

Moses is now 80 years of age. (Acts 7:30) He has spent the last 40 years herding sheep in the desert wilderness. He has abandoned his dreams of freeing his people. He is no longer a prince; he is nobody. **You are never too old and your training is never too insignificant to be a tool in the hand of Almighty God.** In fact, the more humble you are, the more likely it is that God will use you. (1Corinthians 1:26-29)

Our culture admires youth and the wisdom of man. We desperately try to stay youthful in looks and attitude because this is admired. (Proverbs 20:29) I pluck those old man eyebrow hairs and work out, but time marches on and our days are numbered. No amount of Botox or face-lifts can change that. And as far as the wisdom of man goes, I just can't imagine that the Book of Life has those little letters after our names. What does last, however, is what you did with your encounter with God.

¹ Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. Moses has no sheep of his own. He is still keeping the flocks of his father-in-law. We notice that the father-in-laws name is Jethro. Before he was referred to as Reuel, the priest of Midian. It is the same man. Jethro may be his title, meaning "his excellency" or he may have had two names. In either case, he is called Jethro from this point on.

The location of Horeb is much debated. It probably doesn't matter, for the important point is what happened there. Being called "the mountain of God" is significant. At that time, gods were thought to inhabit specific regions. Apparently, the earliest believers in YHWH thought He inhabited this mountain. Of course, we find later that God is omnipresent. (Psalm 139:7-10) His location can't be fixed and yet He manifests Himself in ways that we can relate in specific places and times. Someone may have had an encounter with God at this mountain before Moses.

² And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. Who is the angel of the Lord? The Hebrew grammar (appositional construct) implies that this expression *MalakYahweh* would better be translated, "the angel that is Yahweh" or "The Angel Yahweh". This manifestation has occurred previously in the story of Hagar, Genesis 16, and in the story of the near sacrifice of Isaac, Genesis 22. He is referred to as Yahweh in all three of these cases. So who is speaking to Moses?

Since God is a spirit and inhabits eternity, mortal man cannot see Him. (John 4:24) But when He chooses to manifest Himself in space and time, He does so in a way that we can relate to Him. He gives us something to look at and listen to since that is how we

Commented [Paul Wall1]: Acts 7:30 (ESV)
30 "Now when forty years had passed, an angel appeared to him in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, in a flame of fire in a bush.

Commented [Paul Wall2]: 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (ESV)
26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth.
27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong;
28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are,
29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.

Commented [Paul Wall3]: Proverbs 20:29 (ESV)
29 The glory of young men is their strength, but the splendor of old men is their gray hair.

Commented [Paul Wall4]: Psalms 139:7-10 (ESV)
7 Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence?
8 If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!
9 If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10 even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

Commented [Paul Wall5]: New American Commentary on Exodus, Excursus: The Angel of the Lord by R. Ficker

Commented [Paul Wall6]: Genesis 16:7 (ESV)
7 The angel of the LORD found her by a spring of water in the wilderness, the spring on the way to Shur.

Commented [Paul Wall7]: Genesis 22:11 (ESV)
11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I."

Commented [Paul Wall8]: John 4:24 (ESV)
24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

perceive things. The Apostle Paul tells us that the visible manifestation of the invisible God is Christ Jesus. (Colossians 1:20) For this reason, many of us believe that He was the pre-incarnate Christ that was speaking with Moses. He is both Lord and God.

³ And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." During those 40 years in the desert, Moses had likely seen lightening strike a tree or bush and seen it burn up. I've seen lightening strike a juniper tree near my home and watched into the night as it burned. It made me think of Moses. If that tree was still burning in the morning I was going to hike up the mountain to see it. Unlike Moses' bush, the juniper was consumed. Moses' bush just kept burning and burning. God got his attention.

