

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF MOSES

Taught in Ambassador's Class of Peninsula Bible Church, Palo Alto, California
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Lesson #3, Exodus 2:11-3:5 - January 20, 1980, Moses Flees to Midian

This morning we will begin in Exodus 2, verse 11, but before we do, I would like to go back and reread parts of Hebrews 11 and Acts 7 because they tie in directly with what is going on here.

First, Hebrews 11, verses 24-26. This is the famous heroes of the faith. chapter.

Hebrews 11: 24:

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin; considering the reproach of Christ [that is the Messiah] greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he was looking to the reward.

Then notice the very next verse.

By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is unseen.

Between 26 and 27 there is a gap of 40 years, between the first and second time Moses leaves Egypt. It says nothing about his Midian flight.

He chooses at 40 years of age to identify himself with the people of Israel rather than the people of Egypt. To be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter would imply high rank, at least, or, if having that rank already, possibly even the throne.

Chapter 7 of the book of Acts kind of reinforces this but also brings out one more point I want to make.

Acts 7:22

And Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians, and he was a man of power in words and deeds. [You want to remember that, because Moses plays games with God a little later on. He is a man of power in "words" and "deeds"] **But when he was approaching the age of forty, it entered his mind to visit his brethren, the sons of Israel. And when he saw one of them being treated unjustly, he defended him and took vengeance for the oppressed by striking down the Egyptian.** [There's that hot Irish temper of his] **And he supposed [or literally "was thinking"] that his brethren [This is the key verse] understood that God was granting them deliverance through him; but they did not understand.**

Apparently God has in some way revealed Himself to Moses indicating Moses was to be the deliverer of Israel from Egypt. So when Moses goes out to visit the Israelites, he thinks they will understand he is God's appointed deliverer, but they don't.

Acts 7: 26:

And on the following day he appeared to them as they were fighting together, and he tried to reconcile them in peace, saying, "Men, you are brethren, why do you injure one another?" But the one who was injuring his neighbor pushed him away, saying, "WHO MADE YOU A RULER AND JUDGE OVER US? YOU DO NOT MEAN TO KILL ME AS YOU KILLED THE EGYPTIAN YESTERDAY, DO YOU?" And at this remark MOSES FLED, AND BECAME AN ALIEN IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN, where he became the father of two sons. [Gershom and Eliezer]

Now let's go to Exodus 2, verse 11. At this point in his life, God probably, in some kind of direct confrontation as he does some forty years later in this very chapter, tells Moses he is going to be Israel's deliverer. Moses now has a choice. As the son of Pharaoh's daughter, he is in an excellent position to make it to the throne, if indeed they would allow a foreigner on the throne. They might not. Pharaoh was considered to be a direct descendent of Ra the sun god. The rule of Egypt was established by god in his creative order, according to Egyptian history, and Pharaoh was the direct descendent of god and therefore reigned as god. The first god in their history was Ra. The king of Egypt did not rule by election or by the right of the people; he ruled by the right of creation. So Moses probably would not have actually become Pharaoh, but he might well have become Prime Minister as Joseph, also a Semite, did some 400 years before. His other choice was to identify with the people of God, the people of Israel, who, at this point, were undergoing persecution. They were not in favor as they had been in Joseph's day. By choosing them, Moses would give up all the prerogatives and perks that went with rank, privilege and power, something he had enjoyed for 30-40 years depending upon when he left his mother and entered the Egyptian court.

So for around 40 years he has been enjoying being a prince of Egypt, and according to Josephus, he has been a very fine prince. Josephus' "Antiquities of the Jews," while a little inflated here and there and with some inaccurate data here and there, all-in-all is a rather reputable history. In there we are also told Moses was a beautiful man, a handsome man, so impressive that both Egyptians and Jews stared at him as he passed.

Also, Moses was a brilliant general. According to Josephus' record, he delivered Egypt from the Ethiopians. So he has already been a deliverer, if indeed Josephus is correct. Since he has already delivered Egypt, who would God more likely choose than a proven deliverer. Looking at it from a human standpoint, as Chief Executive Officer of a struggling corporation which was in trouble, what would you do? Well, first of all, you'd fire all your managers. Then you go out and buy yourself some proven management. You bring in somebody with a track record of success in the same kind of situation you are in. So Moses, trained in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, a man of power in words and deeds, proven on the battlefield, handler of vast numbers of men, a good planner, a good fighter, a brilliant man, has everything needed, from a human perspective, to be a second deliverer. His resume reads, "I delivered Egypt." He is exactly the man God needs.

