

“I AM THAT I AM”

I. READ TEXT—EXODUS 2:23-3:17

2:23 Now it came about in *the course of* those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of *their* bondage rose up to God. **24** So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. **25** God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice *of them*. **3:1** Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. **2** The angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. **3** So Moses said, "I must turn aside now and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up." **4** When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." **5** Then He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." **6** He said also, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. **7** The LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am aware of their sufferings. **8** So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. **9** Now, behold, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; furthermore, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. **10** Therefore, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, so that you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt." **11** But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" **12** And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain." **13** Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name? What shall I say to them?'" **14** God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" **15** God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is My name forever, and this is My memorial-name to all generations. **16** Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. **17** So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'" "

II. INTRODUCTION

A. GOD'S SELF-DISCLOSURE

1. What His identity is:

- Existent—He IS—*does* exist
- Self-existent—no cause preceded Him
- Eternal—continuous ‘is-ness’
- Self-sustaining—continuously autonomous—not dependent/contingent on anything
- Source—beginning/start of everything

2. Importance of knowing His identity

- a. *Everything* is contingent upon Him—He is Creator of the universe
- b. Our identity depends on Him—*who* we are depends on Him who made us
- c. Our existence depends on Him—He is Sustainer—keeps it all going
- d. Our hope depends on Him—our future depends on our relationship with Him

B. WE MUST BE REMINDED—REMEMBER WHO HE IS!

1. Israel had forgotten *who* God IS—and what He can do

- a. Earlier they had known the I AM—i.e. “name of the Lord”

Evidence—they had previously called upon the “name of the Lord”

- In the days of Enosh, son of Seth—**Gen 4:26**
- Noah—**Gen 9:26**
- Abraham—**Gen 12:8**
- Isaac—**Gen 26:25**
- Jacob—**Gen 28:16**
- Laban—**Gen 30:27**

b. But Israel had forgotten how to “call upon the name of the Lord”

1. Note—the passage of time

Ex 1:8—a king arose over Egypt who did not know Joseph

2. They still knew *about* God—and ‘feared’ Him

Ex 1:17, 21—The midwives feared God and disobeyed Pharaoh

3. In their bondage—they cried out—**Ex 2:23**

- Their cry was not directed explicitly to God
- Cry of futility—not “calling upon the name of the Lord”

- They had forgotten the God of their Fathers
- They did not remember or trust His power to deliver them

4. Israel had forgotten

- The God of *their Fathers*—the “Lord” God Almighty
- His *covenant* with them—promise to make them a great nation/blessing
- His ability to deliver them—as He had done with their Fathers

2. But it was **God** who acted!

a. God **heard**—and **remembered** His covenant—and took **notice** of them—**2:24-25**

b. God **acted**—not the people’s instigation

- God took Divine initiative—by His grace—not Moses’s or people’s action
- God initiated contact with Moses—**3:2 ff**
- God responded *personally* to the Israel’s general cry for help—**3:7 ff**

c. He **reminded** them

- He was the God of their Fathers—**3:6, 15**
- The “Lord” Who had promised their Fathers—would still fulfill His promise

- The “Lord” Who had delivered their Fathers—would also deliver them

APPLICATION

- Every generation needs to be reminded of Who the Lord IS
- Every generation needs to be reminded only He can deliver them
- Every generation needs to know how to “call upon the name of the Lord”

C. “I AM”—“THE NAME OF THE LORD”—MEANS SEVERAL THINGS

1. I AM—the One who EXISTS—CREATES
2. I AM—the One who REVEALS
3. I AM—the One who CARES and SUSTAINS
4. I AM—the One who is ABLE

II. I AM—THE ONE WHO EXISTS AND CREATES

A. EVERYTHING HINGES ON HIS EXISTENCE

Gen 1:1—In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Jn 1:3—through Him all things were made, without Him nothing was made that has been made.

