

# NO EXCUSES Sunday School- September 5, 2010

## Unifying Topic: GOD'S REVELATION TO MOSES

### Lesson Text

#### I. A Devine Introduction (Exodus 3:1-6)

#### II. A Devine Commission (Exodus 3:13-15)

**The Main Thought:** Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. (Exodus 3:6, KJV).

**Unifying Principle:** We all have experienced the surprise of someone calling our names whose voice we do not recognize. What happens to us when we hear this unfamiliar voice? When Moses heard God's voice, he responded by saying, "Here I am." Then he hid his face because he was afraid.

**Lesson Aim:** To teach students how God introduced Himself to Moses and called him to ministry.

**Life aim:** To teach believers about God's calling and to be able to understand that call and discern His voice.

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- 3: 1 Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.
- 3: 2 And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.
- 3: 3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.
- 3: 4 And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I.
- 3: 5 And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.
- 3: 6 Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God.
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- 3:13 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?
- 3:14 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.
- 3:15 And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

### **HISTORY:**

<sup>1</sup>In the first chapter of the Book of Exodus, we learned of the cruel oppression of the Israelites by the Egyptians. God's blessings of the Israelites caused the Egyptians to fear them and to attempt to insure their control over them. This began with enslavement and harsh treatment. When this failed, Pharaoh ordered the Hebrew handmaids to kill all the Israelite boy babies at birth. This also failed to accomplish the goal of annihilating the Israelites as a race. The first chapter ends with the order of Pharaoh to the entire Egyptian population that they must throw the Hebrew boy babies into the Nile.

Chapter 2 focuses on one Hebrew boy baby, Moses, who is destined to become the deliverer of the nation. The parents of this child hid him for three months, refusing to obey Pharaoh's order. Eventually they concede to partially obey, "casting Moses into the Nile" in a woven ark. What could well have been the death of Moses became his deliverance, as he was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter and eventually taken into the palace to be raised as her son. There came a time, however, when Moses decided to identify himself with his own people, and thus he refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He was raised as Egyptian royalty until he went out among his people, saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, and killed the oppressor (an Egyptian). When Pharaoh sought to kill him for this, he fled into the wilderness. It was in the wilderness that he met the seven daughters of the priest of Midian. The family invited Moses to eat bread. He ended up marrying Zipporah, and together they had a son named "Gehr-SHOHM", (meaning *foreigner*). For he said, "*I have been a stranger in a foreign land.*" It ends with the king of Egypt dying and the children of Israel crying to God because of their bondage. God heard their cry and remembered His Covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and He acknowledges them.

### **LESSON:**

#### **Exodus 3:1-6 A Devine Introduction**

<sup>1</sup> <http://bible.org/seriespage/burning-bush-exodus-31-15>

Once in the palace of Pharaoh's, now Moses kept sheep. He is being prepared for God's use. It was while Moses was living in the land of Midian, that God commissioned him for the job of leading the Hebrew people out of Egypt.

**3:1** Moses has become a shepherd, pasturing the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro. At this point his life was so humble that he didn't even have a flock of sheep to call his own - the sheep belonged to his father-in-law. He leads them to Horeb, another name for Mt. Sinai. "Horeb" means "desert" or "desolation," and the name gives an idea of the terrain. It is called the mountain of God. "Horeb", or "Mt. Sinai" –interchangeable terms through the book of Exodus. <sup>2</sup>Being a shepherd on the \*backside of the desert was probably a better condition than being a slave under the regime of Pharaoh. Moses was destined to lead the nation of Israel out of captivity, but the timing was not his, it was in God's hands. Moses could not have known what was about to happen. It is in those forty years that he spent as a shepherd in the land of Midian, where many of us find ourselves today. When we look at the life of Moses, we can basically see it was divided into three major sections.

1. His first forty years was spent in Egypt in the Pharaoh's court.
2. The next forty years he was a shepherd in the land of Midian.
3. His final forty years he was leading the people of Israel from Egypt into the Promised Land, although he was disallowed by God from entering in because of disobedience.

Now, God's Divine Introduction was about to change his life forever. It was a call to service after running away and then waiting forty years in a foreign place, but not far from God—the mountain of God.

#### **NOTE:**

\*The backside of the desert: Many times we Christians go through a time of testing or time of tribulation, which does not end in a short time. Someone may have lost a job and can't find employment for over a year or someone might contract an illness which keeps them isolated or unable to function for a long period of time.

