

## Moses Shaped and Called

Exodus 5-1-10

### I. The Potter and the Clay

**Jeremiah 18:1-6** *This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: 2 "Go down to the potter's house, and there I will give you my message." 3 So I went down to the potter's house, and I saw him working at the wheel. 4 But the pot he was shaping from the clay was marred in his hands; so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me: 6 "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter does?" declares the LORD. "Like clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.*

**Isaiah 64:8** *Yet, O LORD, you are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.*

God patiently shapes His servants to do His will

Character is far more important than skills, resumes, accomplishments, reputation

God's ways are not our ways, God's timing is not our timing... God is willing to wait for forty more years to prepare totally and properly His human instrument of deliverance, Moses

#### A. Last Time: Moses Tried His Own Way

**Exodus 2:11-12** *One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to where his own people were and watched them at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. 12 Glancing this way and that and seeing no one, he killed the Egyptian and hid him in the sand*

1. Determined to free his people from slavery
2. Motivated by human rage and pride
3. "Looked this way and that"... then murdered a man
4. Guilty conscience, fear of judgment, fleeing for his life

#### B. God's Ways NOT Our Ways

**Illus.** Campus Crusade for Christ... always looking for the "key leaders", quickly thrusting them into positions of importance... sometimes overly concerned with worldly achievements and things that look good on a resume. Especially fascinated by success: athletic, business, scientific, entertainment... if anyone goes "well" in the world's eyes in these pursuits and also is a Christian, the CCC mindset is that they can be a "key leader"

1. Moses had all the credentials

- a. worldly wisdom
- b. worldly power, position, influence
- c. worldly accomplishments
- d. worldly skills

***Acts 7:22 Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action.***

Forty years old, in the prime of his life as a powerful leader of men. Human wisdom would thrust him immediately into power

God's ways and God's timing are so different!!

***Luke 16:15 He said to them, "... What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight."***

Moses had enrolled in the school of the Egyptians... time to enroll in God's school

2. God's school: the desert!!

- a. amazing the number of God's prophets trained in the desert
  - i) Abraham traveled three days journey into the desert to sacrifice Isaac
  - ii) Joseph thrown into a cistern, then sold into slavery in the desert
  - iii) Israel wandered through the desert for forty years
  - iv) David tended sheep in the desert before anointed as King, then suffered greatly in the desert while in exile chased by Saul. Finally David fled from Absalom and again took refuge in the desert
  - v) Elijah dwelt by the Brook Kidron in the desert, crossed the desert to get to the widow at Zarephath, fled into the desert to hide from Jezebel
  - vi) John the Baptist grew up in the desert and lived there throughout his ministry
  - vii) Jesus Christ fasted for forty days in the desert, tempted by the devil
  - viii) Paul went to Arabia and there received the gospel he was to preach
  - ix) Philip led the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ in the desert

b. God must wean us from the world before He can use us

A.W. Pink: "The heart must be separated, the spirit divorced from the world, if progress is to be made in spiritual things. 'The hand of man can never mould a vessel fit for the Master's use.' The One who is to use the vessel can alone prepare it."

c. desert a place of purification, humbling, refinement

***Exodus 3:1 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.***

Pink: "The 'backside of the desert' is where men and things, the world and self, present circumstances and their influences, are all valued at what they are really worth. There it is, and there alone, that you will find a divinely-adjusted balance in which to weigh all within and all around. There are no false colors, no borrowed plumes, no empty pretensions. The enemy of your souls cannot guild the sand of that place. All is reality there. The heart that has found itself in the presence of God at the 'backside of the desert,' has right thoughts about everything. It is raised far above the exciting influences of this world's schemes. The din and noise, the bustle and confusion of Egypt, do not fall upon the ear in that distant place. The crash of the monetary and commercial world is not heard there; the sigh of ambition is not heard there; this world's fading laurels do not tempt there; the thirst for gold is not felt there; the eye is never dimmed with lust, nor the heart swollen with pride there; human applause does not elate, nor human censure depress there. In a word, everything is set aside save the stillness and light of the Divine presence. God's voice alone is heard, His light enjoyed, His thoughts received. This is the place to which all must go to be educated for the ministry; and there all must remain if they would succeed in the ministry."

3. God's timetable: forty years!!!

- a. nowadays, instant graduation to leadership in the church
- b. standard relatively low, time table very quick
- c. BUT...

***1 Timothy 3:6 [An elder] must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil.***

- d. God's work in Moses could not take place overnight
- e. God allowed Israel to groan under severe suffering for two more generations!!!

