

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This morning, we are going to continue our study through the book of Exodus.

Let's pray...

[Exo 3:1-22 NKJV] 1 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian. And he led the flock to the back of the desert, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

Moses is now 80 years old.

He has been on the run - a fugitive for 40 years.

40 years earlier, he was living in the palace – he was most likely the heir to the throne.

And now he is shepherding sheep – they are not even his own sheep – he doesn't even have sheep of his own – they are his father-in-law's sheep.

For the first forty years of his life, Moses was somebody – for the next forty years of his life, he was a nobody.

During these 40 years, God prepared Moses by humbling him – so that Moses may depend on God instead of his own strength to deliver the Children of Israel from Egypt and into the Promised Land.

These forty years would also serve to familiarize Moses with the land that the Children of Israel were going to wander for another 40 years after they refused to enter the Promised Land.

Who else was going to know where all the watering holes were at???

2 And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush. So he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire, but the bush [was] not consumed.

Here in verse two, we have a theophany or a Christophany –

It is the manifestation of Jesus Christ in the Old Testament.

He appears as a flame of fire from the midst of a bush.

3 Then Moses said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn."

Who is Moses talking to???. He is talking to himself. He sees the burning bush from the corner of his eye and then tells himself that he is going to turn his head to take a closer look as to why the bush does not become consumed.

Think about this – would Moses have paid attention to this burning bush if this had happened 40 years earlier during a time in his life where he would have been preoccupied with the activities in the palace? **I don't think so.**

You see church, I believe that God sometimes puts us in these desert places (like He did to Moses) because it is only then that we have eyes to see and ears to hear that which He desires to speak to us.

4 So 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."

Church, I want you to notice that God didn't speak to Moses until He had Moses' attention.

Moses took a step towards God, and God then further revealed Himself to Moses.

When someone is struggling with questions or doubt – one of the first things I share with them is the need to draw closer to God.

Take that step - then God will give instruction.

Ours is a walk of faith - one step at a time.

**5 Then He said, "Do not draw near this place. Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand [is] holy ground." 6 Moreover 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 upon God.**

Don't come any closer Moses – you are in a special spot. You are in my presence.

It was God's presence that made that mountain holy.

Not only did Moses remove his sandals, he also hid his face.

You see, Moses realized his shortcomings.

He was full aware that he had killed another Egyptian with his bare hands.

He knew he was a sinner standing before His Creator.

7 And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who [are] in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. 8 "So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites. 9 "Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them. 10 "Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

The Lord tells Moses – I am going to do something about the oppression of my people.

Not only am I going to deliver them from the hand of their oppressors – I am going to take them to a place that is flowing with milk and honey.

The land that was promised to Abraham.

Moses must have been thinking – that's great!!! But why is God telling me this.

Then God tells Moses that he (Moses) is the one who will deliver the people from Egypt.

His plan was to send a shepherd to lead them - first away from Egypt, then into the Promised Land (with an extended stay in the desert by their choice).

This shows that God often uses and chooses to rely on human instruments.

11 But Moses said to God, "Who [am] I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" 12 So He said, "I will certainly be with you. And this [shall be] a sign to you that I have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

Forty years earlier, there is no way that Moses would have responded with the question who am I??? He knew exactly who he was – he was a prince of Egypt – he was a Hebrew – he was a man with the credentials to deliver the Hebrews out of Egypt.

But after chasing sheep for forty years – after killing a man - he is not quite sure that he is the right person to lead his people.

God's response to Moses is – “who cares, I'm with you and that's all that counts.”

You see church, it is not who you are that counts – it's God that counts.

Turn with me to Matt 28,

[Mat 28:18-20 NKJV] 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, **I am with you always, [even] to the end of the age."**
Amen.

God commissioned Moses to deliver His people and He promised that His presence would never leave him. Jesus commissioned you and I to go tell the world about Jesus and promised us the very same thing.

So when we hesitate when it comes to sharing the good news with others – because we feel that we are inadequate, remember that God is by our side.

13 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, [when] I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What [is] His name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM**." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "**

In the original Hebrew texts, God's name is spelled with four letters "YHWH"

Because God's name was considered so holy by the Jews and because they feared that they might take the name of the Lord in vain – they used the Hebrew word "adonai" which is the word for Lord.

So every time in our bibles when we see the LORD – it is the name YHWH

YHWH and I AM are used interchangeably.

The idea behind I AM That I AM is that there is no one who is equal to God.

