

**The Village Church – Rancho Santa Fe**  
**Wednesday Morning Women’s Bible Study**  
**Week #3**

**Exodus 3:1-22**

**September 27, 2023**

---

**Introduction**

1. The Call of Moses and the Conversation With God
2. “Call Narrative” is often found in scripture:
  - a. Such as with Gideon or Jeremiah
  - b. Elements of a Call:
    - i. Theophany – divine appearance
    - ii. Introductory word
    - iii. Divine commission
    - iv. Objection
    - v. Reassurance
    - vi. Sign
3. Here, Moses is called to be a messenger of the word of God – the first such instance in scripture
4. Conversation (Dialogue)
  - a. Moses is not passive in the conversation
  - b. Moses disagrees, challenges God
  - c. God does not demand passivity or acquiescence from Moses
  - d. Moses’ questions prompt God to reveal more of himself
  - e. Moses and God are in real relationship, give and take

**Exodus 3:1-6**

5. Horeb – literally, “wasteland”
6. Moses’ encounter takes place far removed from “normal” places of religious activity
7. God appears to a shepherd in the wilderness with good news – where else does this happen in scripture?
8. The “Burning Bush” – note, the bush is not burning, but is the place where the Presence is located, in Fire
  - a. Moses is curious – and God uses his curiosity as occasion for dialogue
  - b. What Moses *sees* plays an important role in what Moses *hears*
    - i. Words are not the only way that God speaks to us
  - c. God uses nature as a vehicle for expression, presence
  - d. Moses is *afraid* to look at God, indicating that God was there and physically present and “seeable”
  - e. Moses turns away (hides his face) but that does not end the encounter
9. God chooses to encounter Moses, not the other way around
  - a. The “divine initiative” (God chose Abraham in similar way)
  - b. In choosing Moses, God picks someone who has demonstrated an ability and experience suitable for the task ahead: someone who will confront the injustice of slavery
    - i. What Moses was created as will help shape what Moses will do
10. God’s appearance makes the place holy
  - a. Sinai/Horeb becomes sacred place in history
  - b. Removing shoes shows respect
11. God identifies himself
  - a. The god of *your* father
  - b. This is about the story of God over time in history
  - c. God takes sides with oppressed Israel
  - d. “God’s history with Israel is of one piece.” (Fretheim)

**Exodus 3:7-12**

12. Moses’ Responses to God
  - a. Deference, Obedience, Questioning

13. Note: Moses is not overpowered by God
14. Moses is not ambitious nor afraid (he will take the lead)
15. Moses has some influence in how God's plan will proceed
16. God will act *through* Moses
17. Canaan
  - a. Israel will not only be saved but also set in a new place where it will continue in relationship with God and fulfillment of its created purpose
  - b. Deliverance *from* is also deliverance *to*
18. God has *seen* a situation, there Moses is *sent* to deal with it
19. God has a claim upon the people, they are *my* people – this is divine election, which then results in Israel's call to response
20. God sees: God identifies with and experiences the suffering of his people
  - a. See Isaiah 53 where God's Servant also suffers and grieves
21. God must do for Israel what it cannot do for itself
22. God's call plays out in the *sociopolitical* realm – the real world, not just the “religious” world
23. Because God does not oppress, neither is Israel to oppress
24. Moses asks, “Who am I?” to do this work
  - a. Reluctance follow readiness
  - b. God does not so much tell Moses who he is as God simply assures Moses that he will be with him
  - c. There will be a future sign – Israel's worship on Sinai – that will occur only much later – as proof that God's call and presence are/will be/were real and true

### Exodus 3:13-22

25. Moses' shifts his questioning from “who am I? (to go do as you command) but “who are you” (that you should/can command me).
  - a. Because of Moses' question, God reveals more!
  - b. 3:14 is one of the most puzzling verses in scripture
  - c. “Yahewh”
    - i. A repetition of the verb “to be”
    - ii. I am who I am
    - iii. I will be what/who I will be
    - iv. I will cause to be what I will cause to be
    - v. I will be who I am / I am who I will be
    - vi. I will be God for you
  - d. God is not arbitrary or capricious (as were other gods in polytheism)
  - e. God is, therefore, to be trusted, faithful, “the same yesterday, today, forever”
  - f. Translation Issues:
    - i. LORD – based on post-OT times when Jews read “Adonai” when they came across “Yhwh” (with Adonai meaning “Lord”) (and in Greek, with Kyrios meaning “Lord”)
    - ii. NT generally uses “God”
  - g. Notes:
    - i. God names himself – the only one to do so – all others in creation are named by others
    - ii. To share a name indicates willingness for relationship/community/intimacy/vulnerability
    - iii. One of the 10 Commandments is about the Name!
26. Thus will commence an interaction between Moses and Pharaoh
  - a. It will start with a small request – but get larger
  - b. It will see a shift in the status of the Hebrew slaves: they will receive produce/income/wealth of the land (jewelry, clothing)
  - c. The upshot: this new call and relationship will end well, with justice & righteousness restored and Israel set free to continue in the next stage of its history of fulfilling its created purpose

### Questions for Your Life Today

1. Describe your own experience of a call from God.
2. Would you argue with God? If so, about what?

3. What are some ways that you can discover what God wants you to do with your own life?
4. How does God express his continued presence in your life?
5. If you were asked to give a name to God, what would it be? Why?

Notes by The Rev. Dr. Jack Baca, Senior Pastor, The Village Church, Rancho Santa Fe, California

Resources:

- a. Interpretation Commentary on Exodus, Terence E. Fretheim, John Knox Press, Louisville, Kentucky, 1991
- b. The Communicator's Commentary Series, Old Testament, Exodus, Maxie D. Dunnam, Word, Inc., Waco, TX, 1987
- c. The Old Testament Library: Exodus, Brevard S. Childs, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, PA, 1974