame dies.

- But if the branches are not being reduced to ashes, and if the leaves are not turning brown, then it means **the flame is not feeding on the bush.**
- **So here is a flame that is self-sustained.**
- God does not depend on any other for His sustenance. **God is life in Himself.**

SLIDE: HOLY GROUND

Moses walks over to get a close look at this curious sight and then he hears the voice of God saying: "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." Vs. 5

Now, I'm fairly sure that Moses was totally unprepared for what is happening – a voice coming from the bush that calls out his name! At this point, most people would have run away as fast as they could.

But Moses doesn't – he falls to the ground and lay there scared out of his wits. Moses hides his face because he was afraid to look at God (vs.6).

- God then says: *"remove your sandals because you're standing on Holy ground"*
- The ground was HOLY because God's presence was there.

Just a side note: I cringe when I hear newscasters report that people were killed in the "HOLY CITY OF X, Y OR Z" in Iraq, or the "holy month of Ramadan" begins in a week, or whatever.

- Only God can declare what is holy, not man.

This is because ONLY HE is HOLY in His Own Right. The Hebrew word for “holy” (‘kadosh’ or ‘qadosh’) means *separate, set apart, something completely other*.¹⁰ Only He can declare what is Holy because only He can make it holy!

Scripture recognizes only two holy cities: *Jerusalem* (Matthew 4:5, Isaiah 48:2, Nehemiah 1:1, etc.) and the *New Jerusalem* (Revelation 21:2) “I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband.”¹

At the burning bush, the ground itself was set apart solely because of the presence of God. Later on, the people would be instructed not to approach or even touch the Mountain of God while He was there else they would die because it was holy. (Ex. 12:19) The holiness of God is DANGEROUS, and we cannot approach Him unless He authorizes us to do so.

- Thank you Jesus for being our authorization!

In taking off his shoes, Moses was acknowledging his creature-hood before the Holy. He’s only a man. In everyday life, Moses wore shoes, but slaves didn’t wear shoes. He was no slave in normal life, but – before God, before the Holy God,

¹ Most likely, the Holy City symbolizes the sanctified church gathered in heaven, the holy completed church. Asbury Bible Commentary – B. The Holy City (21:9–22:5)

he is reminded very forcibly that he rank is nor more than that of a slave. So before God, the creature removes his shoes and humbles himself before the Creator.

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Note: FYI – similar command to remove your sandals because of “*holy ground*” was given to **Joshua** when he is about to begin the conquest of Jericho:

Now it came about when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, a **MAN** was standing opposite him with his sword drawn in his hand, and Joshua went to him and said to him, “**Are you for us or for our adversaries?**” He said, “No; rather I indeed come now as **CAPTAIN OF THE HOST OF THE LORD.**” And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, “What has my lord to say to his servant?” The captain of the Lord’s host said to Joshua, “**Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy.**” And Joshua did so.” Joshua 5:13–15

In the Tabernacle complex, and later in the Temple complex in Jerusalem, priests had to be BAREFOOTED because the temple floor was holy.

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## THE DIALOGUE

### SLIDE: WHAT IS HIS NAME

And, now begins an incredible dialogue between Moses and God. God tells Moses that he is to go back to Egypt and confront the Pharaoh.

God is informing Moses of what He was about to do and what Moses is to do.

- Notice, He is NOT ASKING Moses for help. He is telling Moses what he is going to do.

So, Moses began a feeble attempt to duck the assignment. 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?”

- God replies: *you’re thinking too much like a man.*  
“**I** will be with you” – **that’s all that matters!**

Moses undoubtedly can remember 40 years ago when he – as a prince of Egypt – tried to break up a fight between two fellow Israelites; the instigator of the fight said to him – “*Who do you think YOU are*” – in other words, **you may have standing as a prince of Egypt but you have *no creds* in the Israelite community.**

- God says to Moses: ***“My presence will give you all the creds that you need!”***

Well, Moses couldn't argue with that, so he comes up with a second argument as to why he should not go:

### THE DIVINE NAME REVEALED

Vs. 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?' 14 God (Hebrew word Eloheim) said to Moses, ***'I am who I am.'*** He said further, 'Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "I am has sent me to you."' 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 for ever, and this my title for all generations.

16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and tell them, ***'Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey (Yahweh),*** the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt

### SLIDE: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Shakespeare wrote: *What's in a name? that which we call a rose. By any other name would smell as sweet;*

Shakespeare Romeo and Juliet Act II, Scene II

- Here's where I want to begin asking some questions of the text that perhaps we've not thought about before because of the so-called *Lullaby Effect*.

