



### Looking Inwards (15 mins) Caring For Each Other

*Reflecting on your life at the moment, is there anything you would like to share with other members of your home group which you feel is appropriate (this is an opportunity to share, not something you have to do, however, 'It's the sharing that enables the caring!') for:*

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?



### Looking Outwards (15 mins) Concern For Others

*Is there anything concerning someone in your: family; circle of friends; neighbours or church, which you would like to share (please be sure not pass on anything that is confidential or which you think the person concerned would not wish to be shared) for:*

- Thanksgiving?
- Prayer?
- Encouragement?
- Support in any way?

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Part of The Billericay & Little Burstead Team Ministry



### HG157 Moses: The Prince Of Egypt The Burning Bush

Exodus 3:1-22

Home Group Study Notes

28 January 2018 - Pauline Woolnough



**PLEASE COMPLETE AS MUCH AS YOU CAN  
ON THIS WORKSHEET IN PREPARATION  
BEFORE THE MEETING!**

*Don't forget to take your Bible to Home Group with you, along with any previous notes and other resources which might be helpful for your discussions.*



### Welcome (10 mins) Ice Breaker

What do you say to your child or grandchild who asks "Who made God?"



### Looking Upwards (10 mins) Worship

In your time of worship, you may want to sing Songs of Praise; listen to a Worship CD, as well as using Meditations; Bible Readings; Prayers ...



HG157 *Moses: The Prince Of Egypt*  
**The Burning Bush**

Exodus 3:1-22

Home Group Sermon

28 January 2018 - Pauline Woolnough

**Introduction**

The story of the burning bush marks a crucial event which changed the history of the nation Israel, the beginning of the end of Egypt's oppression and it is critical for our understanding of the character and nature of God. As our story opens, Moses had been living in Midian for 40 yrs. He was a fugitive from a crime committed forty years before in Egypt. He'd started a new life with a new family and a new job as a shepherd. He may have still lived in a measure of fear that his past would one day catch up with him. No one would have ever expected to see Moses back in Egypt again. We don't know whether the suffering of his people was any longer a concern to him or if he even thought about them but we do know that it was a concern to God. We know from Exodus 2:23-25 that as the people: *"cried out for help and their cry rose up to God. God heard their groaning and he remembered his covenant promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He looked down on the people of Israel and knew it was time to act"*

**God Calls Moses**

As Moses wandered tending his sheep something caught his eye, notice that he was at Horeb, a place called the mountain of God and would appear to be the same place as Mt Sinai. In the distance a bush was on fire, perhaps a common enough occurrence in the hot dry wilderness, but there was something unusual about this bush because it appeared to be unaffected by the flames that enveloped it. Fire is symbolic of God's Holy presence and in this instance God's Holy presence was within a bush that burned but which was not consumed by the flames, giving us an image of the never ending power of God who upholds the universe but never runs out of fuel.

Moses approached to get a closer look and the Angel of the Lord spoke to him from within the bush. The Angel of the Lord spoke, *as* God, and not *for* God, and appearances like this are believed to be the pre-incarnate appearances of Christ. God only spoke to Moses once he had his attention. Often God's Word doesn't touch our heart the way that it might because we don't give it *our* attention and because we don't listen.

So God waited till he was really close and he said, *"Moses, Moses."* God's first word to Moses was to say his name showing that even though Moses was now an obscure, forgotten shepherd, God knew who he was, and that Moses was important to God. Moses replied, as we should when we are called, *"Here I am."*

4. If we are suffering and despite our cries to the Lord he is silent, does this mean he doesn't hear us or doesn't care? Does Ex 3 help you understand his reasons.

5. What is the ultimate purpose of God delivering Israel from slavery. (3:12,18)  
What is the ultimate purpose of our salvation?

6. Moses was born to be the deliverer of Israel, do you know the calling that God has on your life? (Rom 11:29, Phil 3:14, 2 Thes 1:11).



Is there anything you most want to put into practice as a result of this study?



