I. Set Up: In one of her books, Fleming Rutledge says that when she taught confirmation class., she would also begin every year the same way. She'd ask each student to draw a picture of God and then rip it up. She noted that, as you might imagine, there would be drawings of all sorts of things – clouds, suns, circles, triangles, and a preponderance of old men with white beards. But the lesson was about ripping it up. After each young person held up his or her picture and explained it, she'd ask them to tear it into pieces and then drop them into the wastebasket.[1] The message was obvious. We need to get rid of our pictures of God and allow God to show us who He really is. We learn that lesson today – from Exodus 3, which Mike is going to preach on today. It's the 7th in our walk through the Bible, where we're working to move past the stories in the Bible, to focus on THE Story it tells. Let me pray.

II. Intro:

A. You're likely familiar with the phrase "Mind the Gap." SLIDE It's everywhere in London, where it reminds people to pay attention to the gap between the train and the platform. Having watched a little girl fall through that gap – she emerged OK a few minutes later. Her Mom was hysterical, but the little girl was fine. I agree. If you find yourself in London, "Mind the gap." However, I believe the gap we need to pay more attention to is the distance between how we think about God and how he has revealed himself to be.

B. What we think about God is the second most important thing about us. (The most important thing about us is what God thinks about us). It's critical that our understanding of who He is is shaped by his revelation of himself, which is most profoundly found in His Son – the Word of God incarnate, but also in His Word.

C. The call to Mind the Gap is pressed upon us in today's text.

III. We are moving from Act One Scene One – Abraham and his descendants in Genesis - to Act One Scene Two - The Exodus.

A. Genesis ends when Abraham and Sarah's grandson – Jacob – and eleven of his twelve sons (and their children and staff) flee the Promised Land for Egypt to escape a famine. Joseph – one of the twelve sons – was already there, having been sold into Egyptian slavery by his brothers. There, with God's help – he'd risen to become Pharoah's number two. Among other things, he'd prepared Egypt for a famine, and so he was able to share some of it with his brothers when they turned up looking for help.

B. In this we not only see God keeping his promise to Abraham. He was keeping his descendants alive so they might deliver The Promised One. We also have another foreshadowing of Jesus. Jesus is not only: 1) the true and better Adam - the second Adam who passed the test the first Adam failed, and whose obedience is transferred to us; and 2) the new and better Abraham - who left his Father's home to go to a foreign land and bring God's blessing to the nations; 3) he was the true and better Isaac and the true and better Jacob – the real stairway to heaven; and 4) he is the true and better Joseph - the beloved Son who is rejected by his brothers, and brought low through no fault of his own, but who then not only saves the very people who betrayed him, he forgives them.

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C. Exodus 1 picks up 400 years later. During that time: 1) the Jews have grown in number – some say as many as 2 million (I think that's high); and 2) fallen out of favor with the Egyptians. They're now slaves, and because there are so many they make Pharoah nervous, he's ordered that all the Jewish baby boys be drown in the Nile River.

D. In Exodus 2 we read about: 1) Jochebed, a woman who keeps her newborn son (Moses) alive by putting him in a basket and floating him down the river; 2) how this boy is discovered by the daughter of the Pharoah and raised as her son – where he is trained to lead a nation; 3) how he eventually starts to identify with his people (the Jews); 4) kills one of the Egyptian task masters and needs to flee for his life, runs to the middle of nowhere, where he takes up work as a shepherd and lives for the next forty years.

IV. I'm reading now from Exodus 3. Moses is now 80:

A. Now Moses was tending the flock[2] of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

1. We do not know exactly where Mount Horeb is. There are a lot of mountains in this area – which are not really mountains, they are hills. But the Midianites were semi-nomadic, and the names of the mountains kept changing; and no one bothered to write down the exact GPS coordinates.[3] What were they thinking?

2. The more interesting and important question is, how has Moses changed? It's been forty years and, we are constantly being formed (or malformed) by the things around us and how we process them. During the intervening four decades, Moses had: 1) Married – which is one of graduate schools of character development; 2) He's grown older – which can change us. Not everyone who grows old grows wise, but some do; 3) he's spent time with Jethro – this mysterious priest.