What's in a name? Biblical names carried significant information about the person, not so much today. But even today, a name can call to mind our knowledge of a person. If you are well acquainted with "Jack Oles", you know that he is a friendly, handsome, brown-headed Jets fan of about 50 years old. So, when someone tells you, "*I saw Jack today*," the speaker does not have to describe him to you. The name carries within it the many traits you associate with Jack.

- Moses says to God that *the people will want to know Your name*. " *What is Your Name?*

- ...obviously, Moses does NOT know the God of Israel's personal name.

**QUESTION:** Does anyone else find this a curious question? What's the big deal about knowing God's Name? What's wrong with just saying, "*The God of our fathers sent me*"? And Why is Moses so sure the Israelites will ask this?

Well, there are several reasons.



- 1) The Israelites have been living in Egypt for hundreds of years, and – as we know – the Egyptians had multiple gods and goddesses, one for almost every situation and place. Over 2,000 of them!
  - Egyptians would scoff at the notion that you have ONLY ONE god – that’s pretty pathetic – and YOU EVEN DON’T KNOW HIS NAME? No doubt the average Hebrew would be embarrassed at this.
  
- 2) But there’s another reason. In both the Hebrew and in the Egyptian language, **personal names held *meanings***. Names of gods and of people were not random – they denoted *characteristics*. The *name* of a god *denoted that god’s characteristics* that were associated to some specific part of the natural or spiritual world that he, or she, had control or influence over.
  - The Hebrews called God by the Name EL, Eloheim (plural of El). But El is a generic name in Hebrew for someone or something having POWER. El can refer to the God of the Bible, but it sometimes will refer to Baal, the Sun, angels, judges and so on – Entities with power over you. When the Hebrews mentioned the EL is God, they knew Who they were talking about, but pagans didn’t.

- In paganism, if you had a need and knew the name of the **specific EL** who supposedly had control over your need, you could call on him/her.
- For example, you could call out *“oh great Google, god of the Internet, please make my website come up quicker on Google Search”*, and that god had no choice but to do your bidding.<sup>11</sup>

Moses well knew this from living in Egypt for his first 40 years of life. And, of course, God also knew it. So, God obliged and gave Moses His: “I AM THAT I AM”.

### \*\*\* FALSE PROPHECY VS. ‘I AM’

BTW– Most of us probably know that Jesus applied the Divine Name ‘I AM’ to Himself. In John 8:58–59, He said...

*“Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.”* Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him...”

I mention this because some Christians mistakenly believe that while Jesus IS God, He never claimed to be God while here on earth. In fact, a well-known individual with a major Christian TV ministry related receiving the following “*prophecy*”:

[Quote – Jesus speaking] *“Don’t be disturbed when people put you down and speak harshly and roughly to you. They spoke that way to Me (Jesus), should they not speak that way to you? The more you get to be like Me, the*

*more they are going to think that way about you. They crucified Me for claiming that I was God. But I didn't claim I was God; I just claimed that I walked with Him and that He was in Me. Hallelujah."*<sup>12</sup> [Close quote]

The individual subsequently attempted to clarify what he said – [quote] *"I didn't say Jesus was not God – only that Jesus didn't CLAIM to be God".)*

Now – I don't question the person's *sincerity* regarding this "so-called" prophecy or the fact that he is a Christian...

- But *sincerity* isn't a "*Get Out of Jail Free*" card as far as scriptural is concerned. He was speaking as a **false prophet** – sounds harsh, even unChristian to say this, but that's what the Scripture says very clearly.

This points to an unfortunate situation that exists in the churches today, especially those churches who believe in the active Charismatic gifts of the Holy Spirit. When a Christian leader seems to have ONE gift (e.g.; evangelism), he often begins to assume that he therefore probably has others.

- Especially if people say that they see such and such a gift in us – the gift of teaching, or that we're a prophet or we're an apostle – and we're just VAIN enough to believe it.

However, I can say – based on scripture – the individual **surrendered any credentials** for any **ONGOING** impartation of these gifts based on this false prophetic statement that he claims as being from Jesus.

- I say “*ongoing*” because the Holy Spirit can give anyone a gift at a specific moment – even pagans. God *may* give him a prophetic word to a local congregation sometime in the future, but he is NOT a prophet to the church, and the gift of prophecy (office of prophet) is not an *abiding* gift on him.
- he disqualifies himself from having the *ongoing* gift of **prophecy to the church** because such a Biblical prophet could never be so terribly wrong even once.
- He also cannot claim the **gift of teaching** because he was ignorant of the *implication* of Jesus’ statement – even the Jewish crowd understood the implication of what Jesus said, as they took up stones to throw at him for apparent blasphemy.
- And, this individual disqualified himself from having an *ongoing* **gift of discernment** because he obviously couldn’t discern that what he supposedly heard would *never* have come from Jesus.

