Revelation & Response

How would you respond if God showed up in a physical form some time today and told you exactly how He planned to triumph over evil and rescue us from all suffering? How would you respond if He told you that your role in His plan is to personally confront that evil face to face and advocate for those suffering in order to help lead them to safety? Would you be excited, terrified, indifferent, or perhaps maybe resistant?

This is the position that Moses is put into in perhaps one of the most iconic passages in all of the Bible, and the way that Moses writes the story here in Exodus 3-4, puts us in the position to consider our own response. Ultimately, God shows up to announce the good news that He is going to deliver Israel from slavery in Egypt and bring them Himself to the promised land to live in blessing. There are multiple parties that hear this news: Moses, Zipporah, Aaron, and the elders of Israel. Moses had a vastly different response to the news than Zipporah, Aaron, and the elders of Israel. They not only embraced what they heard but they responded with joy. In particular, the elders of Israel responded with astounding worship and joy. Moses on the other hand responded with reluctance and even resistance to his role in the whole matter. What we want to explore this morning is why? What made the difference in his response? Let’s look at his question and answer session with God.

1. Two Questions

   - Personal Qualification - “Who am I?”

   Exodus 3:11-12 But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?” 12 He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

   - God’s Reply – “It doesn’t matter; I will be with you”

   - Divine Identity - “Who are you?”

   Exodus 3:13-15 Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?” 14 God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” 15 God also said to Moses, “Say this to the people 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 thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

   - God’s Reply – “I AM WHO I AM” (translated LORD, as opposed to Lord, or God)

John Piper: "In other words, the great, central, Biblical name of Yahweh is explicitly rooted by God himself in the phrase "I am who I am". Tell them, the one who simply and absolutely is has sent you. Tell them that the essential thing about me is that I am...My heart burns when I hear God say, "My name is, 'I am who I am.'" Doesn't yours? It burns when I think of the absoluteness of God's existence – never beginning, never ending, never becoming, never improving, simply and absolutely there to be dealt with on his terms or not at all. Let it hit you, brothers: God never had a beginning! "I AM has sent me to you." And the one who never had a beginning, but always was and is and will be, defines all things. Whether we want him to be there or not, he is there. We do not negotiate what we want for reality. God defines reality. When we come into existence, we stand before a God who made us and owns us. We have absolutely no choice in this matter. We do not choose to be. And when we are, we do not choose that God be. No ranting and raving, no sophisticated doubt or skepticism, has any effect on the existence of God. He simply and absolutely is. "Tell them I AM has sent you." If we don't like it, we can change, for our joy, or we can resist, to our destruction. But one thing remains absolutely unassailed. God is. He was there before we came. He will be there when we are gone. And therefore, what matters in ministry. above all things, is this God.
Moses seems unfazed by the profundity of what God is revealed and moves from questions to objections!!!

2. Two Objections

- Unbelievability - “They will not believe me”

Exodus 4:1 Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The LORD did not appear to you.'"

- God’s reply – “I'll turn your rod into a snake, I'll turn your hand leprous, and turn the Nile river to blood”

- Ineloquence - “I am not eloquent”

Exodus 4:10-12 But Moses said to the LORD, "Oh, my Lord, I am not eloquent, either in the past or since you have spoken to your servant, but I am slow of speech and of tongue." 11 Then the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Who makes him mute, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? 12 Now therefore go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak."

- God’s reply – “Who do you think made you that way?”

- Moses’ questions and objections seem to make it all about himself

3. Two Infuriations

- lest we think that more information will convince Moses to go along with the plan, alas it does not help

- Refusal to Lead - “Send someone else”

Exodus 4:13-17 But he said, "Oh, my Lord, please send someone else." 14 Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do. 16 He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him. 17 And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs."

- Refusal to Follow - "My sons aren’t circumcised"

Exodus 4:18-26 Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." 19 And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead." 20 So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand. 21 And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. 22 Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son, 23 and I say to you, "Let my son go that he may serve me." If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.'" 24 At a lodging place on the way the LORD met him and sought to put him to death. 25 Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!" 26 So he let him alone. It was then that she said, "A bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.

- circumcision was the covenantal sign for Abraham’s offspring and signified faith in God’s promises
EXODUS: Rescued with Blood

- this is perhaps one of the most puzzling passages in the Bible, but I believe this is the key to this story – Zipporah performs an emergency circumcision in order to save Moses – he needed to know what it felt like to need rescue.

- God sought to kill Moses, and Moses needed to be rescued “with blood”

- Moses couldn’t have the same response as Israel (worship and joy) because he didn’t have the same spiritual marker or the same experience of affliction

**Exodus 3:7-8** Then 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. I know their sufferings, 8 and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians"

**Exodus 3:9-10** And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

**Exodus 4:31** And the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped.

| Big Idea: God’s rescue only makes sense when we know we need it. |

4. Two Connections

- Spiritual Drought

- back to our question: How would you respond if God showed up in a physical form some time today and told you exactly how He planned to triumph over evil and rescue us from all suffering? Let’s rephrase: How do you respond to the fact that God showed up in a physical form in the person of Jesus Chris and told us exactly how He planned to triumph over evil and rescue the world from sin & suffering through His own suffering?

**John 8:56-59** Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad." 57 So the Jews said to him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” 59 So they picked up stones to throw at him, but Jesus hid himself and went out of the temple.

- we have more revealed to us than Moses ever did, yet we too often yawn at the Gospel or even refuse it

- Mission-Mindedness

- How would you respond if God told you that your role in His plan is to personally confront that evil face to face and advocate for those suffering in order to help lead them to safety?

**Matthew 28:18-20** And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

- I am rebuked by this text because so many times I want to object to my own calling or insist that I am not fit to lead because of my flaws, or my lack of effectiveness, or my comparison to others

- we have the better news to share than Moses ever did, yet we have the same objections to sharing it with our family, friends, neighbors, and co-workers – “I am not eloquent”