Children of God, remember **God knows how to get your attention!** Those who sincerely seek after God and long to follow Him with all their heart and soul often wonder if they missed something. Unless you are blatantly sinning, which hardens our spiritual ears, don't worry about having missed something. (Deuteronomy 4:29) God knows how to get our attention. If there is something to be concerned about, it is obedience after we have heard what He is saying. (Deuteronomy 1:43)

The fact that the bush was not consumed points us to God's self-sufficiency. He did not need the bush. He does not need us. He is self-existent. Gregory of Nyssa in the fourth century commented on the bush not being consumed. He wrote, *...what Moses saw in the burning bush was nothing less than "the transcendent essence and cause of the universe, on which everything depends, and alone subsists."* (Colossians 1:17)

⁴ When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." God (*Elohim*) called to Moses! God is speaking from a bush that is ablaze with His glory. The word that is used for bush, *seneh*, means a small bush of only a few feet in diameter. Why would God choose to manifest Himself in a little thorn bush? But then, maybe that is all there was other than rocks and grasses. In the Biblical world, bushes and trees sometimes represented people. I suspect that God may be saying that He can manifest Himself in anything He chooses, even in the life of broken down shepherd who has abandoned his hopes and dreams. Even in people like you and me. **You can't be too insignificant for God.**

Even if you are just a little thorn bush, you can become ablaze with the glory of God! He can use you to encourage others that God can work through them too. Get in His presence! Let Him light you up, and see how He can bring Himself glory through you.

We must also note that God called Moses to Himself. Providence directed Moses' steps to the place of the encounter. God brings us to Himself. (Proverbs 20:24)

The double use of Moses' name is a term of endearment in the Semitic culture. (Genesis 22:11; Acts 9:4) It implied friendship and affection. Moses would have been put at ease knowing the One in the fire was not there to judge him.

Commented [Paul Wall9]: Colossians 1:15 (ESV)
15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Commented [Paul Wall10]: Deuteronomy 4:29 (ESV)
29 But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Commented [Paul Wall11]: Deuteronomy 1:43 (ESV)
43 So I spoke to you, and you would not listen; but you rebelled against the command of the LORD and presumptuously went up into the hill country.

Commented [Paul Wall12]: Gregory of Nyssa, The Life of Moses (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), p. 60

Commented [Paul Wall13]: Colossians 1:17 (ESV)
17 And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Commented [Paul Wall14]: Proverbs 20:24 (ESV)
24 A man's steps are from the LORD; how then can man understand his way?

Commented [Paul Wall15]: Genesis 22:11 (ESV)
11 But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here am I."

Commented [Paul Wall16]: Acts 9:4 (ESV)
4 And falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?"

Fire is a very significant manifestation. Many of the manifestations of God involve fire. There was the smoking firepot in the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15:17), the pillar of fire that led the Israelites (Exodus 13:21), and the fire that came down on Sinai when Moses met with God (Exodus 19:18) to name a few. God is even called a consuming fire in Deuteronomy 4:24. Fire gives light but also consumes. It purifies and it can destroy. John the Baptist predicted that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and with fire. (Luke 3:16) The presence of God will not abide that which is evil. (Psalm 5:5)

5 Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." When people presented themselves to Pharaoh, they were required to enter without sandals. God uses our individual cultures to communicate in ways we understand. The mountain of God was not the only place God is, but Moses understood it as a place one encounters God. Taking off your shoes may be symbolic of not bringing the dirt of this fallen world before a pure and holy God, but Moses would have seen it as a sign of reverence and subservience when appearing before one that is vastly superior. No other place in Scripture makes this demand to take off one's sandals.

Even though Moses was addressed as a friend, he was to keep his distance. He is being taught about the holiness of God. God's holiness requires respect and distance. We'll see this again in Exodus 19. Boundaries are set around this same mountain where Moses will again meet with God. No living thing is to cross that boundary. It is the same idea as the veil that was before the Holy of Holies in the Temple. (Hebrews 9:3)

Holy is a word that will appear again and again in Exodus. It is to be separated for Divine purposes. When applied to God, it means His "otherness". It is that distance of Creator to creation. It is the infinite distance between Deity and humanity. (Hosea 11:9; 1 Samuel 2:2)

Because of the work of Jesus on our behalf, the veil in the Temple that separated us from God was torn and we can draw near to God. (Hebrews 10:19-22) We still come with reverence and awe, but we no longer need fear the wrath of God upon our sin. Jesus took that upon Himself.