This is a prime example of why Christians cannot follow ANY individual blindly, even those claiming gifts from the Holy Spirit.

- And I personally – this is just me – I will not listen to any teaching from this individual until he **retracts** his “prophecy” **as being false** – because he **obviously cannot discern what part of a message SMELLS OF LILIES and what part SMELLS OF BRIMSTONE.**
- **He doesn't have the GIFT OF SMELL.**

SLIDE: EXODUS 3:14

OK – moving on – Moses asks God His Name, and God responds to Moses' question as follows – and I'll use the **actual words in Hebrew:**

Eloheim said to Moshe,  
'Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh (I am who I am),'  
and added, “Here is what to say to the people of Isra'el:  
'Ehyeh (I Am) has sent me to you.”

SLIDE: EXODUS 3:14 HIGHLIGHTED

OK – God uses THREE different names for Himself here:

- Eloheim
- Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh (I AM WHO I AM”, and then just

- Ehyeh (I AM) - a shortened version of the previous name.

**Click:** And then in the VERY NEXT SENTENCE (vs. 15) God says: And say to the Israelites: 'Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh, the God of your fathers, the God of Avraham, the God of Yitz'chak and the God of Ya'akov, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever; this is how I am to be remembered generation after generation.

---

**Brief aside** – some commentators claim that the Hebrews DID know the name 'Y-H-V-H' because there are several places in the Book of Genesis – which describes events *hundreds of years prior to the burning bush incident* – where that Name 'Y-H-V-H' is used. They conclude that the Hebrews were familiar with the Name per se but did not have any *understanding* of its *meaning*.

Most scholars disagree. You see, Moses WROTE DOWN Genesis during the 40 years AFTER the burning bush incident. He was writing a history, *not a diary*. When we ourselves might write or speak about events in history, it is quite common to refer to a person or location by using a name *with which the readers would be familiar*, even though the name itself might have not been in existence when the events actually occurred.

For example: today I might write that my 19 years old daughter Janell was a very active baby in the womb, even though I would be speaking about a time when her name had not yet been officially given. Or, if I was going to write about the 16th century history of Mohican Indians who lived in the Kinderhook area, I'd be using the name "Kinderhook" which was not established as a town until 250 years later. These are examples of a technique to refer to a particular area by the name it is CURRENTLY known so that the reader would have a better frame of reference. That's all that was happening when Moses used God's name 'Y-H-V-H' earlier in Genesis.....it was done in retrospect.

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Ok...

**Click:** so, in TWO sentences, God uses FOUR different names for Himself.

SLIDE: FORMALLY 'EL SHADDAI'

And I want to skip just briefly ahead to Chapter 6. Here, God says to Moses...

"I appeared to Avraham, Yitz'chak and Ya'akov as El Shaddai, although I did not make myself known to them by my name, Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh ." vs. 2-3

Ok – God says that He was previously known to the Hebrews as El Shaddai, but now He wants to be known as ‘Yud-Heh-Vav-Heh’.

- El Shaddai was a shimmering reflection of Who He really is – not a completely clear picture but an approximation of Him.

#### SLIDE: FIFTH NAME

So, in just three sentences, Go has used FIVE different identifiers for Himself.

- Eloheim,
- Ehyeh Asher Ehyeh (I AM WHO I AM”, and then just
- Ehyeh (I AM) - a shortened version of the previous name
- YUD-HEY-VAV-HEY
- El Shaddai

So, we see that God had a number of different names. But one of the reasons why we don’t always pay attention to this is the fact that – up to now, God Himself never really make SUCH A BIG DEAL about His name. But, all of a sudden, God is concerned that we know His Name – right over here in the Exodus, right before the plagues start. WHY?



- God says He was *formally* known as El Shaddai but now He wants to be known as by His Personal Name – 'YUD-HEY-VAV-HEY'

So, when Moses asks God for His Personal name at the burning bush...

- It was a great opportunity for God to say "*I want to let everybody know that my name is yud and hey and vav and hey*", right? But instead God replies...

"Ehyeh (*Eh-heh-yeh*) Asher Ehyeh".

God answered 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.'"

- And then, in the very next sentence, God seems to change His mind and says "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, "**YUD-HEY-VAV-HEY**" - the **God (Eloheim) 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 " .

If you're Moses at this point, you might be a little confused.

Which IS the Name?