3. And he's also spent much of the last 40 years alone in the wilderness – which in the Bible is not this idyllic, uncorrupted, innocent, pristine place – somewhere you go to escape, unplug, "get off the grid." Touch grass.[4] In the Bible the wilderness stands in contrast with the "Garden." A garden is ordered. The WILD-erness is harsh and untamed. The Enlightenment philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau - who was a bad guy. Ominous, minor key, Darth Vader music should play every time his name is mentioned - argued that we are naturally good but society corrupts us. No. What we saw in Week Two (Genesis 3) which was reinforced in week 4 (Genesis 4-11) is that although we're highly valued, we are deeply broken. Our problems are not out there, they are inside us.

a) Jesus will make this point in Mark 7, when he says, "For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly."

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b) The Christian tradition of going out into the wilderness – like John the Baptist did, and Jesus did, and the Desert Fathers would do – is not so much to escape the corruption of city, it's to deal with our own heart. And get in spiritual shape.

4. The wilderness is wild. It is untamed. It's dangerous - you needed to keep your head on a swivel because you were subject to predators and thieves. And it was a place without distractions where you had to face your own heart. You can't blame your sins on anyone else.[6] So, a question is, how has Moses been shaped. Who has he become over the last forty years?

B. V3: **Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."**[7]

1. The KJV famously translates this passage, Moses turned aside. Which raises the question: if God called you, would you hear it? Would you recognize the burning bush for what it was or race past it because you were looking at your phone? You may be familiar with the classic line from the poet, Elizabeth Barrett Browning. In commenting on this verse, she wrote: **Earth's crammed with heaven, and every common bush afire with God. But only he who sees takes off his shoes. The rest sit round it and pluck blackberries."**

2. This will turn out to be another theophany – a physical manifestation of God on earth.[8] This may be a Christophany – that is, it is an appearance of the pre-incarnate Jesus. Remember, Jesus is God. He is not just a wise teacher or moral reformer. He claims to be the fully divine Son of God, creator of all things and eternal. He is not like me or you. His life did not begin at conception. He existed before time began as God (the logos).[9] At the incarnation he added humanity to deity.

3. Before that happened, he made a handful of appearances – he visited Abraham in Genesis 18; he wrestled with Jacob in Genesis 32; he met Joshua in Joshua 5. And he may have been the fourth figure in the fiery furnace in Daniel 3.

C. V4: **When the Lord saw that Moses had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"**[10] **There the angel of the Lord the word is messenger, which is why many think this is a Chrisphany appeared to him in flames of fire**[11] **from within a bush.**[12] **So, God calls to Moses, "Moses, Moses. And Moses said, "Here I am." "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."**

1. You are in the presence of a God who is not only all powerful, he is all good – perfectly pure. Perfectly perfect. (This aspect of God is very important and will get more attention later).[13]

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D. Then he said, "I am the God of your father,[15] the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." He does not say, I was the God of Abraham when he was alive. This is in the present tense. In Luke 20 – in one of his many dustups with the Sadducees (who do not believe in life after death) – Jesus will cite this passage, noting that Abraham and Jacob were still alive. Men and women, we live after we die. This changes everything. Eternity changes everything. This is not the land of the living. At this moment it is the land of the dying. I believe God will keep his promise to bring his restore his world. That is what he promises. (We saw that last year in our study of Revelation). Eternal life means more than we have some spiritual afterlife. God will reclaim all that is his. But, note: if you have lost a loved one in the Lord, they are alive with God. You will be reunited with them.

E. **At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God. The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians."** *Why now? They'd been crying out for four hundred years. Why this day?"* I don't know. Scripture doesn't tell us why God chose this particular moment, and as Sherlock Holmes says, "It not wise to speculate beyond the data."

1. It's tempting to say "this was God's timing." God's delays are not God's denials" and move on, but if you've ever waited through years of pain with no answer, you know how hollow that can sound. For four hundred years people were waiting. They cried out, without seeing relief. Some of you are waiting and crying out for God to do something. I don't want to glibly say, "God's delays are not God's denials" as if that settles it. Sometimes God's delays are very hard and feel like God does not care. What I can say is: the text tells us God saw, God heard, and God saw and God did eventually act, and Eternity Changes Everything. Whatever we don't understand about God's timing, we're not told that God was absent or indifferent during the waiting.

