

Research on: I AM THAT I AM

Ex. 3:1-5, 14

“To Moses was given a fuller revelation of the nature of God than had heretofore been known. God had declared Himself to Abraham as “the Almighty,” but to Moses he declared Himself as Jehovah, as the “I AM THAT I AM,” the Self-Existent One—“The living God.” To strengthen Moses’ confidence and to provide Israel with convincing testimony of Moses’ commission, he was given two visible signs of divine power—the turning of his rod into a serpent and the healing of the leprous hand” (Shotwell, 107).

“The years of Moses’s life are remarkably divided into three forties; the first forty he spent as a prince in Pharaoh’s court, the second a shepherd in Midian, the third a king in Jeshurun. He had now finished his second forty when he received his commission to bring Israel out of Egypt. Sometimes it is long before God calls his servants out to that work which of old he designed them for. Moses was born to be Israel’s deliverer, and yet not a word is said of him till he is eighty years of age” (Benson Commentary, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/3-1.htm>).

1 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.

“The names Horeb and Sinai seem to be synonymous, though it has been suggested that Horeb is the name given to the entire mountain range, while Sinai denotes the particular mountain where the Law was given” (Dummelow 51).

“One day Moses drives the flock ‘beyond’ (some try to translate it, ‘to the west of’; others, ‘far side of’) his usual grazing area in order to seek pasture for them” (*EBC* 1.363).

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.

“That’s a very important intersection for mankind because between Genesis and Exodus, there may be maybe nearly 400 years of silence between Joseph and Moses.

What caused the silence? Wasn’t God revealing? Wasn’t God communicating? Well, where did the fault lie? Since communication has that prefix **co**, the fault lies either with the source or the receiver. And we almost find an abrupt change as Moses becomes a receiver. And it took him some while before he became a receiver.

And there he was in the mostly unlikely place in the middle of Sinai, and here is a bush burning. But somehow it wasn't consumed. If that were happening in the middle of Times Square the local commuters and pedestrians would merely rustle their "Wall Street Journals" and walk on by,

But Moses stops to find out why. That makes him an inquirer and immediately casts him as an important scientific observer in the history of humanity. That's scientific inquiry, isn't it? He wants to know **why** that the bush hasn't burned.

And, at that moment, he receives communication. And he receives one of the greatest breakthroughs about God, one that every one of us must have today before we can progress in any comprehension of the Godhead, I AM.

Why is that such a breakthrough? Because here those children of Israel for nearly 400 years in bondage had been worshipping the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who lived hundreds of years before. After many centuries of long, tired prayers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and nothing happening currently, what happens to any concept of God as I AM? It really becomes you're worshipping not an I AM God, but what? an I WAS God.

And that's a God who is dead. And not too long ago, "Time" magazine, on their cover, brought that back again. That's a I WAS God. Here the tremendous pushing aside, waiting for the receiver, Moses, to get that point: "I AM, the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, and I AM has sent me unto you."

I'm still I AM. I'm not a God of the past.

Ex 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" (Cobbey Crisler).

"Fire is a frequent emblem of God in the Scriptures on account of its illuminating, purifying, and destructive properties, and appears as the accompaniment and indication of His presence . . . A sacred fire had sealed the Abrahamic covenant (Gen. 15:1), marked the presence of God at the burning bush (Ex. 3:2-4) guided and protected the Israelites by a pillar of fire (Ex. 13:21; 14:19,20), been manifest on Mount Sinai at the giving of the Ten Commandments (Ex. 19:18), accompanied the translation of Elijah (II Ki. 2:11), and was the sign to Elisha of preservation from the Syrian army (II Ki. 6:17). . . At Mount Horeb an angel appeared to Moses in a flame of fire out of a burning bush; and though the bush burned it was not consumed. By this sign Jehovah made known His presence and power to Moses (Ex. 3:1-6)" (Shotwell, 168).

