

Exodus 3:7-14

7 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, 8 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, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. 10 So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." 11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" 12 He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain." 13 But 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?" 14 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.'"

Exodus means going out, and exiting. The book is a book of redemption. It records the redemption of the descendants of Abraham out of Egyptian bondage. Redemption is a relationship with God, expressed by worship, fellowship, and service. The book of Exodus teaches us that redemption is essential in our relationship with God.

When Queen Elizabeth died, a lot of people watched TV, the news, and special shows about her reign and her life. I decided to re-watch the movie *A Royal Night Out*. It tells the story of Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret during the night of celebration on VE day. The movie is based on factual events. While they were out dancing two MP's tackle a man. Elizabeth shouts out "Stop it, let him go!" One of them asks "And who are you?" She boldly proclaims "The Princess Elizabeth!" This is a goose bump moment of everyone in the ballroom. The activity of everyone present comes to an immediate stop and their behaviors change instantly as they suddenly recognized her and realize who she actually is. The soldiers stand at attention and people salute and curtsey. In that culture, who she is demands considerable respect.

The biblical lesson is on the nature of God. Our God is the God of the ancestors of the Hebrew nation; the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This God is the all mighty creator of the heavens and the earth. This is by far much greater than any king or queen here on the earth. Therefore, when God says "I am," it is very significant and substantial moment. God commissions Moses for a divine mission. God notices the infliction cast upon Israel and sends Moses to bring them out and lead them to a new land that is open, free, and fertile. Moses questions his own ability on how to handle the objections of when Israelites might ask who sent him. The name of God is revealed in a mysterious way. God responds by boldly proclaiming "I am." When God identifies God's self as "I am," God is saying I am who I am, there is no other, and there needs to be no other explanation. The statement "I am" is a declaration of the existence of the living God. The Israelites were surrounded by temples dedicated to deities with bodies, names, and stories. They had dominion over certain aspects of life. However, the God of Israel is different. This

God exists for real. Therefore, God proclaims “I am.” This means I exist, I am real, and I am the one true God.

I’m sure you are familiar with the background of the story. Jacob showed favoritism to his son Joseph and his brothers were jealous and threw him into a pit. Then they sold him to the captain of Pharaoh’s guard. He was falsely accused of rape and sent to prison. He had the skill of interpreting dreams and was the only one that was able to interpret Pharaoh’s dream. This granted him freedom and he saved Egypt from famine. Meanwhile his family comes to Egypt to buy grain. Joseph forgives them and the family is reunited. Some 400 years later the Hebrew nation has grown and is held captive for slave labor. Moses fled Egypt as a fugitive but God sent him back.

Moses asks “Who am I?” Imagine it is you. God says “America is off track, the people are divided. They say they are true to me but they end up doing their own thing. I know your troubles. Things are going to get worse. So, I am sending you to lead them to righteousness. Go to the president and congress and tell them that I sent you.” My response would be very reluctant, if not an adamant “No! I think you need someone else.” Many of us, if not all of us would question, who me? Who am I? Perhaps we all ask that when called by God to lead. But God is the one with power to make things happen for righteousness and justice. God is the “I am” of righteousness and justice.

The situation that Moses is in is much worse than contemporary examples. Moses was a fugitive and Pharaoh had the power of execution. Moses acknowledged his own weakness and did not fear either his human weakness or Pharaoh’s tyranny, but delivers the people in a specific direction. This is very important for us today. It is not about the direction that the people want to go but the direction God wants the people to go. This is the ultimate lesson. We are to go in the direction that God wants us to go. Let God guide you and protect you in your life.