

Ex. 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.

Ex. 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*.

Ex. 3:3 And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.

This chapter starts with a little puzzle. For no apparent reason, Moses' father-in-law is called Jethro instead of Reuel. The Hebrew for Reuel indicates "friend of God," but Jethro is just identified as Moses' father-in-law. I don't know if the two names represent different things to the Jewish reader or if it is a first name and surname or what. It is interesting that the first time Moses meets this man, it is emphasized that he is meeting one who is a friend of God. Moses is way off in the wilderness away from his people, yet God has a friend prepared to accept him as part of his family until God is ready to call Moses into service.

Moses is taking care of his father-in-law's flocks. He took them to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. (The Bible dictionary associates this with Mount Sinai.) (11/05) Galatians 4:25 confirms that Mt. Sinai is in Arabia (cf note at 2:15).

For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

Since this is being written after the fact, it would be natural for the writer to identify the location, since Sinai is where God spoke to Moses and gave the people the Ten Commandments. Both are very significant points in the history of the nation of Israel.

Verse two tells us that the "angel of the LORD" appeared to him in flames. Moses saw a bush that was on fire, but not burning up. He decided to take a closer look and try to see why it wasn't being consumed.

Again, Stephen tells us in Acts that 40 more years had passed before this event took place. That would make Moses 80 years old.

Acts 7:30 And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.

Ex. 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*.

Ex. 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*.

Ex. 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.

The Lord saw that he was going to look, and God called to him from within the bush—by name, twice, with emphasis enough to stop him in his tracks. (Was this referring to the Son and the Father—the angel and the voice?) Moses stopped and answered—"Here I am." (It is interesting to me, again, how easily Moses responds in this very unique situation.) God tells Moses not to come any closer and to remove his sandals

because he is standing on holy ground. (I would assume this act is associated with humility.) Then Moses learns who is speaking to him—"the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." This caused Moses to hide his face because he was afraid to look at God.

It's interesting that he is not afraid of God, but afraid to face God. I think that is a good description of how I often feel. I can't wait to be in the presence of God literally; but at the same time, I'm not sure I'm ready to look Him in the face. I have to keep reminding myself that He will only see me through the covering of the shed blood of Jesus. He won't be looking at my face and thinking of all the many ways I failed Him. He will just see me as His child bought at great price with all my imperfections covered by the blood of His precious Son. Satan likes us to forget that truth.

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

Ex. 3:8 And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites.

Ex. 3:9 Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them.

The Lord tells Moses that He is aware of and has seen the misery of His people in Egypt. He has heard the cries caused by the cruel treatment of the slavemasters; He knows how they are suffering. The reason He has "come down" (to talk to Moses in person so to speak) is to rescue the Israelites from the Egyptians and to bring them to a good and spacious land, "a land flowing with milk and honey"—the place where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live. He repeats that their cry has been heard, and He has seen their oppression. (God is always aware of what is going on in the lives of His children.)

Ex. 3:10 Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

Ex. 3:11 And Moses said unto God, Who *am* I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?

In verse 10 Moses is told to go. God is sending him to Pharaoh to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. (There is no gentle pleading or would you consider; it is an order. Maybe Moses wasn't real surprised at being confronted by God. He was probably well aware of his miraculous salvation as a baby. And, having godly parents, he was probably told that God had a special purpose for him in life as indicated in Acts.)

Acts 7:22–25 "And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds....he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not."

At any rate, Moses didn't want to go. He questions God whether he is the right one to do this. (You know, I question God often in my heart regarding things that are allowed to happen in this world and even at times past in my life, but I don't think I would be willing to question His command to me in His presence. On the other hand, I realize

that I am *in His presence* any time He is speaking to me through His Word or in prayer. Why is it that we are so dependent on visual/tactile affirmation that something is real?)

Ex. 3:12 And he said, Certainly I will be with thee; and this *shall be* a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain.

Ex. 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?

Ex. 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.

Ex. 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.

God tells Moses, “I will be with thee.” (That takes care of any doubt Moses may have had—at least it should have.) Then He tells Moses that another sign verifying that it is God who is sending him will be that he would return to worship God on this mountain after he had brought the Israelites out of Egypt.

Moses isn’t finished making excuses. His first problem is how he will answer the Israelites when he tells them that the God of your fathers has sent me to you, and they ask him what is his name? “What shall I say?” God says, “I AM THAT I AM” (the self-existent, eternal, sovereign God). Moses is to tell them that “I AM” has sent me to you. He is also to say, “The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob” has sent me to you. This is the name He is to be remembered by forever, from generation to generation. (I think this long name of identification is important to the Jewish people as a constant reminder that God has chosen them and that His covenant with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob will continue to be fulfilled and will continue to verify that God is.) This covenant name is for “all generations”—not many generations, or some generations, but ALL generations. God has not abandoned the Jewish people nor has He replaced them with the church. His covenant was with the posterity of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Another good observation from my daughter-in-law: “God is the reason there is anything at all—that there is a state of “being.” So the only name they could comprehend would be “I AM”—the reason you are—God is.”

Ex. 3:16 Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and *seen* that which is done to you in Egypt:

Ex. 3:17 And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and honey.

Moses is told to assemble the elders of the Israelites and tell them that, “The Lord, God of your fathers...appeared to him and said that He has watched over you and has seen how you have been treated in Egypt. God has promised to bring you out of your misery in Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites,

and Jebusites—“a land flowing with milk and honey.” God told them exactly where He was taking them.

Ex. 3:18 And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The LORD God of the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.

Ex. 3:19 And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty hand.

Ex. 3:20 And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.

Ex. 3:21 And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty:

Ex. 3:22 But every woman shall borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put *them* upon your sons, and upon your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.

Then God proceeds to tell Moses what will happen. First, the elders of Israel will listen to him (and believe him). He and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and tell him that “the Lord, the God of the Hebrews” has met with them. They are to ask for permission to take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to their God.

The king will not allow this unless a mighty hand compels him. God will then perform many wonders among the Egyptians that will not be pleasant; they will feel like they are being beaten. Then the king will let them go. Not only that, the people will not leave empty handed. The women of Israel are to ask their Egyptian neighbors for articles of silver and gold and clothing, and the Egyptians will comply. The Israelites will leave with great wealth, a fitting recompense for their slave labor.