Now, if you were a deliverer with a proven track record, a system that had worked for you before, would you change your system? Well, Moses had delivered Egypt from the Ethiopians in the strength and resources of Moses, with the wisdom, understanding and power in words and deeds that he got from his training in Egypt. So, of course, he thinks, "It all worked once, and it will work again." Then, as a Chief Executive with a problem, what do you do? You go out and survey the situation. Very normal, logical thinking. That is exactly what Moses does.

Exodus 2:11:

Now it came about in those days, when Moses had grown up, that he went out to his brethren and looked on their hard labors; and he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his brethren. So he looked this way and that, and when he saw there was no one around, he struck down the Egyptian and hid him in the sand.

So he goes out and very normally, as any general would, surveys the territory he will be handling. How is he going to deliver these people of Israel? I would suspect by armed insurrection, but I don't know. First thing he

runs into is an Egyptian beating up on a Jew. He has identified with these people, now, and knows that God has called him to lead them out.

Remember God had offered him a choice; Egypt and the pleasures of sin for a season, or Israel and ill-treatment but a future, a reward that would be coming some day. He chose right. Hebrews 11 says he chose God. He chose to be God's man, to be God's deliverer. The choice was right. The actions here are the problem. Moses is hot tempered, and that hot temper is going to cost him his entrance into the Promised Land. He is never allowed to enter the Promised Land.

What tips you off right away that there is something wrong about his actions?

Class comment: He looked this way and that.

Bob's response: Yeah! When God gets around to delivering the Jews from Egypt, it is going to be right up front, totally out in the open and widely publicized. But Moses "looks this way and that" to make sure no one is around before he kills the Egyptian. Besides that, it is undoubtedly an unfair fight. No one would dare raise a hand against a prince of Egypt without being slain. Remember those seven years of famine in Joseph's day? Remember how he bought all of Egypt for Pharaoh, the money, land, grain, cattle, even their bodies. Everything except the priests belonged to Pharaoh. Pharaoh owned Egypt. He owned your bodies. You wouldn't dare raise your hand against a son of Pharaoh's daughter, but a son of Pharaoh's daughter sure could raise a hand against you. So it was not even a fair fight. It was just a heated emotional brawl.

What has happened to our hero? What is the flesh of a dedicated man of God like? This man has made an extraordinary choice for God. He blew his future in Egypt along with all its riches, and the riches of Egypt were really something. This King Tut exhibit in the city is just peanuts. That is just what they shipped over here. Moses had made an outstanding choice for God but what happened the moment he succumbed to the flesh?

Class comment: He lost it all.

Bob's response: Yeah! Isn't that amazing? The moment he takes his eyes off God, the flesh takes over, and it still stinks! That fantastic choice didn't do a thing for the flesh. It never does. The tragedy is Moses doesn't learn his lesson. Later on it comes around and bites him.

So Moses "looks this way and that." My friends, anytime you are working for the Lord, you should not have to look this way and that to make sure no one is watching. If it is God's work, and God's emphasis in Scripture in on His holiness, it should be totally up front. There is no such thing as a white lie for Christians. God does not lie. The Lord says He dwells in "unapproachable light whom no man can see or has seen." [I Tim 6:16] He is purity personified. If you are going to do something for Jesus' sake, remember, God will not accept anything from you even though it is done in all the ardent, dedicated, zealously of your being if you have to look around to make sure no one is watching. It doesn't work for Moses here, and it won't work for you today.

So how do I know it is the will of God when I'm doing something for the Lord? Well, can you do it openly and above board? I have had people come for counseling asking about the will of the Lord when they are manipulating a husband or wife to come to church, or go to a prayer meeting, or go to a Bible study. We had a lady visit us some time ago who left a note that said, "Please call on my father and mother who don't want any part of Jesus Christ but never tell them I sent you." So we prayed for her father and mother, and I wrote the lady a nice letter saying, "I will not call on them on that basis. You get their permission, and we will be glad to call on them, but I will not call on somebody when you tell me, 'Don't tell them I sent you.'" God doesn't need to operate that way. In His time they will call and ask for someone to talk to them if you pray about it and give it to the Lord.

So here is Moses. He makes a wonderful choice and uses lousy methodology.