F. V8: I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey[16]—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

1. Moses was not expecting this call. "Me? Are you serious? You looked around the world and you thought, let's send this old guy who is a bit of a hot head – he got mad, killed a guy, throwing away all the advantages I'd given him. And he's spent the last forty years in the middle of nowhere taking care of sheep."

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2. A lot has been written about why God chose Moses. Some note his unique qualifications: 40 years in the palace learning how to lead a nation and then 40 years in the desert learning how to survive (because he's going to have to keep the Jews alive on their 40 year wanderings). The text doesn't tell us why God selected Moses. What it highlights is that Moses didn't want to job. When God called Abraham, there is no record of any negotiations. God made the offer and Abraham accepted. With Moses, there's a bit of a sales cycle. It's the longest conversation in the Pentateuch.

3. There is a lot here to notice: 1) We might marvel that God uses people even though he clearly doesn't have to; [17] 2) we might ponder that Moses didn't get his call until he was 80 (which has been the new age to reach before you run for President); 3) It's worth noting that Moses thought of himself as a failure – which made him humble; 4) I could point out that Jesus is the true and better Moses – noting that he leads his people in a greater exodus—not simply out of slavery in Egypt, but out of slavery to sin and death.

V. I want us to focus on what comes next – on God's answer to Moses' 2nd question. Moses offers five excuses, framing them as questions. I want to jump to the second. In the first one he asks, "Why me?" claiming he is not qualified. In the second – vs. 13 - Moses asks God who God is.

A. **Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites** (interestingly, he does not talk about going to Pharoah. And he doesn't call them "my people." He's clearly worried about the people). **and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name? Then what shall I tell them?"** When Moses had said he wasn't qualified, God had replied, "It isn't about you. It's about me." So Moses had then asked, "OK then, so who are you? What is your name?"

B. In the Bible, names mean a lot. And in V14, God responds to Moses, **"I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am' has sent me to you.'"**

1. What God gives to Moses is his name, not his title. And this is the first time in the Bible that it's unpacked.[18] In Genesis what we got mostly were titles[19]- a bunch of derivatives of the Hebrew term *El*.[20] *Elohim*. *El-Shaddai*. *El-Elyon*. They describe attributes of God. Here we get the covenant name of God. It's a special word.

2. Scholars refer to it as the Tetragrammaton, because four letter words in Hebrew are rare, and this is the most important one.[21] It's a verb not a noun. [22] It's a form of the verb "to be" which is loaded with mysterious intrigue. We pronounce it Yahweh – we used to translate it Jehovah. In some translations of your English Bible it's written in capital letters.

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3. We could spend 20 minutes here on this word. I will not, but I will read the great quote by Frederick Beuchner because it captures a bit of what is going on. **"Buechner is my name. It is pronounced Beek-ner. If somebody mis-pronounces it in some foolish way, I have the feeling that what's foolish is me. If somebody forgets it, I feel that it's I who am forgotten. There's something about it that embarrasses me in just the same way that there's something about me that embarrasses me. I can't imagine myself with any other name Held, say, or Merrill, or Hlavacek. If my name were different, I would be different. When I tell you my name, I have given you a hold over me that you didn't have before. If you call it out, I stop, look, and listen whether I want to or not. In the book of Exodus, God tells Moses that his name is Yahweh, and God hasn't had a peaceful moment since."**[23]

C. There is a lot here. The main thing to note is what God is actually saying. Vs 14: **So, God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am' has sent me to you.'"**

1. God says to Moses, what are you to say to the Israelites? And to those that follow? To the people in the northern suburbs of Chicago? Tell them that I am God. I am the self-referential one. I am the one who defines all things. I am the one who establishes what is real and what is right. You tell them that I will be who I will be, and not who they try to make me. And tell them to mind the gap.

