

Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia



CHILDREN'S MINISTRY TEACHER'S PACKET

4 Year Olds

Sunday Morning

Study 25

Y is for YHWH

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The Objective is the key concept for this weeks lesson. It should be the main focus of the study

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The “Main passage” is the basis of the study, where the other verse support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the “reward box” found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God’s Word

Objective This lesson will teach the students that God’s Name is Yahweh, which makes Him different from every other God.

Key Verses

Exodus 3:1-15—Main Teaching Passage

Isaiah 26:4

Genesis 17, 35

John 1:35-42

Memory Verse - Psalm 97:9 (July Memory Verse)

“For You, LORD, are most high above all the earth; You are exalted far above all gods.”

Hook

Inform the students that you have many names. To your children, spouse, co-workers, students, etc., you have different names (dad, Mr. Smith, Bob, Coach Bob, etc.). Modify these examples to fit yourself. Then tell them that your real name, the name that means who you really are, is your full name (Bob Smith).

Ask the students if they know God’s Name. Ask why it is important to know God’s Name.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

BOOK

Today's Bible story takes place early in the book of Exodus, but at this point Moses was 80 years old. He had spent 40 years living in Pharaoh's palace and 40 years in the wilderness as a shepherd. During this time, the Israelites were slaves in Egypt. Then in Exodus 3, Moses sees a burning bush while he was taking care of the sheep. Even though the bush was on fire, it was not burnt up. Moses walked over to the bush and found that God was speaking through the bush. God announced to Moses that He had heard Israel's cry and was going to use Moses to set His people free. But Moses was afraid, and asked what He could do to set the people free. God assured Moses that He would be with Moses. Then Moses asked God who He was. God responded by giving Moses His special Name: Yahweh (or Jehovah), which is the Hebrew word from which we get "I AM WHO I AM." In verse 15, God explains His Name more: He is Yahweh, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the same God who took a 100-year-old man with an old wife and no children and made Him into an entire country of people. God is so indescribable, He can only be compared to Himself because there is no one like Him.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

LOOK

Names are really important in the Bible. Often in Bible times, parents gave their children names with meanings having to do with how the child would live. Sometimes, people would even change their names when something big changed in their lives (such as Abram to Abraham, Jacob to Israel, etc.). If we think it's important to know people's names, shouldn't it be important to know God's Name as well? God's Name is Yahweh, which in Hebrew means "I am who I am." This seems confusing, but it shows us that God is so great, there is nothing we can compare Him to. Trying to describe Him is like trying to describe the Grand Canyon to someone who has never seen it before. You can say things that are true (God is love, God is holy), but these statements, as great as they are, by themselves can't do justice to how great God is. Like the Grand Canyon, you really need to experience Him for yourself. God then explains His Name by calling Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God is a personal God. He is not just an idea or an imaginary figure, but someone who you can know and have a personal relationship with. Just like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we can know God.

LOOK (Continued)

Now why is it important to know God's Name? People talk about gods all the time. When we say the word "god," people may think we are talking about our God, Allah, Zeus, or any number of the millions of gods mankind has created. In fact, many people today say that all these gods are the same. How then can we tell which god we are talking about? Just like we can tell people apart by their names, we know God by His Name. Our God is Yahweh. He is not the same God as Allah or Zeus. Yahweh is the true and living God of the Bible. He is the same God who gave Abraham a child, who turned Jacob from a liar and a manipulator into the father of Israel, who helped Israel cross the Red Sea, who sent His Son Jesus, and who rose Jesus from the dead. The God we read about in the Bible is the same God who lives in all believers. He is not Allah or Zeus. He is Yahweh.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life.

TOOK

Review the lesson by asking the students what God's Name is and why it is important to know God's Name.

Pray: Thank the Lord that He is a personal God who knows us personally. Praise Him for being indescribable and great.

Parent Question: What is God's Name and what does it mean?

FURTHER STUDY

Commentary on Exodus 3:1-15 by David Guzik

Exodus 3 - Moses and the Burning Bush

A. God's call to Moses from the burning bush.

1. (1-3) Moses and the burning bush on Mount Horeb.

Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush *was* not consumed. Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

a. **Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law:** For 40 years Moses lived as an obscure shepherd in the desert of Midian. At this point his life was so humble that he didn't even have a flock of sheep to call his own - the sheep belonged to his **father-in-law**.

i. **Tending the flock:** "The Hebrew suggests that this was his habitual occupation." (Cole)

b. **The back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God:** Moses brought the sheep to this mountain, also later called Mount Sinai. **Horeb** probably means "desert" or "desolation," and the name gives an idea of the terrain.

c. **The bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed:** It wasn't just that Moses saw a bush burning; apparently, it is not uncommon for a plant like this to spontaneously ignite out in that desert. Nevertheless, two things were distinctive about that bush:

- **The Angel of the LORD appeared...from the midst** of the bush
- Though the bush burned, **the bush was not consumed**.

i. "Though the bush burned with fire, it did not crackle or diminish, no leaf curled and no branch charred. It burned, but was not consumed." (Meyer)

ii. The bush burning but not being consumed was a magnetic sight to Moses - it drew him in for a closer examination. Some think the burning bush to be a symbol of Israel, or the people of God more generally - afflicted but not destroyed, because God is in the midst of them.

iii. Yet we can also say that the burning bush was a picture of the cross. The Hebrew word used to describe this bush is comes from the word "to stick or to prick," this meaning a thorn-bush or bramble. We can think of the cross - where Jesus, crowned with thorns, endured the fires of judgment and yet was not consumed by them - and be reminded of the cross when we consider the burning bush.

iv. **I will now turn aside to see this great sight:** Whatever exactly Moses saw, it was nothing *normal*. "To explain what happened here as a temporary mirage of reflected sunlight on some red leaves or a campfire of

some Bedouin or even the phenomenon of Saint Elmo's fire is to substitute *our* experience for Moses' forty years in that area and his estimate that it was indeed unusual." (Kaiser)

v. Clarke on the **Angel of the LORD**: "Not a created angel certainly, for he is called *Jehovah*, Exodus 3:4 and has the most expressive attributes of the Godhead applied to him...Yet he is an *angel, malach, a messenger*, in whom was the name of God....And who is this but JESUS, the Leader, Redeemer, and Saviour of all mankind?"

2. (4-6) From the burning bush, God calls to Moses.

So 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." Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand *is* holy ground." Moreover He said, "I *am* the God of your father; the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God.

a. **When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look**: God didn't speak to Moses until He had Moses' attention. Often God's Word doesn't touch our heart the way that it might because we don't give it our attention.

i. The burning bush was a spectacular phenomenon that captured Moses' attention; but it changed nothing until Moses received the *Word of God* that came to him there.

b. **God called to him from the midst of the bush**: Moses didn't see anyone in the burning bush; yet God, in the presence of the *Angel of the LORD* (Exodus 3:2) was there, calling out to Moses from the midst of the burning bush.

i. Undoubtedly, this is another occasion where Jesus appeared before His incarnation in the Old Testament as the *Angel of the LORD*, as He did many times (Genesis 16:7-13, Judges 2:1-5, Judges 6:11-24, Judges 13:3-22).

ii. We say this is God, in the Person of Jesus Christ, because of God the Father, it is said *No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him* (John 1:18), and that no man has ever seen God in the Person of the Father (1 Timothy 6:16).

c. **Moses, Moses!** God's first words to Moses called him by name. This shows that even though Moses was now an obscure, forgotten shepherd on the backside of the desert, God knew who he was, and Moses was important to God.

i. The *double call* (**Moses, Moses!**) implied importance and urgency, as when God called *Abraham, Abraham!* (Genesis 22:11), *Samuel, Samuel!* (1 Samuel 3:10), *Simon, Simon* (Luke 22:31), *Martha, Martha* (Luke 10:41), and *Saul, Saul* (Acts 9:4).

d. **Then He said**: God told Moses to do two things to show special honor to this place because of the immediate presence of God.

- He told Moses to keep a distance (**Do not draw near this place**).
- He commanded Moses to show reverence for God's presence (**Take your sandals off your feet**).

i. **Do not draw near** literally has the sense of "stop coming closer." Moses was on his way for an up-close examination of the burning bush when God stopped him short.

ii. This was a holy place; and because God is holy, there will always be a distance between God and man. Even in perfection man will never be equal to God, though we will be able to have closer fellowship with Him than

ever.

iii. **Take your sandals off your feet:** Removing the sandals showed an appropriate *humility*, because the poorest and most needy have no shoes, and servants usually went barefoot. It also recognized the *immediate presence* of God. In many cultures, you take off your shoes when you come into someone's house, and now Moses was in God's "house," a place of His immediate presence.

