

The fact that the Israelites cried unto God shows that they retained some faith in the God of their fathers. When the old oppressing king died, they prayed in hope. But the bondage continued for a time.

41. *How important was God's covenant? (2:24)*

A *covenant* has always been the cornerstone of God's dealings with mankind. A covenant is variously defined as a commitment, bargain, agreement, arrangement, or will. God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, Moses, and others. God is unfailing in remembering his covenants.

Regarding God's covenant with Abraham, see Genesis 15. This covenant involved promises of Israel's increase in population, its enslavement in a foreign country, its deliverance, and the possession of the land of Canaan.

42. *What four actions are ascribed to God in 2:24-25?*

God heard . . . remembered . . . saw . . . knew. Ex. 2:25, when translated very literally, says, "And God looked upon the sons of Israel, and God knew." How beautiful! What more could anyone ask than that God would see us and know? To *know* means to know meaningfully, by experience. It often has the idea of intimacy, of approval, and acceptance.

The Text of EXODUS
TRANSLATION

3 Now Mo-ses was keeping the flock of Je-thro his father-in-law, the priest of Mid-i-an: and he led the flock to the back of the wilderness, and came to the mountain of God, unto Ho-reb. (2) And the angel of Je-ho-vah appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. (3) And Mo-ses said, I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. (4) And when Je-ho-vah saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Mo-ses, Mo-ses. And he said, Here am I.

(5) And he said , Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. (6) Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of I-saac, and the God of Jacob. And Mo-ses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. (7) And Je-ho-vah said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people that are in E-gypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; (8) and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the E-gyp-tians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Ca-na-an-ite, and the Hit-tite, and the Am-or-ite, and the Per-iz-zite, and the Hi-vite, and the Jeb-u-site. (9) And now, behold, the cry of the children of Is-ra-el is come unto me: moreover I have seen the oppression wherewith the E-gyp-tians oppress them. (10) Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pha-raoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Is-ra-el out of E-gypt. (11) And Mo-ses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Is-ra-el out of E-gypt? (12) And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this shall be the token unto thee; that I have sent thee: when thou hast brought forth the people out of E-gypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain. (13) And Mo-ses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Is-ra-el and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? (14) And God said unto Mo-ses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Is-ra-el, I AM hath sent me unto you. (15) And God said moreover unto Mo-ses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Is-ra-el, Je-ho-vah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of I-saac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations. (16) Go, and gather the elders of Is-ra-el together, and say unto them, Je-ho-vah, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of I-saac, and of Jacob, hath appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and *seen* that which is done to you in E-gypt: (17)

and I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of E-gypt unto the land of the Ca-naan-ite, and the Hit-tite, and the Am-or-ite, and the Per-iz-zite, and the Hi-vite, and the Jeb-u-site, unto a land flowing with milk and honey. (18) And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Is-ra-el, unto the king of E-gypt, and ye shall say unto him, Je-ho-vah, the God of the Hebrews, hath met with us: and now let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to Je-ho-vah our God. (19) And I know that the king of E-gypt will not give you leave to go, no, not by a mighty hand. (20) And I will put forth my hand, and smite E-gypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go (21) And I will give this people favor in the sight of the E-gyp-tians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: (22) but every woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall despoil the E-gyptians.

EXPLORING EXODUS: CHAPTER THREE
QUESTIONS ANSWERABLE FROM THE BIBLE

1. After careful reading of Exodus 3, propose a topic or theme (1-3 words) for the entire chapter.
2. What work did Moses do in Midian? (3:1)
3. Who was Moses' father-in-law? What other names are given to him (Compare Ex. 2:18; 4:18; 18:1)
4. Which side of an area is the "backside"? (3:1; 26:12, 22)
5. What mountain is Horeb? (3:1; 19:20; 33:6; 34:2). Why is it called the "mountain of God"? (Compare Deut. 4:10-13; Ex. 19:20—20:3).
6. What appeared unto Moses? (3:2) What was unusual about the sight? At what place was this appearance?
7. Who was the *angel* of the LORD? (3:2, 6; Compare Gen. 22: 11-18; 31:11-13; Judges 6:11-16).
8. What was Moses' reaction upon seeing the burning bush? (3:3)