Acts 17:25-28—**25** He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; **26** and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, **27** that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; **28** for in Him we live and move and exist

B. EVIDENCE FROM THE UNIVERSE

1. Scriptural basis

Rom 1:20—For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made

2. Three Observations from Nature

a. Fact #1—THE SUN

1. **Stability**—constant temperature and burn-rate

- Surface = 11-12,000 degrees F
- Core = 15 million degrees F

2. **Right distance**—93 million miles

- 25% closer = Venus—869 degrees F
- 50% further = Mars—minus 284 degrees F

3. **Ideal temperature**—265 degree span (F)

a. **Range** on earth

- Hottest = Libya (1922) = +136° F
- Coldest = Vostock Sta., Antarctica = - 129° F

b. **Span** of measured temperatures

- Hottest = Nebula NGC 2440 (Constellation Puppis) = + 360,000° F
- Coldest = Boomerang Nebula (Constellation Centaurus) = - 458° F
- Range = over 360,000° F

c. **Compare** our ideal temperature range (265 degrees)

- Odds = 1:1360
- Like one constant note—out of 15 piano keyboards

Point of Fact #1 = Constancy

b. Fact #2—EARTH'S ORBIT

1. **Mass** = 6600 million, million, million tons (66 with 22 zeros)

2. **Speed** = 70,000 mph eastward around sun

3. Course **deviation** = 1 in 10 million

- 1 inch in 170 miles
- Compare: 1 inch in two round trips Fort Worth to Dallas
- Compare: less than 1 inch—Fort Worth to Wichita Falls

Illustration: linking New Orleans bridge—off one half-inch in 3-4 miles

Point of Fact #2 = Precision

c. **Fact # 3—THE MOON**

1. Right relation to earth

- Exact orbit and speed—238,000 miles away at 2300 mph
- A little closer—it would crash into earth
- A little further—it would fly into the universe

2. Two functions

- The tides
- Breaking action

3. The tides

a. Sun and moon pull flexible crust up a few inches twice daily

b. Purpose: cleansing action for oceans—prevents stagnation

c. Exact distance:

- ❖ A little closer—tidal waves would swamp earth
- ❖ Too close—moon would cause earth to explode

4. Breaking action

- Slows earth gradually—keeps earth from spinning out of control
- Rate = 1 second in 10,000 years

Point of Fact #3 = Precision and Power

APPLICATION

1. This is not mere chance—but evidence of God’s existence and providence
2. Only foolish people ignore the facts

Ps 14:1 and 53:1—The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”

HOW GREAT THOU ART

O Lord my God, when I in Awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made.
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art! How great thou art!
Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to Thee
How great Thou art! How great thou art!

C. EVIDENCE IN HUMAN DESIGN—3 FACTS

Fact # 1—DNA

- Each body—has over 60,000 billion cells
- Each cell—has 1.5 meters of DNA
- Each human body—enough DNA for **300 round trips** to sun
- Each DNA strand—has 4.5 billion pairs of chemical bases
- Each cell—could store Shakespeare's works **200 times**

Point of Fact #1 = Power/Potential of the Human Body

Fact # 2—PROTEIN

- a. Protein is essential for life

- Complex molecule made of amino acids
- Builds hormones, enzymes, antibodies

b. Odds of protein forming accidentally

1. Francis Crick—Nobel prize for discovering double-helix of DNA—said = 1×10^{260}
2. Harold Morowitz—biophysicist at Yale and George Mason University—said = 1×10^{236}
3. Other estimates go as high as 1×10^{361}

c. Mind boggling numbers!

- It would take 1×10^{51} grains of sand to fill our Solar System
- It would take 1×10^{80} atomic particles to fill the whole universe

Point of Fact #2 = Complexity of the Human Body

Ps 8:3-5—3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; **4** What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You care for him? **5** Yet You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You crown him with glory and majesty!

Ps 139: 14, 17-18—I will praise You; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are Your works; and that my soul knows right well How precious also are Your thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand: when I awake, I am still with You.

Fact # 3—CREATION FROM NOTHING—NOT EVOLUTIONARY MATERIALISM

a. Evangelical position—‘Intelligent Design’

1. Proponents—like Stephen Meyer—head of Discovery Institute
 - Michael Behe—irreducibly complex biochemical systems
 - William Dembski—specified complexity—probability proves irreducible complexity
2. Attacked for lack of ‘scientific’ methodology—and for being ‘creationists’

b. Uncertainty of Darwinian evolution *between* species

1. It still just a theory—without final empirical proof of ‘missing link’

2. Non-evangelical criticism

- Astrophysicist Sir Fred Hoyle
- Taught at Cambridge
- Helped found Institute of Theoretical Astronomy
- Rejected Darwinian evolution—in favor of cosmic design.
- Said chance of life evolving spontaneously = $1 \times 10^{40,000}$

