

PM Exodus 2:23-3:22

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Date: 26 July 2026

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[0:00] Begins with where Genesis leaves off. Genesis leaves off with Jacob's family. The twelve sons of Jacob and their families going down into Egypt because of famine in the land of Canaan.

! And they settle there. And at first they're in a favourable position. Joseph is the prime minister. But then later, that generation dies out as a new pharaoh comes. They are oppressed and put under slavery and forced to build cities for the Egyptians.

Much later on, the Egyptians, fearing the population, fearing the growth of the Israelites, they adopt a very brutal form of population control which is killing every newborn son, infant son.

And in that situation, Moses is born. Moses is hidden by his parents in a basket in the rushes and is discovered by Pharaoh's daughter who adopts him and brings him up as her own child in the royal palace with Moses' mother as his nurse. So Moses grows up in that position of privilege.

And then at the age of 40, he sees an Egyptian slave master beating a Hebrew slave and takes things into his own hands and kills the Egyptian. That is found out and Moses has to flee for his life.

[1:38] And he flees to Midian where he settles and gets married to Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro, the priest of Midian.

And so this takes place after 40 years of being there in Midian. So we take up the reading in Exodus 2 verse 23.

During those many days, the king of Egypt died and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God and God heard their groaning.

And God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel and God knew. Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian.

And he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.

[2:50] He looked and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. And Moses said, I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned.

When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, Moses, Moses. And he said, here I am.

Then he said, do not come near. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground. And he said, 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 surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.

I know their sufferings. And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of 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 place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and Jebusites.

[4:15] And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.

Come, I will send you to Pharaoh, that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt. But Moses said to God, Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?

He said, He said, God said, But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.

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? God said to Moses, I am who I am. And he said, Say this to the people of Israel, I am has sent me to you.

[5:30] 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. 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.

And I promise that I will bring you up, out of the affliction of Egypt, to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

A land flowing with milk, and honey. And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel, shall go to the king of Egypt, and say to him, The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us, and now, please let us go, a three days journey, into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice, to the Lord, our God.

But I know, that the king of Egypt, will not let you go, unless compelled, with a mighty hand. So I will stretch out my hand, and strike Egypt, with all the wonders, that I will do in it.

[7:00] After that, he will let you go. And I will give this people, people favor, in the sight of the Egyptians. And when you go, you shall not go empty, 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. May God bless, that reading of his word.

Let's join together again, in prayer. I'd like us to turn back, to Exodus chapter 3, on page 55, of the church bible.

What's in a name? We all have a name. Maybe, you were named, after a relative. Or maybe your parents, named you after someone, they admired, and respected.

Most names have, some meaning. My name, Duncan, actually means, brown warrior, or brown chief, which, always makes my, Pakistani friends laugh.

[8:25] But I don't think, my parents chose it, because of the, of that meaning. I don't actually know, why they chose the name, but they must have liked it. But in western culture, we, you know, choose names for our children, because, maybe we like the sound, of that name.

Or because it has, some good, association. But in biblical, times, in the biblical cultures, names, often had, great, significance, and meaning.

And, they would speak, of the nature, the character, the attributes, of a person. Either, what maybe the parents, hoped, would be, the nature, the character, of the child, that they were naming.

Or sometimes, someone is given, a new name. Someone like Jacob, who was named, Israel, by God. Because, of the meaning of that name, that Israel means, he struggles, with God.

And other people, throughout the scriptures, are given names, to represent, maybe something about them, or something that had happened, to them. So, names, in, biblical culture, often had, great, significance.

[9:39] And that is also true, of, God's, own name. And, in this passage, we read, of, God revealing, his own name, and, the significance, of that name, to Moses.

And so, I want to look at the passage, really under three headings. First of all, God's appearance. Second, God's concern. And third, God's name. God's name.

So, at this time, Moses is 80 years old. At the age of 40, he had fled from Egypt, after having killed, an Egyptian. And, he has spent, 40 years, in the wilderness, as a shepherd, tending the flocks, of his father-in-law, Jethro, in the scrub, and sparse, grazing land, of, the wilderness.

wilderness. And, he comes to, the west side, of the wilderness. This is the wilderness, of Sinai. And, he comes to, what is called, the mountain of God.

