

GOD ENCOUNTER

God wants to be known. Creation itself declares and displays his wisdom, knowledge, power, precision, creativity, greatness and majesty.....but only from a distance. God longs to be known more personally and wants man to experience the joy of walking with Him and being involved with His grand purposes. Throughout the Bible and other history we see how he fulfills this through God encounters. One such encounter took place in the Egyptian desert. The participants were Moses, the angel of the Lord and a desert bush.

Whenever God calls a person to a significant task, He often reveals Himself in extraordinary ways. This sometimes is due to the fact that the person He is calling may need that extra special nudge to actually accept the assignment. Also, God wants them to have a clear assurance that He is 100% with them in the mission process and completion, since there will be many challenges, tests and opposition forces that they must face and overcome.

Moses spent his first 40 years being educated by the Egyptians in preparation to be a leader in either their military or government. However, God had something else in mind for him. Moses spent the next 40 years on the backside of the desert as a shepherd with sheep, solitude, sand and stars as his companions. He also learned something he had not developed in his Egyptian education. It was humility. The lessons Moses learned would be put to use for the following 40 years as he led God's people through the desert on their way to the promised land. Let us now go back to where Moses had an encounter with God and what initial lessons that God wanted to teach Moses. (To get the contextual preceding events and the actual God encounter, it would be helpful to read Exodus chapters 3 and 4 and also Acts 7:17-37.) Things we see in these passages can give us greater faith, hope and love towards the God we serve and pray to.

God does supernatural things. v.2

The burning bush did not burn up, because the angel of the Lord was in it. This was Jesus in a pre-incarnate form. The fire of God often represents his holiness, purity and power. **Supernatural things happen when Jesus is present.** Daniel's three friends in the fiery furnace found this out when Jesus was the 4th man in the fire with them. One Brazilian pastor at our church in London, told me that he had a burning bush experience in Brazil. Also, some Brazilians at our church in London were praying one night in a circle and they saw fire in their midst over the Brazilian flag.

When Jesus is in something... it becomes special v.3

There were thousands of bushes in the desert but they remained unnoticed. The bush in this encounter has become well known. When we allow Jesus to burn brightly in our life, others will stop and take notice. When the fire of God is active in a church, the community takes note and often comes to see what is going on. Fire attracts attention.

God knows where we are. v.4

Moses was in an isolated place doing an ordinary job, but God knew where he was and saw that Moses had gone to look at the bush on fire. Satan wants us to feel isolated and alone, but we are never alone for we are under God's watchful eye.

God knows our name. v.4

God calls out - "Moses, Moses." In this world we are sometimes treated impersonally and even just given a number. How wonderful to know that God, the overseer of the entire universe, knows our name. In fact, he has written our names down in the Lamb's book of life! The Beast of Revelation treats his subjects like animals, only with numbers (666). On our dairy farm, we had numbers for all of our cows except one. My Dad bought this cow from Pete Schurman that turned out to be our best milk producer at over 100# per day! We called her 'Pete'. Did you know that God has special new names for each overcomer when they get to heaven?

To him who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give him a white stone with a new name on it, known only to him who receives it. - Revelation 2:17 NIV

Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will he leave it. I will write on him the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God: and I will also write on him my new name. - Revelation 3:12 NIV

God is holy v.5

God told Moses to take off his sandals and to not come any closer, for he was standing on holy ground. In the culture in Biblical times, going barefoot was a sign that you were a slave and had given up all your own rights. Moses undoubtedly had seen the slaves who walked barefoot as they served in the palace of Pharaoh. When God called Moses by name from the bush, Moses responded with the words, 'Here I am'. In Hebrew language that means: 'Here I am to do your will O Lord. You command me, and I will do it.' - Michael Esses in the book, Jesus in Exodus. An encounter with God can bring us to a state of awe in His holy presence.

When we come to God in prayer, that should be our approach. We come to seek and submit to his will. This is one reason I like to call the Lord's Prayer our daily will alignment.