C. Moses' Specifics

- 1. Totally humbled... didn't even have a flock of his own!!!

***Exodus 3:1 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.***

- 2. Horeb: a mountain range... Mt. Sinai a mountain within that range

- a. same mountain at which God would appear to Israel and give them the Ten Commandments
- b. same mountain at which God would speak to Elijah in the still small voice
- c. perhaps even the same place where Paul received the gospel he would preach among the Gentiles

## II. The Burning Bush

**Exodus 3:2-3** *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. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight— why the bush does not burn up."*

A. God Knows How to Attract Us, Allure Us, Pique our Interest

1. "Irresistible Grace"... better "effectual grace"
2. God's knows what's in our hearts

**John 2:24-25** *But Jesus would not entrust himself to them, for he knew all men. He did not need man's testimony about man, for he knew what was in a man.*

Just like Nicodemus "You must be born again"; and the woman at the Samaritan well, "living water"

Here, God uses a miraculously burning bush to change Moses' life forever

B. The "Angel of the Lord"

1. Called "Lord" and "God" later in the account

**vs. 4-6** *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." 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.*

2. Other "Angel of the Lord" passages

**Exodus 23:20-23** *"See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared. 21 Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him. 22 If you listen carefully to what he says and do all that I say, I will be an enemy to your enemies and will oppose those who oppose you. 23 My angel will go ahead of you and bring you into the land of the Amorites*

Hagar in the desert:

**Genesis 16:7-13** *The angel of the LORD found Hagar near a spring in the desert; it was the spring that is beside the road to Shur. 8 And he said, "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" "I'm running away from my mistress Sarai," she answered. 9 Then the angel of the LORD told her, "Go back to your mistress and submit to her." 10 The angel added, "I will so increase your descendants that they will be too numerous to count." 11 The angel of the LORD also said to her: "You are now with child and you will have a*

*son. You shall name him Ishmael, for the LORD has heard of your misery. 12 He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers." 13 She gave this name to the LORD who spoke to her: "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me."*

#### Abraham Sacrificing Isaac:

*Genesis 22:11-18 But the angel of the LORD called out to him from heaven, "Abraham! Abraham!" "Here I am," he replied. 12 "Do not lay a hand on the boy," he said. "Do not do anything to him. Now I know that you fear God, because you have not withheld from me your son, your only son." 13 Abraham looked up and there in a thicket he saw a ram caught by its horns. He went over and took the ram and sacrificed it as a burnt offering instead of his son. 14 So Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, "On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided." 15 The angel of the LORD called to Abraham from heaven a second time 16 and said, "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, 18 and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me."*

#### Balaam's Donkey:

*Numbers 22:31-33 Then the LORD opened Balaam's eyes, and he saw the angel of the LORD standing in the road with his sword drawn. So he bowed low and fell facedown. 32 The angel of the LORD asked him, "Why have you beaten your donkey these three times? I have come here to oppose you because your path is a reckless one before me. 33 The donkey saw me and turned away from me these three times. If she had not turned away, I would certainly have killed you by now, but I would have spared her."*

#### Speaking to Israel at Bokim:

*Judges 2:1-3 The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land that I swore to give to your forefathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, 2 and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? 3 Now therefore I tell you that I will not drive them out before you; they will be thorns in your sides and their gods will be a snare to you."*

#### The Call of Gideon:

**Judges 6:11-24** *The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. 12 When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." 13 "But sir," Gideon replied, "if the LORD is with us, why has all this happened to us? Where are all his wonders that our fathers told us about when they said, 'Did not the LORD bring us up out of Egypt?' But now the LORD has abandoned us and put us into the hand of Midian." 14 The LORD turned to him and said, "Go in the strength you have and save Israel out of Midian's hand. Am I not sending you?" 15 "But Lord," Gideon asked, "how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family." 16 The LORD answered, "I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together." 17 Gideon replied, "If now I have found favor in your eyes, give me a sign that it is really you talking to me. 18 Please do not go away until I come back and bring my offering and set it before you." And the LORD said, "I will wait until you return." 19 Gideon went in, prepared a young goat, and from an ephah of flour he made bread without yeast. Putting the meat in a basket and its broth in a pot, he brought them out and offered them to him under the oak. 20 The angel of God said to him, "Take the meat and the unleavened bread, place them on this rock, and pour out the broth." And Gideon did so. 21 With the tip of the staff that was in his hand, the angel of the LORD touched the meat and the unleavened bread. Fire flared from the rock, consuming the meat and the bread. And the angel of the LORD disappeared. 22 When Gideon realized that it was the angel of the LORD, he exclaimed, "Ah, Sovereign LORD! I have seen the angel of the LORD face to face!" 23 But the LORD said to him, "Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die." 24 So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it *The LORD is Peace*. To this day it stands in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.*