2. Some people – perhaps you? – have a view of God that makes sense to you. This god thinks like you. And votes like you. This god never surprises you. This god never convicts you. This god is understandable. This god is well mannered and tame. This is not the God of the Bible. The God who introduces himself to Moses says, "I am who I am." I am God. You are not.

VI. There is much more to the book of Exodus than what we are looking at. We'll be in it for the next two weeks. It's a book full of massive and massively important events – like, well, the Exodus itself.[24] I want to be sure we are minding the gap. So far, we have seen that:

A. God is the all-powerful Creator and Owner of all things.

B. And we have seen that He is more loving than we can comprehend.

1. In Genesis 15 we saw him "walk the line." When Moses asked, "can I trust you?" he showed up and "cut a covenant." Unthinkably he promised Abraham – if I don't keep my word, may I be cut in half. And if you do not keep your word, may I be cut in half. May I die, which I then noted is what happened. He ended up sending his son to his death. I told the story about the man drowning and how it never occurred to me to "send my son" into the water.

2. Last week we were in Genesis 22 – that crazy passage in which God tells Abraham to sacrifice his son, Isaac. And we all protest, "No! That is unthinkable. We want nothing to do with a God who makes that kind of demand on us. It's too much." Only to later realize, "Oh, he is not making that demand of Abraham. He is helping us see the length he will go for us. Because it's not Isaac who gets sacrificed on that mountain in 2,000 BC. It is Jesus 2,000 years later.

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C. To these two insights about God we now get another data point. In giving us his name he is telling us that: he is God and we are not. He is telling us that He is the one who defines. He is the one who is in control. He is the one who decides.[25] He is not someone or something we can manipulate.

D. At a high level, there are only a few ultimate reality options to choose from.

1. Either there is a god (or gods) or there isn't.

2. If there is one or more gods then we have to learn what is he/she/they are like? Personal or impersonal; powerful or limited; loving or spiteful; eternal or mortal; physical or spiritual?

E. I'm not going to recreate an Intro to Philosophy class or an Intro to World Religions here. What I'll note is that at the moment – if you want to play the odds, track Polymarket - there are four worldviews challenging the Christian faith.

1. From the East, it is Buddhism. Hinduism is bigger, but the caste system doesn't play well outside of India.

2. From Africa and the Middle East, the main challenge is Islam. Christianity is bigger in Africa, but Islam is bigger in the Middle East, and it is growing (more by birth rate than conversion), but it is growing.

3. From Europe, the rival to Christian faith is secularism. It was atheism – which is different. But atheism is pretty small. And so, even though secularism is struggling for a number of reasons (secular people tend to not have children and it is collapsing in on itself ideologically) one of the rivals to Christianity is secularism.

4. But from the US the main rival is what, in 1985, Robert Bellah – the author of *Habits of the Heart* - labeled Sheilaism.[26] It's the big rival I see in the zip codes around here. And it's very much what's in the cross hairs of God in Exodus 3. Sheilaism is people making up their own views about god and spirituality. It's people defining God as opposed to realizing that He defines himself.

5. Even those who say they are Christians, often allow the gap between who they say God is and who God says he is to grow. Sheila had this hodge podge collection of views – a bit of belief in God, and in self, and in reincarnation and karma, and in capitalism and the Cubs and what Oprah said on the one episode and what Bill Murray said in that speech in Cady Shack and, well, it's pretty fluid.

F. Let's note, one of the very first things God does as he re-establishes his relationship with the Jews after a 400 year pause is to say: I am who I am. I am God. I am in control. You are not. This is an unpopular idea. Who does God think he is? Well, He thinks he is God.

G. Men and women, we need to know this God. We need to understand him as He has revealed himself to be. We need to align our plans with His. We need to Mind the Gap.

VII. Closing Prayer.

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VIII. CPs in Wrap Up.

A. Today Mike challenged us to Mind the Gap. Yes. May we rip up and throw away our silly pictures of God and let God be who He is. And may we be shaped by how great He is and how great his love for us.