## Looking Upwards (40 mins) Bible Study

Read the text for this study, and any references given, then answer the following questions. You may find it helpful to listen to the sermon and/or read through the sermon notes as you do so. Discuss some, or all, your answers with your Home Group and, remember, these questions are only a guide to start your discussions.

1. Do you ever feel inadequate to do what God wants you to do? In what ways?

2. God said to Moses, *“I will be with you.”* Can you think of examples of how this knowledge has encouraged you and helped you with a task God gave you?

3. God heard the cries of the Israelites and decided to act. What requests can we take to God, and which ones should we try to handle ourselves (Phil 4:6)?

### God Is Holy

In verse 5 we read, *“Do not come any closer,”* God said, *‘Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.’* When he understood who was speaking to him Moses removed his sandals and covered his face in an act of reverence, afraid to look at God. He would have been overwhelmed by the holiness of God manifesting Himself in the flames. God is our Father, our refuge, our friend but we must remember that he is our Sovereign Lord and our King and it is deeply disrespectful to come before him in a casual manner expecting him to be pleased however we turn up (or not), as the case may be. God went on to say, *‘I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.’* The God of the burning bush is the covenant-making, covenant-keeping God of his forefathers and he had a plan. Not a new plan, simply the outworking of the old one as revealed to Abraham in Genesis 15:18 when God promised to give Abraham’s descendants a land to call their own. Then the Lord said, v 7, *“I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them.”*

### God Commissions Moses

Moses must have been overjoyed thinking that finally, after all the waiting and silence, God was at last coming down to rescue the people of Israel but there was a catch. Vs8 and 10 together we read God saying, *“So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians,”* *“So now go. I am sending you.”* While God is going to be directly involved in the deliverance of His people, He intends to do so through Moses. God commissions people to participate in His purposes always choosing to work through us. So we find Moses commissioned by God to return to Egypt, to confront Pharaoh, and to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

### Moses’ Excuses

The call of Moses in Chapter 3 shows us that God can and more often than not, uses weak and imperfect people to carry out his work. That idea may thrill you or, like Moses, terrify you. Paul tells us in 1 Cor 1:27 *“But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.”* Its very easy to think of the characters in the Bible as willing and able to do what God asks of them and Moses is certainly a giant in the bible but looking at his response it looks like he is anything *but* willing to do what God asks. His first thought was, (but) *“Who am I?”*

A good question. One that suggests that Moses struggled with his identity. He knew that he wasn't well thought of by the Israelites and that there was little chance of the elders listening to anything he said. In his years in the wilderness of Midian, Moses must have often remembered how he murdered an Egyptian and how proud he had been to think he could deliver Israel himself. He may have remembered a thousands sins, real and imagined - and now, when God appeared, he responded in a way completely different than he might have 40 years before when he thought he knew who he was, a prince of Egypt and a Hebrew. After forty years of chasing sheep around the desert, Moses didn't have the same self-confidence that he once had. Now that God is actually commissioning him for the job, Moses is not so sure, and as he sees it, he is not up to the job.

We may sympathise with Moses as we too can struggle with our identity feeling unqualified to serve God, but God is not looking for extraordinary people, He is looking for ordinary people who will trust an extraordinary God. God's answer seeks to refocus Moses' attention from looking at himself, the one being sent, to God, the one doing the sending. Better to rely on God than your own abilities. (See Heb 11, the Christian Hall of Faith, and study the chequered lives of the people that God chose to carry out his will).

### **God's Response**

When Moses said, "*Who am I? I'm just a nobody,*" God's response was: "*I'll go with you*" That was it, and it was enough. God's presence with Moses was what would make Moses' task successful. Like him, we don't need anything else. When God asks us to do something all we need to know that he will be with us. Moses however, didn't quite see it that way and he spoke back to God saying, "*Ok even if I tell them that you sent me they will ask who you are, they will ask, What is your name*" Although God had clearly identified Himself to Moses it was important that Moses knew his name not just for himself but for those who would ask him who sent him. God was patient and told Moses to tell the Israelites that he was sent by "*I AM WHO I AM*" (Ex 3 14-22) and this tells us all we need to know about who God is and what he is like.

