

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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## SERMON TITLE

Close Encounters of the God Kind – Moses' Story

## SERIES

## DATE

3/19/2023

## KEY SCRIPTURE

Exodus 3:1-10

## SYNOPSIS

Moses had a God-encounter which led to a partnership with God and included supernatural events.

## HIGHLIGHTS



## ☞ **Close Encounters of the God Kind – Moses' Story**

God-encounters are life changing and powerful. We need our own God-encounter today. Moses had one of the most famous God-encounters at the burning bush.

### **Exodus 3:1-10**

**Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.**

Moses was just doing his job, being faithful in his duties when this encounter occurred. He had been in a prominent position - being raised by Pharaoh's daughter, he was a Prince of Egypt. But now he is living in the desert and has been in obscurity, tending sheep for 40 years. So, from the outside, it would seem that he has gone downhill quite a ways. A prosperous prince is now a poor shepherd. Early in life, everything he needed was right at hand in Pharaoh's court. But, now he is going far out of his way to find what was necessary to feed the sheep. And, these sheep weren't even his own - they belonged to his father-in-law. He went from prosperity to poverty; from sufficiency to scarcity; from notoriety to nothing. And, yet God had not given up on him.

You may be able to relate. Has life given you a series of tough breaks? Does it seem that ☞ everything has taken a wrong turn? No matter, **God has not given up on you. So, don't you give up, either.** Moses was in the desert, but he kept moving forward to the place where there ☞ would be water and good grazing ground. This is just further emphasis on the need to **keep on keeping on.** God loves and rewards faithfulness, even if it's not glamorous.

Moses went to Horeb, which means solitude. I've mentioned several times about our need to quiet ourselves so we can hear God's gentle whisper. Our culture is so accustomed to noise and activity all the time, and it makes it hard to connect with God.

☞ Church, you each need to **make room for that quiet time with God.** I'm not saying that's the only way to hear God. On the contrary, God speaks when we are gathered together and when we are worshipping him. God speaks through circumstances of life and various other ways. But, we need the discipline of a quiet time, and we see this so often with the God-encounters listed in the Bible. Many of them were alone and quiet when they had a profound experience with God.

**2 There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. 3 So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight — why the bush does not burn up."**

Notice that Moses did not immediately realize that God was in the burning bush. It was just ☞ something unusual that got his attention, so he decided to check it out. We also need to **pay attention when unusual things are happening** around us. That's how I perceive the reports of revival stemming from Asbury – it's unusual and profound. So, I want to pay attention to see and hear what God is doing. Last week, our typical order of service was interrupted by a move the



Spirit. We are not upset over that, but rather are curious as to what God is up to and how we can be part of it.

**4 When the Lord saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am." 5 "Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."**

☞ God noticed that Moses changed his course to investigate this weird thing. Church, **God is watching to see how we respond** when he interrupts our plans. Psalms 14:2 says, "The Lord looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God."

Most people have turned away from God, but God is looking for people who turn *toward* him; people who will move in his direction. James 4:8 says, "Come near to God and he will come near to you." That's what Moses did and God noticed, then called out to him. And the first thing God said was Moses' name. Here he was in obscurity, far from anything he might call home, but God knows him by name. **God knows you** as well.

Then, verse 5 shows us the reverence needed to come into God's presence. Removing sandals was a sign of respect. Even today, it's customary to remove your shoes when entering a person's home. You don't want to dirty up the place with the grime from the soles of your shoes. We also ☞ **come into God's presence with respect and reverence**. Even if it's your own home and you're not concerned about dirty shoes, you likely take them off when you know you're going to be there a while. In the South, they might say, "Come on in. Sit a spell." God had some things to say to Moses and it wasn't going to happen all in an instant. He needed to **take some time to hear** what God had to say.

**6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.**

Here is more reverence for the Lord. He is so far above us that we can barely comprehend him. He is our creator. He is Lord. He is awesome.