Exodus 2:13:

And he went out the next day, [I'll go out and make another survey] and behold, two Hebrews [Not Egyptian and Hebrew but now there are two Hebrews fighting. His own people, surely they will understand] were fighting with each other; and he said to the offender, "Why are you striking your companion?" [After all, he is God's deliverer] But he said, "Who made you a prince or a judge over us? Are you intending to kill me, as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses was afraid, and said, "Surely the matter has become known." When Pharaoh heard of this matter, he tried to kill Moses. But Moses fled from the presence of Pharaoh and settled in the land of Midian; and he sat down by a well.

Boy, what a come down!

So, who tipped off Pharaoh that Moses had killed an Egyptian to protect a Jew? There were only three people out there. Moses made sure of that. Jew, Egyptian, Jew, one of whom was called Moses. There are two Jews and one Egyptian, and the Egyptian isn't talking anymore. You would expect an Egyptian to report Moses when he chooses to identify with the Israelites, but what about the Jews? They go around yacking it up, spouting all over the place, and, the next thing you know, Pharaoh hears about it; the next day yet. Do you notice that? He went out the next day and already word had gotten around. His own people had given him away. For a fellow who is kind of edgy anyway, that is a crushing blow. Pharaoh undoubtedly had spies, so naturally he heard about it in a hurry. Any kind of threat to Pharaoh is going to be eliminated. So he is out to kill Moses. Moses is scared, of course, and flees.

Moses is forty years old at this time. What happens to men who are totally rejected at forty? Moses is not some figure in ancient legend out there, some special person. He is a normal human male that happened to wind up a prince of Egypt, but he is a man, and he is forty years old, the foolish forties, and he is rejected by both the Egyptians and his own people the Jews. He is totally rejected. What happens to the male ego at the foolish forties? Come on be honest for a change, you guys who are over forty. What happens to your male ego and your self-worth? In the business world, back when I was working for a corporation, if you didn't make it by forty, you were over the hill. That was it, and you knew it. You might as well forget about your career. You had to be at a certain level by forty or that was the end because we are buying you. You are an asset to us. Remember the law in those days? You only had until you were 65. So at forty you had to be at a certain management level so we could get 25 more years out of you. If you got there at 50, we could only get 15 more years. You needed to be there by 40. 40 was the magic number. When we rolled heads, we rolled them from 40 on up. What happens to a man's ego when he is rejected at 40, or thinks he is? Why do we call it the foolish forties? Why do men begin having affairs in their forties and their marriages break up in their forties? You feel over the hill. For the first time in your life you begin to question your masculinity. You begin to question your future. You begin to question yourself. Up to now you have been on the uphill, but at forty everything starts coming apart. Your hairline starts to recede. You used to referee your kids and now your oldest son is throwing you down. Ever had the experience of seeing Junior pumping 200 pounds of iron that I couldn't lift without getting a hernia? It is traumatic. I have a psychiatrist friend who has worked with executives who have been passed over. It is a shattering experience to them. They have given their life to a corporation and then, because of a merger or maybe some young hot shot from outside, they are passed over, shunted off to the side, and their lives becomes a shambles.

That is exacting where God wants to bring Moses. Why, because he is a mean God? No! What must take place in regard to the male or female ego before a person can really be used of God as a deliverer to anybody?

Class comment: You have to be humbled. You have to get rid of that ego.

Bob's response: Yeah! Deliverance has got to start where? Here! I have to be delivered from me before I can reach out and deliver anyone else. If I am hung up on my self-worth and am judging myself by my worldly performance, by how men judge me or how men respond to me, anyone of you can shatter my self-worth by just spurning me. However, if I really believe that my acceptance, my self-worth, is based upon my position in Christ, the fact that I am a son of the living God, that I have been chosen by God personally in His sovereign election, that I am right now seated in the heavenlies of Christ, you can't do anything to me. I do not need your approval. Even though I may have to go against the whole crowd, I have total self-worth, a total sense of resting and acceptance in

Jesus Christ. And out in the business world you had better have that assurance because all your business life you will be walking against the crowd. At a certain level you are sure to be passed over if you are a Christian. My Bible says, "Not many of the rich, the mighty, the noble shall find the kingdom of God." It doesn't say not any, but not many. There are not many presidents of corporations in the United States that are Christians. Very few. When I talk to young Christian men over at Stanford in the MBA school, I tell them, "You are being trained for big business. You are being trained for propositions. The only problem is, as Christians, if you are a friend of the world, you will be the enemy of God, and sometime during your career you are going to have a confrontation between the world and Jesus Christ. When you choose Jesus Christ, your career may do this or this, and you had better be willing to pay the price. God help you if you don't. I have seen Christians choose the world. I knew one in particular who is with the Lord now. He blew forty years of his life. I wouldn't have been in his shoes at the Judgment Seat of Christ for millions and millions. He had to explain forty years of placing Jesus Christ second to his career. Yes, he did return to the Lord after he left his corporation, and he did walk with his Lord for those last few years. He had a beautiful time with the Lord, by the way. The Lord doesn't hold grudges. Don't kid yourself though, my friends, at the Judgment Seat of Christ he had to explain those forty years.