So when they would ask Moses who sent you – his response would be the one who has no other equal except God Himself is the one who sent me.

By the way, this is a divine title that Jesus took upon Himself often, clearly identifying Himself with the voice from the burning bush.

[Jhn 8:24 NKJV] 24 "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am [He], you will die in your sins."

[Jhn 8:28 NKJV] 28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [He], and [that] I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.

[Jhn 8:58 NKJV] 58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

[Jhn 18:4-6 NKJV] 4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that would come upon Him, went forward and said to them, "Whom are you seeking?" 5 They answered Him, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said to them, "I am [He]." And Judas, who betrayed Him, also stood with them. 6 Now when He said to them, "I am [He]," they drew back and fell to the ground.

15 Moreover God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: '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] My name forever, and this [is] My memorial to all generations.' 16 "Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared to me, saying, "I have surely visited you and [seen] what is done to you in Egypt; 17 "and I have said I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Amorites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, to a land flowing with milk and honey." '

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 to take the land God promised to their fathers.

However, the land was still inhabited by all of these different ites that would have to be driven out of the land.

There were battles to be fought; but the battles belonged to the Lord as He had promised to be with them.

18 "Then they will heed your voice; and you shall come, you and the elders of Israel, to the king of Egypt; and you shall say to him, 'The LORD God of the Hebrews has met with us; and now, please, let us go three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' 19 "But I am sure that the king of Egypt **will not let you go, no, not even by a mighty hand.**

Moses and the elders were supposed to go to Pharaoh and ask that he let them go out on a long weekend and then they would return.

If the goal was to be delivered from Egypt, why would God have them ask for a brief holiday?

You see, it was to demonstrate to them that Pharaoh's heart was already hardened against them. If Pharaoh was not willing to allow them to have a long weekend – then certainly he was not willing to set them free.

Because God is all knowing – He knew the heart of Pharaoh – He knew how he would respond. God did not cause Pharaoh to refuse – that decision was made by his own free will.

20 "So I will stretch out My hand and strike Egypt with all My wonders which I will do in its midst; and after that he will let you go. 21 "And I will give this

people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be, when you go, **that you shall not go empty-handed**. 22 "But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, namely, of her who dwells near her house, articles of silver, articles of gold, and clothing; and you shall put [them] on your sons and on your daughters. So you shall plunder the Egyptians."

Because Pharaoh would not allow the Hebrews to leave – God would bring judgment upon Egypt.

A contest of gods was shaping-up in Egypt.

Y-H-W-H versus the gods of Egypt.

And we will see that each of the Egyptian gods were defeated (we will see that in the plagues), leaving no doubt that Yahweh alone is God.

Not only is God going to move the heart of Pharaoh – He is also going to move the heart of the Egyptian people as well.

Turn with me to Deut 15,

[Deu 15:12-14 NKJV] 12 "If your brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, is sold to you and serves you six years, then in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. 13 "And when you send him away free from you, you shall not let him go away empty-handed; 14 "you shall supply him liberally from your

flock, from your threshing floor, and from your winepress. [From what] the LORD your God has blessed you with, you shall give to him.

This was not stealing or extortion – the Egyptian people were supplying the Hebrews with the appropriate wages for the years of forced labor.

[Exo 4:1-17 NKJV] 1 Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'

In verse 18 of the previous chapter, God had promised Moses that the people would indeed listen to him. (they will heed your voice)

So what Moses is pretty much saying here in verse 1 is, “but, what if you are wrong God?”

" 2 So the LORD said to him, "What [is] that in your hand?" He said, "A rod."

Moses was a shepherd – so in his hand he held his shepherd’s staff.

That shepherd staff is what God is going to use in his ministry for the next 40 years.

Many times we struggle with how we can serve God or how can we be used by Him?

Sometimes it as easy as looking at the item in our hands.

You hold a frying pan in your hand, God can use that for His glory.

You hold a hammer in your hand, God can use that for His glory.

We don't need to grasp for something that is not within our reach – we simply need to allow Him to anoint what we already have.

3 And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. 4 Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and **take [it] by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), 5 "that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you."**

One of the things that I learned when I arrived in Southern Arizona was that you never, ever, pick up a snake by the tail – it's the head that one needs to immobilize. You grab a snake by the back of the head.

Moses must have come across hundreds of snakes during his 40 years in the wilderness – yet he demonstrates faith in obeying the Lord.