B. And may we realize that one of the ways we get a picture of who God is, is through Jesus – who the book of Hebrews says is "the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being." As you may know, Jesus will cite this Exodus 3 passage. Indeed, in John 8 - during one of the dustups with some religious leaders – Jesus will claim this special name of God as his own. At the end of a long debate with them, when the tension is already quite high, they ask him, "who do you think you are?" And Jesus says to them, "I Am." He takes the name God revealed to Moses in Exodus 3 as his own.

C. And their response is to pick up stones to stone him for blasphemy.

D. Our response to is relax and worship Him!

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[1] Fleming Rutledge, *And God Spoke: Preaching from the Old Testament*, Eerdmans, 2011, p. 69.

[2] In Egypt they were farmers and not shepherds. Kass (p. 61) goes so far as to call shepherding "an anti-Egyptian occupation."

[3] I Kings 19:8.

[4] Winston Churchill was taping into this instinct when he wrote, "Every prophet has to come from civilization. But every prophet has to go to the wilderness. He must have a strong impression of a complex society and all that it has to give, and then he must serve periods of isolation and meditation. This is the process by which psychic dynamite is made." (Winston Churchill, "Moses" in *Thoughts and Adventures: Churchill Reflects on Spies, Cartoons, Flying and the Future*. Greenville, DE: ISI Books, 2009).

[6] The prophets would occasionally retreat into the wilderness, both to fast and pray, but also to get in spiritual shape. Moses has spent 40 years spending lots of time there. (It is worth noting that in today's world we clearly need more off-the-grid time than we get. Some people have virtually no inner world).

[7] He was probably bored. (You will remember, a few weeks back I said you did not want to be a shepherd. In addition to the low pay, the job was lonely, dangerous and boring. You can imagine him looking up and seeing a fire and thinking, "well, I'll go over and look at that. It's been going and going. I wonder what is up with that.")

[8] There are a few things of note here. 1) Theophany is from: *theos* (God) and *phainein* (to bring to light or cause to appear); 2) Some Jewish commentators note that God could not appear to Moses as himself. Moses could not stand in the presence of God and survive; and 3) others note that God's first appearance to Moses was not as an awesome mountain or even a giant tree, but as a humble bush – doing this to note that no place is devoid of his presence. Exodus, Rabbah 2.5.

[9] Before Mary held him, he was holding the universe together. The virginal conception not a statement that sex is bad. It's just the miraculous pathway through which the eternal logos added humanity to deity. While remaining fully God he became fully human – doing so principally so that He could die.

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[10] The repetition of the word in Hebrew is a classic way of emphasizing it. In 1 Samuel 3, God's said, "Samuel! Samuel!" Jesus does it on the cross, "My God! My God! why have you forsaken me?" In Luke 10 he called Martha this way: "Martha! Martha!" Jesus will get Peter's attention saying, Here he says, "Moses! Moses!"

[11] Kass suggests that a fire was "an exceptionally Egyptian attraction," because it is like the sun – which is the ultimate unquenchable flame. And the sun was among the highest gods in the Egyptian pantheon.

[12] There's speculation that the bush was an acacia Bush. Rich and thorns and kisses. This ties back to the person genesis three out of the ground will come here. Thorns it this is. And also some foreshadows Jesus having Crown of Thorns.

[13] This is the first time the term holy is used in the Bible. It's worth noting because holy is the only attribute of God that is elevated to the third power. Lots of words are repeated twice – in this passage the name Moses is. But I believe only two concepts are repeated three times. One is the number six, which represents imperfection. So, the number 666 stands as imperfection elevated to the extreme. The other is Holy, which we hear in Isaiah 6. It is repeated three times by the angels in God's presence.

[15] Noting that he was the God of Moses' father may have spiked Moses's attention because he did not ever really know his father. His identity is sketchy.

[16] As an aside, many mistakenly think "milk and honey" means lush and abundant. They think the Holy Land looks like New Zealand. It does not. It looks like a desert. The Holy Land is quite unique. If you visit it you realize that God prepared a land for his people every bit as much as he prepared a people for the land.[16] One of the key take-aways from milk and honey is, you will be shepherds not farmers. Israel is not Egypt with the Nile River bringing water and fertile soil.

