

I AM THAT I AM

Exodus 3:1-15 provides the context within which this name of God is used.

3 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb. ² And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. ³ And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. ⁴ And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. ⁵ And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. ⁶ Moreover he said, I am the God of thy 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 upon God. ⁷ And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; ⁸ And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹ Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt. ¹¹ And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt? ¹² And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. 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? ¹⁴ And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 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. (Exodus 3:1-15, KJV)

Moses was hidden in the palace of the very Pharaoh who was killing the children of Israel. Moses grew up in his palace and was trained as a general in his army. At some point, Moses realized that he had a part to play in the deliverance of Israel. He tried to do it on his own terms and he killed an Egyptian in the process. His act was exposed and so he ran away to Midian. Moses then found himself in the desert tending sheep. He had moved from the palace to the back side of the desert. He was 40 years old when he left Egypt and he was eighty years old when he had the above encounter with God. He may have felt like God had forgotten him but God was preparing him for his role in the deliverance of the children of Israel. He may have felt like he was just waiting for his life to end, but God was not finished with him yet! He may have felt like he had wasted 40 years until he encountered the I AM and his story changed!

Everyday Moses would take the sheep to and from the mountains but the Bible says that one day, he came to the mountain of God. One day, he came into the tabernacle of God, into the presence of God and he had an encounter with the Almighty God. On the mountain of God, there is deliverance from despair and delay and as many as come, will enter into the purpose of God for their lives.

But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions. (Obadiah 1:17, KJV).

On the mountain, God used a burning bush to get Moses' attention. He had come to the mountain of God to receive a fresh commissioning, but still needed to give God his full attention. Some come into the presence of God but still do not give Him their full attention. God has been willing to change many stories, but many have been unwilling to turn to see what God wants to do in their lives. Many know they have a role to play in the Kingdom of God, but they have been resisting Him for a long time, and they continue to resist.

Moses turned aside to see a great sight - why the bush was not burnt. He turned aside and then the Lord spoke. **Until God gets our attention, He will not give the next instructions.** Instructions given when God does not have one's attention are abused.

Once God had Moses's attention, He introduced Himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Until you have a divine and personal relationship with God, you can never be persuaded to follow Him. Until God introduces Himself to you, He cannot commission you for the next level.

After introducing Himself, God said "I have surely seen the affliction of my people...and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows" The children of Israel had been in Egypt for 430 years to fulfil prophesy that was made to Abraham concerning his children. But God says He had not only SEEN and HEARD, but he KNOWS what His people are going through and He has come to help them. Whatever crisis going on in the lives of His children, God knows and has come to deliver them. The years that you have laboured with nothing to show for it...persistent sickness...loneliness...God knows what you are going through. He just asks that you look up to I AM.

Moses' reaction to God's declaration was to question his worth. He had been in the desert so long that he did not believe he had any value any longer. Many of us are overwhelmed by our limitations that we wonder how our situations can change, God is able to use the least in a family to bring light and deliverance to that family, as He did with Moses! How God will do it, we cannot understand, but we just need to remember that He is Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, Jehovah Elshaddai and that everything belongs to Him!

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. (John 15:5, KJV).

Moses thought he would be required to go in his own strength. He did not realize that as the Man of War, God was going to go before him and fight in a way that would leave no doubt in anyone's mind that it was Him who turned up for battle! It is not our place to figure out how what God had said will come to be. The vision may tarry but it will not die, it will be fulfilled at the right time.

Then he answered and spake unto me, saying, This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts. ⁷ Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it. ⁸ Moreover the word of the Lord came unto me, saying, ⁹ The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also finish it; and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto you. (Zechariah 4:6-9, KJV).

The enemy opposed the rebuilding of the temple and for eighteen years, it was left abandoned while the children of Israel built their own houses. The Lord then sent word to Zerubbabel that he had been doing the work in his own strength and that going forward, he would remove every opposition. Subsequently, the work of rebuilding the temple was completed in two years!

Moses still was not convinced. God had already introduced Himself to him, yet he asked what how he would introduce God to the children of Israel. This was when God then introduced Himself as the I AM THAT I AM! This is a personal name of God, in Hebrew, YAHWEH, a name believed by the Jews to be so holy that it is not to be spoken out loud. It means the God that is Ever-Present, the Eternal I Am, the One-Who-Has-No-Past, no begging, no future, no end. The One-Who-Exists-Outside-Time-and-Space, the Self-Existent One, the Self-Sufficient One - the one who looks to Himself for whatever He wants! He was telling Moses to tell the Israelites "whatever you need to leave Egypt, I AM. If you need help, miracles, soldiers, water, light, food, whatever you need is inside of me, I AM." For the sick, God is saying, "I AM your healer". For the weak, God is saying, "I AM your strength". For those in bondage, "I AM your deliverer". For the hungry, "I AM the

bread of life", for the thirsty "I AM the Fountain of Living Water". For the lonely "I AM Emmanuel", For the lost, "I AM the Way, the Truth and the Life". For those in darkness "I AM the Light of the World, the Brightness of my Glory". For the troubled "I AM the Prince of Peace". For those with a shaky foundation "I AM the Chief Cornerstone". When demons demand judgment "I AM your Savior! I AM your Mediator. I AM the Ransom for all!" If you are facing a battle "I Am the Man of War! I AM your Fortress." For those who lack, "I AM your sufficiency".

God is saying, "Whatever the issue, I AM."