Now, it's called the mountain of God, basically, for what, is going to happen, not what has, already taken place. It's, kind of named, in prospect, of that.

[11:00] And, it's called, Horeb, and later referred to, as, Sinai. And, the location is, traditionally, it's on the, on the Sinai Peninsula, what is in today, part of Egypt, and, on a ridge, between two peaks, and there's a peak, called Jebel Musa, which basically means, Moses Mountain, which is, about, seven and a half thousand, feet.

But, for Moses, this is just, another day, in his life, as a shepherd, taking care of his flocks, an ordinary day, until he encounters, something, and someone, that would, radically, alter, the course, of his life, of his people's life, and indeed, world history, forever.

In verse two, we read that, the angel, of the Lord, appeared to him, in a flame of fire, out of the midst, of, a bush. Now, if you, read the Bible, you will come across, many times, angels, and, usually, angels are, created beings, they're part of creation, they're these heavenly beings, who are usually unseen, to human eyes, but they're, they're heavenly beings, but they're created beings. But then also, sometimes, in the Old Testament, we come across, this singular, character, the angel, of the Lord, or sometimes, it could be translated, the messenger, of, the Lord.

And, it's a single, individual, figure. And, this figure, the angel of the Lord, appears, on, a number of times, throughout the book of Genesis, to various people, throughout that book.

[12:53] And, one of the, intriguing features, of this figure, is that, the angel of the Lord, speaks, for the Lord, as the Lord's messenger, but also speaks, as, the Lord.

So, sometimes he speaks, as one distinct, from the Lord, but then sometimes, he speaks, as one who is, identified, as, the Lord. And sometimes, that's interchangeable, even in the same, passage, in the same, appearance.

And here, in this, occurrence, this appearance, he's, identified, with, the Lord himself, as the Lord himself. In verse 2, we read, about the angel of the Lord, appeared to him.

And then, in verse 4, we read, that when the Lord, saw, that Moses turned aside, to see. And then, God called, to him, out of the bush.

So, the angel of the Lord, the Lord, and, God, are, the same being. They're identified, with each other.

[14:05] And, Moses, in verse 6, is afraid, to look, at God. And that, tells us that, Moses understood this, to be a, a manifestation, of God, in these flames, in, in the bush.

And, this, fire, symbolizes, the presence, of, God, the presence, of the Lord. Fire, is, pure, and purifying.

And I think it, points to, the holiness, of God. Later on, in fact, at this same place, at Sinai, God would again, appear, in the form of fire.

In, in Exodus 13, God, um, leads, the, the Israelites, out of Egypt, in a pillar of cloud, by day, which turns into a pillar of fire, by night.

And then in, Exodus chapter 19, God descends, on Mount Sinai, in fire. We read in, um, Exodus 19, verse 18, that the, the mountain was covered in smoke, because the Lord, descended on it, in fire.

[15:20] And, Moses is, is curious. He says, I will go over, and see this site. Now, it's not known for bushes, to spontaneously, spontaneously, combust, to get set on fire, in, in the intense heat, of that part of the world.

But what was really weird, about this, was that, there was a fire, but the bush, was not being, burned up. Of course, we may have seen, on the television, some of the terrible, forest fires, in Spain, and France.

And they leave, just a charred, blackened, uh, mess, behind them. Or, some of the, the, the, the more than fires, in, in the Cairngorms, that have been going on, as well, similar.

They just leave, sort of a blackened, you know, burned, uh, patches, of what was, formerly heather. And yet, by contrast, this is just, this bush, it's still green, it's still fresh.

It's burning away, but it's not being, consumed. It is utterly, strange, and weird. And in verse 4, God, the Lord, calls, Moses, from the midst, of the bush.

[16:27] He calls, Moses, by name. And Moses says, here I am. In verse 5, God says to him, do not come near, take your sandals, off your feet, for the place, in which you are standing, is, holy ground.

God cannot be, approached, casually, just as fire, is threatening, and to be treated, with respect. So God, must be treated, with the, utmost respect, and reverence, because he is, holy.

Moses is told, take off your sandals. Today, in Pakistan, India, that part of the world, that is what you do, especially in, in sort of places of worship, mosques, temples, churches, people take off their shoes, at the door, even going into someone's house.