6 Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand [was] **leprous, like snow. 7 And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his [other] flesh. 8 "Then it will be, if they do not believe you,**

nor heed the message of the first sign, that they may believe the message of the latter sign.

Leprosy was considered an incurable disease.

The “bosom” might be a picture of the heart, the inner person.

Perhaps this is a picture of how God is able to deal with even the most incurable problems of a heart.

Perhaps this miracle is a picture of what God can do to our life. In a way it's like a testimony, letting people see that God can take a wicked heart and make it new again.

So God provides Moses with a testimony -

9 "And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour [it] on the dry [land]. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry [land]."

God gives Moses three powerful signs that would confirm that he was speaking on behalf of God.

God gave him the staff that would turn to a snake

God gave him the testimony with his hand

And now, Moses was provided with this sign of turning water from the Nile into blood.

All of these signs were given to him to overcome the objections that were brought upon by Moses.

10 Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I [am] not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I [am] slow of speech and slow of tongue."

There are many bible scholars that believe that Moses might have had a speech impediment that developed during the forty years he spent in the desert. After all, he was mostly talking to sheep during this time.

His self confidence was gone; but he needed God confidence instead.

11 So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? [Have] not I, the LORD? 12 "Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say."

The Lord replies to Moses and says – I created your mouth – why would you question Me when I ask you to do something for Me using your mouth.

Here is a question to ponder???

Do we ever use Moses' excuse when God has called us to do something?

Sure.

We excuse ourselves for not being adequate to the task.

We don't know enough... We're not holy enough... We don't have the time, or the resources.

Church, if Jesus calls us to a ministry, or asks us to serve Him in some way, small or great, He wouldn't commission us unless He had overcome all possible excuses by His grace.

13 But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever [else] You may send."

Send someone else God – just don't send me. I don't want to go.

14 So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.

God is angry at Moses – but notice that God does not give up on Moses.

He simply expands His call to include Aaron who unknowingly becomes Moses' mouthpiece.

15 "Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. 16

"So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. 17 "And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs."

As we continue our study through the book of Exodus, we will see that Aaron was more of a problem to Moses than he was there to help.

But this was the result of Moses' reluctance to place his trust in the Lord.

Even though God had told him that He was going to be with him.

Moses lost sight of how big his God really is.

And I pray that we don't commit the same mistake that he did.

Amen

Let's pray...

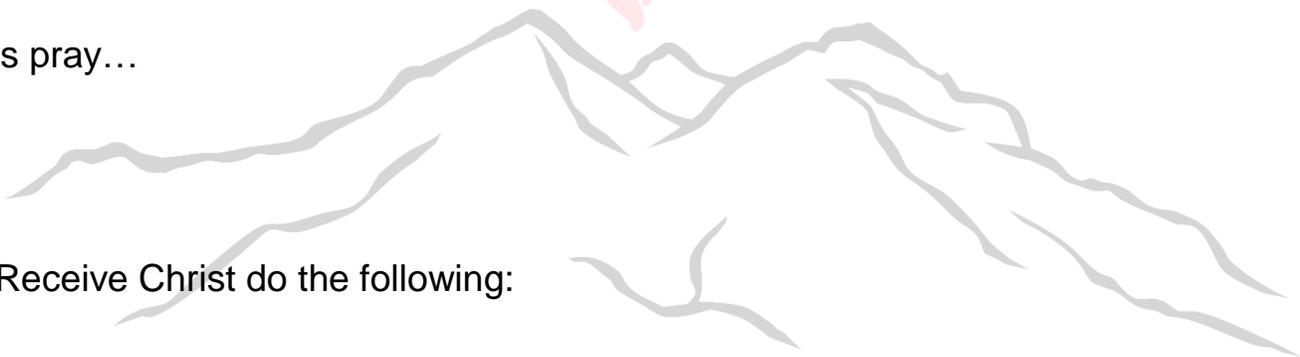
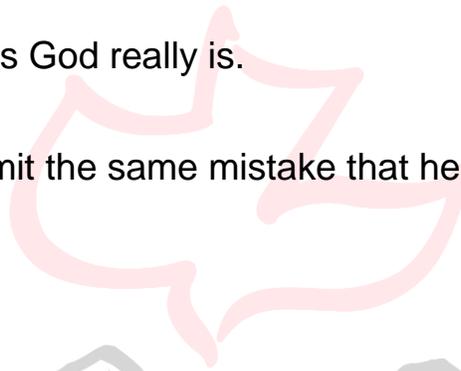
To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.



CALVARY
Santa Cruz

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