#### **POINT:**

*When you are on the backside of the desert, you will be surprised as how well you can live with less. Sometimes God may want us to just clean out our attic and have a garage sale and return to simplicity, or clean out the attic of our lives. Many times we have trouble distinguishing a need from a want, but God doesn't have that problem. If there is one thing that we can count on is that God does nothing in the believer's life that does not have a purpose attached to it.*

Look at Moses on the backside of the desert.

1. God supplied him with a wife who was part of a big family, so there was no chance for loneliness.
2. He was given a task as a shepherd, although it looked menial on the surface, it was a training program for him.
  - a. He was to tend sheep for forty years
  - b. He was to complete this task until called to lead Israel out of Egypt.

Now, Moses had to be thoroughly familiar with the characteristics of sheep. Why? -Because humans tend to act like dumb sheep. By Moses tending, living with, and learning about sheep, he was being trained for the huge task which was to be placed on him just about a time in life when most men are already retired. Age has no factor in the Lord's work, if He gives you the strength to perform what He has called you to do.

**3:2** The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. This is no mere created angel, but the messenger of Jehovah, Christ Himself! The word "angel" means "messenger," and can apply not only to angelic messengers, but human men, and even Christ Himself. The "angel of the Lord" is the second Person of the Trinity. "Fire" is an emblem, in Scripture, of the Divine holiness and justice; also of the afflictions and trials with which God proves and purifies His people; and even of that baptism of the Holy Ghost, by which sinful affections are consumed, and the soul changed into the Divine nature and image.

**3:3-4** As Moses is caring for the sheep. He looks up and sees a bush on fire. Apparently, this wasn't a rare occurrence. It has been known to occur when lightning strikes in the desert sun, it ignites dead plants in the Sinai wilderness. When the Lord saw that Moses turned aside to look then God called to him from the midst of the bush.

Four things:

1. Moses said, I will now turn aside and see...
2. The Lord saw that he turned aside to see...
3. God called unto him..."Moses, Moses."
4. And Moses said, "Here am I."

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.scionofzion.com/backside.htm>

It's always good to turn aside and come to God. But it's even better when God turns aside and comes to you. The point is: we have the take action of first coming to God. God doesn't speak until He first has your attention. When we come to Church each Sunday, we turn aside from the business and routine of our lives to seek God. And God speaks to us, when, and where, we seek Him. Every time we come into God's house; every time we open our Bibles with a sincere heart; every time we lift up our spirits in prayer, we draw near to the burning bush, to the Lord who dwells in the bush, as Moses would later put it. At that moment everything depended on his willingness to interrupt his normal routine to find time for God. Consider this, at this very moment God is using unexpected sources to communicate with you or to get your attention. Do not let your busyness prevent you from hearing God and receiving His instructions for your life. Moses could have ignored the sign and kept on going as usual, but by so doing he could have missed God and the great things that God had called him to do. He was no longer a young man yet God's timing always conflict with ours because our standards are way below His. Moses did not wait, for the word used here, is "now!", for he acted immediately. The bush was burning but not being consumed. Then God called him by name Moses, Moses. God knew who he was, and Moses was important to God. When Moses returned an obedient answer, he was saying: "*Here am I, not only to hear what is said, but to do what I am bidden.*"

**3:5** God told Moses two things:

1. <sup>3</sup>Do not draw near this place (First, He told Moses to keep a distance). This was a holy place; and because God is holy, there will always be a distance between God and man. Cleanliness and holiness can only approach God. That's why we ask for forgiveness. It was the holy ground on which he found himself; holy because God is holy, that made the encounter so memorable and so powerful. And it was the fact that the living God came down from heaven and called him by name.
2. Take your sandals off your feet (Second, to show a reverence for God's presence). This same thing happened to Joshua before the battle of Jericho (Josh. 5:15). Removing the sandals showed an appropriate humility, because the poorest and most needy have no shoes, and servants usually went barefoot. It also recognizes the immediate presence of God. In many cultures, you take off your shoes when you come into someone's house, and now Moses was in God's "*house*," a place of His direct presence.