9. Who called out of the midst of the bush? (3:4)
10. With what words did God call to Moses? (3:4)
11. What two preliminary commands did God give Moses from the bush? (3:5)
12. What significance is there in removing the sandals? (Compare Josh. 5:15)
13. What made this spot "holy ground"? (3:5)
14. Why did God introduce himself to Moses as "the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, . . ."? (3:6; Gen. 15:13-18)
15. What does 3:6 reveal about the faith of Moses' father? What was the name of Moses' father? (6:20)
16. What argument did the Lord Jesus draw from Ex. 3:6? (Luke 20:37-38)
17. How did Moses feel about looking upon God? How did he show his feelings? (3:6)
18. What had the LORD seen and heard? (3:7, 9)
19. By what term did the Lord refer to the Israelites in 3:7?
20. What was God's purpose in "coming down"? (3:8). Why does God need to "come down"? Isn't He everywhere? (Compare Jer. 23:23-24)
21. What is meant by saying that the land was "flowing with milk and honey"? (3:8; Compare Deut. 8:7-8).
22. How many nations occupied the land that God was bringing the Israelites into? (3:8; Compare Deut. 7:1).
23. To whom was Moses sent? (3:10)
24. What was Moses' mission? (3:10)
25. What was Moses' first excuse when God told him to lead Israel out? (3:11)
26. What were Moses' four other excuses that he later gave? (3:13; 4:1, 10, 13)
27. What reassurance did God give to encourage Moses to do his job? (3:12)
28. What was the *token*, or sign, that God promised to Moses, to verify that God had indeed sent him on this mission? (3:12)
29. How could this be a sign to reassure Moses during the

performance of his work, when Moses could not possibly see the fulfillment of the sign until his work was done? (3:12; Compare John 2:18-22).

30. How and when did Israel serve God "upon this mountain"? (3:12; 19:1-3)
31. What question did Moses assume that Israel would ask him when he told them that God had sent him to them? (3:13)
32. What does the question concerning God's name suggest about Israel's religious knowledge and faithfulness in Egypt?
33. What was the name God gave for Himself? (3:14)
34. What significance and implications can you perceive in this name for God? (Compare Isa. 57:15; Rev. 1:4; John 8:58).
35. Why the repeated stress on the fact that God was the God of their fathers? (3:15)
36. What had God promised to Abraham that made Abraham so important and prominent? (3:15; Gen. 15:13-14; 22:18).
37. What name for God is solemnly given in 3:15?
38. What is indicated by God's calling His name "my memorial"? (3:15; Compare Psalm 97:2; 102:12; 135:13).
39. How long was the memorial to be known? (3:15)
40. Whom was Moses to go and gather together? (3:16)
41. What is the significance of God "visiting" them? (Compare other passages on "visiting," such as Gen. 21:1; 50:24; Ruth 1:6; Psalm 106:4; Luke 1:68).
42. What promise of God was to be declared unto Israel? (3:17)
43. How would the Israelites respond to God's promise? (3:18)
44. Who was to go with Moses unto the king of Egypt? (3:18). Did it work out that way? (5:1-2)
45. What request was Moses to make to the king? (3:18; Compare 5:1-2)
46. What did God predict about the king's response to Moses' request? (3:19)
47. Explain "No, not by a mighty hand." (3:19)
48. What did God promise (or threaten) to do to Egypt? (3:20)
49. How did God fulfill the threat stated in Ex. 3:20? See Ex. 7:3ff.
50. What would Egypt do after all God's wonders had been done

- in its midst? (3:20)
51. What would God give to the Israelites in the sight of the Egyptians? (3:21)
 52. What does "Ye shall not go out empty" mean? (3:21; 12:35-36)
 53. From whom were the women to ask (borrow) valuables? (3:22)
 54. What did these valuables consist of? (3:22)
 55. Where were the valuables to be placed? (3:22)
 56. How extensively were the Israelites to take valuables from the Egyptians? (3:22)
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EXODUS THREE: THE CALL OF GOD'S MAN

Facts About God's Call:

1. Comes in unexpected ways; 3:2
2. Comes in keeping with past revelations; 3:6
3. Must be heard with reverence; 3:5
4. Given to help man; 3:7-8
5. Sends us to BIG jobs; 3:8.
6. Comes to the fearful; 3:11.
7. Comes with God's directions; 3:16.
8. Comes with reassurance; 3:17.
9. Sends us against human opposition; 3:19.
10. Comes with divine help; 3:20.

