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Moses and the Burning Bush

Definitions in **bold letters** are from **Strong's** Exhaustive Concordance
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or Roget's Thesaurus - **July 2, 2017**

Exodus 3:1-12

Introduction: As Exodus 3 opens, **Moses** was a shepherd in the land of **Midian** and had been one for the past **forty years** (Acts 7:30). At age **EIGHTY**, Moses no longer envisioned himself a **deliverer** of slaves. He was apparently content to take care of the flocks of his father-in-law and live in obscurity.

The area known as Midian had no definite borders, but it apparently covered much of the Sinai Peninsula. Since the **Midianites** were descendants of **Keturah** (Genesis 25:1-2), **Moses** married into an **Abrahamic** family.

"**Horeb**" (Exodus 3:1) was another name for **Sinai**, "**the mountain of God**" to which Moses would later lead the Hebrews. It became a holy place because God appeared to Moses there and later gave the Law from it. The "backside of the desert" simply meant the west side. (Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication- Christian Life Series*)

Exodus 3:1, Now Moses kept (pastor, shepherd) 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 (generic name for the Sinaitic mountains).

NOTE: "**Jethro his father-in-law** ... "This is surprising in view of the fact that **Reuel** appeared in Exodus 2:18, both as the "**priest of Midian,**" and as "father-in-law" of Moses. However, **forty years** had intervened, and Jethro, probably the **son of Reuel**, had inherited the office, as was the custom. This would have meant that **Jethro was brother-in-law to Moses**, the same word in Hebrew meant either. "The word here rendered father-in-law is used of **almost ANY RELATION by marriage.**" The phenomenal blindness that causes men to find evidence of contradictory sources in a passage like this is equaled only by that of those who are deceived by such false allegations.

"**To the back of the wilderness ...**" This means to the west or northwest of the area. "Among the Hebrews the EAST is before a man, the WEST behind him, and the south and the north on the right and left hand."^[5]

"**...the mountain of God ...**" The "mountain of God" could be nothing other than **Sinai**. Moses was writing perhaps near the END of his life, and the whole nation of Israel would have understood this as a reference to the **mountain where the Law was given**. Thus, its being called the "mountain of God" here was prophetic (far-seeing). Note that it is identified with Horeb. "Horeb ..." "This name is NOT restricted to ONE single mountain, but applies to the **central group of mountains** in the **southern part** of the **(Arabian) peninsula.**"

Nevertheless, there was also a **peak called Horeb**, and, in the O.T., "Horeb and Sinai are used as equivalent terms."

(Source: <https://www.studydrive.org/commentaries/bcc/exodus-3.html>)

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**.

NOTE: Much speculation surrounds the identity of the "**Angel of the Lord**." At whatever conclusion one arrives, it is clear that the angel of the Lord spoke **FOR** God and **AS** God (cf. Gen. 16:10, 22:11-18; Judg. 2:1-5). For this and other reasons, some **believe** that the angel was the **preincarnate Son** of God (cf. John 1:18; Col. 1:15).
(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator*, Union Press Publication- Christian Life Series)

Thought 1. When we look at God's word, and come to a conclusion that has at least ONE scripture that clearly contradicts what we BELIEVE, then, we know that what we believe is NOT the truth. So, we have to continue to study, LISTENING for the Holy Spirit, our teacher, to give us the revelation of the truth for which we are searching. The scriptures have at least ONE account that proves Jesus (Yahshua) is NOT "the angel of the Lord."

Matthew 1:18-20 ...When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found **with child** of the Holy Ghost. ...Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, **the angel of the Lord appeared** unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for **THAT** which **IS conceived IN** her is of the Holy Ghost.

Thought 2. As you can see, the obvious question is IF "the angel of the Lord" IS in fact, Jesus (Yahshua) himself, HOW could he be IN the womb of Mary, being a human, and outside of her womb at the SAME TIME, in another form? (Phil 2:7)

NOTE: Men who do NOT believe the Bible have many fanciful perversions of what is written here. No, it happened, exactly as related here. Rylaarsdam called it a "**vision**." Ellison said, "It was the **spontaneous ignition** of some dry thorn bush." Ellison also added that such an example of spontaneous combustion "was nothing unusual," for which wisdom (?) we are thankful; because it makes it absolutely unnecessary to contradict anything that such a writer says!