**3:6** God revealed Himself to Moses by declaring His relationship to the patriarchs. This reminded Moses that God is the God of the Covenant, and His Covenant with Israel was still valid and important. Moses understood precisely who this God was by his reaction to what he was told. Obviously he couldn't see God, but Moses didn't even want to look at the fire, the symbol of God's presence. <sup>4</sup>He hid his face, as one both ashamed and afraid to look upon God. God has spoken, "*I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*"

### NOT APART OF THE LESSON

**3:7-8** God tells Moses of His intimate knowledge of Israel's (His people) affliction. He has seen, has heard, and has known. They had been praying and asking for a long time. They were in the hands of the Egyptians. It's time to bring them **out** and **into** a good land flowing with milk and honey.

1. "I HAVE SURELY SEEN THE AFFLICTION OF MY PEOPLE."
2. "I HAVE HEARD THEIR CRY."
3. "FOR I KNOW THEIR SORROWS."
4. "AND I AM COME DOWN TO DELIVER THEM."

**3:9-10** God notices the afflictions and hears the cries of his afflicted people. Their sorrows; even the secret sorrows of God's people are known to Him. God even sees the affliction and oppression they endured, however, the highest and greatest of their oppressors are not above Him. God could do it all by Himself, but it is God's plan to work with and through people - we are workers together with Him (2 Corinthians 6:1). God let's Moses know that He was going to do it, but He still wanted to use Moses. God begins to tell Moses of His plan to send him to Pharaoh in Egypt, (yes, the place he had ran from). This is Moses' true purpose; his true assignment. Instead of him trying to do it all by himself before; his inadequacies are God's possibilities. God says "*Come Now...*"

**3:11-12** Moses' question and God's replies:

1. Who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh? 40 years before, Moses thought he knew who he was—a prince of Egypt; a Hebrew; God's chosen instrument to deliver Israel. After forty years of chasing sheep around the desert, Moses didn't have the same self-assured confidence that he once had.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.enduringword.com/commentaries/0203.htm>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.commandtheraven.com/?p=1745>

**God's Reply** I will certainly be with you: God's reply is intended to take Moses' focus off of himself and onto where it should be - on God. Therefore, God never answered the question "Who am I?" Instead, He reminded Moses "I will certainly be with you."

The issue here is not who Moses is, but whose he is. God has sent him, and it is God who will be with him. In fact God doesn't want us to be free-lancing. God wants us to be depending upon Him to accomplish whatever He has called us to do. The task seemed impossible, humanly speaking, but with God, all things are possible (Gen.18:18). God assured Moses that He would lead the people back to serve Him upon this mountain, the sign was given. "...and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee." The sign was the "mountain"; the same mountain Moses is encountering God at, at this very moment. This was to be the sign that God had sent Moses. They were to meet at the same mountain again when he brought the people out of Egypt.

## BACK TO THE LESSON

### Exodus 3:13-15 A Devine Commission

**3:13** Moses still had several questions for God; he doubts his ability; he sensed he needed credentials before he came before the children of Israel. What name should he give when the people ask? What was God's Name? Why would the Israelites need to ask the name of the God who has sent Moses to deliver them? Two reasons:

1. First, due to their worship of other (Egyptian) gods (Josh. 24:14), they may wonder which of their gods is answering their prayers.
2. Second, one's name is a description of one's character. If Moses' authority is wrapped up in the God who has called and commissioned him to lead Israel out of Egypt, then he may need to be able to describe the character of this God to assure them of God's willingness and ability to lead them into the land of blessings. The name by which God chooses to identify Himself would capture the essence of His character and being.

**3:14** God replied, "I AM THAT I AM" ..."I AM hath sent me unto you." It means "*I AM The One Who is*" and is preferred over "*He Who causes to be.*" God expressed the unchanging, eternal, self-existence of His being. He is able to act at will, to keep promises, and to redeem Israel. Yet, He is unsearchable.

- <sup>5</sup>The "I AM" is the God who is, that is, the God who exists. There were many "*no gods*" in both Egypt and Canaan, which were worshipped, but in contrast to all of these "gods" was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is the God who is, the only true God.
- The "I AM" is the God who exists independently. Theologians speak of God as self-existent. God is the Creator, but has no creator. He exists apart from any dependence on anything or anyone. He is a God who does not need help, either to exist or to accomplish His will. Thus, there is nothing which can prevent God's will from being accomplished.
- The "I AM" is the God who exists independently and unchangeably. As the "I AM," God is not the God who was anything, in the sense that He changes. Whatever He was, He continues to be, and He will be forever. Therefore, whatever God has begun to do He will bring to completion, because there are no changes which necessitate any alterations in His original plans and purposes.