- Is it 'I am that I am'? Is it just 'I Am'? Is it 'the God of your forefathers'? Is it Y-H-V-H?

So, while names might not have mattered to Shakespeare, Names evidently do matter to both Moses AND to God here in Exodus. **The reason Why is because there is something about what God's Personal Name that is going to rock the polytheistic world of Pharaoh.**

- OK – what are we to make of all this? What did God mean when He said that His Name was "I AM THAT WHICH I AM?"
- What does YUD-HEY-VAV-HEY mean? Is this a *Second* new Name?

I want to concentrate on the name "I Am That I Am", and we'll get to YHVH next time, because PowerPoint pictures illustrates its meaning much better than talking about it. But just a preview – I AM and YHVH has essentially equivalent.

SLIDE: ALEPH BETA

I want to give TREMENDOUS CREDIT to Rabbi David Fohrman of *AlephBeta Institute* for the following approach to God's dialogue over His Name – **I highly recommend that you subscribe to his website [alephbeta.org](http://alephbeta.org).** Since I do not know

the ins and outs of Hebrew, Rabbi Fohrman's insights into approaching this issue were invaluable to me.

Ok – let's briefly look at an approach to how to can approach what God was saying in these names.

SLIDE: WHEN A WORD, NOT A NAME

Let's take the various names of God and pretend for a moment that they're not names but words. As words, what would they mean? Maybe the meaning of the NAME borrows from the meaning of the WORD.

What does the Hebrew word mean when it is NOT a name?

SLIDE: EL AS A NAME

We have two of the Hebrew terms God applied to Himself in our text: Eloheim and EL Shaddai.

Click: Both contain the name EL - actually, **Elohein is the plural form of El.**

Click We also have EL as part of the names **Bethel** (*House of God*), **Immanuel** (*Hebrew – God with Us*), **Israel** (This name is a combination of the Hebrew words for "wrestle" and "God") and **Joel** (*Yahweh is God* -> very powerful name).

Click> in these contexts, when the word “EL” is used as a proper NAME, it refers to either the God of the Bible or just plains “god” in general.

SLIDE: EL AS A WORD

But when used as a WORD in Hebrew, <click> EL means Power, Might or Strength

Consider how El is used in this verse:

In Genesis chapter 31, Laban says to Jacob... “I have it within my **power** to do harm to you.” Genesis 31:29

The word here for *power* is “EL”

SLIDE: A JUDGE

So, as I mentioned, names carried specific meaning with them. EL, indication power and strength, can also refer to someone or something that can has power or has an influence over you, such as a judge who can sentence you to jail.<sup>13</sup>

Click> And besides referring to judges, El is also used to refer to mighty men, and even angels – all instruments of power and authority – *admittedly limited but power none the less.*

- Remember Jesus' answer to Pilate: "You would have no power (authority) over me if it were not given to you from above."<sup>14</sup>
- I think that this understanding can explain something that, taken at face value, is very puzzling.

SLIDE: 2<sup>ND</sup> COMMANDMENT

The second of the Ten Commandments is oddly worded, "Thou shall not have allegiance to any other gods before Me."

Here's another Question – Does this commandment seems almost self-contradictory> The Torah insists on an absolute devotion to monotheism, faith on The One and Only God, and then in the selfsame statement, the texts *seems* to take for granted that there ARE other gods.

- But what other gods *are* there? Isn't the Torah's whole point that there is only One God?

Click> Here's how the text is In Hebrew" 'You shall have no other eloheim before me.'

Remember that El means various things: it can refer to God, a god, a judge, or anyone/thing that has power. Eloheim is the

plural of EL. So “gods” is not an incorrect translation but it loses its real meaning. .

Click> The text commands us not to have allegiance to other “powers” beside God

For there are other great sources of “power” that someone might want to worship – the sun is powerful, less powerful than God, but powerful non the less. But the second command tells us that the sun is off-limits for worship because we are not to have any allegiance to ANY power other than the Almighty.

➤ The same is true for money, power, even family...

This concept can be seen in the model of the priests in the Tabernacle and later in the Temple when they had to be barefooted because the temple floor was holy.

*“Therefore there must be **nothing interrupting** between the priests and the floor (BT Zevachim 2, 1), to the extent that if **SOMETHING COMES IN THE WAY OF CONTACT** between the priest's feet and the floor, his service is **invalid** (Maimonides).*

*“He shall wear the holy linen tunic, and he shall have the linen pants upon his flesh, and shall be girded with a linen belt, and he shall be attired with the linen turban;*

*these are the holy garments; therefore he shall bathe his flesh in water, and put them on" (Lev. 16:4)*

*Maimonides states that it is these words which indicate that the garments must next to the skin, with nothing else interfering."*<sup>15</sup>

I believe that this symbolized 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment and that we as a holy people, a royal priesthood, MUST NOT HAVING ANYTHING BETWEEN OURSELVES AND CHRIST.