EXODUS THREE: AN ENCOUNTER WITH GOD

- I. Preparations for an encounter with God
 1. Awareness; 3:3.
 2. Humility; 3:5-6.
- II. Purposes of an encounter with God
 1. To deliver the afflicted; 3:8-10.
 2. To bless the afflicted; 3:8, 17.
- III. Power of an encounter with God
 1. Power to answer objections; 3:13-17.
 2. Power to overcome resistance; 3:18-20.

EXPLORING EXODUS: NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

1. *What was Moses' main occupation in Midian?* (3:1)

He kept the flock (sheep, goats, small cattle) of Jethro, his father-in-law. Literally, he "was keeping" the flock, indicating the continuance of this occupation. Often this work was considered the work of women or children, and men would not do it. What a contrast this was to Moses' previous life-style in Egypt!

2. *Who was Jethro?* (3:1)

He was Moses' father-in-law, the same person called *Reuel* in 2:18. See notes on 2:16-18. The name *Jethro* also occurs in 4:18 and 18:1ff. Critics like Martin Noth assume that the use of the two names Jethro and Reuel indicate separate sources and traditions lying behind our exodus narrative.¹ But even he admits that it is impossible to discover the origin of the different names given to the priest at a "later date." It seems to us that there is no solid evidence for the existence of any sources, and that we can confidently hold to the clear Biblical assertions that Moses gave us all the law (John 7:19; Neh. 10:29).

3. *Which side is the back side of the desert?* (3:1)

To the Hebrews the *backside* of anything was the west side. (Americans have a different idiom, and say "back east.") It appears that Jethro lived in the S.E. part of the Sinai peninsula. Moses drove the sheep westward (or north-westward) through a wilderness to the patchy pasture areas around Horeb.

4. *What is the "mountain of God"?*

The expression may mean only "the great mountain." Tradition reaching back many centuries identifies this mountain as Mt. Sinai, or Jebel Musa (meaning, Mt. of

¹Exodus, p. 37.

Moses), in the southern Sinaitic peninsula. We see no cause to reject this view.

Perhaps the mountain was called the mount of God because God here afterwards came down and gave the ten commandments and other laws (Exodus 19-24). Moses wrote Exodus after the law was given at Sinai. Therefore, Sinai was indeed the "mount of God" to those who first read Exodus.

Josephus² says that men had the opinion that God dwelt at that mountain, and therefore shepherds had not before pastured there before Moses came. It is possible that the mountain was regarded as a holy mountain by the superstitious residents even before God called Moses there. But such superstitions are neither certain nor significant.

The term "mount of God" (or similar terms) is also found in Ex. 4:27; 18:5; 24:13; Num. 10:33; I Kings 19:18.

5. *What does Horeb mean?*

The name *Horeb* comes from a verb meaning "to be dry." This well describes much of the rugged, granitic, mountainous, desert area around Sinai. The name refers to Mt. Sinai, or, more probably, the entire region thereabout. The name *Horeb* is found in Ex. 33:6; 17:6; I Kings 8:9; 19:8; and numerous other passages.

6. *Who appeared to Moses at Horeb? (3:2)*

The angel of the LORD appeared to Moses. The word *angel* means messenger. But this messenger was none other than God himself. See 3:4, 6. Deut. 33:16 speaks of God's blessings as coming from the "good will of him that dwelt in the bush." The angel of the Lord was the same personality that later came into the world as Jesus of Nazareth, the one whom John calls the WORD (John 1:1). "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (John 1:10).

Keil and Delitzsch³ make the helpful comment that the transition from the *angel of Jehovah* (vs. 2) to *Jehovah* (vs. 4)

²*Antiquities*, II, xii, 1; III, v, 1.

³*Op. Cit.*, p. 439.

proves the identity of the two; and the interchange of the names *Jehovah* (LORD) and *Elohim* (the Hebrew word for *God*) in vs. 4 precludes the idea of *Jehovah's* being merely a national God of the Hebrews.

