



Scripture Focus

Exodus 3:7 “*And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows...*”

Introduction

When you hear the word vulnerable many things come to mind: helplessness, defenselessness and weakness. Actually you would be right to think in these terms. Vulnerability can be defined as:

1. capable of or susceptible to being wounded or hurt, as by a weapon: *a vulnerable part of the body*
2. open to moral attack, criticism, temptation, etc.: *an argument vulnerable to refutation; He is vulnerable to bribery.*

Yet when we think of things that are weak, defenseless and helpless we usually do not involve God in the equation. As a matter of fact we would think the very opposite of God: strong, mighty, defender – anything but vulnerable! Most conversations do not contain God and vulnerable in the same sentence.

However, God is vulnerable! He is susceptible to being wounded and hurt. He is open to moral attack, criticism and in His flesh was tempted in all ways just like us.

I've Seen...I Heard...I know...GOD GET'S INVOLVED!

The people of Israel had been led into captivity in the land of Egypt. Their lives, their families and their worship had all been disrupted by slavery. Day in and day out involved in the making of brick and the building projects of the Pharaoh. But it was into this arena that God discloses Himself to Israel like He had never done before and it began at a burning bush.

Moses the sheepherder is walking through the desert tending his sheep and his business when he notices something very curious. He sees a bush that appears to be burning but it is not consumed. When God saw that he noticed the bush God called to him – “Moses, Moses!” He approaches the bush and the Lord begins to declare Himself to Moses. Moses hid his face because he was afraid. Then the Lord says something very interesting to Moses...

Exodus 3:7 “*And the LORD said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows...*”

I want you to notice 3 phrases contained in this scripture...

1. I have surely seen...
2. Have heard their cry...
3. I know their sorrow (sufferings)...

I think what God is telling Moses is simply this...“I am going to get involved in the lives of slaves!” He saw the affliction being placed on His people, He heard their cries as the taskmaster brutally drove them and more importantly he says that He – **knew their sorrows**.

Now we all know that God is, in theological terms, omniscient. In other words He is “all knowing.” However, our idea of this “all knowing” God is somewhat mystical. We tell our kids – “God is watching you!” That is true. What we are actually saying is that God is distant, impersonal and uncaring. He just knows everything and uses that knowledge against us! Nothing could be further from the truth!

He saw the affliction of Israel. He heard their cries for deliverance. Greater than all of these others He did not stay

distant! He did not just see and hear but HE GOT INVOLVED!

When the scripture says, “knew their sorrows” it is not just speaking of someone who knows something about someone else. It is much deeper!

The Hebrew word for “know” is *yada*. It indicates a participation in and experiencing that which is known. Thus, God indicates a divine choice to enter into and experience Israel’s suffering.[\[1\]](#)

God was willing to not just “see” and “hear” but He was willing to involve Himself in the lives of men and women! Think of this folks. God, the all knowing one, CHOOSES to suffer with His people. Through this involvement he brings to those who had lived under the taskmasters whip a breath of HOPE! He asked nothing of Israel. There were no conditions on His involvement. He just put Himself in the middle of this situation because He LOVED.

The Vulnerability of His Name

God doesn’t just stop at getting involved He opens Himself up to even greater vulnerability. Let’s read...

Exodus 3:13-14 *And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, 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 Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.*

God took an even further risk than getting involved in the lives of slaves but He opens up and let’s slaves know His name! Now we take for granted the name of God. We have heard it spoken and preached for most of our lives. These Israeli slaves though had not yet understood the significance of the name of God. He was and is the...I AM!

To this point Israel knew God only by the things He did. He was:

- El Shaddai means ``God Almighty" and pictures God as the all powerful source of blessing and comfort. (Genesis 17:1; Exodus 6:3; Psalm 68:14)
- El Elyon means ``God most High" and pictures God's strength and sovereignty. (Genesis 14:18; Psalm 9:2)
- El Roi means ``God who sees" and denotes God's personal care and presence (Genesis 16:13)
- El Olam means ``Everlasting and Eternal God" and pictures God's eternality and infinite strength. (Genesis 21:33; Isaiah 40:28)
- Yahweh Jireh means the ``Lord provides" and was used by Abraham when God provided a sacrificial lamb instead of Isaac. (Genesis 22:14)
- Yahweh Sabbaoth means the ``Lord of hosts" (hosts is sometimes translated almighty or army) and pictures God as the commander of the heavenly armies. (Joshua 5:14; I Samuel 1:3; Psalm 24:10)
- Yahweh Rophe (or Rapha) means the ``Lord who heals" and denotes the physical and spiritual healing power of God. (Exodus 15:26)
- Yahweh Shalom means the ``Lord is peace" and denotes the lack of tension, conflict and strife in God. (Judges 6:24)
- Yehweh Nissi means the ``Lord is my banner" and signifies that the battle is the Lord's. (Exodus 17:15)
- Yahweh Tsidkenu means the ``Lord our righteousness" and signifies God as the only source of true righteousness. (Jeremiah 23:6)
- Yahweh Maccaddeschcem means the ``Lord our sanctifier" (or the Lord who makes you holy) and signifies that God is the one who sets people apart and makes them holy. (Exodus 31:13; Leviticus 20:8)
- Yahweh Raah (rohi) means the ``Lord our Shepherd" and denotes God's loving care, protection and provision for His people. (Psalm 23:1)

The titles described the way God had revealed Himself to Israel by the things He **did** for them. Yet to Moses He takes a drastic turn and declares another Name – a greater name than any to this point. But now He would be the “I AM.”