"Moses' experience t the Burning Bush (Ex. 4) opened his eyes to the great truth that God is the I AM THAT I AM: the only Soul, or Ego; the one Cause, Creator or Principle. . . It is interesting to note that the hotheaded, impulsive prince had become a humble, patient

shepherd, wise enough now to lead his people out of bondage Neither he nor they had been ready before” Tatham, 104).

The major point here is that the bush is burning, but is not consumed.

3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

See is *ra'ah* in Hebrew which means “to perceive, consider, have vision, behold, discern, distinguish, look intently” (Strong’s 2095).

Burnt is *ba'ar* in Hebrew which means “to consume, to feed upon, to eat up, to be consumed with fire” (Strong’s 1197).

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.

“**See** is *ra'ah* in Hebrew which means “to perceive, consider, have vision, behold, discern, distinguish, look intently” (Strong’s 2095).

“He doubles the name, partly to show kindness and familiarity, and principally to make Moses more attentive to the business before him.” (Matthew Poole’s Commentary).

“God called unto him out of the midst of the bush; with an articulate voice, being the eternal Word:

“and said, Moses, Moses; for the Lord knows his people distinctly, and can call them by name; and the repetition of his name not only shows familiarity and a strong vehement affection for him, but haste to stop him, that he might proceed no further; and this was done in order to stir him up to hearken to what would be said to him:

“and he said, here am I; ready to hear what shall be said, and to obey whatever is commanded.” (Gill’s Exposition).

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.

Place in Hebrew is *maqom* which means “a standing place, a station, human abode” (Strong’s 4725).

Holy is *qodesh* in Hebrew which means “what is holy, a holy thing, a sanctuary, apartness, sacredness, separateness, set apart, consecrated, dedicated, hallowed, holy” (Strong’s 6944).

“Dummelow has, “Every place where God manifests Himself is holy. To take off the shoes is an ancient as well as modern way of expressing reverence in the East.”

God had commanded Moses to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. Like Moses, we need to take off our shoes on holy ground—we need to take off the "covering" of the whole human ego, which seems to war against our divine sonship. It is essential to put off the covering of human will, to take off all the thickness of pride, self-love, self-righteousness, and—humbly confiding in God's will—let our real sonship shine forth. Then we can stand on the holy ground of God's allness, where, in truth, we always are. In order to take off our shoes in this way we must learn to bear witness to truth with *spiritual* sense. Spiritual sense shows us the perfection of man and God's ever-present goodness. (“The burning bush”, Georgiana Lieder Lahr, March 2, 1987, CSS).

“When God revealed Himself to Moses as the great I Am, He said ([Ex. 3:5](#)), "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." There was nothing particularly holy about the spot where Moses stood. It was a lonely place in the wilderness with little to commend it, but his sudden awareness of God's presence transformed it into holy ground and so pointed the way to transforming all other places. The understanding of God as "the ever-present I Am, filling all space," always has power to make holy the place where we are. . . The place whereon thou standest" is at the same time a place to live, a place to worship, and a place to work. It is a mental standpoint which is capable of infinite expansion as long as it is dominated by the understanding of God's indivisible ever-presence. (“The place whereon thou standest” by Evelyn M.S. Duckett, April 26, 1958, CSS).

“Put off thy shoes from thy feet — This is required as a token of his reverence for the Divine Majesty, then and there eminently present; of his humiliation for his sins, which rendered him unworthy to appear before God; of his putting away all sin in his walk or conversation; and of his submission and readiness to obey God’s will; for which reason slaves were wont to approach their masters barefooted. . . putting off the shoes was then what putting off the hat is now, a token of respect and submission” (Benson Commentary, www.biblehub.com).

“ put off thy shoes—The direction was in conformity with a usage which was well known to Moses, for the Egyptian priests observed it in their temples, and it is observed in all Eastern countries where the people take off their shoes or sandals, as we do our hats. But the Eastern idea is not precisely the same as the Western. With us, the removal of the hat is an expression of reverence for the place we enter, or rather of Him who is worshipped

there. With them the removal of the shoes is a confession of personal defilement and conscious unworthiness to stand in the presence of unspotted holiness”
(www.biblehub.com Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Commentary.)