3. Probability → certainty—Science says odds more than 1×10^{50} —it won’t happen!

D. EXISTENCE OF A ‘DESIGNER-CREATOR’ IS NOT ENOUGH

1. ILLUSTRATION = ANTHONY FLEW

a. Leading British atheistic philosopher of 20th century

b. Taught at Oxford, Aberdeen, Keele, and Reading

c. ‘Converted’ by Intelligent Design to belief in ‘God’—2004

d. But this was only Deism/Theism:

- God is personal—but not moral—being
- God does not get involved with the universe
- God does not reveal Himself to humans

APPLICATION: “I AM”—GOES FAR BEYOND “I EXIST”

III. I AM—THE ONE WHO PERSONALLY REVEALS HIMSELF

A. HE HAD DONE THIS FROM THE BEGINNING

1. God had revealed Himself to—Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob

2. He did this two ways:
 - a. As **God** = Elohim—Creator
 - b. As **Lord** = Jehovah—Covenant
3. Always in the form of a covenant
 - a. A **personal** relationship
 - b. Based on His **promise**

B. HE REMINDS MOSES—3 TIMES—OF THIS RELATIONSHIP

3:6—3:16—4:5

“I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”

C. HE REVEALS HIS NATURE AND CHARACTER—3:14-16

1. His NATURE

“I AM THAT I AM” = the only **self-existent** One—dependent on no other

“This is My name forever” = **eternal, immutable**

2. His CHARACTER—**dependable forever**

Memorial name = my name is the benchmark you can count on

To all generations = permanent promise—forever faithful

D. NOW HE EXTENDS THE REVELATION AND COVENANT—TO ALL ISRAEL

3:15 “Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel . . .”

IV. I AM—THE ONE WHO CARES

A. GOD ALWAYS REMEMBERS HIS PROMISES

2:24 God heard their groaning, and God **remembered** His covenant with Abraham Isaac, and Jacob.

B. GOD IS ALWAYS **AWARE OF OUR CONDITION**

2:25 And God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them.

3:7 And the Lord said, “I have surely **seen** the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have **heard** their cry because of their taskmasters, for I am **aware** of their sufferings.

C. GOD ALWAYS SHOWS **CONCERN FOR HIS PEOPLE**

3:16 I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt.

4:31 So the people believed, and when they heard that the Lord was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshiped.

D. GOD ALWAYS **ACTS TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE**

3:8 So I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land.

3:17 I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite . . . to a land flowing with milk and honey.

V. I AM—THE ONE WHO IS ABLE

3:11 Moses says “I am not able to bring Israel out of Egypt.”

God says, “I AM.”

4:1 Moses (paraphrase)—I am not able to convince Israel to follow me.

God says, “I AM.”

4:10-11 Moses says—“I am not able to speak; I am not eloquent.”

God says, “I AM.”

VI. SUMMARY

God Exists

But we never can prove this by science or philosophy
Then we just have a test tube god or a rationalistic theory

Even belief in this scientific/philosophic fact is not enough
Even Satan believes that God exists

Saving faith goes further

We must believe He **cares**—He gives Himself—and can deliver us

We must **trust** him beyond the test tube and mere human logic

We must **encounter** Him personally—like Moses and Israel

Jesus says:

Jn 4—I AM He—(the Christ)—to the Samaritan woman

Jn 6—I AM the Bread of life.

Jn 8—I AM the Light of the World

Jn 8—I AM before Abraham was born.

Jn 10—I AM the Door

Jn 10—I AM the Good Shepherd

Jn 11—I AM the Resurrection and the Life

Jn 14—I AM the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Jn 15—I AM the True Vine.

Mk 4—I AM here—don't be afraid

Lk 22—I AM among you as a Servant

Mk 14—I AM the Christ

Mt 28—I AM with you always

Rev 1—I AM the Alpha and the Omega—the First and the Last

APPLICATION:

Jesus came to reveal the Father—to show us *everything* God wants us to know about Him

HE'S EVERYTHING TO ME

In the stars His handiwork I see,
On the wind He speaks with majesty,
Tho' He ruleth over land and sea,
What is that to me?
I will celebrate nativity,
For it has a place in history;
Sure, He came to set His people free.
What is that to me?
Till by faith I met Him face to face,
And I felt the wonder of His grace,
Then I knew that He was more
Than just a God who didn't care,
That lived away out there
And—now He walks beside me day by day,
Ever watching o'er me lest I stray,
Helping me to find that narrow way,
He's everything to me.