

# *Famous Chapter 3's in the Bible*

## *Exodus 3: The burning bush*

### What's up with this chapter?

Wow I didn't know. I went to Egypt several years ago. We hiked up the mountain of God. They call this mountain Sinai. It took us a whole day to get to the top. It was about 4 hours up and 4 hours down. I don't think there was a shred of vegetation in this area. When it was dark at night it was really dark. This area is controversial. Is it the Sinai mountain range? This area is near the Sinai Peninsula. Historians have guessed that this is where the mountain of God is. At the base of this mountain is St Catherine's monastery. Someone obviously believes this place is the mountain of God. However, is this the place of the burning bush?

The Bible says Moses went up Mt Horab and met God on the mountain. God revealed himself in the form of a burning bush. At St Catherine's Monastery, there was a bush they called the burning one. There was a bush but it was not on fire. Is this the same mountain that Moses got the Ten Commandments? I must admit, we just do not know. The area geographically makes sense with the Red Sea and Egypt, but there are several problems.

One, is that they do not know where the Red Sea is that Moses and the Israelites crossed. Some call it the sea of reeds but that does not help. Where are they today? I swam in the Red Sea near Newieba Egypt. It is right between Egypt, Sinai Peninsula, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and Jordan. It is a beautiful and nutty area. There is a great distance for Moses to travel from Aswan to Mt Sinai. Further to that, he probably did not cross the Gulf of Aquaba (the current Red Sea). Yet, somewhere in this geographical area there was a Mt Horab and a Mt Sinai. Were they the Same or different mountains in this area?

I can guarantee that today there is little food and water in this area. I have come to understand that this area looked different 4000 years ago. That is the key. We have 4000 years of time between what was written and where they truly were. There are so many issues related to this story of the burning bush. Where was the mountain? Was God really in a burning bush? Is this the same mountain as the Ten Commandments? Where is the Red Sea? However, what is true is that the writer places this story in this region somewhere known to him.

Over all, this is a famous chapter three in the Bible. God meets Moses in a burning bush. God calls Moses to be the deliverer of Israel. God does talk to other people in the Bible but this is a personal discussion between Moses and God. I believe for the first-time God reveals something about himself. God is furthering his relationship with the tribes of Israel. Next week let's take a good look at this famous chapter and have some fun with it.

### **Exodus 3. What makes it famous?**

God seems to have a way about him that is interesting. Did you ever notice that he revealed himself to Abraham, yet Abraham did not know him personally. Moses was raised Egyptian. He did not know God personally. Moses found out he was Hebrew. I suspect he learned about God from those around him in Egypt. Somehow Moses learned about God. Why do I say that? God revealed himself in a burning bush as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Who are they to an Egyptian child? Yet, I believe Moses knew.

I bet there were more bushes in those days 4000 years ago. Today it would be two miracles: the burning bush and the bush itself. There is nothing growing there. Yet God reveals several things to us in this famous chapter. First of all, God creates Holy ground. Did you notice

that God does not ask Adam to respect holy ground? I think Eden was holy. Secondly, we are asked to remove our shoes in Gods space. I am interested that in church they don't remove their shoes. I have seen a pastor that preaches with no shoes on. I think the shoes represent sin and dirty lives. I think Exodus 3 is more than just a burning bush. We learn to respect God and where he stands.

Another famous part of this chapter is what God is. God reveals himself as the God of all the ancestors. Those ancestors had met God. I bet Moses had heard the stories. We have only those stories today. If God could speak to us he might say he is the God of your ancestors. God reveals that he has been here all along. This is not a new thing. God says he was before Moses and he is revealing that he still is working. I think that is why there is another famous part of this chapter. God says his name is "I am."

I think that declaration by God is pinnacle. To say that you are the God of past people is cool. Yet, does that impact us today? Who cares what you did before. God declares that I am the God you had heard of. I still exist. I am still in control. People don't realize that time had passed between Abraham's time. Jacob, Isaac, and Joseph of the past were long gone. Moses only knew God by history and stories. There were no Bible classes. God decides to reveal himself and keep the light of God burning beginning with a bush. Beginning with Moses.

I love the contrast. God says "I am." Moses decides he is not fit to help God defeat Pharaoh in Egypt. Moses say "who am I." I love that. There is a decisiveness about God. We come to him like Moses. We have questions and doubts. This chapter is famous because God reveals his authority and nature. God is powerful enough to burn a bush without burning it. He is powerful enough to exist throughout time. God demands that weak Moses step up and become a leader. God tells the Israelites to be bold and ask for tribute from Egypt as they leave.

Finally, God says Pharaoh will reject Moses request and claims about God. This God of the burning bush says he will deliver them from Egypt. It will be so powerful that the Egyptians will pay the people to leave. This chapter is a sign of holiness, boldness, and deliverance. God is saying he has done this before for other generations. He is telling Moses he will deliver them the same as he has before. So what does that say for us 4000 years later. Take off your shoes and let's talk about that next week.

### **What we can learn?**

It's incredible the detail in one chapter. I think this chapter 3 is famous because of the rich detail. Detail you say? Glad you asked. First of all, we have Moses father in law Jethro. He is said to be a priest of Midian. So, what? Well Midian was an offspring of Abraham. That means to me that Moses learned about his Hebrew heritage from his father in law. So when God told Moses about the ancestors, Moses understood.

Another interesting detail is the holy ground. God not only asked him to remove his sandals, but he said that he would give him the land belonging to several groups. I bet those groups worshiped God or other gods a different way. I feel that God was showing Moses how to respect him. God took Moses clearly to a different level than Jethro. God also says that delivering the Israelites will be a sign that will give them all a reason to worship him.

Why three days' journey? I feel that is because Midian was three days from Pharaoh. I also think three days is near the Red Sea. One final thought on this is time. Maybe God wanted distance between Egypt and the Israelites. They always grumbled to go back. If going back was too far that helped Moses keep control. In traveling this area, I am thinking way too much. I

know the minerals are abundant. I can picture the distance. It makes me think God had a plan before he revealed himself in a burning bush.

I have heard a notion that Israel received no wages for their slavery. I guess that was possible because they had sold their rights to the Egyptians During Josephs time. Joseph had initially set up a 1/5 payment to Pharaoh. I bet that had changed over the years. Plus, they had enslaved the Israelites to build things. Originally, they were the farmers for the Egyptians. I agree that its more than just the Israelites plundering the Egyptians as they left. There was payment being exchanged for the work they had done of 400 years. See I told you there was some interesting details.

So often we see that God knew all along (go figure). I feel that things are being set up all the time. The harsh life of the Israelites in Egypt came from bad choices. One generations choices will affect another. The cool part is God. He sees freewill at work and allows it. He is also finding a a way through our bad choices. This famous chapter is screaming at us that God is always revealing himself in big and small ways.