#### SLIDE: ELOHEIM PLURAL?

Q: Does the word Eloheim cause a problem when Scripture states:

"And Elohim said unto Moshe... I AM WHO I AM"

Click: 'Eloheim said...' – Eloheim is the plural of El<sup>16</sup> – and the text has God's Name in a PLURAL form.

- Here, the plural word is used with a singular verb form. Some Christians have argued that the use of the plural Eloheim in reference to God shows that there is a plurality in the Godhead.
- Don't think so. The three persons in one God, the Trinity, is our belief, but I don't think that this

alludes to it – the rabbis would have picked up and commented on this plural word/single verb construct way back then.

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ACTION BREAKOUT if Needed

SLIDE:

And Eloheim said, Let **us** make man in **our** image.  
Genesis 1:26

SLIDE:

And Eloheim Yahweh said, Behold, the man has become like one of **US**. Genesis 3:22

Ok, but what about...

SLIDE: Moses

The Lord said to Moses, "See, I have made thee a god (**Elohim**) to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet."

Exodus 7:1

- If *elohim* *a/ways* implies a plurality, how do we explain that the identical word Elohim refers to Moses as well?



So – I don't believe that this WORD Eloheim demonstrates that God is a plurality of three persons. Christianity say that He IS, but I don't think that this word conclusively demonstrates that.

### Return from Action Breakout

#### SLIDE: Royal "We" ?

I'm not sure of all the linguistic background per se, but we have in English plural words that refer to singular people. When Queen of England says 'We do not approve' – she means SHE does not approve.

So, the Name 'EL' emerges as a more general descriptor of power than a name for a particular divine being.

- To the extent that we relate to the One True God, it is appropriate to call Him EL or ELOHEIM. God is the EL of the Hebrews, **the power to whom the Hebrews have allegiance**, as Moses will tell pharaoh in his second speech (Exodus 5:3).
- But in the ancient world, this is only saying that He is a Being to which the Hebrews attribute power. **Other "powers" – so to speak – can and do exist.**

So, while EL or ELOHEIM can be used to describe God, but it **DOES NOT UNIQUELY** describe the God of the Bible. Eloheim can just as easily denote any force believed to be powerful, even if it is not divine.

- Moses understands that the people will want to know WHO IN PARTICULAR they'll be dealing with.
- **SO THIS IS WHY MOSES WANTS TO KNOW HIS PERSONAL NAME!!!**

OK...

#### SLIDE: I AM

- When Moses asks God about what is His name, He answers "I am that which I am".
- Some translators also say that it can mean or at least IMPLIES: "I WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE"
- And then He said " I AM sent me to you."
  - But then He says Yud-Hey-Vah-Hey is His Name forever.

At first, you might think that God here was giving an *introduction* to His name YHVH, like the ring announcer when introducing Apollo Creed in the first two Rocky movies: "*The*

*Master of Disaster*", "The King of Sting," and "The Count of Monte Cristo". But when you look closer, God says:

- "You shall tell the children of Israel this:  
'I AM has sent me to you.'"

So, "I AM" is NOT just an introductory title but God's very Name! – and so too is YHVH.

But, even before figuring out what God meant by 'I Am That I Am' or its relationship to Yud-Hey-Vah-Hey, let's ask a question about this dialogue:

- **Question:** *When God answered 'I Am That I Am', was that a good response to Moses' question?*

SLIDE: A = A

I am that which I am".

God seems to be violating the cardinal rule in definitions.

Click> He seems to be saying A=A, something Forrest Gump would attribute to a saying of his mother. A=A is axiomatically True, but we don't know any more about 'A' now than when we began.

- What is Moses to think at this point?

Let's say someone asks you your name, and your answer was "I AM That I Am." Would you say that that is a **good** answer? NO - THAT'S **NOT** A GOOD ANSWER. We might even say that I've **EVADING THE QUESTION** if you say "I AM That I Am."

- Now, if God was *really* trying to *evade* the question, He should have said something else. He should have said "*why are you asking my name?*"

We actually do have an example of that type of response in the Torah. Jacob asks a heavenly being for a name and the heavenly being responds by rejecting the question and says "*why are you even asking the question?*" = Jacob and the angel. When Jacob asks the angel for his name, the angel (Gen. 32:29) says in effect, "*I'm not telling, why are you asking my name - that's an illegitimate question.*"

But God does NOT say (to Moses) that this is an illegitimate question. So, He doesn't completely *evade* the question, but He seems to give a NON-ANSWER. He says "I AM..." or "I will be what I will be."