Of the billions of facts that we may know or think we need to know this one fact is the foundation of all others and nothing is more basic, more ultimate, more important for us to know than the fact that *God IS*. God absolutely *IS*, God is here, God is there, God is everywhere. He quite simply, emphatically, *IS*. Now God's not saying that this is his name, what he wants Moses to know and understand that before he worries about the name of God he needs to know *who* he is. He needs Moses to know that *I AM* is who God is, and that *I AM* absolutely *IS*, first, foundational and of infinite importance.

**God Exists:** The *I AM* is the God who exists, who is self existent and exists apart from any dependence on anything or anyone.

**God Is The Creator:** God has no creator because he is *the* creator, he needs no help to exist or to accomplish anything and therefore nothing can prevent his will from being accomplished.

**God Never Changes:** *I AM* is the God who never changes, he never *was* anything in the sense that he changes, whatever he *was* he will continue to be and will be forever. He is not getting any better or any worse, he is absolutely perfect. *I AM* is unchanging and eternal, nothing he has made, decided or decreed needs to be changed, therefore whatever he has set out to do he will bring to completion, because he is totally trustworthy and every promise he has made is as solid as a rock. "*I AM,*" *the God who does not change.*" (Mal 3:6). God *IS* who *IS*, *IS!*

John Piper says, "*Therefore, it is a cosmic outrage billions of times over that God is ignored, treated as negligible, questioned, criticised, treated as virtually nothing, and given less thought than the carpet in people's houses.*"

### **The Name of God**

Finally, God gives us his name. His name in Hebrew would be pronounced something like Yahweh, and is built on the word for "I Am" but it's almost always translated "LORD" and written in capital letters in the English Bible. This is God's name built out of the word for "*I Am*" and reminding us each time that God absolutely *IS*. It is in Jesus that the infinite, absolute, self-determining God who is *I AM WHO I AM*, fully showed himself and drew near to us. In John 8:56-58, Jesus is answering the criticism of the Jewish leaders. He says, "*Your father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad.*" *The Jews then said to him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly! I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."* When Jesus said, "*Before Abraham was, I AM,*" he took up all the majestic truth of the name of God, wrapped it in the humility of servanthood, offered himself to atone for all our rebellion, and made a way for us to see the glory of God without fear. In Jesus Christ, we who are born of God have the unspeakable privilege of having *I AM WHO I AM* as our Father. The God who exists, who never changes and from whom all power and energy in the universe flows.

### **A People Who Worship**

The role of the prophet is to listen to what God is saying and to then pass on what God has said. Moses was to go to the elders, report what God had said to him about his rescue plan. He was then to go to the King of Egypt and request that the people be allowed to go on a 3 day journey to make sacrifices to their God. The purpose of the journey was to go out of Egypt where they were in slavery and to be free in order to worship their God once more. A reminder to us that we cannot serve God while we are caught up in the world (Egypt). We must come out of worldliness to go and worship God.

### **Conclusion**

Chapter 3 is about the call of Moses and an encouragement to all of us who feel God is asking us to do something that we feel is beyond ourselves. God led Moses and he wants to lead us as well. He is the same God who appeared to Moses and the same God who can live in us today. Hebrews 13:8 says God is the "*Same yesterday, today and forever.*" Our God is the totally trustworthy covenant making God and he uses the name *I AM* to show his unchanging nature. Exodus 3 marks the start of the journey out of Egypt and slavery and into a home that God had prepared for his people, a land that was flowing with milk and honey. One day, all of us who are saved by Jesus will be led home by him. God identifies himself as "*the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob.*" He is not the God of the dead but of the living, He doesn't say he *was* their God, he says he *is* their God alluding to the fact that although they died on earth, they are alive with God and indicating that God's people never really die. God's promise to Moses and to us is "*I will be with you,*" 3:12

### **Emmanuel Church Text for 2018**

*For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the spirit of sonship. And by him we cry 'Abba Father.'*

Romans 8:15