

LESSON 4: EXODUS 3 & 4

JUNE 1, 2011

OVERVIEW

- . God's call – Exodus 3:1-10
- . Moses' objections and God's responses – Exodus 3:11 – 4:17
- . First steps on the way – Exodus 4:18-31

GOD'S CALL – EXODUS 3:1-10

- . God's timing
 - . A period of 400 years have elapsed since God last spoke directly to man through Jacob
 - . There will be other times in the Old Testament when God will be silent for a period of time
 - . Most notable will be the period of over 400 years between the time of Malachi and the birth of Christ
 - . In Moses life a period of 40 years has elapsed since Moses left Egypt
 - . Throughout this period of spiritual growth God was silent
 - . God is silent no more
 - . Our Teacher, the Holy Spirit, gives us access to the mind of God
 - . The Word is there 24/7 ready to reveal God's everlasting truths to us
- . Horeb, the mountain of God – Exodus 3:1
 - . Horeb is another name for Sinai and means desert or desolation
 - . Some dispute over whether it's the actual Mt. Sinai or nearby peak
 - . Traditional site is in south central Sinai
 - . Tradition identifies Mt. Horeb with Ras es –Safsafah (Willow Peak)
 - . A neighbor to Mt. Sinai rising 6500 ft
 - . Mt. Sinai, called Jebel Musa (the mountain of Moses) is the highest peak rising 7362 ft.
 - . These peaks rise over 5000 ft. from the flat broad plain at their base
 - . The plain is big enough, with enough water, to have supported 2,000,000 Israelites
 - . Other scholars reject the southern Sinai theory and put the location of Mt. Horeb either in the northern Sinai or NW Arabia, across from the Gulf of Aqaba
 - . These scholars are looking for volcanic mountains which they think explains the "fire mountain"

- . The Burning Bush – Exodus 3:2
 - . The Burning Bush symbolizes God’s immanence – His presence at all times, in all things
 - . A bush represents something very common and near at hand
 - . Fire was an ancient symbol of God
 - . So God’s choice to first appear to Moses as a Burning Bush is God saying although I am the sovereign, omnipotent God, I am also nearby, very much a presence in your everyday life
 - . Very different than the God’s of Egypt who were distant and completely detached from the physical realm
 - . The Burning Bush symbolizes God’s holiness
 - . Although God is with us (symbolized by the Burning Bush) he is also separate from us and from our physical nature
 - . God is holy and Moses is not
 - . The removing of the sandals was symbolic of removing all personal contamination and approaching God reverently
 - . Holiness is the characteristic of God, which more than any other, sets Him apart from sinful humanity
 - . It is more than mere righteousness
 - . Holiness is associated with His majesty, the force of His sovereign will and His wrath against all that’s unholy or that opposes His sovereign will
 - . The root meaning of holy is “that which is separate”
 - . So in the Burning Bush we have both immanence and transcendence
- . God’s call to Moses – Exodus 3:3-10
 - . God summons Moses and tells him three things
 - . Who He is
 - . “I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham . . . Isaac . . . Jacob” – Exodus 3:6
 - . This is not a new God, rather the one true God
 - . This is the God who has already made Himself known
 - . His concern for His people
 - . “I have seen misery . . . I have heard the crying” – Exodus 3:7
 - . His comments reference the covenant promise made to Abraham
 - . His sending Moses to deliver the Israelites
 - . “I am sending you to Pharaoh . . . to bring my people out of Egypt” – Exodus 3:10

MOSES OBJECTIONS AND GOD’S RESPONSES – EXODUS 3:11 – 4:17

- . “Who am I?” . . . “I will be with you” – Exodus 3:11-12
 - . Moses considered himself to be unworthy, which he was, but that’s not the point