So Moses has had a shattering experience. What is God trying to do to Moses in shattering him? Does He just want to squeeze him under His thumb? No! God wants to free Moses from Moses. God is determined and committed that Moses will deliver the Jews from Egypt. He has told Moses that. Moses has responded out of his heart and agreed to that. They have a contract, and God will never go back on His end of a contract. He is going to make Moses the deliverer of the Jews if He has to almost kill him, and He almost does. He has to crush Moses' self-worth which is built on his position, his power in words and deeds, his extraordinary learning ability and his years of succeeding. Moses is a very talented man. These talents will be sanctified by God and used later on to lead a people out of Egypt and to take them through the wilderness for forty years. God doesn't destroy our talents, but He does have to get us out of the act.

Exodus 2:16:

Now the priest of Midian [Reuel] had seven daughters [He is going to have to marry them all off]; and they came to draw water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. Then the shepherds came and drove them away, but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. When they came to Reuel [It means "friend of God." He obviously is a Semite. He worships God. Midian, by the way, was a son of Abraham through Keturah his other wife so he is directly related to Abraham] their father, he said, "Why have you come back so soon today?" [Apparently he is used to having his daughters driven away from the well by the shepherds and being a long time at watering the flock] So they said, "An Egyptian delivered us from the hand of the shepherds; and what is more, he even drew the water for us and watered the flock." And he said to his daughters, "Where is he then? Why is it that you have left the man behind? Invite him to have something to eat."

How dumb can you be? The man has seven daughters to marry off, and they leave a live male out there by the well. Notice he is an Egyptian. It is not like Cecil B. DeMile's 10 commandments. He did not leave Egypt as a slave clinging to a staff. He probably left Egypt in a hurry and probably as a prince in the finery that he had. He was also probably heavily armed and on horseback.

While Moses is sitting by the well, here come Reuel's seven daughters to water their flocks. Under the Semitic system, the men did not water their flocks. That was woman's work. Children lead the flocks around and the women did the watering. Men did not water flocks. Now Moses is a man. He is a Semite, and he is an Egyptian to whom shepherds are "loathsome" is the word in the Hebrew. How badly does he want acceptance? When shepherds come out and chase away Reuel's daughters, out steps this heavily armed, well trained Egyptian warrior who has proven himself in battle, and he chases those shepherds up one side of the Sinai and down the other. Then what does the great prince of Egypt do? Woman's work. He wants to be accepted so badly that he not only does the work of a loathsome shepherd but also "woman's work." He pours out the water. All his life he has had this prejudice built into him, and now here he is doing shepherd's work, woman's work,. At this point he will do anything to be accepted. He is pretty low. That is where God wants him, and that is where God can use him. So

when Reuel invites him to come and eat, he does.

Exodus 2:21:

And Moses was willing to dwell with the man, and he gave his daughter Zipporah [that means twitterer or warbler, depending on whether you want to be nice or nasty] to Moses. Then she gave birth to a son, and he named him Gershom, for he said, "I have been a sojourner in a foreign land."

That speaks a multitude of words. Gershom has the idea of not just a sojourner but of one who has been "tossed out" from his country. Moses is a sojourner because he has been rejected and tossed out. So when he has his first son, he is still feeling sorry for himself and still longing for Egypt. He doesn't care for Midian. Midian is way over on the eastern side of the Red Sea. There are two tongues to the Red Sea. One goes up between Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula, the Suez Canal, and the other goes up the eastern side of the Sinai Peninsula. On the eastern side of that tongue is Midian. So he is way across Sinai and way over to the east. As he still feels the hurt of being rejected, he names his son essentially "Rejection.": I have been "tossed out" by my people, not just by the Egyptians but by my own people. The second son he calls Eliezer, "God is my help." Little by little God begins the healing process, and Moses begins to accept what God is doing to him. His second son is not named "tossed out" but "God is my help." God is beginning to prepare His man.

Exodus 2:23:

Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to ["The" God literally] God.