Let's look at this further. When you ask someone for his name, what are you doing? (ASK THE QUESTION?)

You're trying to better understand him/her, you're trying to define him/her. Whenever you name someone or something, you're seeking to define them or peg them or something because you have something that is unknown, but

- when you give it a name, we feel much more secure – now we think we know what we're talking about.
- ➔ example – strange medical conditions, people seem relieved to know what this issue is (e.g., **DAD AND CANCER**).

**WRITING A DICTIONARY** So, now let's imagine that you are writing a dictionary and someone says "*give me a definition of the word orange*" – there are rules for definitions there are rules for writing good definitions. You don't want definitions that are too long, you don't want definitions that are too wordy.

- But there is one cardinal rule for definitions that you cannot violate – you cannot use the word you're *seeking to define* in your definition. That is the worst thing you can do in definitions, every 2<sup>nd</sup> grader knows (or at least they did when I went to school) that **you can't define a word in terms of itself**,
- you can't use the word itself because if I knew what that word meant, I wouldn't be looking it up in the dictionary

in the first place. We call this a **tautology** – when we define something in terms of itself.

- Suppose we define "orange" as "a color that is has an orange pigment". Because this definition uses the word "orange," it defines the concept Orange in terms of itself. <sup>17</sup> This is a circular definition – if we don't understand what the color "orange" is, then the definition doesn't go anywhere; it just moves in a circle.

The proper way to define "*orange*" is to that you mix the color red and the color yellow and you get the color orange.

- So – The **first rule** of definition says that you are to define something in terms **OTHER** than itself.
- Which makes what God said a really **CRUMMY ANSWER**. Because if Moses was seeking a definition when he asks "who are you?", and God answers "I Am Who I AM", then **God has violated the cardinal rule** of definitions which is to never define something in terms of itself.

What a definition tries to do is to use words or concepts from our vast experience of knowledge and experiences in life and tells us 3 or 4 things that you do know, so when you put those 3 or 4 things together, you'll know what this thing is. That's what we do if we give a definition of something.

Example: “*automobile*” – a four-wheeled vehicle powered by an internal combustion engine and travels over a roadway. So, we put together several things we do know about and can come up with a good approximation of that the word *automobile* means.

But, God doesn't do that.

Rabbi Fohrman's Question: What would it mean for God NOT to be evading the question when He says “I am...?” If I tell you “I am that I am” and *really being honest* with you (*and not trying to evade* the question), then I'm telling you something very fundamental.

SLIDE: NOT DEFINABLE

If the only possible way of defining something is by itself, then you're faced with something that is UTTERLY unique. Something for which you can't just throw together two or three other concepts and thereby understand this new concept.

- The thing itself is *utterly unique* – which is what God say about Himself. “*There is NOTHING in your life and experience that can explain me, I am not from your world, I am the maker of your world.*”

There is nothing in your experience (past, present or future) that you can put together that will remotely describe Me. I cannot tell you to look at x, y and z, and put them together and you'll have Me, because what I am is so profoundly different than anything in your experience, that it would be meaningless for Me to say "look at x, y and z" and you'll get Me. Rather, "I AM..."

- The ONLY thing that would remotely describe Me is Me. But nothing else that is in your experience can do it. That's what "I am..." means.

*I exist, but I am NOT definable. There is nothing in your world or experience that can give you an approximation of that which I am."*

#### SEPARATE – HOW TO RELATE?

Now, **the problem here, of course,** is that **the more you think of God as separate from who we are, the less sure you are that you can sort of relate to Him.** The Hebrew word "holy" ('kadosh' or 'qadosh') means separate, something completely other.<sup>18</sup>



- You think, *“I can’t touch Him, I can’t see Him, is He really there?”*

And that’s why God, right after saying I AM, says to Moses, “I am ... God of your father, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob.(vs. 6)”

Look, I had a relationship with your dad, so we can have a relationship with each other. That’s how you should remember me. But fundamentally, I am very different.

God is the Creator and God is making himself known in the Exodus. He says: ‘in the past, people could have thought about me, that I was just ‘El’, I was a Power, like any other power.’ Now, He says that He is the ONE Power unique from all the others; He is the monotheistic POWER– the Only POWER, and He is going to reveal that by virtue of the Exodus.

- How and WHY God is doing this at THIS point in human history will become apparent in future presentations.