6 And he said, "I am the God of your 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 at God. Now we know we are talking about the God that Moses' ancestors encountered as recorded in the book of Genesis. This is the God that made the covenant with Abraham and renewed it with Isaac and Jacob. This is the God that promised to bring them out of bondage after 400 years of being in a strange land. (Genesis 15:13-14)

Moses covered his face. He knew that to look upon the full glory of God would mean the end of his physical life. It is just too much for our earthly bodies to take in. (Exodus 33:20) When people in the Book encounter God, it always comes with the realization of

Commented [Paul Wall17]: Genesis 15:16-17 (ESV)
16 And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."
17 When the sun had gone down and it was dark, behold, a smoking fire pot and a flaming torch passed between these pieces.

Commented [Paul Wall18]: Exodus 13:21 (ESV)
21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of cloud to lead them along the way, and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.

Commented [Paul Wall19]: Exodus 19:18 (ESV)
18 Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the LORD had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.

Commented [Paul Wall20]: Deuteronomy 4:24 (ESV)
24 For the LORD your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

Commented [Paul Wall21]: Luke 3:16 (ESV)
16 John answered them all, saying, "I baptize you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

Commented [Paul Wall22]: Psalms 5:5 (NIV)
5 The arrogant cannot stand in your presence; you hate all who do wrong.

Commented [Paul Wall23]: Exodus 19:12 (NIV)
12 Put limits for the people around the mountain and tell them, 'Be careful that you do not go up the mountain or touch the foot of it. Whoever touches the mountain shall surely be put to death.

Commented [Paul Wall24]: Hebrews 9:3 (ESV)
3 Behind the second curtain was a second section called the Most Holy Place,

Commented [Paul Wall25]: Hosea 11:9 (ESV)
9 I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.

Commented [Paul Wall26]: 1 Samuel 2:2 (ESV)
2 "There is none holy like the LORD; there is none besides you; there is no rock like our God.

Commented [Paul Wall27]: Hebrews 10:19-22 (ESV)
19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, ... [1]

Commented [Paul Wall28]: Genesis 15:13-14 (ESV)
13 Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that ... [2]

Commented [Paul Wall29]: Exodus 33:20 (ESV)
20 But," he said, "you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live."

their utter unworthiness to be in His presence. There seems to come over people an understanding that their sinfulness demands judgment. (Isaiah 6:5)

So how will we ever spend eternity in His presence? Again, it is because of what Jesus has done for us that we can stand in the judgment. Our resurrected bodies will be sinless and our souls purified that we might live in His presence. (Hosea 6:2) It is impossible for us to imagine what joy that will be. (Psalm 16:11)

⁷ Then the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters. I know their sufferings, Here, those amazing words of the last chapter are repeated. God remembers His covenant (verse 6). He sees their affliction and hears their cry. He knows their suffering. What comfort these words should be to every child of God. This is God's self-disclosure of His heart.

Some would say that He is only that way toward His chosen people, the Jews. Well, take a peek into the future of the Jews and you can see He chose them as an example of unfaithful people. He chose them to show us His enduring and gracious love. He loves the world. (1John 3:16) We saw in John's epistle that He is love. (1John 4:8) He cares about every hurting soul and unhealthy body. He will not always deliver us as He is about to deliver the Israelites, but He always sees. He always hears. He always knows what you are dealing with. You can be sure of that.

Whatever happens in your life, know that God remembers His promises. Know that He sees your situation and hears your cry. Know that He knows all about it, every detail.

⁸ and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

God was declaring the time had come. The 400 years was over. The sins of the people in the land of Canaan had reached the limit of God's patience. They had passed the point of any possible return. (Genesis 15:16)

To "come down" is an anthropomorphic expression, as if God inhabited some space above us. It means that He is about to act decisively in the affairs of men. It is a declaration that the transcendent God is about to be seen in the immanent. He will act to deliver them from the Egyptians and bring them up out of the land.

