

## **A Man Called Moses**

Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC

Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.

September 20, 2020

Diaspora XXVII – The Church Scattered, Twenty-seventh  
Sunday

Text: Exodus 3:1-15

Purpose: Moses was a man called from birth to do a great work. His life is a demonstration of success, failure, murder, grace, repentance, and restoration. His dedication to God, His people, and his unending faith in God, was rewarded greatly.

Last month, many colleges began by opening their doors to students in hopes the coronavirus would subside and they could resume a “normal” college experience. Sadly, many students became sick and most colleges have returned to an online format. By going in this direction, they will be missing out on many of the traditional activities that make up the college experience. One of the things they will be missing out on is college football. While many teams will be playing, sadly the stands will be empty. So, in honor of football beginning again, I wanted to share this with you.

A guy decides to bring his new girlfriend to a football game. After the game is over, he asks her if she liked the game.



She replies: “Oh it was great, but there is one thing I don't understand.”

“What don't you understand?”

The girlfriend replies, “Well, at the beginning of the game, both teams got together and flipped a quarter to see who would kick off first. Then the rest of the game everybody was yelling ‘get the quarter back’, ‘get the quarter back’, ‘get the quarter back’. So I thought to myself, gosh it's just a quarter!”

Maybe you will remember that this year when you see them huddle up at the beginning of the game to flip a quarter!

Last week, we finished the story of Jacob's (called Israel) twelve children moving into Egypt to escape famine that had come upon the land. The family dwelt in the best of the land because of Joseph's connections with the Pharaoh. For many years, even after the death of Joseph, they dwelt in the land peacefully and were prosperous.



But one day, a new Pharaoh came to the throne. He didn't remember all that Joseph did for Egypt and began planning ways in which the men of Israel could be destroyed. The Pharaoh was fearful of the potential for a great army of men that had accumulated in the region of Goshen. Thus the Pharaoh decreed that all male children were to be killed at birth. But the midwives that attended the women as they gave birth refused to do as the Pharaoh ordered. Since they didn't listen, he ordered all male children born to be cast

into the river.

It was during this time that a baby was born to a young couple by the name of Jochebed and Amram. Amram's great-grandfather was Levi, the third son born to Jacob. This baby's name was Moses and his brother's name was Aaron.

Out of all the people in the Old Testament most non-Christians are more familiar with Moses. A production of the movie “Moses” many years ago, detailed the story of his birth, how his mother hid him in the bulrushes of the Nile River, his rise to power in the family of Pharaoh, his murdering of a cruel Egyptian taskmaster, his flight into the desert, his encounter with God at the burning bush, his call to rescue his people. The movie gave people a glimpse into the life of Moses.



Moses' life can be divided into three – 40 year – sections. The first are involved his early life, the second was in the desert tending sheep and goats, and the third began when he was eighty years old. With the hand of God leading him, Moses led over 600,000 men (plus women and children) out of Egypt, across the Red Sea, to Mt. Sinai, and through the desert for 40 years. Moses' place in the history of Israel is unequalled. The first five books of the Bible, the Torah, have been attributed to Moses. He is also considered the author of Psalm 90.

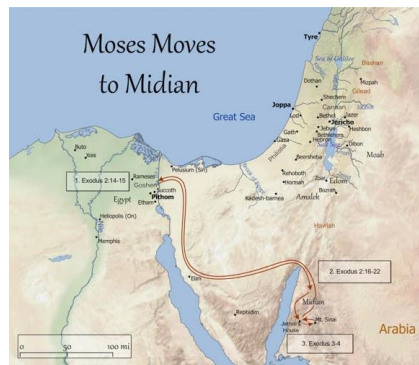


Moses began his life born to a poor Levite family, hidden in the bulrushes at three months, and then accepted and adopted into Pharaoh's family by the daughter of the Pharaoh. Moses grew and was increasing in influence and power there in the palace. One day, Moses saw a task master mistreating an Israelite slave. In anger, Moses reached out and struck the man and killed him. He thought he could cover his sin and bury the man in the sand, but others heard of his deed - so he fled into the desert.

It was there in Midian, on the back side of the desert, at a well, that Moses met the seven daughters of Jethro and assisted them in watering the flock of sheep and goats. Moses was content to stay with Jethro and he married his daughter Zipporah. The Pharaoh that sought Moses' life many years ago was now dead. A new Pharaoh had come to the throne and he was even harsher than the Pharaohs before.

But Moses had a new life now. He had a family. He was accepted into a family. He was satisfied and content watching over sheep and goats around the area of Horeb. But there at the Mountain of God, at Horeb, on the back side of the desert, Moses had an encounter with God in an unexpected way, and at an unexpected time.

It is this encounter, this commissioning, and this revelation of God's name that we will examine for a few moments this morning.



Moses is now eighty years old when he has this special encounter with the **Angel of the Lord** at the burning bush. By the world's standards, Moses would have been considered too old to do the work of God. But Moses was not too old for God. He had been brought low by his sin in Egypt. During the first forty years in Egypt, he tried to rescue his people out of his own strength. During the next forty years in the desert, God used this time to purge Moses and prepare him to be used by the hand of God.



This **first** encounter with God was a **startling manifestation**.

Moses was tending sheep, minding his own business when God decides to intervene in Moses' life. *"The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush."* This flame of fire signified three different things – it signified purity, power and mystery.

I am sure after being in the desert for 40 years; Moses had seen many different brush fires. But this one was different. When he saw it burning, it was not consumed. The Holy consuming presence of God was there, but the bush itself was preserved. In some ways, this is a powerful symbol of how God was manifested in Christ in the flesh. It is also a powerful mystery to those that believe in Christ. We have the spirit of Christ in us, preserving us, yet we are not consumed.