OK – we may feel a little more comfortable with the text now, but... Holiness should never be totally comfortable.

SLIDE: YUD-HEY-VAV-HEY

After God tells Moses that His name is 'I AM', He then says to Moses:

"Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'YUD-HET-VAV-HEY, 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." (vs.15)

God says: YHWH - "This is **my name forever**" Exodus 3:15

What's going on here? I thought that He just said that "I AM THAT I AM" was His Name? Did God change His mind?

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God says: YHWH - "This is **my name forever**" Exodus 3:15

What's going on here? I thought that He just said that "I AM THAT I AM" was His Name? Did God change His mind?

- **Q:** Can we apply the same tactic of looking at the letters Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey as they occur in a Hebrew WORD rather than a Name, just like we did with EL and then try to infer what YHVH means?

SLIDE: YHWH

No – because there **IS** no word in Hebrew composed of the letters Y–H–W–H. It is only used as a NAME.

So, we can't really turn to the Hebrew language for guidance like what we did with the word EL; because the word yud and hey and vav and hey **does not mean anything other than God.**

Well, what do you do when you don't have any other reference point, any other time that this word appears? Rabbi Fohrman suggests that we etymologically **take the name apart by its individual letters** – ***what makes up the name YHVH?*** So, let's try to construct the word YHWH.

This is fascinating to me...

SLIDE: WAS, IS, WILL BE

When we speak of “*Eternal*”, we speak of time – past, present and the future, and when time ends (which it will), we will still be alive eternally.

So, here are the Hebrew words for “Was”, “Is” and Will Be”.

The Hebrew word for ‘was’ is **hayah**, the Hebrew word for ‘is’ is ‘**hoveh**’ – Bill Clinton “It depends upon what the meaning of the word 'is' is.” – and the Hebrew word meaning “to exist in the future” is ‘**yiheyeh**’.

Click> According to Rabbi Fohrman, when you take hayah (the word for *was*) and <click> then add on top of that the Hebrew word yiheyeh – *to exist in the future* – <click> and then put hoveh (the word for *is* – and really a reflection of **I AM**) on top of them, you can see right here that the overlay becomes yud and hey and vav and hey.<sup>19</sup>

➤ So, if you take the Hebrew words for ‘was, is and will be’ and overlay them on top of each other, you actually get yud and hey and vav and hey.

SLIDE: YHWH

Remarkable, isn’t it. The Creator God’s Eternal nature is reflected in His Name – past, present and future!

SLIDE: YHWH ETERNAL

So, the Name I AM THAT I AM and the Name YHVH are CLEAR reflections of each other – not the blurred reflection like El Shaddai is but a CLEAR one.

- God is a Person
- Unequaled
- Beyond Our Comprehension
- But... Present with us – He had a relationship with others before us, and
- He promises to **be with us**. *“I will be there as I will be there.”*

Well, Moses would go on to offer several other excuses to God as to why he was not the man for the job of confronting the Pharaoh

– we’ll get into those as part of the next session.

The next presentation will be a continuation of this encounter between Moses and God –> not sure when – we have a lot of speaking slots lined up –.

- Good Morning Midian – like Good Morning Vietnam – it’s time to wake up, Moses.
- The Theology in the Game of Monopoly, and

- The meaning of the name El Shaddai – *The God Who said to the world 'Enough'*. (again, based on Rabbi Fohrman's material *Va'era: Seeing God in Science*)

What's the takeaway for today?

SLIDE: CONNECT?

Psalm 145 says:

Great is the Lord, and highly to be praised  
And His greatness is... **UNSEARCHABLE.**

God comforted the Israelites in Egypt about the possibility of having a relationship with Him when He said – *Look, I had a relationship with your dad, so we can have a relationship with each other. That's how you should remember me. But fundamentally, I am very different.*

But what about us today – that relationship occurred over 3500 years ago between God and the **Jews** because of God's covenant with Abraham and his descendants. And most of us are not Jewish. What does this say to us?

Well – God says that He does not change His mind nor go back on His promises. Therefore, when **Jesus said that He is**

**the I AM, His invitation is to come follow Him. So, our link to YHVH is there thru Him.**

And there are several points we can think about in this great introduction incident at the burning bush:

Click>

**God met Moses where he worked everyday**

Malcolm Smith commentary<sup>20</sup>: God didn't speak to Moses in a great temple. He spoke to Moses on the side of the mountain. The side of the mountain was Moses' place of work.

