

• *God will not allow Moses to ignore his calling*

**1. God answers Moses' feeling of inadequacy**

• *'I will be with you'*

• *God promises Moses a sign*

**2. God answers Moses' conviction that he does not know enough**

• *God's name*

• *God reveals the deepest meaning of who and what 'HE IS'*

• *'I AM THAT I AM'*

• *Watch and see what is about to happen right now*

Moses made five protests when God called him to Egypt, but God simply kept calling him despite all of his difficulties and objections. This is what a call from God is like. Those who are truly called by God are often quite reluctant to obey God, but God will not let them go and puts pressure on them to obey what He is challenging them to do.

1. **God answers Moses' feeling of inadequacy**<sup>1</sup>. Moses thinks he is inadequate for the task. 'Who am I that I should go...?' <sup>2</sup>. So God answers him.

God says '*I will be with you*'<sup>1</sup>. It is as if God is saying: 'But Moses, I never said you were adequate and I am not asking you to be adequate. Your strength is going to come from me. When you go to Egypt I shall be with you. I will show you what to do, and will be with you as you do it'.

Then God promises Moses a sign: '*And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you. When you have brought the people out you will worship God on this mountain*'<sup>1</sup>. It is a somewhat surprising sign since Moses will not get it until he has obeyed God! Moses might want to say 'But I want a sign now, not one that I get after I have done everything you are telling me'. But God's signs are sometimes like that. This is not a sign before Moses obeys; it is a sign he will get from God after he obeys. We often would like some sign before we obey God. But God tends to give us confirming signs as and when we obey Him, or maybe after we have obeyed Him. To those who obey God gives confirmations.

2. **God answers Moses' conviction that he does not know enough**<sup>1</sup>. Moses is troubled by his ignorance of God's name. For a long time people had used the name 'Yahweh'. It is an extremely archaic word. It is linked with the verb 'to be' and almost certainly means 'HE IS'. It is generally translated LORD (with capital 'L', capital 'O', capital 'R' and capital 'D'). Whenever we find LORD in our English Old Testaments it is the translation of the very name of God, Yahweh (or as it is sometimes spelt 'Jehovah').

The people of God had the idea that there was something mysterious about this name – and they were right. Jacob had asked God the meaning of His name<sup>1</sup> but at that time God had given no answer. Now that the people are about to be redeemed by the blood of a lamb, the time is right for God to reveal the deepest meaning of who and what 'HE IS'.

First God says 'I AM THAT I AM'. This is the fullest form of the name of God. God is 'I AM THAT I AM'. Then God says: '*This is what you are to say... "I AM" has sent me to you*'<sup>1</sup>. We notice that the name has been shortened. First it was I AM THAT I AM. Now it is shorter: I AM. Then God says: Say to the Israelites, 'YAHWEH ... has sent me.' This is a further shortening of the name. First it was I AM THAT I AM; then it was I AM. Now it is YAHWEH (or 'HE IS').

This is the vital point. **Yahweh is the name 'I AM THAT I AM' shortened to one word.** It is as though God says to Moses, 'Watch and see what is about to happen right now and that is exactly what I am and what my name means'. God's name 'I AM' is not about some

<sup>1</sup> 3:11-12  
<sup>2</sup> 3:11

<sup>1</sup> 3:12a

<sup>1</sup> 3:12b

<sup>1</sup> 3:13-22

<sup>1</sup> Gen 32:29

<sup>1</sup> 3:14

philosophically abstract quality in God. It is not about His absolute being or about His necessary existence. Those are Greek philosophical ideas. When Philo, the first century Jewish contemporary of Jesus and of Paul, said 'he speaks of the necessity of himself, saying I AM THAT I AM', he was influenced by Greek philosophical ideas. Many Christians have also read ideas of 'eternity' or 'absoluteness' into God's name. But these 'philosophical' approaches miss the point. What we have here is a reference not to philosophy but to history! God says 'I AM THAT I AM' in what is about to happen right now!

• *God's name refers to His redeeming His people by the blood of a lamb*

In one sentence: **God's name refers to His redeeming His people by the blood of a lamb.** What God was about to do would be a revelation of His name and His nature. 'Yahweh' means: the God of the Exodus, the God who takes a people for Himself, rescuing them from bondage, bringing them into newness of life **by means of the blood of a lamb.**

• *God's 'memorial name'*

This is God's 'memorial name'<sup>1</sup>, the name by which He is to be remembered for ever. Even in heaven Jesus will be 'the lamb as it had been slain'. God's memorial name will continue for ever, through the blood of Jesus.

• *Another answer to Moses' anxiety about knowledge*

There is another answer to Moses' anxiety about knowledge. He will discover that God is a God who can give direct and amazing knowledge to His servants. As Moses goes down to Egypt he will have knowledge enough to do everything that God wants him to do. Moses goes to Egypt with full knowledge of what God will do. He knows the elders will receive him<sup>1</sup>. He knows that he must ask for a period of leave for the Israelites<sup>2</sup> and he knows that Pharaoh will refuse<sup>3</sup>. He knows that God will work wonders<sup>4</sup> and then that the people will be released altogether<sup>5</sup>. He knows that when they are released they will be abundantly provided for<sup>6</sup>.

• *God gives direct and amazing knowledge to His servants*

• *Enough knowledge given by God*

Moses had complained about not knowing enough. The truth is God can give us detailed and exact guidance. When Moses knows about the blood of the lamb and when He knows what God will do – He knows enough!

<sup>1</sup> 3:15

<sup>1</sup> 3:16–18a

<sup>2</sup> 3:18b

<sup>3</sup> 3:19

<sup>4</sup> 3:20

<sup>5</sup> 3:21

<sup>6</sup> 3:22



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