

“I Am That I Am”
Exodus 3:10-16
(Preached at Trinity, August 13, 2006)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we entered **Chapter 3** forty years have passed. Moses has been humbled as he has spent year after year tending his father-in-law’s sheep. As the chapter opens we find Moses on the far side of the desert at Mount Horeb also known as Mount Sinai where Moses would later receive the Ten Commandments.
2. It was at this place that God chose to reveal Himself to Moses. God is transcendent. Philosophically this means the God exceeds the limits of human experience. He is beyond our comprehension. God exists outside our material existence.
3. This means that God is unknowable except by His direct revelation of Himself. Out of His mercy God has chosen to reveal Himself to fallen humanity.
 - A. God reveals Himself through the general revelation of creation and providence. This is a revelation that is so sure and definite that no one can mistake the existence of God.
 - a. It is so sure that all men are left without excuse.
Romans 1:20 – “For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.”
 - b. It is so sure that to deny God is the greatest stupidity
Psalms 14:1 – “The fool hath said in his heart, *There is no God.* They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is none that doeth good.*”
 - c. You cannot cast your eye across the earth without seeing the evidence of God’s divine power in creation. We see God’s power and majesty as He rules all things.
 - B. God has also put an indelible mark of Himself upon the human conscience. He has written His law upon our hearts. In the transgression of the law fears rise in the consciences of man. This too is testimony to God’s revelation of Himself.
 - C. God has also been pleased to reveal Himself through special revelation – direct expressions of His divine essence.
4. Last week we witnessed God revealing Himself to Moses through the burning bush. As Moses approached a voice came from the midst of the bush and called out to Moses. Then the voice told him to stop! He had come into the presence of God. In the burning bush God revealed many of the attributes of His divine nature.
 - A. God is a spirit. He is not bound by any physical existence. He is omnipresent.
 - B. God is Omnipotent – all powerful. He has the power to do His holy will
 1. Moses was amazed because what he saw was contrary to the natural course – fire will consume a bush every time without fail.
 2. It was a small thing for Him to make a bush burn without being consumed

3. God is all powerful – His power knows no end, no boundaries
God is able to do whatever He pleases.
- C. In the burning bush God revealed His splendor and majesty
The bush displayed God’s Shekinah glory in the form of the flame
- D. God is Eternal and Unchanging
The bush burned but remained the same – it was not changed
Psalm 90:2 – “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God.”
- E. In the burning bush God revealed His self-sufficiency
 1. Normally fire needs a fuel to exist
Fire will burn wood until the wood has been consumed
 2. God is fully self-sufficient
John 5:26 – “For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself;”
 3. God has His being in Himself - All that God is comes from within Himself
He is self-sufficient, self-complete, self-contented, self-sustaining, self-determining. God needs nothing outside of Himself
5. As God spoke to Moses from the midst of the bush Moses asked Him His name.
 - A. Remember, in the Hebrew mind a person’s name is attached to his character.
The Hebrew word for name is **שֵׁם** {shame} can also be translated “reputation”
 - B. God gives His name to human beings as a way to describe His divine essence. His name is synonymous with His being.
Genesis 4:26 – “And to Seth, to him also there was born a son; and he called his name Enos: then began men to call upon the name of the LORD.”
 1. This is why the Third Commandment means so much more than just using the name of God as a means of cursing – it is an insult to God Himself – to His divine essence – to His holy character.
Leviticus 19:12 – “And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I *am* the LORD.”
Leviticus 24:16 – “And he that blasphemeth the name of the LORD, he shall surely be put to death, *and* all the congregation shall certainly stone him: as well the stranger, as he that is born in the land, when he blasphemeth the name *of the LORD*, shall be put to death.”
 2. Where Adam gave names to all of the animals, man did not name God.
God’s name is His revelation of Himself
6. God also gives His name as a token of His rich sovereign mercy
Exodus 33:19 – “And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.”
7. What is God’s name?
Scripture gives many names for God
El – the Strong and Mighty – The word translated God is Elohim (Bethel = house of God, Samuel = “His name is El”)
El-Shaddai – God the Omnipotent One

