

# A Message from the Bush

## I. Introduction

---

Exodus 3 tells the story of Moses and the burning bush. God speaking to Moses out of the burning bush represents the turning point in Moses' life. In Exodus, chapters 1 and 2, eighty years of Moses' life are covered. In chapter 1, Moses is born. In chapter 2 he grows up in Egypt. At the end of chapter 2 Moses is forty years old and running from Pharaoh to the backside of the wilderness. At the opening of chapter 3 Moses is eighty years old. Chapter 3 reveals that Moses is not the man he used to be. He is a better man. Before the wilderness he was filled with self-confidence, pride, and physical strength. But after spending forty years on the backside of the wilderness as a shepherd, God has brought Moses to a place where God can use him. In other words, God had to sweat Moses out of Moses so *He* could come in! God wants the *you* out of you so *He* can be in you!

At this point in Moses' life he was probably thinking, "I have really blown it! I tried to fulfill God's plan in my own strength. He called me to deliver the children of Israel but I'm certain during these forty years since I left Egypt, He has raised up another deliverer." But God says, "No Moses. You are still the one I have chosen." Moses then begins to make excuses, "I'm too old. At one time I was an eloquent speaker, but during these forty years, I can no longer speak. It's just been too many years."

With God, your age is unimportant. What *is* important is the timing of God. God's timing is not determined by your age. In fact, often when we think we are too old, God says, "No, you are finally ready to be used by Me."

## II. Moses' Early Life

---

Moses was born a Hebrew but he was raised in the courts of Pharaoh. He believes he is an Egyptian. He grows up and one day, when he is nearly forty years old, he learns that he is actually a Hebrew who has been raised as an Egyptian. The problem is, Moses knows nothing about the common people. He was trained up under Pharaoh in the royal palace, trained in the royal court as royalty. He knows very little about the subjects of the kingdom. God appeared to Moses and he gave his life to the Lord. God said, "Moses, you are the deliverer and..." Moses didn't stay around long enough to hear about God's timing. Instead, Moses went out to deliver the children of Israel in his own strength. He had been accustomed to walking in political power. Moses probably thought, "No

wonder God picked me. I'm strong. I'm handsome. People notice me. I can use my political strength to open doors politically and legally to deliver the children of Israel. I've got the ear of Pharaoh and his daughter. It make perfect sense that God would choose me!"

**Acts 7:22-29:**

*And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.*

*And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel.*

*And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian:*

*For he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them: but they understood not.*

*And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one another?*

*But he that did his neighbour wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us?*

*Will thou kill me, as thou diddest the Egyptian yesterday?*

*Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Madian, where he begat two sons.*

When Moses went out to deliver the children of Israel, he thought they already knew he was there to deliver them. He had so much pride, he thought when he went to the children of Israel and said, "Look at me. I'm your deliverer! Aren't you excited? Aren't you overjoyed?" He thought they would say, "We knew it Moses! We just knew you were our deliverer! Thanks so much for coming to deliver us!" But instead they said, "Moses, who do you think you are? Why would ever you think you're our deliverer?" Moses tried to prove his point by killing an Egyptian who had come against one of the children of Israel and they still didn't recognize him as their deliverer.

Pharaoh went after Moses for killing the Egyptian and Moses fled to the backside of the wilderness and remained there for forty years.

### III. A Changed Man

---

#### Exodus 3:1-8:

*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.*

*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.*

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

*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.*

*And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.*

*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.*

*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;*

*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.*

Moses is not the same man after forty years in the wilderness as he was when he arrived in the wilderness. He is no longer a self-confident man. He believes his time has passed and that he is too old to do anything for God. He believes God has chosen another to deliver the children of Israel. But instead, God appears to Moses and informs Moses that he is still the deliverer and His will for Moses' life has not changed since he was first called. Moses is at a crossroad in his life. He argued with God but finally lined himself up with God's will.

## **IV. Dying to Self**

---

When we are born again, we need to take every ability and talent we possess and lay them on the altar for the Lord. We need to die to what we once were. The apostle Paul, who began as Saul of Tarsus, was saved on the road to Damascus. A powerful prophecy was spoken to him that said in essence, "You will be used to turn the hearts of the Gentiles and kings." I can imagine Saul thinking, "Lord, I'm sure you saved me because of the powerful position I held." But Galatians 2:1 mentions that Paul was unknown for fourteen years in Judea. Judea was the place he had previously been so well-known. Jerusalem was located in Judea. This is where the church was located. For years Saul had had a high profile life.

The same was true of Moses. He had been seen every day on the streets. He was before the people, giving speeches as prime minister of the land. He was highly educated. The people probably saw him daily and one day he is suddenly gone and doesn't reappear for forty years! But when Moses returns to Egypt, he is not the same Moses who left Egypt. He is the man of God who is now prepared to deliver the children of Israel. Moses returns to Egypt not as a self-dependent man but as a God-dependent man!