**3:15** There was no mistake about it, God mentions to Moses "*the children of Israel*" in all three verses (v13-15). That was Moses' Devine Committed assignment. After four hundred years in Egypt, Moses had the job of announcing that now was the time for the children of Israel to go back to Canaan, and take the land God promised to their fathers. The children of Israel probably had no desire to return to the Promised Land; all they wanted was to be made more comfortable in Egypt. Forty years before, when it seemed that Moses had everything going for him, and he tried in his own effort to help them, the people of Israel rejected him as a deliverer for the nation. Surely, he must be wondering why they would listen to him now, when it seemed he had nothing going for him. God makes it clear that His Name was to be remembered forever. This was to be a memorial for to all generations for He was committed to His children.

### SUMMARY:

Moses spent 40 years on the backside of the desert with the Midianites. It was there God worked on him without him knowing; and taught him what he would need to know to be a leader; a leader to free the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. He is tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law on the backside of the desert, coming to the mountain of God, Horeb. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and Moses sees a blazing fire in the midst of a

<sup>5</sup> <http://bible.org/seriespage/burning-bush-exodus-31-15>  
<http://pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

bush, but it's not being consumed. He turns to see this spectacular site a little closer and God calls to him by name out of the midst of this bush, thus revealing to Moses that He is "Yahweh!—I Am! " And Moses answers, "Here I am!" However, he was not to come close and he was to take off his shoes, for he was standing on holy ground.

<sup>6</sup>There are four lessons Moses needs to learn about God.

1. **God is holy.**

What makes the ground holy? God! God's presence! Where God chooses to dwell becomes holy because God is holy. Being in God's presence meant standing in the presence of holiness. This is a God moment for Moses. 40 years earlier - when he killed the Egyptian - trying to be the deliverer of the Hebrews - Moses looked this way and that way - but not to God. Now - in desolation - for the first time in the whole account of Moses' life - Moses looks to God. God chooses to be in the midst of Moses' life without destroying Moses. And Moses is afraid because he realized it was God speaking to him.

2. **God is faithful.**

God made a promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - now God is at work honoring the promise. God shows up in our lives to help us - to fulfill His promises to us, not to destroy us.

3. **God is compassionate.**

God says, "*I have seen and heard their cry.*" He's deeply interested in what's going on with them. Our suffering moves God deeply; and He moves in His timing.

4. **God has a plan.**

God says, "I have come down to deliver them ..., and to bring them up from..., to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place... God through Jesus enters into our suffering - our bondage - our desolation giving us a life with Him now and forever. God's got a plan that included Moses and the people back then and even to us today.

Now after taking off his shoes, now it was time to put his shoes back on because now God is calling and commissioning Moses to go back to Egypt, go back to Pharaoh, and back to the children of Israel—to deliver the children of Israel from their oppression and bondage. God was calling him to service. Moses was to be the leader of the Israelites; taking them away from being slaves in Egypt to serving God in the Promised Land.

As an effort to make an excuse, Moses says, "*Who am I?*" He's saying that he is not important enough for God to appear (v11). The Lord tells Moses that He will be with him (v12). Secondly, Moses asked God what's His name, so he could tell the children of Israel who it was that called him. Moses is saying that he holds no authority! It's hard for Moses to imagine this being possible for him: knowing there is no way to live up to the expectations of others; knowing failure is not an option but the only probable outcome. It may be a conversation you know you need to have - the restoring of a relationship - or the confronting of someone you love. It may mean taking on a new ministry or a new role or employment - opening yourself to vulnerability -dealing with sin in your life. Name it! It's a place you fear to go.

However, this thinking does not cut it for Moses because God has The Answer for him. God answered with a word we now call Jehovah (from YAHWEH), which means **I AM THAT I AM**. This name means that God has lived forever; He is God because he has always been. Jesus is the great I AM that spoke to Moses at the burning bush. When God revealed Himself and He answered Moses, God's reputation, His Character, and Nature were at stake and therefore, no more excuses were acceptable!

## **APPLICATION:**

As Christians we are called to serve God also. We can make excuses and disappoint God, or we can do all we can to serve Him. Every Christian is called by God to serve where He places them. God wants to take us where we cannot go without Him.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.muncherian.com/s-ex3v1.html>