- . The point was that it was God who was doing this
- . Anyone plus God is a potent and irresistible force
- . "What is your name?" . . . "I am who I am" – Exodus 3:13-22
 - . Significance of "The Name"
 - . Most important part of Exodus 3 is the revelation of God's name
 - . In the Bible names are highly significant
 - . Names are always intended to reveal something about the person
 - . The origin of "The Name"
 - . The original Hebrew interpretation of "I am" was YHWH
 - . The Israelites considered this too holy to pronounce, so they didn't
 - . To pronounce it was to commit blasphemy – Leviticus 24:16
 - . Later the Israelites added vowels to YHWH, did a little tweaking and came up with Jehovah and Yahweh
 - . This allowed them to orally refer to YHWH without the fear of Blasphemy
 - . Both words are interpreted as "He who causes to be"
 - . The meaning of "The Name"
 - . God is a being with attributes and personality
 - . His name stresses personality, not some sort of abstract, or mathematical equation
 - . This is a divine "person" who has created and communicates with other persons
 - . Whatever personality we have, we have from God who made us in His image
 - . God is self-existent
 - . He has no origins and therefore is answerable to no one
 - . The only way we can know God is as He reveals Himself to us
 - . The only way we can know something is to determine it's origins, how it came into being and what caused it
 - . Because God has no origins and nothing caused Him we can only know Him as He reveals Himself to us
 - . To try to learn about God in the absence of scripture or in denying the one true teacher, God, is arrogance and ignorance – Proverbs 1:7
 - . God is self-sufficient
 - . God doesn't need human beings
 - . He didn't need to create us
 - . God does not need helpers or defenders
 - . He does not even need worshipers
 - . Only when we start to grasp this concept will we begin to understand why the Bible has so much to say about the need for faith in God alone
 - . If we refuse to trust God, we are saying that some other thing or person is more trustworthy

- . God is eternal – everlasting
 - . God is, has always been, and will always be
 - . God has set this aspect of Him in our hearts – we long to be Immortal
- . God is unchangeable
 - . He is today, what He has always been, and what He will be tomorrow – He will never change
 - . God can be trusted to remain as He reveals Himself to be
 - . God is inescapable – He will not go away
 - . We may choose to ignore Him now, but we will have to reckon with Him in the life to come
- . “They won’t believe me” . . . So God will give three signs – Exodus 4:1-9
 - . The rod that became the snake
 - . The shepherd’s rod was as common an object as could be imaged
 - . The leprous hand
 - . Leprosy was considered the ultimate defilement
 - . The water turned to blood
- . “I am not eloquent” . . . “I will help you” – Exodus 4:10-12
 - . Moses, once again, doesn’t feel up to the task, being slow of speech
 - . God reminds Moses of who created him
 - . God is responsible for making Moses the way he is
 - . It’s God’s way of reminding Moses that God knows Moses intimately and that he’s up to the task
- . “Send someone else” . . . “How about Aaron?” – Exodus 4:13-17
 - . God gets angry with Moses at this point and decides to use Aaron to be God’s voice, and for Moses to know God’s thoughts
 - . God will speak to Moses, who will translate to Aaron, who will speak to the people

FIRST STEPS ON THE WAY – EXODUS 4:18-31

- . Farewell to Jethro
 - . After 40 years Moses and Jethro say farewell
- . A new revelation from God – Exodus 4:19-23
 - . Before leaving Midian, God tells Moses that those in Egypt who sought to kill him are now dead
- . Circumcision of Moses son – Exodus 4:24-26
 - . The inference here is that Moses had neglected to apply the covenant rite of circumcision to his son(s)

- . This angered God
- . Zipporah, who may have been the reason behind the boys not being circumcised, intervened to save Moses
- . Shortly after the episode, we learn that Moses sends Zipporah and the boys back to Jethro, so he can devote his full attention to freeing his people
- . Moses reunion with Aaron – Exodus 4:27-31
 - . Moses fills Aaron in on all that has transpired between God and himself
 - . Moses and Aaron head for Egypt united in their desire to free their people

NEXT LESSON IS WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 2011: EXODUS 5:1 – 6:27