7. *Was the bush really burning?*

Certainly it was. Ex. 3:2 says that the bush burned with fire, but the bush was not consumed. This bush was a kind of thorn bush (Heb., *seneh*) common in that district.

We ask this question only because some modern commentators seek to do away with the miraculous feature of the burning bush. They suggest that it had brilliant flowers that looked like flame; or sunlight was falling on it so as to produce an effect of flame.⁴ And even more radical idea is that the vision was only an inner experience in Moses' mind, and that one standing next to Moses would have seen nothing unusual.⁵ Noth supposes it was some manifestation similar to St. Elmo's fire.⁶

8. *How did God address Moses at the bush? (3:4)*

He called his name twice, "Moses, Moses," in a way reminding us of God's call to Abraham in Gen. 22:11: "Abraham, Abraham."

Note the interchange of divine names in 3:4: The LORD (*Jehovah*) saw, but God (*Elohim*) called. *Jehovah* is God's covenant name with his people. *Elohim* is the general term for God as the mighty one, creator, and ruler.

9. *Why take off the shoes? (3:5)*

This was an act of reverence and humbleness before God. The special manifestation of God's presence made the spot "holy ground." Removing the shoes is still practiced in the East. Moslems remove their shoes upon entering any of their holy places. Joshua put off his shoes when he stood before the captain of the Lord's host (Josh. 5:15).

10. *How did God describe himself to Moses? (3:6)*

⁴Cole, *op. cit.*, p. 64.

⁵*The Broadman Bible Commentary*, Vol. 1 (Nashville; Broadman, 1969), p. 328.

⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 39.

As the God of thy father (Amram?), of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. This verse implies Moses had some knowledge of the patriarchal history in Genesis.

God described himself as one who remembers, sees, hears, and helps his people.

The word *father* (singular) may refer to Moses' father, Amram, about whom we know almost nothing. Or it may be a collective use of the term, and refer to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who are named in the second part of the verse. Moses receives communication from no new or unknown God, but only a fuller of revelation from Him whom his people had known before.

Our Lord Jesus presented this passage as a proof of the resurrection of the dead to the Sadducees (Matt. 22:32; Mark 12:26; Luke 20:37). God said to Moses, "I AM the God of Abraham (not, "I was"). When God spoke to Moses, Abraham had been dead over five hundred years. But Abraham was not dead to God; for all live unto Him. On the basis of this assertion of the continued existence of Abraham's soul after his physical death, Jesus said that ultimately soul and body will be reunited by a resurrection of the body.

11. *Why did Moses hide his face?* (3:6)

People are always fearful to look on God when they really see His holiness and glory. (Isaiah 6:1, 5; Judges 13:22; Luke 5:8; I Kings 19:13)

12. *Why was God now coming down to deliver Israel?* (3:7-8)

Because He had seen their affliction, and heard their cry, and knew their sorrow. God is a God of personal feelings and tenderness.

Also the time of which God had foretold to Abraham was nearly fulfilled. "They shall afflict thy seed four hundred years" (Gen. 15:13). God keeps His promises, and keeps His schedule.

13. *To what kind of a land would God bring Israel?* (3:8).

To a *broad*, or large, land. This is indicated by the enumeration of the six (or seven) tribes which then inhabited the country.

To a *good* land, a land flowing (oozing) with milk and honey. This means that it was a land of pastures, where flocks giving milk could be raised. It would be a land of flowers, from which bees would make honey. The phrase "flowing with milk and honey" is repeated in 3:17; 13:5; Jer. 11:5. The goodness of the land is also described in Deut. 8:7-8.

Sinuhe, an Egyptian fugitive who fled into the land of Canaan, or a nearby area, about 1960 B.C., described the land in a way similar to that by which God described it to Moses:

It was a good land, named Yaa. Figs were in it, and grapes. It had more wine than water. Plentiful was its honey, abundant its olives. Every (kind of) fruit was on its trees. Barley was there, and emmer. There was no limit to any (kind of) cattle.⁷

14. *What peoples would be displaced from the promised land by Israel? (3:8)*

Six "nations" are named. This is the first reference to these since God's promise to Abraham in Gen. 15:18-21. They are named frequently after this. See 3:17; 13:5; Deut. 7:1; Josh. 24:11. Each of these nations is said to be "greater and mightier than thou" (Deut. 7:1).