iv. "As this sole must like in dust, gravel, and sand about the foot when travelling, and render it very uneasy, hence the custom of frequently *washing* the feet in those countries where these sandals were worn. *Pulling off the shoes was*, therefore, an emblem of laying aside the *pollutions* contracted by *walking in the way of sin.*" (Clarke)

e. **The God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob:** God revealed Himself to Moses by declaring His relationship to the patriarchs. This reminded Moses that God is the God of the covenant, and His covenant with Israel was still valid and important. This wasn't a "new God" meeting Moses, but the same God that dealt with **Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**

i. God would reveal Himself to Moses more intimately than He had to any of the patriarchs; yet it all began with God reminding Moses of the bridge of covenant they met on.

ii. Some in the days of Moses might have thought that God neglected or forgot His covenant in the 400 years of Israel's slavery in Egypt, since the time of the patriarchs. Nevertheless, God was at work during that time, preserving and multiplying the nation.

f. **Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look upon God:** God told Moses to do what was appropriate for a creature before their Creator - to revere and recognize His holiness. Moses responded as a man who knew he was not only a creature, but also a sinful creature - he **hid his face.**

i. In his years in the wilderness of Midan, Moses must have often remembered how he murdered an Egyptian and how proud he was to think he could deliver Israel himself. Moses might have remembered a thousands sins, both real and imagined - now, when God appeared, he responded in a way completely different than he might have 40 years before.

B. God's commission to Moses.

1. (7-10) God explains His general plan to Moses, and Moses' place in the plan.

And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

a. **I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land:** God did not just *then* decide to give Israel the land of Canaan. It was the same land that He promised to the patriarchs some 400 years previous to this.

b. **I have surely seen the oppression of My people who *are* in Egypt, and have heard their cry:** God wanted Moses and Israel to know His compassionate care for them.

i. To this point, Moses' experience emphasized the *separation* between himself and God. Moses could never burn without being consumed. Moses could not speak from the midst of a fire. Moses couldn't keep his sandals on in the divine presence. Moses was not the eternal God of the patriarchs. The separation between God and Moses was real; yet God would soon show His care and compassion to Moses and the people of Israel. God is *separate*, but not necessarily *distant*. God is separate; yet God cares and connects Himself to our needs.

c. **I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people:** In Exodus 3:8 God said, *I have come down to deliver them*. Then at Exodus 3:10 God said, **Come now, therefore, and I will send you**. If God said He would deliver them, why did He use or need Moses at all? This shows that God often uses and chooses to rely on human instruments.

i. God could do it all by Himself, but it is most often God's plan to work with and through people, as we are *workers together with Him* (2 Corinthians 6:1).

2. (11-12) Moses' answer, and God's reply to that answer.

But Moses said to God, "Who *am* I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this *shall be* a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

a. **Who am I?** 40 years before, Moses thought he knew who he was: he was a prince of Egypt and a Hebrew, God's chosen instrument to deliver Israel. After forty years of chasing sheep around the desert, Moses didn't have the same self-sure confidence that he once had.

b. **I will certainly be with you:** God's reply is intended to take Moses' focus off of himself and on where it *should be* - on God. Therefore, God never answered the question "**Who am I?**" Instead, He reminded Moses "**I will certainly be with you.**"

i. This was a great opportunity to deal with Moses' "self-esteem" problem, but God ignored the solutions we usually use regarding this "problem." Moses only had a self-esteem problem when he was too confident in his own ability to deliver Israel.

ii. **Who am I?** This really wasn't the right question; "*Who is God?*" was the proper question. God's identity was more important than who Moses was. When we know the God who is with us, we can step forth confidently to do His will.

iii. **I will certainly be with you:** After this, Moses had no right to protest further. From here his objections move from a godly lack of self-reliance to an ungodly lack of faith.

c. **When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain:** As Moses tended his flock in the wilderness, it probably seemed totally unlikely that he would lead all three million of his people to this same **mountain** - but God promised that this would be so.

i. The **sign** that God had truly sent Moses may not have been the coming to Mount Sinai (which did not happen for many, many months). The sign probably refers backwards, to the sign of the burning bush and the encounter with God there.

3. (13-14) The revelation of God's name to Moses.

Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, *when* I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What *is* His name?' what shall I say to them?" And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

a. **And they say to me, "What is His name?" what shall I say to them?** Rightfully, Moses sensed he needed credentials before the people of Israel. Before, he thought he had the credentials because he was a prince of Egypt. 40 years of tending sheep took away his sense of self-reliance.

i. When God revealed Himself to man in the days of the patriarchs it was often associated with a newly revealed name or title for God.