## **V. Moses' Training**

---

Moses is now eighty years old, on the backside of the wilderness and keeping sheep. It seems throughout the Word of God, whenever He wants to raise up someone to lead people, He trains them with sheep. David learned the principles of faith, the principles of grace, the principles of love, the principles of praise and worship by watching the Lord's creation under the stars and caring for sheep. This is exactly what happened with Moses. Although Moses has been caring for sheep for forty years, God was using the sheep to train him to handle people.

While in Egypt, Moses learned leadership from the top down. God wanted him to learn leadership from the bottom up. He wanted him to learn how to handle people. The problem with Moses was, he was raised around royalty, was trained by royalty and never knew much about the common people. Moses was so out of touch with the common man, he assumed they would gladly accept him as their deliverer because of his position, his political might, his power, and his education. He learned very quickly, the people did not relate to any of these things. This is the reason Exodus 1 and 2 give such a thumbnail sketch of a limited area of Moses' life. God was not interested in his education, position or power.

God used sheep to train Moses. The greatest leaders in history came up through the ranks; they didn't begin at the top. Moses had been trained at the top and God had to retrain him. The Bible brushes over the first eighty years of Moses' life, but from the burning bush on, we learn intricate details of Moses' life.

God was ready to raise Moses up. It didn't matter that Moses was eighty. God never gets older. It didn't matter that Moses was physically weaker. God never grows weaker. It didn't matter that Moses could no longer lean on his own strength. He could lean on the unlimited strength of God. This is the place God wants all of us to come to.

God took Moses into a profession that was an abomination to the Egyptians. Genesis 46:34 says, "...for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians." If anyone from Egypt had known what Moses was doing, they would have thought he had sunk to the lowest level a man could sink being a shepherd.

## **VI. The Backside of the Wilderness**

---

Not only did God put Moses around sheep, He put him in the desert. Here was a man trained and raised up in the largest city and in the most powerful family and kingdom of the ancient world. Why would God banish him to the backside of the wilderness?

The desert is a place where the world, people, self, and circumstances are seen for exactly what they are. The desert represents reality. In the desert you are alienated from the news, sports, changes in education, what the stock market is doing, the greed of others. Moses was completely separated from all natural events in Egypt. That is why God brought him to the wilderness. In Egypt, Moses knew the wisdom of man. He knew man's counsel. He knew man's viewpoints, but God was clouded from his view. When God spoke and said, "You are the deliverer," Moses was so consumed with human insight, human knowledge, human viewpoint, human counseling, he attempted to use human strength to accomplish the will of God.

How often have we done the same, using our own human strength to accomplish the will of God? Age, physical strength, human might and power are not important factors in God's will being accomplished. Most important is timing. To do the will of God in His timing requires preparation.

For thirty years Jesus was in preparation for three years of public ministry, but what a powerful three years! God would rather find you in preparation for ministry than rushing into ministry because you want to

do something before Jesus returns. God wants us to fulfill *His* will in *His* timing, not ours.

Moses has now found the timing of God and in finding His timing Moses has found God's strength and no longer needs to rely upon his own education, position, or influence. He has reached a point in his life where he has become dependent upon the Spirit of God.

The wilderness was a place of total dependence on God. No help or intervention from man was available. The desert was a place where Moses learned about the God Who never changes. People change, circumstances change, financial systems change, but God *never* changes. Every believer needs to come to a place in his or her life where they are dependent upon the God Who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

When Moses came to the wilderness, he had Egypt in him. God brought him to the wilderness to get Egypt out of his heart and to get the wilderness into his heart.

## **VII. Alone With God**

---

It all comes down to how you view life. Every one of you have a wilderness place where you can get alone with God. TL Osborn once said, "Everyone has a place they can identify with. For some people it is the mountains. For some people, it is the desert. For some people, it is the ocean. For some people it is the forest. But whatever it is that helps you identify and hear from God, you need to get there from time to time."

When Moses went back to Egypt, he was no longer influenced by Egypt. He had been in the wilderness for so many years, the wilderness was inside him. He had been around the unchanging presence of God. As he observed the sun, moon, and stars rise and set every day, he learned the most important lesson of his life: "I can count on the presence of God. I can count on the wisdom of God. I can count on the Word of God. I can count on the leadership of the Holy Spirit and bring that back to the world."

You need a place to go where you can be alone with God. Everyone needs a place to be alone with God. With the pressures of the world around us, we need those times to be in a place where we can hear from the Holy Spirit. When we go to that place, we may have the world in our heart, but we can get rid of it and carry God's presence back to the world. Like Moses, we need to realize that life may change, finances may change, circumstances may change, family may change, but God will *never* change!