The Birth of Samson:

**Judges 13:16-22** *The angel of the LORD replied, "Even though you detain me, I will not eat any of your food. But if you prepare a burnt offering, offer it to the LORD." (Manoah did not realize that it was the angel of the LORD.) 17 Then Manoah inquired of the angel of the LORD, "What is your name, so that we may honor you when your word comes true?" 18 He replied, "Why do you ask my name? It is beyond understanding." 19 Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: 20 As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame. Seeing this, Manoah and his wife fell with their faces to the ground. 21 When the angel of the LORD did not show himself again to Manoah and his*

wife, Manoah realized that it was the angel of the LORD. 22 "We are doomed to die!" he said to his wife. "We have seen God!"

Zechariah's Vision:

***Zechariah 3:1-2 Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the LORD, and Satan standing at his right side to accuse him. 2 The LORD said to Satan, "The LORD rebuke you, Satan! The LORD, who has chosen Jerusalem, rebuke you! Is not this man a burning stick snatched from the fire?"***

HERE:

***vs. 4-6 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." 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.***

He calls Himself "I AM"!!!!

This must be pre-incarnate Jesus!!

***John 8:58 I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"***

C. Spiritual Symbolism of the Burning Bush

1. Vision of Glory for Moses at beginning of ministry

Like Isaiah, and like Paul

2. Spiritually: burning bush symbolizes God's grace
  - a. fire represents God's holiness, judgment against sin

***Hebrews 10:26-27 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, 27 but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.***

***Hebrews 12:29 our "God is a consuming fire."***

- b. BUT bush is not consumed!!

Holy God can dwell among sinners and the sinners not be consumed

Perfectly symbolized in Israel's experience with God in the desert!!

Also with us... How can a perfectly holy God put up with us, except through grace

***Habakkuk 1:13 Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.***

**Romans 5:20-21** *But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, 21 so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

3. Bush a THORNY bush

Hebrew *ceneh* represents a thorny bush

Thorns represent curse of God

**Genesis 3:18** *It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.*

Only as Christ was made a curse for us was grace available to us for salvation

**Galatians 3:13** *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."*

4. Bush also represents resurrection

**vs. 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.*

**Mark 12:26-27** *Now about the dead rising— have you not read in the book of Moses, in the account of the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!"*

5. Burning bush symbolizes Israel's trials in Egypt

**Deuteronomy 4:20** *But as for you, the LORD took you and brought you out of the iron-smelting furnace, out of Egypt, to be the people of his inheritance, as you now are.*

**Isaiah 43:2** *When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.*

**Isaiah 63:9** *In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and mercy he redeemed them; he lifted them up and carried them all the days of old.*

6. Bush also symbolizes Israel's lowliness and humility... not a mighty cedar of Lebanon

**Deuteronomy 26:5** *Then you shall declare before the LORD your God: "My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous.*

**Deuteronomy 7:7** *The LORD did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples.*



7. Thornbush symbolize Israel's fruitlessness

Naturalists tell us thorns are aborted branches

Branches designed to bear leaves and fruit

Israel's fruitlessness here depicted

8. YET fire in the bush symbolizes God's determination to DWELL among His people gloriously

***Deuteronomy 33:16 with the best gifts of the earth and its fullness and the favor of him who dwelt in the burning bush. Let all these rest on the head of Joseph, on the brow of the prince among his brothers.***

"Dwelt" = *shachan*... from which we get *shekinah* ... the glory of God's dwelling place among His people

***Exodus 40:35 Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.***

***1 Kings 8:11 And the priests could not perform their service because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled his temple.***

***John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

***Exodus 15:13 "In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.***

***Revelation 21:3 And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God.***

### III. The LORD: Our Holy, Compassionate Covenant-Keeping God

***vs. 5-10 Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." 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. 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. 10 So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."*

A. God's Holiness

*vs. 5 Do not come any closer," God said. "Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground."*

*vs. 7 At this, Moses hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.*

B. God's Covenant-Keeping Faithfulness

*vs. 6 Then he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."*

C. God's Compassion

*vs. 7-8 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*

*Exodus 2:25 So God looked on the Israelites and was concerned about them.*

D. God's Grace

*vs. 8-9 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.*

E. God's Commission

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