"Rose up to the true God" because Egypt had a pantheon of gods. They had a smorgasbord of gods. Any kind of god you wanted they had. And remember the Egyptians were in idolatry and so were the Israelites now. They were worshipping Egyptian gods.

Exodus 2:24:

So God heard their groaning; and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them.

"The course of those many days" in verse 23 implies a long range. There is some speculation that on Pharaoh's death there was open revolt against Egypt, and in order to keep the Jews from adding to his trouble, additional pressures were brought to bear to keep them in line. This finally drove the Jews to cry out to God. When they do, what happens? Notice in verses 24 & 25 how many times the word God appears. And because of their bondage, their cry rises up to THE God, instead of to the gods where it has been going lately. GOD heard their groaning, and GOD remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and GOD saw the sons of Israel and GOD took notice of them. God, God, God, God. He has been ready, willing and able all along to intervene for them any time they chose to repent. He was just waiting for them. The Scriptures shatter this idea that the theology of the Israelites evolved from polytheism to monotheism. You study the Scriptures, and the genius of the Jew was apostasy. Every chance he got he ran after other gods and rejected THE God. The prophets all cry out one thing, "Come back to Yahweh, THE God. He is the loving, gracious God who is ready, willing and able to help any time you want to return." The Book of Judges is a picture of that. Worship God and they feel great. They are delivered. Turn from God and down they go into captivity. Cry out for help and He gives them a deliverer, a judge and frees them. Judge dies and back into bondage to idolatry and back into bondage to another nation. Cry out again. God delivers them. Deliverer, failure, deliverer, failure, deliverer, failure. Deliver, repentance, deliver, repentance, deliver repentance. And the Book of Judges just stretches like an accordion. But every time they repent, God is there. He really wants them to be His. He really wants to enjoy them.

I don't care how many times you sin, run to God immediately every time. Go with guck all over you and confess and repent. "Say with God" is all the word means. "I am wrong. You are right." and then thank Him for His

cleansing and His forgiveness and His forgetfulness. My Bible says if I confess my sins, say with God about my sins, agree with God about them, He is faithful and He is righteous. He is not loving, kind, generous and merciful. He is faithful. He will always forgive, and He is righteous. He has to do it because Christ has paid for those sins. He will forgive my sin and cleanse me from all unrighteousness, Jeremiah 31 and Hebrews 10. He will forget my sins. He will put them behind his back, in the depths of the sea, and I can stand before my God just as though I had never sinned. The consequences, yes, they will work themselves out in time, but my relationship with my God is restored, just like that. God longs for that restoration, and I don't care how many times you sin. Proof! Peter ask the Lord, "Lord, how many times must I forgive my brother when he sins against me, seven times?" What did the Lord say?

Class comment: Seven times seven.

Bob' response: Seventy times seven which is a Hebrew idiom for infinity, an infinite number of times. Now, if the Lord orders his disciples to forgive up to an infinite number of times every single time anyone repents, then what does the Lord have to do to be a righteous God. Forgive us every time we repent up to an infinite number. There is no limit on the grace of god. There is no limit to the number of times you can sin and repent and be accepted by God if, indeed, it is true repentance. Repentance means "Change your mind." True confession is a change of mind about your sin.

Say, you are hooked in a sin you can't seem to break, but you really want out. That's the key, you really want out. If you try and fail and then come to God and go I John 1:9, and again you try and fail and come to God and I John 1:9, and you do this time and time again. Every single time you will end up doing one of two things; either keep on coming, repenting and with thanksgiving accepting the forgiveness and cleansing of God and eventually be free. Or you will settle for a mediocrity, put on a religious facade and hide your sin as best you can. You will say, "What's the use I will never made it." You will do one of these two things. You can go on for years with this facade. You have a besetting sin which you long to be free of, but you have tried and tried and by now you are tired of yourself and therefore God must be tired of you too. No He isn't. Just keep on coming back every time you fail because He says, "I'll not only forgive your sins, I will cleanse you from all unrighteousness." Each time you come back, a little bit of cleansing takes place. It makes it a little harder to do that same sin again, and sometime it will become too hard to do it again. If He demands from his disciples infinite forgiveness, He must of Himself be an infinitely forgiving God. Don't stop trying. Hang in there! Somewhere you will have victory. Unfortunately a lot of us settle for second best, a facade of Christian living. We figure, "Aw, what's the use. I am not going to make it, and God sure must be tired of my prayers by now." No He isn't.