## **VIII. Facing Hardships**

---

Some may sense this is the time to prepare for ministry but then thoughts enter your mind, “What about my family? I’m too old. I know God put this in my heart many years ago, but by now He’s probably found someone else.”

I think about Lester Sumrall. He had been in the ministry a number of years when his own denomination kicked him out. He was sixty years old at the time. He started again and had a worldwide ministry in a very short time.

Your age does not matter to God. Put your hand on your heart. If it is still beating, God is not finished with you! God has a plan for your life and if your heart is still beating at forty, sixty, or eighty years old, it really doesn’t matter, God still has a plan for your life.

Hardship brings us to utter dependence upon the Lord. A total dependence on the Lord will keep you stable while you prosper. It will keep you stable while things around you are being blessed by God. It will keep you stable when things fall apart around you. Dependence upon God causes you to realize that circumstances may change, but God will never change.

## **IX. The Burning Bush**

---

### **Exodus 3:2-3:**

*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.*

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

The Hebrew word for “bush” in Exodus 3 is the word *seneh* and means “thorny bush.” This describes a bush that could have burned very easily. We might call it a tumble weed. It is a bush that is barely held into the ground. It has been dead for some time and the slightest breeze could probably cause it to break off from its roots. If a bush like this ever caught fire, it would instantly be consumed.

When Moses saw this ordinary bush that had no beauty about it, it was burning from the inside and yet, was not consumed. As Moses

approached it, the Lord spoke to him and told him to remove his shoes. Very important. Before you come into the presence of God, before you enter into ministry, you need to remove those areas of your life that are in contact with the world and realize you are standing on holy ground. Moses' shoes had dirt on them. God said, "Remove your shoes because the place you are standing is holy ground." Removing your shoes is a type of I John 1:9, "*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*"

The Bible tells us when the priests went into the presence of God, not only did they have to bathe before entering, they had to wash their feet to remove the dust. Moses was required to remove his shoes before he could come into God's presence and commune with Him. Hebrews 12:29 says, "*For God is a consuming fire.*"

Who spoke out of the burning bush? The Hebrew says it was the angel of the Lord. This is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus appeared many times in the Old Testament. Whenever God desires to visit mankind, He comes through the second member of the godhead. His name is Jehovah. He is the manifested member of the godhead. Before He came into the earth as a human being, He manifest Himself in many different ways. He was the angel of the Lord. He was the fire by night and the cloud by day. He was the rock that followed the children of Israel. He was the water. In the case of the burning bush, it was Jesus Christ speaking from the midst of the bush.

It has often been taught that the bush represents the humanity of Jesus and the fire represents the fact He was deity. Jesus had flesh. He could be touched, nailed to the cross, His side pierced with a soldier's spear because He was human and had a flesh and blood body. Yet, He was also deity and that deity could be at home inside a human body and not consume the body.

The burning bush is also a type of you and me. The Bible says, "*But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us*" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

God was trying to tell Moses, "Moses, you have trusted in the bush for years. I want you to trust in the fire that's in the bush. You trusted in your own human strength for so long, but your own human strength is no better than a bramble bush that could burn. You trusted in your own intellect. It's no better than a bramble bush that can burn. You trusted in your own political power, but it's no better than a bramble bush that can burn."

With all the outward accolades you may possess, it is still Jesus in you that is the hope of glory. It is still Christ in you. It is still “greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world.” Our dependence must not be upon our flesh. Our dependency must be upon the Lord inside us. We need to trust in the Shekinah glory on the inside of you. Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Outwardly you are the bramble bush that has no value in and of itself. The value is in the fire on the inside. The earthen vessel has no worth. It is the treasure inside that has the worth. God simply told Moses, “Moses, it is time to listen to Me because I am the One Who will be with you wherever you go.”

## **X. In Covenant with God**

---

### **Exodus 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.*

In verse 6, God is emphasizing the covenant relationship already established with Moses. In essence He said to Moses, “Let me give you a history of where you are, Moses. I am the God of your father. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.” The phrase “the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,” is actually a covenant title for God.

How wonderful to know we are in covenant relationship with God. The covenant relationship began with Abraham and we are in a long line of believers who have been attached to the faithful God who went into covenant relationship with us.