8. God declares His chief name to be יהוה in **Verse 15** – LORD or Jehovah
Exodus 15:3 – “The LORD *is* a man of war: the LORD *is* his name.”
- A. From a form of יהוה hayah – The Hebrew form of “to be” which is translated in Exodus 3:14 – I AM THAT I AM – God is “The Existing One”
- In the Hebrew the tense is not definite
 God has no past, present, or future – God is the One that always is.
 - This is consistent with the words of Jesus
John 8:58 – “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”
 - It was a name that was so high that it was never read aloud in the reading of Scripture or in prayer – They usually used the name Adonai (Lord) in their devotions.
- B. These four letters are called the Tetragrammaton (Greek for word with four letters) - the personal name of God and his most frequent designation in Scripture, occurring more than 5000 times.
Psalms 83:18 – “That *men* may know that thou, whose name alone *is* JEHOVAH, *art* the most high over all the earth.”
- I. What does it mean that God is the “I Am?”
- A. It means that God is Self-existing
- God has His being in Himself
 - God had no beginning
 - Matthew Henry – “The greatest and best man must say, By the grace of God *I am what I am*; but God says absolutely—and it is more than any creature, man, or angel, can say—*I am that I am.*”
 - All that God is comes from within Himself – He is fully self-sufficient. He does not have any unmet needs or unfulfilled desires. He is all in all to Himself.
- B. God is the source of all being – God is the God that causes to be.
Genesis 1:1 – “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”
- He created all inanimate matter – the heavens and earth
 - All life comes from God
Acts 17:24-25 – “God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; ²⁵ Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;”
Acts 17:28 – “For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.”
- The existence and form of all things comes from God
 - Creation declares the being and wisdom of God
 - Stephen Charnock – “His name is glorious and his attributes are excellent in all the earth; in every creature, as the glory of the sun is in every beam and smaller flash; he is seen in every insect, in every sprit of grass.” (Existence and Attributes p.42)

- d. All life and all things had a beginning. There was a time when nothing existed – the earth, the sun, the stars, the universe – everything had a beginning.
 - C. God had no beginning
 - 1. Before anything was, there was God – He is the existing One
He is self-existing.
 - 2. God exists independently of all outside influences
 - a. God acts independently of all outside influences
 - b. God is sovereign in His actions – He receives counsel from none
 - 3. God is Preexisting – everlasting, no beginning
He is the great I AM
- II. This eternal God exists in three distinct persons – you cannot properly think of God without considering His triune nature.
- A. In the being of God, in His divine essence He cannot be divided
 - 1. God does not have parts
 - 2. He is One, unique, indivisible
 - B. This one, unique, undivided God exists in three distinct persons
The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
 - 1. He bears all of the qualities of personality
He is an intelligent, rational, moral being – He has self-awareness. He is a reasonable being capable of determining His own course of life.
 - 2. Each of the three persons of God possesses Deity, personality
Each of the persons of the Godhead possess the attributes of God
 - C. God ordained to save a multitude of fallen humanity reconciling them to Himself
 - 1. Each person of the Godhead was active in our salvation
 - 2. The Father elected us unto salvation – He is the Author of our salvation
 - 3. Jesus Christ came as the only begotten of the Father, in obedience to the Father and became a man
 - 4. The Holy Spirit became the agent of our new birth, the source of our conviction of sin, and the Provider of our faith and repentance.
 - D. Each Person of the Godhead is active in our lives
 - 1. We pray and worship by the Spirit, through the Son, to the Father
 - 2. The Father keeps us as His own dear children sending forth the Spirit enabling us to cry out Abba Father
 - 3. The Son is our Mediator providing access to the Father and sends forth the Spirit teaching us of His ways
 - 4. The Holy Spirit is God’s active presence in our lives equipping us, empowering us, sanctifying us, protecting us
 - E. God’s revelation of Himself is a gracious act of His sovereign mercy
Exodus 33:19 – “And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.”

III. The ultimate revelation of the name of God is JESUS!

A. God gave Moses His name – He has given us a new name to call Him.

1. Jesus is the name that is above every name
2. Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God

Hebrews 1:1-3 – “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; 3 Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”

B. Jesus IS the great I AM

John 8:58 – “Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.”

1. Jesus is the only name by which you might find redemption for your soul
Acts 4:12 – “Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”
Romans 10:13 – “For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”
2. The God who is, and who has revealed Himself has declared His Son to be the name that is above every name.
It is the only name by which we might be saved.

Conclusion:

1. God does not speak to us today in a burning bush or an audible voice. He speaks to us by His Word. He tells us of our need for salvation and compels us to turn from our sin and trust in Jesus Christ, the name above every name.
2. Have you called upon that name?
Have you thrown yourself upon the mercy of the name that is above every name?
3. If you have professed Christ is the name of Christ being glorified in your life?
2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 – “Wherefore also we pray always for you, that our God would count you worthy of *this* calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of *his* goodness, and the work of faith with power: That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.”