

## Surprised by God's Call Exodus 3v1-17

Some questions are so frequently heard that we assume we know what they mean. But we shouldn't leap to answer the question, "Do you believe in God?" too quickly. *Which God do you mean? Who is God? What is his name?*

For someone to be able to answer that question & know God in relationship, God has to make himself known to us—he has to come down, call us and rescue us.

### 1) The God Who Comes Down & Calls (3v1-15)

Moses sees a bush that is burning but not consumed (v2). That challenges his worldview, so he stops long enough to look into things more closely (v3). The angel of the LORD is revealed to him in a flame of fire in the midst of the bush (v2), and Moses is "afraid to look at God" (v6). When the angel of the LORD speaks here, God speaks. The LORD sees Moses come over and then calls out to him personally by name. That's deeply moving. It's just Moses and the glorious, holy and beautiful LORD there in the wilderness. God comes down and is relationally present with him, and so the place is holy ground (v5). Our God sees our misery, hears our cries and prayers, and comes down to rescue (v7-8). *Is Christmas focussing us on the wonderful truth that, because of his deep compassion, the Lord comes down from heaven to rescue us and to raise us up (see also John 6v38-40)?* The first time we realise that the Lord comes down, meets us personally where we are and calls us by name, making us his own, we tend to be both surprised and overjoyed.

God shares with Moses who He is—the LORD who is personally present with him ("I AM with you", v12) and who is self-sustaining and self-determining ("I AM WHO I AM", v14), just like the flames of the burning bush. The name LORD sounds very much like the name "I AM" in Hebrew. It's a play on words. The LORD is the living, eternal God of glory (think of the flames of fire)—we don't get to dictate to him or control him. But to call him Lord and welcome his ongoing presence in our lives is utterly freeing. He is the God who comes down, reveals himself to us, calls us by name and promises his personal presence.

### 2) The God Who Sees & Whose Presence Saves (3v16-17)

God is committing himself in this passage to save and rescue his people, because of his covenant love for them (v16-17).

Whatever we are going through, God has not forgotten us. We are engraved on the palms of the hands of the Lord who loves us. To Jews like the Apostle Paul, "the LORD" was "the name above all other names". In Philippians 2v5-11, Paul tells us that Jesus has the name that is above every name and that "Jesus Christ is Lord". Paul can only mean one thing—that Jesus is the one speaking out of the flames, that Jesus is the LORD and the one who can say "I AM". In fact, Jesus says in John 8v58, "Before Abraham was, I AM". Jesus is indeed Lord, and is the One who came down and humbled himself to death on a cross, being raised so that we too can be "brought up out of our misery" (v17). Jesus Christ is the Lord who sees you, calls you by name and whose personal presence saves and rescues. *Are we pressing in to the relational presence of Jesus Christ, relying on the power of his cross and resurrection, acknowledging him as Lord and going deeper in knowing him?*

