



God Reveals God's Name

EXODUS 3:7-15

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Exodus 3:14

Gather

CHECK IN

Share your first name preceded by an adjective that describes you—and that begins with the first letter of your name. For example, “joyful Julie” or “musical Manuel.” Try to remember how others introduce themselves.

OPENING PRAYER

Loving God, you know each one of us and call us by name. Open our minds and hearts to encounter you through your word. Guide our conversations in this group and our service to the world you love. In Jesus’ name. Amen.



COMMUNITY-BUILDING

For this first session, review the group covenant (see page 9). As you read, consider why having a covenant is important and which parts of it you think will be most helpful for you to feel comfortable participating in this study. Know that there are no right or wrong answers and that everyone’s perspective is valuable.

Dwell

DWELLING IN THE WORD

As the scripture text is read, pay attention to what it reveals about God’s character and commitments.

Exodus 3:7-15

Narrator: ⁷Then the LORD said,

God: “I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, ⁸ and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. ⁹The cry of the

Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. ¹⁰ Now go, I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt.”

Narrator: ¹¹ But Moses said to God,

Moses: “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?”

Narrator: ¹² He said,

God: “I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

Narrator: ¹³ But Moses said to God,

Moses: “If I come to the Israelites and say to them, ‘The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is his name?’ what shall I say to them?”

Narrator: ¹⁴ God said to Moses,

God: “I AM WHO I AM.”

Narrator: He said further,

God: “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Narrator: ¹⁵ God also said to Moses,

God: “Thus you shall say to the Israelites, ‘The LORD, the God of your ancestors, 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 my title for all generations.”

CONVERSATION

1. This scripture text is part of the story of Moses’ unexpected encounter with God in the burning bush on Mount Horeb. God chooses to give God’s name to Moses, who will share it with God’s people. This is significant because sharing one’s name fosters relationship. As you consider this, also note that “I AM WHO I AM” (v. 14) could also be translated as “I will be who I will be” or “I will be who I am.”



- ♦ According to this scripture text, who is God? What does God's self-identification as "I AM WHO I AM" reveal about who God is?

- ♦ How does God promise to act in this scripture text, and why? What does this tell you about God?

2. Another important element of this text is that it shows that God chooses to work in the world through human beings like Moses.

- ♦ How do you think Moses felt when God commissioned him to bring the Israelites out of Egypt?



- ♦ Where else in the Bible does God call or commission someone for a specific purpose? You might think of the prophets or of people involved in Jesus' life and ministry. What do those stories have to teach us about God and how God relates to people?

3. How have you experienced or encountered God in your own life?

- ♦ Have you ever prayed to God and sensed that you received an answer? If so, describe what this experience felt like or how it affected your life.

- ♦ Have you ever sensed God calling you to a certain action, place, or vocation? If so, how did you discern this call?
- ♦ How is God calling you here and now?

4. God declares that God, working through Moses, will free God's people from suffering and bondage. Consider who in your own life, community, or the wider world is currently struggling or oppressed. How might you, your group, and/or your congregation act in solidarity with those who are suffering?

Engage

WORD AND SERVICE

As Moses was attentive to God's call, one thing I will do this week to be more attentive to God's presence and prompting is . . .

This session's scripture text shows the power of a personal invitation. Consider inviting one new person to come with you to the next session.



WORSHIP AND PRAYER

Consider any concerns or questions that arose during today's session and offer these to God in silence. It is fine if nothing comes to mind, or if you finish praying before the time ends. Simply take some deep breaths and rest in the silence.

CLOSING PRAYER

Holy God, as you have accompanied your people through times of captivity, wilderness, and exile, shelter and sustain all those who flee persecution, oppression, warfare, violence, hunger, and poverty. Open our hearts and homes, our gates and doors, so that they find safety, peace, and welcome—a place to live in freedom and without fear; through Jesus Christ, our refuge and our hope. Amen. (ACS, p. 51)

SESSION RECAP

In this session, we explored how God encounters us in unexpected ways, calls us to join in God's work, and reveals who God is by giving us God's name. We exchange names as a foundation for building a relationship, and God does the same thing. This shows that God wants a real relationship with people. Just as I AM was present with Moses and all of God's people, delivering them from captivity, God also calls us into a relationship of trust with God. This life-giving relationship frees us from various forms of oppression and empowers us to love and serve God and our neighbors. We started building relationships and trust today through our

shared study, conversation, and worship. We pray these relationships will grow in the coming weeks as an expression of God's love for us.

SUGGESTIONS FOR GOING DEEPER

- ✦ To learn more about this scripture text's broader context, explore the resources on Exodus on Luther Seminary's *Enter the Bible* website: enterthebible.org/book/exodus.
- ✦ To deepen what you learned in this session about the importance of names, talk with someone you know about the significance of their name. For example, you might ask if they were named after someone and/or have a nickname. Share about your own name and what you learned in this session about God's name.
- ✦ Read or watch the news this week to identify one situation of need, suffering, or oppression. Consider how God might be calling you to respond, and do so as you are able. This might include praying, learning more about the situation, serving with a community organization, or reaching out to your local and federal representatives.
- ✦ Read and meditate on any of the following biblical passages to learn more about how this session's text fits within the story of God's ongoing relationship with God's people.
 - ♦ Exodus 1:1-22
 - ♦ Exodus 2:1-25
 - ♦ Exodus 3:1-6, 16-22
 - ♦ Exodus 4:1-17
 - ♦ Exodus 6:1-13
 - ♦ Exodus 19:1-9
 - ♦ Isaiah 43:1-21
- ✦ Reflect on what you experienced in this session. Here are a few prompts you might use to reflect or journal.
 - ♦ What captured your attention the most in this session's scripture text and/or conversation?

- ♦ Have you ever sensed God calling you to a certain role or task? If so, describe your sense of call and what your response has been or might be. If not, reflect on other ways you have sensed God's presence or provision.

- ♦ What questions do you have about this session's scripture text or the book of Exodus?

LOOKING AHEAD

In our next session, we begin our study of how Jesus' own "I am" sayings reveal who he is and what God intends for us and our world.