Abraham did not have the influence Moses had. He did not have the education or political power. He did not live in a royal palace. Although Abraham was quite wealthy when God called him, he did not have any of the accolades Moses possessed. Abraham made many mistakes in his life, yet God chose to enter into a covenant relationship with him. It wasn't until Abraham was ninety-nine years old that Abraham completely surrendered himself to the Lord. Until that time he tried to do things in his own strength. Finally, Abraham pushed the “bush” aside—he pushed his flesh aside and said, “Holy Spirit within me, I trust You. God, I trust Your Word.” The moment he finally decided to trust in God and not in himself, God entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham and he became the father of many nations. At ninety-nine years old Abraham became a father and at ninety years old Sarah became a mother. The child God had promised them was born. The covenant was reconfirmed to Isaac and again, to Jacob. Each time a person was born into the family and said “yes” to the Lord—accepted Him as Lord and Savior—the covenant was reconfirmed.

Jacob was a chiseler and took advantage of every person and situation that would benefit his life. He was very self-centered. But there was a day Jacob accepted the Lord and the covenant was reconfirmed to him. God was saying to Moses, “Moses, the covenant I had with Abraham, the covenant I had with Isaac, the covenant I had with Jacob, and the covenant I had with your own father is the same covenant I’m offering to you. Moses, the bush is dead. The fire is alive. The success you experience will come through Me. Surrender to Me and let me go to work through you.”

## **XI. God Declares to Moses What He Will Do**

---

### **Exodus 3:7-8:**

*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;*

*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.*

Notice, Moses is not mentioned once in this entire passage. God says repeatedly, “I” (God). All God is asking of Moses is that he be obedient. As Moses walks in obedience, God will work through him.

### **God’s Eyes Are Watching**

*“I have surely seen the affliction of my people.”* The word “seen” is important because God’s eyes are watching over Israel. God is saying, “Your vision is limited. You can see the sheep around you. You can see the stars in the sky. You can see the desert around you. You can see your wife and your children. But you cannot see what is happening in Egypt. Don’t be concerned about going back to Egypt because even though you can’t see, I can see with My eyes what is happening in Egypt.”

### **God’s Ears Are Hearing**

*“...and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters.”* Thank God for the ears of the Lord! He can hear what is going on and the need in your heart. Often we say, “Lord, I just want to see with my eyes and hear with my ears,” and God is saying, “It’s alright. My eyes can see and My ears can hear.”

## **We Have God's Attention**

"I know their sorrows." God's awareness is much greater than ours. God is saying, "I know exactly what is going on. I know your sorrows. I understand. You are not alone."

## **God Has a Plan**

*"I am come down to deliver them...and to bring them up..."* God not only said, "I've come down with a plan for deliverance," He went on to explain His plan. The same is true of your life. You may say, "I'm too old." God has a plan. You may say, "I'm too weak." God has a plan. The circumstances do not matter. God has a plan for your life. His plan is for deliverance, never for destruction. God has a plan for you to succeed and not to fail. All you may see is the bush—weak, unstable, the slightest wind blowing it away. But there is a fire inside you that brings stability and keeps you in the plan of God for your life.

## **God Will Take You Out of the Hand of the Egyptians**

God not only takes care of your deliverance, He also brings you into a good land. Not only will God take you out, He will bring you in. God is telling Moses, "I have heard, I have seen, and I have come down with a plan to deliver. My plan is to deliver from the hand of the Egyptians to bring them into a good land and a prosperous land."

## **God Will Not Abandon You**

God is saying to Moses, "Once I bring them into the land, I will not abandon them. I will see to it their lives are filled with milk and honey." This is prosperity! What is God's end for you? Prosperity. His destination for your life is prosperity. God delights in the prosperity of His servant.

We could also apply this to the plan of salvation. One day God saw your need. One day God heard your cry. God knew your situation and He came to deliver you. He brought you out of Egypt—out of sin and the world. He brought you into the new birth. He did not abandon you. He brought you out to prosper you.

I believe there are many God has called into the ministry—into foreign fields. But in your heart you are saying, "I felt the call years ago, but somehow I missed God's plan for my life. I didn't follow the call. Now I have a family, a job, a mortgage. It's too late." You need to stop looking at the thorny bush and instead, look at the fire on the inside. If you are willing to look past yourself and look to the fire inside you—look past the earthen vessel to the treasure that abides inside you, you will begin

to realize that it is by the power of the Lord that the call will be fulfilled and His plan will be accomplished in your life.

## **XII. God In You**

---

### **Deuteronomy 33:16:**

*And for the precious things of the earth and fullness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush:*

The word “bush” is only mentioned twice in the Old Testament. In both cases it refers to the voice and the fire that came from the burning bush. The burning bush brings deliverance. The burning bush brings about the will of God. The burning bush brings us to a place of precious things in the earth. The burning bush brings us into the fullness and good will of Him that dwelt in the bush. And the One that dwelt in the bush dwells in us today. He shows up when we show up, because we are the temple of the Holy Spirit. Look past your inadequacies. Look past your weaknesses. In fact, look past your strengths and see the Lord. God wants to fulfill His will in you!