To this point, **Moses had never seen any kind of supernatural event** in his **entire life** of about eighty years. His conclusion, therefore, was that it was some UNUSUAL natural phenomenon that he had encountered. Therefore, he turned aside to investigate it. Wonder of wonders! Although the bush was on fire, it was NOT being consumed. Such a contradiction of all that could have been expected required further investigation, so Moses went nearer. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/exodus-3.html>)

Exodus 3:4, And when **the LORD** (Yahweh) **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.

Thought 1. Notice that the Lord (Yahweh) waited until he had Moses' FULL attention before he spoke to him. It goes without saying that Yahweh KNEW this burning bush would cause Moses to investigate it so he could speak to him as he did.

As we know, there are countless testimonies of things that go "beyond the ordinary" that Yahweh and the Lord Jesus have DONE to arrest the attention of people, and then, speak to them concerning HIS WILL for their lives, or about whatever he want them to know.

Acts 26:13-19, At **midday**, O king, **I SAW** in the way a **light** from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which **journeyed (WALK) with me**. And when we were all **fallen** to the earth, I heard a VOICE speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, **Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?** it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I

have **appeared unto thee** for **this purpose**, to make thee a **minister** and a **witness** both of these things which thou hast **SEEN**, and of those things in the which I will **APPEAR** unto thee; **Delivering** thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now **I SEND** thee, To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may **receive forgiveness of sins**, and **inheritance** among them which are sanctified by FAITH that is IN ME. Whereupon, O king Agrippa, I was **NOT disobedient** unto the heavenly **VISION**...

Exodus 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**.

NOTE: Put off thy shoes - The REVERENCE due to holy places thus rests upon God's own command. The custom itself is well known from the observances of the temple, it was almost universally adopted by the ancients, and is retained in the **East**.

Holy ground - This passage is almost conclusive against the assumption that the place was previously a sanctuary. Moses knew nothing of its holiness after some 40 years spent on the Peninsula. **It became holy by the presence of God.**

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bnb/exodus-3.html>)

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**.

God defined 430, 'elohiym el-o-heem', SUPREME (Highest in Authority) **GOD.**

God, the Supreme Being; the eternal and infinite Spirit, the CREATOR, and the Sovereign of the universe; Jehovah (Yahweh).

NOTE: Now recognizing that he was in the presence of the God of Israel, Moses averted his eyes, being afraid to look at God. The kind of **fear** experienced by Moses was both a **reverential awe** and an awareness of his own mortality (cf. Isa 6:1-5.)

(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication-Christian Life Series*)

NOTE: God reveals Himself to Moses through declaring His relationship to the patriarchs (**the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob**); this reminds Moses that God is the God of the **COVENANT**, and His covenant with Israel is still valid and important.

i. It might have seemed to SOME that God had neglected His covenant for some **400 years**, since the **time of the patriarchs**; but God had been at work during that time, preserving and multiplying the nation.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/exodus-3.html>)

Genesis 17:7, And I will **establish my covenant** between **me** and **thee** **and thy SEED** after thee in their generations for an EVERLASTING COVENANT, to be a God unto thee, and to thy **SEED** after thee.

Galatians 3:16, Now to **Abraham** and **his SEED** were the **promises** made. He saith NOT, And to **seedS**, as of MANY; but as of **ONE**, And to thy **SEED**, which is **Christ**.

Exodus 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...

NOTE: ...I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt,.... Or, "in seeing I have seen", which NOT only denotes the certainty of it, as we express it; but the clear, distinct, and full sight he had of it, **with sympathy** towards them, an affectionate concern for them, and a fixed, settled, determination in his MIND to **DELIVER** them;

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/exodus-3.html>)

Exodus 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**.

NOTE: a. Obviously, God had NOT just then decided to give Israel the land of Canaan - it was the land that He had **promised** to the **patriarchs** some **400 years** previous to this.
b. Yet, so Moses and Israel can see the compassionate heart of God, He emphasizes the truth that He has come to deliver Israel from the taskmasters of Egypt.
i. The land of Canaan **had belonged** to Israel since the day **God promised it to Abraham**; but God is moving Israel there *NOW* because of the compassion of His heart. The actions were ordained long ago, but **the timing** is prompted by God's heartfelt love for His people.
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/exodus-3.html>)

Exodus 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**.