That is normally what, you would do, because your shoes, are contaminated, with the ground, and so you take them off, as a mark of respect, for the holiness, of the ground.

That was what, Moses is told to do. And he is told, the place is, holy ground. This is actually, only the second occurrence, of the word, holy, in the Bible.

[17 : 42] The first occurrence, is in Genesis, chapter 2, verse 3. Where, the Sabbath, is set apart, as a holy day, as a day of rest, because God rested, on that day.

And, the word holy, just means, it means distinct, separate, set apart, from what is common, and ordinary. And this place, is not, it's not holy, in and of itself, but because of the presence, of the holy God, in that place, where the burning bush is.

So, in verse 6, God, identifies himself. He said, I am the God, of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God, of Jacob.

The God, who has had, past dealings, with Moses, and his people's ancestors. And Moses, hides his face, for fear, of God. Well then, second, we come to God's concern.

In verses 7 to 10, God has, a message. This is the reason, that God has appeared. He hasn't just, appeared for no reason. He has come, with a message, for Moses.

[19 : 02] And, this message, expresses God's, concern, for his people, Israel. Israel, the Israelites, had been, 400 years, in Egypt.

Most of which, had been, they had been, oppressed, as slaves. And, God here, speaks of, hearing, their cry, because of their, taskmasters.

I know their, sufferings. And, in verse 9, the cry, of the people, of Israel, has come, to me. And I have also, seen the oppression, with which the, Egyptians, oppressed them.

And the background, to that is in, chapters 1 and 2, of, Exodus. And, the Israelites, have been there, now for centuries. Way beyond, living memory.

They've been there, for generations. Think of 400 years, for us that would, take us back to, 1625.

And, I don't know about you, but to me, 1625 just seems like, ancient history.

[20 : 06] It's, it's ages and ages ago. The world was a very, different place, in those days. And, so to the Israelites, in Egypt, it probably just seemed that, this is our fate.

We will always be here. Nothing's going to change. We've been here for, for decades, for centuries, for generations. And, it's just, just the way things are.

And, there was no hope, of any, anything, to change, in that situation. and yet, God says, I have seen them, I have heard, and I know, their cries, have come, to me, and I have seen, their affliction. And, today we can, apply that, in a number of ways. We can apply it, in a very general way. That, because we live in a world today, where, there are many people, who are oppressed, who, somehow, are actual slaves.

But, others are, just, under the thumb, of, of, tyrants, and oppressors. And, God sees that, God knows that. Nothing of that, is, is hidden to God.

[21 : 10] And, God will one day, put, all, injustice, to right. But, also, we can apply it, specifically, to, God's people today, who, are oppressed, and, persecuted.

And, God, is not indifferent to that. God cares, for his people. He knows, about that, and he is concerned, for them. And, also, for them.

God will one day, bring justice. But, also, we can apply it, in a spiritual way, because, the Exodus, is the great, Old Testament, paradigm, of, God's salvation.

And, in the New Testament, we, read of, often, Exodus language, is used, about, the rescue, of God's people, from the slavery, of, our sins.

And, God sees our need, our need, of, rescue, of, deliverance. And, God has acted, to meet that need, in, the ultimate event, the ultimate Exodus, which is even greater, than this Exodus, the, Exodus, that Christ brings about, for his people, in his death, and resurrection.

[22 : 23] when, in verse 8, God speaks about, delivering them, from, the hand, of the Egyptians, and delivering them, to, a good land, a broad land, flowing with milk, and honey.

And, that is in fulfillment, of God's promise, to Abraham, way back, in Genesis. Genesis. But, also the land, signifies, a partial restoration, of the Garden of Eden.

That, beautiful, paradise, where, humans had, fellowship, perfect fellowship, with God. Of course, it is not a, it is not a full restoration, of that, because, the Israelites, in, the land of promise, would still be sinners.

They would need, atonement in that. But, for us today, as we, we read this, we, can think of, God's deliverance for us, from sin, from the consequences, of those sins, from its guilt, its power, its punishment.

And, God, has brought us, into fellowship, with himself. And ultimately, that will, culminate, in the new heavens, and the new earth, in that place, a real place, where we will enjoy, perfect fellowship, with God.