**7 The Lord said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. 8 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey — the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 9 And now the cry of the Israelites has reached me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them."**

God is fully aware of your situation. Especially if you are follower of Christ, part of God's family - he is concerned about your situation. Whatever you have gone through, it has not gone ☞ unnoticed by the Lord. And, if you've been crying out to God, **he hears your prayers**.



1 Peter 3:12

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their prayer

Hebrews 4:16

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

☞ Not only is God aware of your situation; and, not only does he hear your prayers; **he has a good plan for you.** Jeremiah 29:11 says, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

He was going to use Moses to deliver the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and move them into a ☞ good and spacious land. It was a promise he had made to Abraham, and **God keeps his promises.** Even all these years later, God did not forget, but had a plan to keep his promise.

**10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."**

Moses' God-encounter gave him life direction. His experience wasn't just about himself. God had something in mind for Moses that was beyond his own blessing. He was calling Moses to be a blessing for a whole nation. When God speaks into your life, it is a wonderful blessing, but it will most certainly include an assignment for you to bless others.

Remember last week we saw that God told Jacob, and Abraham before him, that he would be a ☞ blessing to all people. **God's work in our lives will lead us to bless others** as well. We should lead others to God; we should lead others to salvation through Christ; we should help and serve others because God has helped and served us. Our God-encounter is to spill over to others.

☞ We also see here that **God partners with people.** In verse 8 he says, "I have come down to rescue them..." But then in verse 10 he says, "Go, I am sending you..." It's a partnership. We see this over and over again in the Scriptures. Yes, God intervenes, but he calls and sends people to carry out his plans. **Are you willing and ready to partner with God?**

In Moses' case, he tried to talk God out of it. But that was a pointless effort. God pulled a Star Trek Borg on Moses: "resistance is futile." I preached a message years ago called **7 Buts, 6 I's and a Stick.** Seven times Moses objected with "but, God." And six times God responded with "I will," and then God gave him a tool in the form of a stick, the staff in his hand. God used what Moses already had and put His own power into it, thus overcoming all the objections of Moses.

☞ **God empowers those that he enlists.** In the next chapter, verse 12, God tells him again to go, adding that He, himself will help Moses speak and teach him what to say. God used an ordinary staff over and over again to perform miracles with Moses. What is in your hand? What do you already know and have that God can anoint and use for his purposes and glory?

Jeremiah 32:17



Ah, Sovereign Lord, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for you.

☞ Here is another aspect of God-encounters. **God-encounters bring supernatural results.** In Moses' case there were many supernatural occurrences with his staff and through his actions. Last week we talked about Jacob's God-encounter which led to **blessings** of a large flock of healthy sheep and then a large family as well. Gideon had a God-encounter followed by an extraordinary **victory** over an overwhelming enemy. The early disciples had a God-encounter in the Upper Room, which led to 3,000 being **saved** in one day, followed by a bunch of **healings** and **miracles**. Paul's God-encounter **transformed** his life and led to a series of miraculous events and massive evangelism.

I have said to a few people regarding the current move of the Spirit, that healings and miracles are part of God's nature. So, the more we experience his presence, the more likely we will see healings and miracles. Currently, God is reviving a hunger for more of his presence, but inevitably, his presence will bring the miraculous along with it. His character and nature will rub off.

If you hang around me for any length of time, eventually, if not sooner, you will hear some whistling or humming. It's just part of who I am. It's going to happen. If you haven't noticed that about me, it's because we must not have spent that much time together. And, it's like that with God. If God is making visitation in our area, it will eventually include healings and miracles. It's just part of who he is. I believe it's coming.

☞ God is moving in the world today in unusual ways. Let's **pay attention** to what he is doing. He's watching to see how we will respond. Let's not take this for granted, but instead **pursue** the Lord with reverence and awe, taking time to **perceive** and understand what he is saying. Let's be willing and ready to **partner** with God, knowing that he empowers those he enlists. Let's be expectant and **prepare for** God's presence, especially anytime we gather together. And, let's anticipate and **plan on** God's transforming, miraculous power to work in us as well.

☞ *God is moving by His Spirit  
Moving thru all the earth  
Signs and wonders when God moveth  
Move O Lord in me*