[17] The number of miracles in Exodus make it clear that God could have done this without Moses. The late Rabbi Jonathan Sacks notes that we get the creation of the world in nine verses in Genesis but end up with lots of chapters in Exodus being devoted to the building of the tabernacle. He suggests that is because it's harder to build the tabernacle because it had to be done with people – 12 tribes who do not get along working together.

[18] The name of YHWH was known in Genesis. Abraham, Noah, Isaac, Jacob, and Laban all called upon the name of the Lord—of YHWH, or Jehovah. But it seems as if the name had been forgotten. "It was not mentioned in Exodus 1 or 2.

[19] This is his name not a title. Various terms were used to refer to God in Genesis. Most of them derivatives of the Hebrew term: El – which means God. El Elyon" (God Most High), "El Shaddai" (God Almighty), "El Roi" (The God who sees me).

[20] Note – I am making corrections to this. In my sermon I said that YHWH was the only four letter word in Hebrew and that irregular verbs were very rare. I have been corrected! There are not many four letter words, but YHWH is not the only one. And there are quite a few irregular verbs. (Note: Greek is still worse!)

[21] I suspect that Hebrew was designed by engineers because it is so rule-based. My Dad was an engineer. As was my father-in-law, both of my brothers and two of my brothers-in-law. When we all got together, "Oh what a great time they had."

[22] In Hebrew, it is *ehyeh aser ehyeh. Aser* in the middle is a particle connecting the two verbs, and it can be translated, 'who,' 'that,' or 'because,' so there's some ambiguity there. The verb itself, ehyeh, is a derivation of the verb "to be". It's in the imperfect tense, which (in Hebrew) means it has all sorts of ambiguity and

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flexibility. You could translate it as "I am," "I was," or "I will be". Do your math: you've got three things here and three things there, so there's nine different ways that you could realistically translate this. "I am who I am." "I will be who I will be." "I was who I was." "I was who I will be." 'I am who I was." And so forth. You can sort them out. Some have also argued that it could be translated, "I caused to be.'

[23] Originally published in *Whistling in the Dark* and later in *Beyond Words*.

[24] In verses 16 and 17 God tells Moses a bit more of what he is to say to the Jews in Egypt. And in 18-22 he summarizes how things will unfold, noting that as they leave Egypt they will be compensated for their serving. And when we get to chapter four, Moses will offer more excuses. He will argue that he is not the guy to do this. But we have enough to ponder here. Some who preach on this passage, highlight the relational aspects of God's response, noting that after Moses says, "I am not able to do this," God comforts Moses, saying, "I will be with you." They highlight God's statement that he has seen their suffering. Others who preach on this passage take a dive into the philosophical underpinnings of God's self-existence. The idea that He is self-referential. Altogether above his creation and independent of it. Theologians refer to this as his aseity. (Aseity is Latin word, meaning "in himself." He does not need to go outside of Himself to find purpose or life. There was a time when matter was not, but there never was a time when God was not. You see this in the very first verse of the Bible: "beresit bara elohim…").

[25] There are two main ways we learn about God. He reveals himself via nature. We call this Natural or General Revelation. David makes note of this in the Psalms – "the heavens (the skies) declare the glory of the Lord" – i.e., there are things we can learn about the creator by looking at creation. Paul talks about this in Romans 2. The other way we learn about God is when he breaks into nature to tell us more. He does that in Jesus – who Hebrews tells us is **"In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, [2] but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. [3] The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being…"** And He does this via the Word of God written – the Bible. What we need to see here in Exodus 3 is that we are being given very important information about the nature of God. And it is this: He is who He is. He is God. He calls the shots. He makes the rules. He defines reality. And we need to Mind the Gap between our understanding and reality.

[26] There was a woman – named Shelia - who described her views as Shelia-ism, because she picked and chose from what she liked. Today it is sometimes referred to as cafeteria religion. It's a bit of Christianity and a bit of Buddhism and some Ayn Rand and some Milton Friedman and throw in some Cubs love and karma and a few lines from Cady Shack and mix that together and it's what people believe. Believing – by the way – that the fact that they believe it means it's true. Never mind that what they believe is fluid and internally inconsistent.