NOTE: ...**behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me**,.... See Exodus 2:23, which is repeated to observe the great notice he took of it; and the reason of his descent and appearance in this wonderful manner, as well as of the urgent necessity of Moses's going to deliver the people from their oppression.
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/exodus-3.html>)

Exodus 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**.

NOTE: **Come now therefore**,..... Leave thy flock, thy family, and the land of Midian: **and I will send thee unto Pharaoh**: this Pharaoh, according to Eusebius, was **Cenchres**, the successor of Achoris; but according to Bishop Usher^{F21}Annal. Vet. Test. p. 19. , his name was **Amenophis**, who immediately succeeded **Ramesses Miamun**, under whom **Moses** was BORN. Clemens of Alexandria^{F23}Stromat. l. 1. p. 320. relates from Apion, and he, from Ptolemy Mendesius, that it was in the times of **Amosis** that Moses led the children of Israel out of Egypt; but Tacitus^{F24}Hist. l. 5. c. 3. says, the name of this king was **Bocchoris**, who obliged them to go out, being advised by an oracle to do so; and so says Lysimachus^{F25}Apud Joseph. contr. Apion, l. 1. c. 34. :
... **mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt**; and conduct them through the wilderness to the land of Canaan, and so be their DELIVERER, GUIDE, and GOVERNOR under God, who now **gave him a commission** to act for him.
(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/exodus-3.html>)

Exodus 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**?

NOTE: "Moses, unlike his early days in Egypt, has learned to **distrust** himself so thoroughly that he **will incur God's anger** (Ex.4:14). Self-distrust is good, but **ONLY** if it leads to **TRUST** in God. Otherwise, it ends as **spiritual paralysis, inability and unwillingness** to undertake any course of action".
(Source: *The Bible Expositor and Illuminator, Union Press Publication- Christian Life Series*)

NOTE: This is the first of a series of **excuses** offered by Moses in his resistance to full acceptance of God's commission of deliverance by the hand of Moses. Note: "Who am I, that I should go?" (**Exodus 3:11**). "What shall I say when they ask, 'What is his (God's) name?'" (**Exodus 3:13**). "They will not believe" (**Exodus 4:1**). "I am not eloquent" (**Exodus 4:10**). "Send someone else" (**Exodus 4:13**). **God effectively refuted** (clear away) **ALL of Moses' objections** and **set him forward** on the road to Egypt to DO the work to which God called him. (Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/bcc/exodus-3.html>)

Exodus 3:12, And he said, Certainly **I will be WITH thee;** and this shall be a **token (sign)** unto thee, that **I have SENT thee:** When thou hast **brought FORTH** the people OUT of Egypt, ye shall **serve God** upon this **mountain.**

NOTE: when thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain: Mount Horeb or Sinai, as they did at the time of the giving of the LAW on it, when an altar was built upon a hill, and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, Exodus 24:4 and this was a **sign, "a posteriori"**, confirming the divine mission of Moses; and besides the promise of this, on which Moses might **DEPEND**, being made by the Lord, **ASSURED HIM** of success, that he should **BRING** the children of Israel out of Egypt, since he and they would serve the Lord together at this mountain, and from whence he might conclude he had a mission and commission from God.

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/geb/exodus-3.html>)

Thought 1. Today, even though, we will NOT feel, or sense God's presence all of the time, he and Jesus ARE with us ALL of the time, because they SAID they ARE with us! So, when we come together, it's NOT a matter of us having to invite God (or his Spirit) in, because HE came in when WE came in, since HE is WITH us, living IN our spirits.

1 Corinthians 6:19, What? know ye NOT that your body is the **TEMPLE** of the Holy Ghost which is IN you, which ye have of (FROM) God ...?

1 John 4:16, And we have **known** and **believed** the **love** that God hath to us. **God is LOVE;** and he that dwelleth IN love **dwelleth** IN God, and **God IN him.**

Exodus 3:13-15, 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? 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. 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.**

The LORD defined 3068 Yhovah yeh-ho-vaw' from 1961; (the) self-Existent or Eternal; JEHOVAH, Jewish national name of God: --Jehovah, the Lord (RULER). Jehovah, Heb. only the four Heb, consonants YHVH are conceded to be certainly known.