Now, forty years have gone by, and Moses has passed from the foolish forties to the dull eighties. Eighty was old in those days. Moses lived to be 120, and yes, his eye was still bright and his vigor had not abated, but that was cited as an exception. It wouldn't even have been mentioned had it not been an exception. Same with Caleb at eighty-five, "My strength is just as strong as the day I went into the Promised Land and wanted to take the land. At eighty-five I am just as strong." [Joshua 14] It is an exception. At eighty Moses had the attitude of an eighty year old person. He was kind of settled. He had a nice job, a nice future. Yes, he was a shepherd, but he had accepted that long ago. He had found his self-worth in the acceptance of the Midianites, his father-in-law and his wife. Pasturing his flock was a peaceful existence. No pressure. He just wandered around with his dumb old sheep, maybe a wild beast here and there to handle. I think the last thing Moses wanted at this time was to hear anything from God. But in the back of his mind there's still a little voice, "You are My deliverer of Israel, and I need you." The more he gets settled in Midian, the less he wants to hear that voice.

I can remember when I became a Christian, I thought, "Lord, please don't send me to some dirty uncivilized place. I don't like dirt and filth and stuff like that. I'm a city boy, remember?" Well, I kind of think by now Moses probably has this thought, "Please, Yahweh, not Egypt." Oh, yeah. Verse 1, chapter 3.

Exodus 3:1:

Now Moses was pasturing [The Hebrew tense indicates this was an habitual situation now. This was

lifestyle] **the flock of Jethro** [That is another name for Reuel. Jethro is the word "excellency." That is probably his title as the priest of Midian. Reuel means "Friend of God." That is probably his name] **his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.**

This is probably the cluster of mountains of which Sinai is one of the peaks. We don't know. Horeb and Sinai are used interchangeably, but it appears to be a kind of a cluster down the Sinai Peninsula. By the way, it was one of the most fertile spots in the whole Sinai. It had a very high elevated valley. There was fresh water, beautiful fresh water, and lots of lush pasture. It was an ideal place to camp 2-3 million people while the Law is given to them. It was the one place down there that would support life. Things have changed since then, but back in those days it was lush. Fruit trees and other things were spoken of at Sinai. In summer when the lower lands became parched, they took their flocks up to the highlands of Horeb because it had water and lush pasture.

Exodus 3:2:

And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, yet the bush was not consumed. So Moses said, "I must turn aside now, and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up."

Ever read Ian Thomas' book "The Saving Life of Christ" or heard him speak? He says, "Any old bush will do." This was an old stunted, bowed acacia bush, full of thorns, ugly as sin, the kind that grows wild up there. It was not some gorgeous cypress tree reaching straight into the sky. No! God appeared to Moses in a lousy old thorn bush, any old bush. What is He trying to tell any old shepherd? Any old shepherd will do. God doesn't need a man powerful in words and deeds and educated in all the wisdom of Egypt. He just needs any old shepherd in the wilderness of the desert, eighty years of age, gone through the male crisis, self-worth only so big. That is all He needs. So He takes a crummy old thorn bush and uses that to be His manifestation. He draws Moses' attention with a bush which keeps burning but never gets used up. Moses has built camp fires with those scrub bushes many many times up there, but with this one there are no ashes. One of my archaeology books makes a funny statement. Some archaeologists over there exploring were offered a glimpse of "some of the ashes from the bush of Moses." There weren't any ashes from the bush of Moses.

Exodus 3:4:

When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." [And about this time he begins to get that horrible dread feeling, "I have heard that voice somewhere before, and I think I am going to go to Egypt. Forty years I probably got away with it."] Then He said, "Do not come near here; [literally, "stop coming near here"] remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

God's presence makes that ground holy and not to be defiled by the dirt on Moses' sandals. God's presence sanctifies whatever He uses. God's presence sanctifies that burning bush. The priests in the temple of Israel used to go barefoot. They removed their sandals and washed their hands and feet in the laver out front so they were completely cleansed when they went in.

So God appears on this old hill where Moses has been many, many times before, probably for forty summers. He then picks any old crummy bush, and His presence sanctifies the whole area.

What is he trying to tell Moses about Moses when God deals with him. "My presence will sanctify you too. It will set you apart for God's use. You will become God's manifestation and you will not be consumed. I don't care how strong Egypt is." In that area, at that time Egypt was THE greatest nation. However, when God takes Moses, He is going to sanctify him, and he will not be consumed, not even by Egypt who thinks shepherds are loathsome, an abomination, and will hate Moses because of his connections.