[23 : 40] Where we will enjoy, Eden, restored. And, in verse 10, God brings, Moses, into the picture.

And, God commissions him, in verse 10, come, I will send you, to Pharaoh, that you may bring, my people, the children of Israel, out, of Egypt.

So, we've seen, God's, appearance, God's concern. And third, we come to, God's name. In verse 11, Moses objects, to God.

Who am I, that I should go, to Pharaoh, and bring the children, of Israel, out of Egypt. And this is the first, of four, objections, protests, on the part, of, Moses.

This is a very different, Moses, from the, man of 40 years earlier, who had, tried to, liberate his people, by violent means. Back then, he had, maybe been, self-confident, as one, who had been, brought up, in the royal household, and, had all the benefits, of the education, and the privileges, of that upbringing.

[24 : 55] But now, his, self-confidence, has, completely gone. Who am I, that I should, do this, lead these people out? Now, Moses' reluctance, is, is sinful.

There's, there's a disobedience here. And, later on, the Lord gets angry with him, because of his, sort of, refusal to, to do this. But it is significant, that God, chooses now, after all this time, after Moses has spent, 40 long years, in the wilderness, just looking after sheep, in, in this dry, and barren landscape.

Now, after all that time, God chooses, to use him, for this great, task. When, Moses' self-confidence, has, completely, evaporated.

And I think, often, too much, of our self-confidence, can get, in the way, of God's work. If we're confident, in ourselves, in our own abilities, in our own learning, or in, just our own, personal talents, that can get in the way, of the work of God.

And we see that, God's response to Moses, is not to, kind of boost, his self-confidence. God doesn't say to him, yeah, actually, you're great Moses, you've got loads to offer, you're a really talented guy, you've got great potential, as a leader.

[26 : 21] No, there's none of that. God's, sort of, encouragement, is simply, I will, be with you. That is the covenant, promise of God's, presence, with his people.

And, it's, in Moses' weakness, in his, lack of self-confidence, in his, lack of self-assurance, his, awareness of his own, limitations, his limitations, as a speaker, that God promises, that he will, be with him.

It's like, if you imagine a child, and, there's a playground, where there's, lots of, maybe older, bigger kids, who are bullies, and out to get, the child. The child has, his father with him, and feels safe, with that.

That is the promise of God, that God is, God will be with him. Moses is not, alone in this task. God promises, that he will go with him.

Today also, God commissions us, with a task, as his people. We think of the great commission, to go and make disciples, of all nations. Baptizing them, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

[27 : 30] And teaching them, to obey, all that, the Lord Jesus, has commanded. And that's a, a very daunting task. But the Lord Jesus, also promises, that same covenant promise, I will be with you, always, until the end, of the age.

So Moses, objects, again, in verse 13, and, then God reveals to him, his name. And as we've mentioned, in that culture, name, the name, a name was highly significant.

It pointed to the attributes, the characteristics, of a person. And in verses 14 and 15, God said to Moses, Moses asks, the 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? God said to Moses, I am, who, I am. And then, God said, and he said, say this to the people of Israel, I am, has sent me, to you.

So this name, I am, who I am, is also related to, the name, you will see, in, verse 15, God also said to Moses, say this to the people of Israel, the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, etc.

[29:05] And, you can see, the word Lord there, and, there is a footnote, in the, this version of the Bible, that says, the word Lord, and it's Lord, you will notice in, in capital letters, the Lord, when spelled with capital letters, stands for the divine name, Yahweh, which is here connected, with the, the verb, Haya, to be, in verse 14.

So, in, in Hebrew, I am who I am, is, Echye, Asher, Echye. And, that means, that's the first person, I am who I am.

In the third person, Yahweh, it's like, He is, that's the meaning, of the word, of the name of God. So, God's name is, is Yahweh, He is, it is, I am who I am.

That is the name, of God. And, there's two, I think, possible, meanings to this, points of significance to this.

One is that, it could be, you could translate it, I will be, what I will be. And, it may be an expression, of God's, constancy. That God is a covenant, keeping God.

[30:22] That God, is faithful. He will not, let, Moses, He will not let, his people down. That is one, possible meaning of this. And, the other, and they're not, they're not, mutually exclusive.