This group of "nations" is often said to number seven. Collectively they are called the Canaanites, even though one tribe called Canaanites was a distinct group among the seven. Gen. 10:15-19 reveals that six of them (the Perizzites are not mentioned) were descendants of Canaan, the son of Ham. While they were distantly related by blood, these nations were not a United Nation or a United States. They had wars between themselves. Their society was based on a city-state system. Prominent among the city-states in Canaan were Hazor, Jericho, Gezer, Megiddo, Jerusalem, Shechem, and Hebron. Cities such as these ruled as much territory as

⁷"The Story of Sinuhe," translated by John A. Wilson, in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton U. Press, 1955), p. 19. Used by permission.

they could control. The Egyptians had general control over all of Palestine at this time, but when the Egyptian troops were absent, the Canaanite city-states were not very loyal subjects.

Morally, the Canaanites had become very degenerate. Their cup of iniquity had become full and running over (Gen. 15:16). They offered their children as sacrifices (Deut. 9:5; 18:9-10). Sometimes fornication was part of their religious ritual (Numbers 25:1-2).

Here are a few facts about these seven Canaanite nations: (1) The *Canaanites* (the separate tribe) settled into the land about 1900 B.C.⁸ They gave their name to the whole land, which included Phoenicia and the Mediterranean coastal area of Syria. Their areas included Jericho, Tyre, Sidon, Byblos (in Phoenicia).

(2) The *Hittites* were immigrant peoples from the Old Hittite empire (1800-1450 B.C.) in Asia Minor to the north. See Gen. 23:10.

(3) The *Amorites* were the most numerous and dominant of the "Canaanites." They had settled into Canaan and nearby lands about 2300 B.C., probably from the Syrian and Arabian deserts. They destroyed most of the urban settlements which had existed in the land before their arrival.⁹ They occupied the Northern part of Moab, north of the Arnon river, among other areas (Num. 21:26).

(4) The *Perizzites* are not identifiable. The term may mean *villagers*.

(5) The *Hivites* dwelt around Gibeon (about five miles NW of Jerusalem) and around Shechem. See Josh. 11:19; 9:3-7; Gen. 34:2. They may be the same people as the Horites, or Hurrians, who were people from the mountains north of Mesopotamia, who settled into Palestine about 2000 B.C.

(6) The *Jebusites* occupied Jerusalem. (Judges 1:21; II Sam.

⁸Kathleen Kenyon, *Archaeology in the Holy Land*, Second Ed. (New York: Praeger, 1956), pp. 160-161.

⁹Kenyon, *op. cit.*, pp. 135-137.

5:6; Josh. 15:63)

(7) The *Girgashites* (Josh. 24:11; Deut. 7:1) are obscure.

15. *Could Moses have disobeyed God's call to deliver Israel?*

Certainly. See Ex. 3:10. But, like Paul, he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision (Acts 26:19).

16. *Why was Moses hesitant to go and bring forth Israel? (3:11)*

Why should he say, "Who am I?" Undoubtedly, any human would have been frightened by such a commission. Especially would this have been true of Moses, who is said to have been meek above all men on earth (Num. 12:3). Whatever may have been Moses' reason for hesitancy, the scripture does not criticize him at this point, and we shall certainly not do so either.

17. *What were Moses' five excuses to God?*

1. "Who Am I?" (3:11)

2. "What shall I say when they ask, 'What is his (God's) name?' " (3:13)

3. "They will not believe" (4:1).

4. "I am not eloquent" (4:10).

5. "Send someone else" (4:13).

18. *What was God's reassurance to Moses? (3:12)*

"Certainly I will be with thee." Years later Moses gave the same reassurance to Israel and to his successor Joshua (Deut. 31:8, 23).

The Hebrew word translated "I will be" is *ehyeh*. This word is the very word which God gave for Himself as His name in 3:14 ("I Am . . ."). God's name thus means that he is the existing one, the being one, the eternal.

19. *What was God's token of assurance that he had sent Moses? (3:12)*

The token, or sign, was that Israel and Moses would serve God upon that very mountain before which Moses then stood, after God had brought them forth from Egypt! Moses was being called from the burning bush before Mt. Horeb; he would return to Horeb with Israel.

