

Exodus 3:1-15ⁱⁱ

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 LORD of God. 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." 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." Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 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, 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." 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?" God 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.'" God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations.

ⁱⁱ **About the Exodus 3:1-15**

This passage records Moses' life-changing encounter with God. Here God's name and character are revealed as Moses is commissioned as God's agent. The fiery bush signifies God's presence and activity. In response to God's presence, Moses hides his face, for in Hebrew thought it was fatal to see the Lord directly. God is revealed as imminent, who chooses to be in a relationship of commitment and even intimacy with God's people. The transcendent God sees, hears, knows and has come down to deliver. God's transcendent holiness does not preclude divine immanence and compassion.

God sums up the mysterious, divine character by revealing it in a personal name, YHWH. As a form of "to be" it can be understood as present ("I AM"), future ("I WILL BE [with you]") or the causative ("I CAUSE [things] TO BE"). When speaking, God says simply "I AM." When speaking of God, we use this verb form as God's proper name. This suggests a dynamic and outgoing concept of God, reflecting God's activity in history rather than simply describing God's eternal being as self-contained and changeless.