- If you were a shepherd, your place of work was the side of the mountain.
- And in all probability, while Moses was having his lunch, he sees right there in the place where he works, the glory of God made manifest.
- God came to him not in a special holy place, but right where he worked; the place of his daily work was where the glory of God appeared.
- And because God's presence was there, all of a sudden it became holy.
- And the voice of God to him there was, "Take off your shoes. The place where you're standing is holy ground."

- It might look like any old pasture or a messy kitchen but in actual fact, it is the habitation of the glory of God.
- Now – you’ve got eyes to see it. Any old kitchen will do; any old factory floor, and any old computer desk. If you’ve got eyes to see, the place is filled with the glory of God.

SLIDE: COMMENT

### **And – The bush was not consumed**

Moses saw a bush that was burning but was not consumed – and all the while Moses is talking, the bush is burning but it is not being consumed.

- Then there’s something burning that bush that is NOT using the natural strength of the bush.
- God’s glory was in the bush – the bush burned but it wasn’t consumed because it wasn’t using its own natural strength because it would have been burned out before Moses got close to it.
- You’re just an old bush.
- You struggle to be like Jesus and pretty soon you’re a heap of ashes.



- But if you realize that bushes CAN'T do this, then the glory of God will come within the bush and I burn but I don't burn.
  
- When all was said and done, the bush was still just a bush
- The bush didn't suddenly turn into heavenly indestructible wood. It was still a bush.
- **And we don't turn *into* Jesus.**
- He is not me, and I am not He, but together it's a "we" – Christ in me, the hope of glory!

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SLIDE: JESUS

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

- We don't have to *figure out* how to approach this undefinable God because *Jesus tells us* how to do it, it is thru Him and Him alone.

The connection everyone needs has already been made. Jesus.

This presentation originally scheduled for January 1<sup>st</sup> but postponed until today. So – Happy New Year! As we think about the year 2017, God says...

SLIDE: He WILL be There

- “I will be there as I will be there”
- He WILL be there
- but perhaps not as we expect or wish for.
- Wind, earthquake, fire...
- Whisper, kisses
- He is there NOW
- I AM THAT I AM

Joni Eareckson Tada, [A Spectacle of Glory](#), January 1 devotional

“Lord, I have never been this way before. I have no idea what the year will hold... my health... for opportunities to serve You... for people to love and help and challenge in Your strong name. No matter whether the travel is easy or a mad scramble up a slippery trail in the dark, I know You – my Guide, my God, my Friend – will be with me.”

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Chabad.org, The 613 Commandments, Commandment #425  
[http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/756399/jewish/The-613-Commandments.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/756399/jewish/The-613-Commandments.htm)
- <sup>2</sup> Rabbi David Fohrman, AlephBeta, **The Lullaby of the Haggadah**
- <sup>3</sup> [https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don\\_stewart/don\\_stewart\\_273.cfm](https://www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_273.cfm)
- <sup>4</sup> *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Hebrew #2142. **zakar**
- <sup>5</sup> *Miriam Webster Dictionary*, #2
- <sup>6</sup> Tom Bradford, Torah Class, Exodus Lesson 3, chapter 2
- <sup>7</sup> Strong's 1242. *diathéké*
- <sup>8</sup> *JewishEncyclopedia*, WILL or TESTAMENT, <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14928-will>
- <sup>9</sup> R.C. Sproul, *Terms for the Covenant*, <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/terms-covenant/>
- <sup>10</sup> Strong's #6918. **qadosh**
- <sup>11</sup> Tom Bradford, Torahclass, *Exodus lesson 4, chapter 3* <http://www.torahclass.com/old-testament-studies/35-old-testament-studies-exodus/123-lesson-4-chapter3>
- <sup>12</sup> Kenneth Copeland, "Take Time to Pray" *Believer's Voice of Victory*, February 1987
- <sup>13</sup> Psalm 82:6
- <sup>14</sup> John 19:11
- <sup>15</sup> The Temple Institute, *The Priestly Garments*, [https://www.templeinstitute.org/priestly\\_garments.htm](https://www.templeinstitute.org/priestly_garments.htm)
- <sup>16</sup> Hebrews4Christians, *Hebrew Names of God*, [http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Names\\_of\\_G-d/Elohim/elohim.html](http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Names_of_G-d/Elohim/elohim.html)
- <sup>17</sup> Rules for Definitions, <http://www.wwnorton.com/college/phil/logic3/ch3/rules.htm>
- <sup>18</sup> Strong's #6918. **qadosh**
- <sup>19</sup> AlephBeta, *What's in a Name*, <https://www.alephbeta.org/course/lecture/whats-in-a-name>
- <sup>20</sup> Malcolm Smith, Exodus 1