This token required faith to accept. We might feel it took more faith to believe the promise of the sign than it would

take to go and attempt to lead Israel out. But the sign itself was such a daring and confident assertion that it would inspire confidence and courage. Compare II Kings 19:29.

This token to Moses reminds us of the sign Jesus offered in John 2:18-19: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise IT [my body] up." Such a daring challenge demonstrates confidence within the one saying it, and inspires confidence in those who hear.

20. *Why would the Israelites ask Moses about God's name? (3:13)*

Probably because they had forgotten God's name Jehovah, or the LORD, or Yahweh (YHWH). The name had been used in Abraham's time (Gen. 15:2; 22:14), and long before then (Gen. 4:26). But it had been neglected in Egypt.

In patriarchal times, new revelations of the ancestral God were sometimes accompanied or illustrated by a new title for God (Gen. 16:13; 22:14; 35:7). Thus Israel might be conditioned to expect to hear a new name for God. But they received only the old name with new power and events associated with its meaning.

It is not surprising that Israel wanted to know God's name. Can you conceive of *knowing* someone without knowing a name for that person? Manoah wanted to know God's name so that he could render him honor (Judges 13:17). Jacob wanted to know the angel's name (Gen. 32:29).

21. *What is God's name? (3:14-15)*

His name is I AM THAT I AM. This probably is better translated, "I will be who (or what) I will be," since the verbs express future or continuing action. The Greek O.T. translated it, "I am the being one" (*ego eimi ho on*). The famous archaeologist Wm. F. Albright rendered the name, "I am he who causes (things) to be."¹⁰ Certainly Jehovah is the one who makes all things happen, but most scholars feel that this translation is too abstract and subtle to be the only meaning.

¹⁰Wm. F. Albright, *From The Stone Age to Christianity* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1957), pp. 259-261.

The name LORD (Jehovah, or Yahweh) in Ex. 3:15 is derived from the verb translated "be" or "am." Thus the name points God out as he who is, and was, and is to come. See Rev. 1:4, 8; Isa. 57:15. The possible implications in this name are as infinite as God himself. See notes on Ex. 6:3.

In the same way that God is Father is the eternal I AM, Jesus is also called "I Am" (John 8:58). Jesus is the same yesterday, and today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). In fact, the very one who was speaking to Moses at the bush later came unto us in human form as Jesus of Nazareth.

Interestingly, the Jewish historian Josephus would not tell his Roman readers what God's name which God told Moses was.¹¹ Modern Jews still will not utter aloud the name Yahweh (Jehovah, the LORD). They avoid it so that they may not possibly use God's name in vain. But God expressly told Moses to say the name to the children of Israel. Ex. 4:1 says that the Israelites would utter the name. Nowhere does the O.T. hint that the name dare not be spoken by our lips. Of course, it should be used reverently or not at all.

22. *What is God's memorial? (3:15)*

His name YAHWEH (Jehovah, or LORD) is his memorial. "Sing praises unto Jehovah, O ye saints of his. And give thanks unto his holy memorial name" (Ps. 30:4; A.S.V.). See also Psalm 97:12; 100:12; 135:13; Hosea 12:5. By that name His person, nature, and works are to be recalled. Alan Cole says that the name YHWH ultimately came to mean to the Jews what the name Jesus has come to mean to Christians, a shorthand for all God's dealings of grace.¹²

Surely if God's name YAHWEH is to be remembered throughout all generations, the Jews perverted this truth in refusing to utter it.

23. *Whom was Moses to gather and speak to? (3:16)*

He was to gather and speak to the elders of Israel. The Israelites had very little formal governmental organization.

¹¹*Antiquities*, II, xii, 4.

¹²*Op. cit.*, p. 70.

The older men ruled in each location and family to the extent that their personalities and situations made possible.

24. *What does "visit" mean?* (3:16)

This word is often used in the Bible of some particular saving act of God toward his people. See Luke 1:68; Gen. 21:1; Ruth 1:6; Ex. 4:31.

Joseph had prophesied before his death that God would visit Israel, and they would go up from Egypt (Gen. 50:25). Moses' words about God's visiting them surely point to a fulfillment of Joseph's words, even though Joseph had been dead over three hundred and fifty years.