14And 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.

“Now, what’s so beautiful about that is that Jesus took the statement a little further later in the gospels. He said that that’s the proof that there’s a resurrection, that man is eternal. You remember that in his argument with the Sadducees? He made the point that since God said, “I AM the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,” what did that do for Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob?”

If “I **AM** the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac...” where are Isaac and Jacob? (See below, Partial)

Ex 1:6 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.

They are still living. So, you see, Jesus elevated manhood to eternity just as Moses saw, in the revelation from God, that God was eternal and always I AM.

Jesus added that God was now revealing that makes man eternal. Now, what does that do to church and the concept of man working together cooperatively? An immense breakthrough!” (Cobbey Crisler).

“The story tells us that Moses’ sight was not dim. Like the burning bush, which illustrates the operable, ever presence, eternal, indestructible nature of true substance. He demonstrated that substance in various ways during the trek over Sinai. Their shoes and clothes didn’t wax old. Moses’ eyes were clear, undiminished. He caught that vision that the substance of all things is spiritual and indestructible and permanent. That law of God is the law of harmony and continuity of good for every spiritual idea.

“Gradually their God became the I AM THAT I AM, the Self-created, always existing Being. And finally, as revealed to and by the great Literary Prophets, He became the One and Only God of the whole universe. The author of Genesis One was obviously aware of this great truth: the ALL-power must be the Only Power” (Tathem 8, Old Testament Made Easy).

“The significance of the fact that the appellation "I AM" belongs to God and not to man is worthy of careful consideration. We are led by both reason and revelation to see that since there is but one God there can be but one "I AM," and

that one not mortal but immortal, not imperfect but perfect, not human but divine. The truth then is the truth now. Man as the reflection of God cannot, therefore, think or correctly speak of himself as having existence independent of God, but rather as the expressed image and likeness of "I Am." "Because "I AM" is Spirit, God, the being which is "holiness, harmony, immortality" man is clearly seen to be its individual likeness in multitudinous forms. There are then in reality no common men, no illiterates, no degraded ones, no sick, no sinners, no dead; but all true individualities are the perfect expressions of the one ever perfect "I AM." ("I Am" Julia Warner Michael, CSS, May 22, 1915)

"He that IS, and WAS, and IS TO COME. It explains his name Jehovah, and signifies, 1st, That he is self-existent: he has his being of himself, and has no dependence on any other. And being self-existent, he cannot but be self-sufficient, and therefore all-sufficient, and the inexhaustible fountain of being and blessedness. That he is eternal and unchangeable: the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." (Benson Commentary, <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/exodus/3-14.htm>).

"When used of God, 'name' in the OT has a revelatory content. The name of God means primarily his revealed nature and character. . . As expressing essential nature, it implies the most complete divine self-disclosure, while the identification of name and person safeguards the unity of God. . . To know the name of God is to know God himself as he is revealed" (IDB 3.502).

Sue Harper Mims, in an article from the *Christian Science Sentinel*, October 7, 1905, writes:

"Recognition of the voice of Truth, and obedience to it, open the door to spiritual illumination, hence there was poured into Moses' receptive consciousness the glorious revelation of God as the 'I am that I am,' – the one individual supreme Mind, or infinite Being, the one intelligence that guided Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the 'strong Deliverer' from the bondage of Egypt."

God as I AM must have relevance to the Hebrew's trek from bondage. One cannot strike a match to the term I AM and reduce it to ashes.

ARTICLES FROM THE PERIODICALS TO EXPAND THOUGHT:

"The Burning Bush," by Samuel Johnstone MacDonald, Nov. 6, 1915, CSS.

“Moses,” by Lloyd B. Coate, Sept. 1906, CSJ.

“Put off thy shoes,” Elsie L. Wightman, Jan. 25, 1913, CSS.

“I Am,” John L. Carter, Christian Science Journal, June 1921.