When God delivers, He not only takes us out of a place and conditions, but He brings us to a new place, a new space, if you will. There is a destination. He delivers us up out of sin and rebellion to loving obedience. He takes us out of our selfish mean spirited attitudes and into His loving sacrificial Spirit. (Ephesians 5:8) **God always delivers from the evil to take us to the good.** (1Peter 2:9)

Commented [Paul Wall30]: Isaiah 6:5 (ESV)
5 And I said: "Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!"

Commented [Paul Wall31]: Hosea 6:2 (ESV)
2 After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him.

Commented [Paul Wall32]: Psalms 16:11 (ESV)
11 You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

Commented [Paul Wall33]: Exodus 2:24-25 (ESV)
24 And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.
25 God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

Commented [Paul Wall34]: 1 John 3:16 (ESV)
16 By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers.

Commented [Paul Wall35]: 1 John 4:8 (ESV)
8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.

Commented [Paul Wall36]: Genesis 15:16 (ESV)
16 And they shall come back here in the fourth generation, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete."

Commented [Paul Wall37]: Ephesians 5:8 (ESV)
8 for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light

Commented [Paul Wall38]: 1 Peter 2:9 (ESV)
9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Keep in mind that this is not the end of trouble for the Israelites. Moses may have imagined a merry jaunt through the desert to the Promised Land, a couple of weeks of joyful caravanning, but that is not remotely close to the reality that was before him. Life is full of trouble. (Job 14:1) But it will be trouble of a different type. It will be trouble with a refining purpose.

Commented [Paul Wall39]: Job 14:1 (NIV)
1 "Man born of woman is of few days and full of trouble."

⁹ And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. Of course God had heard the cry of the people from the day they were enslaved, but the expression "has come up before me" tells us that it is now time for God to act. There is a time for everything. (Ecclesiastes 3:1) Moses was about 40 years early on his first effort. It was the right idea then but the wrong time and method.

Commented [Paul Wall40]: Ecclesiastes 3:1 (NIV)
1 There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven:

God always sees all things, but now the time has come to deal with the Egyptian abuse of the Hebrew people. (Hebrews 4:13) Now His seeing is inciting action. God's Spirit is always striving with man, but there comes a time when He will strive no more. (Genesis 6:3) A line has been crossed, and there is no longer the openness to change in the heart of those with whom He is striving. That is when God takes action to deal directly with the situation. It is a warning to us to yield to God's conviction so that we don't have to face more severe forms of discipline.

Commented [Paul Wall41]: Hebrews 4:13 (ESV)
13 And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

Commented [Paul Wall42]: Genesis 6:3 (ESV)
3 Then the LORD said, "My Spirit shall not abide in man forever, for he is flesh: his days shall be 120 years."

¹⁰ Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt." Moses is commissioned to do the task he had given up on. Now he can do it God's way. He has been humbled and trained in God's Preparatory Academy for this moment. At 80 years of age, he is about to embark on one of the most remarkable stories in history. We know he is ready because he immediately tries to explain to God why He has the wrong man.

Come, I will send you! It is the call of God to every little thorn bush who is humbled and ready to surrender to Jesus as Lord of their life. It's a call to go to Him. He didn't say, "Go!" He says, "Come!" because He is already there in the midst of the pain and suffering. (Matthew 4:19) He will lead us to that sick neighbor, that doubting relative, or that business acquaintance. Come I will lead you to be in this ministry, or serve in that capacity. Do you hear the call this morning? Did you hear it in prayer this weekend? Are you willing to hear it? "Come, follow me to..." let the Spirit fill in the blank.

Commented [Paul Wall43]: Matthew 4:19 (ESV)
19 And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

The Lord isn't looking for a few good men, like in the Marine Corps. He is looking for a few broken people, common little ordinary thorn bushes that are willing to follow His lead, willing to be a vehicle for His fiery glory.

Questions:

- 1 How did God prepare Moses for service?
- 2 Why does Reuel have another name?
- 3 Who is the angel of the Lord?
- 4 What is

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Page 3: [1] Commented [Paul Wall27] Paul Wallace

Hebrews 10:19-22 (ESV)

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus,
20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh,
21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

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Genesis 15:13-14 (ESV)

13 Then the LORD said to Abram, "Know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in a land that is not theirs and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years.
14 But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.