For notes on 3:17, see under 3:8.

25. *Would Israel believe Moses' words?* (3:18)

Yes. Ex. 4:29-31 reports that Moses and Aaron did gather the elders and spoke to them, and they did believe, at least at first.

26. *Who was to go in and speak to Pharaoh?* (3:18)

Moses, with the elders. As it worked out, only Moses and Aaron went. See 5:1, 3.

27. *What would Pharaoh understand the words "God . . . hath met with us" to imply?*

The words almost suggest hostile confrontation: "Our God has confronted us, and said to worship him, or else . . .!" Ex. 5:3 tends to confirm this idea. Also 4:24.

28. *Where would the three-days' journey lead them?* (3:18)

The place is not specified. Certainly all of the proposed locations for Mt. Sinai are much farther than three days' journey from Egypt. Probably no specific place was in mind. God foreknew Pharaoh was not going to release Israel, whether the request was for a brief or a long trip. By making the request small, the refusal of Pharaoh would display the harness of his heart. Moses later enlarged his demand, for Pharaoh to grant them entire departure from the land (6:10). From the outset of this confrontation, nothing was stated positively about Israel's coming back after three days.

The request to Pharaoh was politely worded: "Let us go, we pray thee." Actually Pharaoh had no right to detain

them. Israel had entered Egypt by invitation, and surely had the right to leave when they wished.

29. *What did God predict about Pharaoh's response?* (3:19)

Pharaoh would refuse to let Israel go, and would never grant it unless compelled by a mighty overpowering hand.

This is the first reference to Pharaoh's responses to Israel's request for departure. And right here at the outset the blame and the root of the trouble is placed where it belongs, on Pharaoh, not on God.

That Pharaoh expected Israel would never return is suggested by his insolent response.

30. *How did God stretch out his hand?* (3:20)

This figure of speech compares God to a warrior extending his arm in readiness for combat. The record of God's stretching out his hand to deliver Israel is the story of the ten plagues in Ex. 7-13. "By strength of hand Jehovah brought you out from this place" (Ex. 13:3; 7:4; 6:1).

31. *Why were the Israelites to collect jewels from the Egyptians?* (3:21-22)

The use of the word *spoil* in 3:22 suggests it was an act of triumph over Egypt, taking as it were the spoils of battle from the vanquished.

The jewelry could be looked upon as payment by the Egyptians for unpaid wages to the Israelites for many years of slave labor. However, the scripture does not suggest this as a justification for the act.

Note in 3:22 that some Egyptian women sojourned in the houses of the Hebrews. Not all the Egyptians shared the hateful feelings of their king toward Israelites.

"Borrow" in 3:22 simply means "ask." No hint of returning the items is implied.

The promise to give the Israelites favor in the eyes of the Egyptians was fulfilled. See Ex. 11:2-3; 12:35-36.

It is interesting to note that the Israelites placed these jewels upon their sons and daughters. While the Egyptians were burying their dead first born, the Israelites were adorning their children with Egyptian jewelry.

The jewelry was partly used later in making the vessels of the tabernacle (Ex. 35:22). Alas, some of it went into the golden calf (32:2).

THE TEXT OF EXODUS
TRANSLATION

4 And Mo-ses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice; for they will say, Je-ho-vah hath not appeared unto thee. (2) And Je-ho-vah said unto him, What is that in thy hand? And he said, A rod. (3) And he said, Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Mo-ses fled from before it. (4) And Je-ho-vah said unto Mo-ses, Put forth thy hand, and take it by the tail (and he put forth his hand, and laid hold of it, and it became a rod in his hand); (5) that they may believe that Je-ho-vah, the God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of I-saac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee. (6) And Je-ho-vah said furthermore unto him; Put now thy hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, as white as snow. (7) And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. (And he put his hand into his bosom again; and when he took it out of his bosom, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.) (8) And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of the latter sign. (9) And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe even these two signs, neither hearken unto thy voice, that thou shalt take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the river shall become blood upon the dry land. (10) And Mo-ses said unto Je-ho-vah, Oh, Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue. (11) And Je-ho-vah said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I, Je-ho-vah? (12) Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak. (13) And he said, Oh, Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send. (14) And the anger of Je-ho-vah