What does this mean? In basic terms it means – “I’ll be with you!”

In other words – Moses – when you:

- ...walk into Pharaoh’s court – I’ll be with you!
- ...call down plagues – I’ll be with you!
- ...take Israel through the Red Sea – I’ll be right there with all of you!

I won’t be like the god’s of Egypt that are only for the wealthy and upper class. I AM won’t be distant and far away like the god’s you’ve seen the Egyptians worship. I AM has sent a deliverer but He also said,

Exodus 3:8 *And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey;*

You may be thinking – what’s the big deal about a name! Why make all the fuss about “I AM.” In the culture of the Bible revealing your name was to join in an intimate – close – relationship with that person. Knowing the persons name meant there was a connection. You could communicate with that person on a deeper level. And the use of that name could bring you great influence if dropped in the right circles.

God bringing us into intimate relationship is not without its problems. For us, we, through His name, we gain access to Him, we receive His influence and we can communicate directly with Him. For God, He makes Himself vulnerable to people who would take His name and drag it through the mud!

Yet He was willing to take the risk in revealing His name to humanity. Maybe that is why when He chooses to take the next step in revealing His name – Jesus – He begins with shepherds. He reveals His name to those who cared for tender animals; men who take the responsibility of protecting sheep from wolves.

Maybe, just maybe, He was willing to first reveal His name Jesus to virgin girl who was a part of just everyday society. She was trusted with water pots and with the Son of God. She was just common folk – like you and I but was chosen to reveal the greatest gift the world has ever known – Jesus Christ!

When God chose to “come down” and deliver the Israelites He got involved in the lives of slaves - those who were the least of their society. However, there was even greater name coming – a greater revelation and a greater relationship on the horizon of history.

The Ultimate Vulnerability

Matthew 1:21-23 *“And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. 22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”*

God’s ultimate vulnerability came as angels heralded in that Name above every Name – Jesus! He was the Emmanuel – GOD WITH US! Think about it folks He was the “I AM” with Moses and Israel but now He is GOD WITH ALL OF US!

Revealing His name also meant revealing Himself. There in a manger in the City of David lay the GOD-MAN. God had come forth from the womb of a virgin as angels sang and the earth bowed itself in worship.

This time He would get involved in an even more intimate way with His creation. He would not just send a deliverer (like Moses) and work with Him and through Him but He WOULD COME HIMSELF.

- He would experience the limitations of humanity.
- He would be tempted in His flesh.
- He would stare at the stars He created, climb the mountains He formed and cool Himself in the water He fashioned from nothing.

I could spend hours describing who He is but I want you to hear a sermon preached by Bishop S.M. Lockridge...(play video “That’s My King.)

That God He just described got involved in the lives of slaves again. This time the slaves would not be under the oppression of an Egyptian task master, or under the watchful stare of Pharaoh. He would get involved in the lives of those who become slaves to the sin of this world. Those bound by years of religion without relationship. Those who had allowed the cares of this life overwhelm them. Those who were ensnared by that prowling lion called the devil.

From that moment until now He CHOOSES to get involved in the lives of slaves. He wants to get involved in YOUR life! He came to earth as a savior and now by His spirit we who were bound by the devils devices and the trappings of our sinful nature who were without HOPE now have HOPE! We who were once slaves to sin have been delivered and have entered into a new land that flows with milk and honey.

The revelation of His name to slaves also meant that some would reject Him. Many would not accept the savior and find the deliverance and relationship He offers. His name and His manifestation on the scene of humanity would cause some to rejoice while others would despise Him.

The revelation of His name would make Him vulnerable to attack, criticism and mocking. He would be willing to be wounded in order to have a closer relationship with His creation. In revealing His name He also revealed His plan. What was His plan – to make Himself so vulnerable that He would led away captive to a cross and crucified so that you and I could be free!

DO YOU KNOW HIM? HAS HE BECOME YOUR SAVIOR? HAS HE BECOME MORE THAN JUST A THOUGHT? HAVE YOU ALLOWED HIM THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET INVOLVED IN YOUR LIFE?

[\[1\]](#) A Theological Introduction to the Old Testament. Birch, Brueggemann, Fretheim and Petersen. (pg. 111)