They could both be, they could both be, signified, by this name. But, the other is that, God, that God, Yahweh, is the ultimate, reality in the universe.

That He is the eternal, underrived, unoriginated God. In the, the Greek translation of this, which was from, the second and third centuries BC, it's, the translation in Greek, it's, which literally means, the being one.

And, we see something like that, in Revelation 1, verse 8, where, God says, I am the Alpha, and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

And so, it's just that, God is the being one, the one who, simply, exists. And, I think it's connected to, to the fire, the burning bush. That fire, that burning bush, is a symbol, of the presence, of God.

[31:39] And, out of that fire, God speaks. And, remember that the bush, was not burned up, it was not, consumed. This fire was burning away, and of course, normally fire needs fuel.

Without fuel, fire, well it doesn't burn, it doesn't, and, if you don't, keep fueling a fire, it'll just die out. So, fire always needs, fuel.

And yet, the strange, and unique thing, about this fire, was it had no need of fuel. The bush, was not, consumed. The fire is, independent, it just simply burns, of itself.

And that is an illustration, of the God, who simply is. Whose existence, is, utterly, independent, of all other things, and underived. That's in contrast, with creation, with everything else, with ourselves. You know, we need food, we need oxygen, we need water, we need heat, we need light, to exist. But by contrast, God needs, nothing to exist.

[32:45] He is not dependent, on anything else. He is completely, independent. His existence, is independent. It is underived. It is unoriginated. He is the self-existent, uncreated, eternal, God.

And it's expressed, by his name, Yahweh. I am, who I am. And this should evoke in us, awe, and worship.

Go home and reflect on this, that God is, the one who, whose existence, is completely, independent, of all, anything else. that is under, under, under, under, under, uncreated.

And God says that, um, this name, um, in, um, sorry, verse, uh, 15, um, is the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac.

So this is not, the God of Jacob. This is not some new God appearing. This is the same God, who has appeared to their fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob. He is the God, the God of Genesis.

[33:56] The God who is revealed in that book. And then God says, this is my name, forever, in, uh, verse 15. This is my name, forever.

He is the eternal God. And also, uh, in, verse 15, this is my name, forever, and thus, I am to be remembered, throughout, all, generations.

This is not just relevant for Moses, and, the people of that time. It is for all, generations. Well, finally, I just want to notice, how, the New Testament, kind of takes this theme, and develops it.

In, in a monumental statement, of, the Lord Jesus, in, John chapter 8, verse, 58. In, John 8, Jesus is in, disputes with many, of the Judeans.

And in, verse 56, Jesus says to them, your father, Abraham, rejoiced, that he would see, my day. He saw it, and was glad.

[35:06] So the Jews said to him, you are not yet, 50 years old, and have you seen, Abraham? Jesus said to them, truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I, am.

Now, that is actually, quite a strange, way to speak. You know, normally, if, Jesus is wanted just to, show that he existed, before Abraham, which of course, would be remarkable enough, he would say, before Abraham was, I was.

But he doesn't say that, he says, before Abraham was, I am. He uses that, present, tense. And, what Jesus is doing there, is he is taking on, himself, the name, of God, the divine name.

Jesus is claiming, that this, name, this divine name, is his own name. And that has, of course, enormous implications, for, Christology, that means, our understanding, of Christ.

It tells us, that Jesus is identified, as, this God, this same God, who appeared to Moses, that Jesus, is this God. He is claiming that, for himself.

[36 : 24] But it also has, it not only has, huge implications, for our Christology, that's our understanding, of Christ. It has, huge implications, for our theology.

That means, our understanding, of God. Because God, is revealed, in, Christ. He is the word of God, in John's language. He makes God, known to us, to a depth, that Moses, never knew.

And so, just as God, appeared, to Moses, in the flames, of this bush. God has appeared, to us now, in the person, in and as the person, of, Jesus Christ.

And so, if you want to know, this God, well, hear what Jesus says, in John 14, anyone who has seen me, has seen, the Father.

In Jesus Christ, we have the fullest, revelation of God. There is no, un-Christ likeness, in God. He is the word, the one, who, reveals him.

[37 : 32] May God bless, his word, to us. Let us, conclude our worship. Thank you.