When visitors from America came to our church in London, I would take them on a tour of the religious places near the church (Muslim mosques, Hindu temples, and Sikh gurdwara). In every one of those places we were required to take off our shoes as they have a certain reverence for their gods and the place where they worship. When we get to heaven, I think we will all have a better appreciation for the awesome purity and holiness of our God. While we walk on this earth, God is not as concerned

about our shoes and their soles, but he is more concerned about our souls and where our feet take us. He gives grace to the humble.

God remembers his people and desires a personal relationship v.6

He tells Moses that he is the God of his father Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. God likes to have personal relationships that last.

God sees, hears, has compassion and sends help v.7

God sees the misery, hears the crying, is concerned about the suffering of his people and makes provision for their rescue from bondage and slavery. We can be grateful for Jesus our great deliverer.

God wants to bless and prosper his people v.8

He speaks to them of a good and spacious land flowing with milk and honey. The idea of blessing is prevalent in God's world. In God's economy scarcity is non-existent and abundance prevails. God wants to bless us from the inside out; spirit, soul and body. He just wants us to remember where these blessings come from. Deuteronomy 8:10-18

God gives assignments that are bigger than us v.11-12

Moses felt inadequate for the task to face Pharaoh and deliver God's people. However, God promises to be with him.

God is I AM that I AM v.14

What did God reveal to Moses and to us? That he is the self-existent one, the eternal one who is unchanging. God is able to do whatever he wants. He is the ever present and all powerful God. Jesus used the same word in John 8:58. He said to the religious leaders, 'Before Abraham was born, **I AM.**' Immediately the Pharisees picked up stones to stone Jesus, but he hid himself and slipped away. Later, when Jesus was about to be arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, soldiers and the religious leaders arrived with torches, lanterns and weapons. Jesus asked them who that they wanted. They replied: 'Jesus of Nazareth'. Jesus responded with the words: '**I AM.**' At this they drew back and fell to the ground! (the presence of God's Spirit was very evident)

God told Moses that he was the LORD. This is YHWH. v.15 which is used over 600x in the Old Testament. It is God's covenant name with his people. We transliterate it as Yahweh or Jehovah. The Jews would not say the name as it was too sacred to utter.

God knows the future and shows favor v.18-22

He sees that the elders will listen to Moses but that Pharaoh will not. God will do miraculous signs so the Egyptians will finally let his people go free. In fact, he will cause the Egyptians to give the Israelites their gold, silver and clothes.

**Moses spent his first 40 years in the palace thinking he was somebody.
Moses spent the next 40 years in the desert thinking he was a nobody.
Moses spent the next 40 years learning what God can do through a nobody.
D.L. Moody (slightly edited quote)**

God teaches a Leader things he needs to know before
he leads the people in the same things.

- * God can be trusted to lead you through desert experiences into unknown territory.
- * God wants leaders who will humbly obey his leadership and followers who will do the same.
- * God reveals His character and capabilities to increase our faith in Him.
- * MosesThe meekest man on the earth - Numbers 12:3
The word meek includes humility but it is more than that.

***Meekness consists not in a person's outward behavior only;
nor yet in his relations to his fellow-men. It is an inwrought grace
of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly Godward.
Vines Expository Dictionary***

The meek are teachable and humbly accept God's will. They are under the bridle and reins of Jesus. They are not weak but operate with constrained power as a powerful colt does under the control of its master. **The meek not only give up their wrongs, they also give up their 'rights'.** The meek have yielded to their master.
The meekness of Moses is related to the following description of him:

MosesThe Greatest Leader in the Bible

- * He is honored in heaven by those who were victorious over the beast, his image and number, and they sing the **Song of Moses**, **the servant of God**, - Revelation 15:2-4

(see also Exodus 15, Deuteronomy 32) and the **Song of the Lamb**
(songs about Jesus, the Lamb of God, are prevalent in heaven)

Moses fulfilled the meaning of his name. He was named Moses (to draw out), because as a baby he was saved and drawn out of the river and then brought into Pharaoh's house.

80 years later, God used Moses to 'draw out' God's people from slavery in Egypt and out of the waters of the Red Sea on their way towards the promised land.

All of us have an assignment from God. He will reveal his purpose to you as you seek to walk with him. God has various ways to guide us. Perhaps it will be through a God encounter!
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