NOTE: Is there a difference between **I AM WHO I AM** and **I AM** and **YAHWEH**? Not really; each of these sayings express the same idea.

i. Cole on: **I AM WHO I AM:** "This pithy clause is clearly a reference to the name YHWH. Probably 'Yahweh' is regarded as a shortening of the whole phrase, and a running together of the clause into one word." In verse 15, when God says: *Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: "The Lord God of your fathers . . ."*, God is referring back to the name **I AM WHO I AM.**

ii. **Yahweh** was NOT a new name, nor an unknown name - it appears more than 160 times in the book of Genesis. Moses' mother's name was **Jochabed - Yahweh is my glory;** (Ex. 6:20) Moses and Israel knew the name *Yahweh*. God was NOT giving Moses a "new and improved" name of God, but the name they had known before - God was calling them back to the **faith** of the **patriarchs**, NOT to something "new."

iii. How did this name come to be pronounced *Jehovah*? The pious Jews of later years did NOT want to pronounce the name of God out of reverence, so they left the vowels out of His name and simply said the word **Lord (adonai)** instead. If the vowels of the word **adonai** are put over the consonants for YHWH, you can get the name "Jehovah." But all this came about much later; in the days of Bible, the name was pronounced **Yah-weh** or **Yah-veh.**

(Source: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/guz/exodus-3.html>)

Exodus 3:16-17, 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: 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**.

NOTE: One may only smile at such a contradiction as that alleged by Peake, who complained that here Moses was instructed to communicate through "**the elders**," whereas in **Exo. 3:15**, it was to be "**with the people at large**"! Of course, there would have been absolutely no other way that Moses could have contacted the people at large, except through the Jewish institution of the **eldership**, visible here in the Bible for the very first time. It should be remembered that the Israelites were now a nation of some **2,000,000** people, with a potential standing army of over **600,000** men! As Dummelow expressed it: "In the Pentateuch, when the people of Israel are addressed, it is frequently the elders who are meant. They are the usual medium of communication between Moses and the people, and act as representatives of the latter."

(Source: <https://www.studyilight.org/commentaries/bcc/exodus-3.html>)

Thought 1. As previously stated, this is the land Yahweh promised to Abraham and his seed, as he spoke with him, many years earlier in Genesis 15:7-14. He even told Abraham his seed would be in Egypt for 400 years. But, now it was finally TIME to fulfill what had been promised and covenanted to be done.

And contrary to a popular saying, "**God HAD** to **DO**" these things because he SAID he would! So, it is today, he wants us to know, what he's promised, he is obligated to perform.

Psalm 111:5, He hath given meat unto them that **fear (morally, reverent** him: he will **EVER** **be mindful** of his **COVENANT**.

Psalm 89:34, My **covenant** will I NOT break, NOR **alter (CHANGE)** the thing that is gone out of my lips.

Numbers 23:19, God is NOT a man, that he should **LIE**; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath **HE SAID**, and shall he NOT **DO it?** Or hath he **SPOKEN**, and shall he NOT make it good?

1 John 3:22, And whatsoever **we ASK**, **we RECEIVE** of (from) him, because we **KEEP** HIS commandments, and **DO** those things that are pleasing in **HIS sight**.

NOTE: "This declaration is limited by the conditions, which in other passages of Scripture, are made necessary to our **petitions** being granted by God." There is in this verse the implied **condition** that it is the prayers of the **obedient** which are answered. (Source: <https://www.studyilight.org/commentaries/bcc/1-john-3.html>)

1 John 3:23, And **this** is **HIS commandment**, That we should **BELIEVE** on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and **LOVE** one another, as he gave us commandment.

Believe defined 4100, pisteuo pronounced pist-yoo'o ; to have FAITH in, by implication, to ENTRUST (especially one's spiritual well-being to Christ).

Thought 2. Notice, he didn't mention any of the commandments written in the Law. Because of Jesus' death, a New Covenant is in force, which replaced the Old. This verse makes plain that ALL humans have a command to "entrust their spiritual well-being" to the authority that's in Jesus (Yahshua), or be eternally lost. And then, AFTER believing, we believers are commanded to LOVE one another AS (*just like*) Jesus (Yahshua) LOVED. (John 13:34)