- Abraham, in the encounter with Melchizedek called on *God Most High* (Genesis 14:22)
- Abraham later encountered *Almighty God* (Genesis 17:1)
- Abraham came to know the LORD as *Everlasting God* (Genesis 21:33), and *The-LORD-Will-Provide* (Genesis 22:14)
- Hagar encountered *You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees* (Genesis 16:13)
- Jacob met *El Elohe Israel* (Genesis 33:20) and *El Bethel* (Genesis 35:7).

ii. So if Moses were to come to the elders of Israel as a representative of God, it would be logical for them to wonder, "By what name did He reveal Himself to you?"

b. **And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM."** It might seem nonsensical to refer to one's self with the phrase, **"I AM WHO I AM."** Yet it reveals something important about God - that He has no equal.

i. "There is no equivalent for God but God. If you place God on the one side of your symbol of equation (=), there is nothing to put on the other but Himself." (Meyer)

ii. The *closest* we come to an equivalent is to say, "God is love" (1 John 4:8, 4:16). Yet that is not exactly an equivalent, because you can't turn it around and say, "Love is God." God is love, but He is also greater than love.

iii. This name **I AM WHO I AM** is connected with the name *Yahweh*. "This pithy clause is clearly a reference to the name YHWH. Probably 'Yahweh' is regarded as a shortening of the whole phrase, and a running together of the clause into one word." (Cole)

iv. *Yahweh* was not a new name, nor an unknown name - it appears more than 160 times in the book of Genesis. Moses' mother's name was *Jochabed* meaning *Yahweh is my glory*. Moses and Israel knew the name *Yahweh*. God did not give Moses a previously unknown name of God, but the name they had known before. God called them back to the faith of the patriarchs, not to something "new."

v. In the English-speaking world, for a time people pronounced *Yahweh* as *Jehovah*. The pious Jews of later years did not want to pronounce the name of God out of reverence, so they left the vowels out of His name and simply said the word *Lord* (*adonai*) instead. If the vowels of the word *adonai* are put over the consonants for *YHWH*, you can get the name "Jehovah." All this came about much later; in the days of the Bible, the name was pronounced *Yah-weh* or *Yah-veh*.

c. **I AM has sent me to you:** God told Moses His name was **I AM** because God simply *is*; there was never a time when He did not exist, or a time when He will cease to exist.

i. The name **I AM** has within it the idea that God is completely independent; that He relies on nothing for life or existence (Isaiah 40:28-29; John 5:26). Theologians sometimes call this quality *aseity*. It means that God doesn't need anybody or anything - life is in Himself.

ii. It is also connected with the idea that God is eternal and unchanging. "Strictly speaking, there is no past or future tense in the Divine Vocabulary. When God appears to employ them, it is by way of accommodation to our limited horizons." (Meyer)

iii. Also inherent in the idea behind the name **I AM** is the sense that God is "the becoming one"; God becomes whatever is lacking in our time of need. The name **I AM** invites us to fill in the blank to meet our need - when we are in darkness, Jesus says *I am the light*; when we are hungry, He says *I am the bread of life*, when we are defenseless, He says *I am the Good Shepherd*. God is the becoming one, becoming what we need.

iv. In this, God's name is both an announcement and an introduction. It announces God's presence, and invites any interested to know Him by experience, to taste and see that the LORD is good.

d. **I AM**: This is a divine title that Jesus took upon Himself often, clearly identifying Himself with the voice from the burning bush.

i. *Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that **I AM** [He], you will die in your sins.* (John 8:24)

ii. *Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that **I AM** [He], and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things."* (John 8:28)

iii. *Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, **I AM**."* (John 8:58)

iv. *Now I tell you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe that **I AM*** (John 13:19)

v. *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "**I AM** [He]." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. Now when He said to them, "I am [He]," they drew back and fell to the ground.* (John 18:4-6)

4. (15) God tells Moses what to say to the elders of Israel.

Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: 'The LORD 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 to all generations.'

a. **Thus you shall say to the children of Israel**: After four hundred years in Egypt, Moses had the job of announcing that *now* was the time for the children of Israel to go back to Canaan, and to take the land God promised to their fathers.

i. This was probably totally contrary to what the elders and people of Israel desired. In four hundred years, you set down roots. They probably had no desire to return to the Promised Land; all they wanted was to be made more comfortable in Egypt.

ii. The first word had to come to the people of God (Exodus 3:16) and then to world (Exodus 3:18). Often God will not speak to the wider world until He speaks to His people and He has their attention.

b. **This is My name forever**: God here referred to the name just previously mentioned in the same verse, the **LORD God** (*Yahweh Elohim*). "**Forever**" emphasizes the eternal faithfulness of God to His covenant.