**Secondly**, this encounter with God resulted in a **timely resolution**.

*“Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight.”* This **turning aside** was needed. Think of what Moses would have missed if he had heedlessly passed on by. In turning aside, he met with God and was taught by Him. Maybe you need to stop and look closely at the things in your life and see if God is seeking to encounter you there. Have you ever been reading the scripture and your eyes are captivated by a particular sentence or phrase? Maybe you should turn aside and listen to what God is trying to tell you there.



When Moses turned aside, he did it **for a purpose**. He was seeking something special there at the burning bush. In doing so, he **heard the voice of God**. *“When the Lord saw that he had turned aside, He called unto him.”* I find this particular phrase of interest.

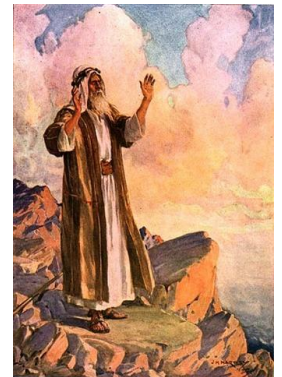
God sees us in the midst of life. God wants to enter into a personal relationship with us. He wants to engage us daily in life. God has probably been placing burning bushes all along your life’s road. God doesn’t always send something big or spectacular to get our attention. But when you stop what you are doing, turn, and listen, maybe you can hear the word of God calling out to you. God sees every turn we take, whether it is to Him or from Him. God is the reward of those that diligently seek Him. In Moses’ case, God manifested himself immediately.

On Monday of this past week, I walked down the hallway of the educational building. As I walked by the classrooms, I saw quiet meditative learning. The teacher had them in the “zone” of learning. That is a precious moment in time in a classroom. I even saw several students receiving private tutoring and they too were actively engaged. I left for a few moments to pick up lunch.

When I returned to the church, I could hear the children outside playing on the playground, squealing, yelling, and laughing. Just as I was opening the door, the Presbyterian Church began playing their chimes – “Jesus Loves the Little Children.” I turned aside and listened to the church bells and the squeals of laughter. It is as if God was speaking to me in that moment, confirming the work being done here on the campus of Spilman with Hope Prep is “Precious in His Sight.”

**Thirdly**, this encounter with God resulted in a **gracious revelation**.

In this revelation of Himself, God reminded Moses of His character. The one speaking to Moses was none other than the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. *“I am the God of thy fathers.”* This was a declaration for all eternity.



This revelation told Moses of His saving purpose. *“I am come down to deliver.”* God had heard the oppression of His people and was now ready to act. This gracious revelation to Moses included a plan to bring them out of Egypt, bring them to the land promised to Abraham, and make them a people wholly dedicated to God.



**Fourthly**, this encounter with God resulted in a **definite commission**.

God instructed Moses, “*Come now, and I will send thee.*” This commission would not have worked in the life of Moses when he was a younger man. Neither the people nor Moses would have been ready to do as God instructed. Now, the time had come. In the fullness of time, God accomplishes His will.

In the fullness of time ...

- Moses delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt.
- Joshua led the people out of the wilderness.
- David became King over Israel.
- Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.
- Jeremiah foretold 70 years of exile after the destruction of Solomon’s temple.
- It was rebuilt by Nehemiah.
- A baby was born in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph and they named him Jesus – for He would save them from their sins.



God is still in the “fullness of time” business.

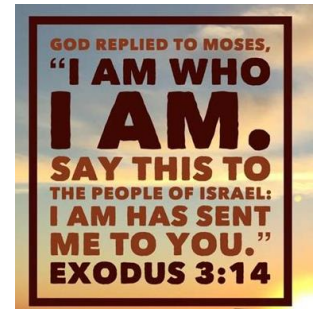
Now God needed Moses to lead the sons and daughters of Israel out of bondage. The purpose was clear. This group of people belonged to God and God had come to redeem them. Moses was called out to go to those in bondage. Moses was commissioned to set the captives free.

Ministers of the gospel are called out to preach good news to people in bondage and darkness. Ministers are called to proclaim the good news that God loves each of us so much, that He willingly allowed his Only Son, Jesus Christ, to be our Passover lamb to atone for our sin.

Moses was given authority to go to the people and give them the good news. Early in Moses’ life (Exodus 2:12), we see Moses going to the people in his own authority. Now that he has been commissioned by God, he goes in the name and authority of God.

**Fifth**, this encounter with God also revealed a **memorial name**.

Moses was unsure that he would be able to go to his fellow brothers and sisters and convince them that he was commissioned and had the authority of God to request this of the King of Egypt. Moses asked the Lord what was His name.



The Lord said, “***I AM WHO I AM.*** Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, “*I AM has sent me to you.*” This phrase, “I AM.” in Hebrew is written YHWH. The name of God is so Holy and revered by the Jews that they will not pronounce it, even when they are reading the scriptures. Every time they see the word YHWH, they will say the word Adonai – which means LORD. The word YHWH in some translations has been transliterated into the English word, Jehovah.

Paleo – Hebrew	Contemporary – Hebrew	English Transliteration
← יְהוָה →	← יהוה →	YHWH →
יְה = יה = YH	יה = YaH	I AM (myself, the one)
וָה = הו = HW	הו = HuW	He (same, who is)
יְהוָה = הוה = HWH	הוה = HaWaH	Exist (self)
יְהוָה = יהו = YHW	יהו = YaHuW	I AM - He (the one who is)
יְהוָה = יהוה = YHWH	יהוה = YaHuWaH	I AM - He (who) – Exist(s)

No one knows exactly how to pronounce the name of God. I think that is the way it should be. The name of God should be viewed as Holy, Respected, Honored, Appreciated, Esteemed, Valued, Venerated, Adored, Cherished, Prized and Loved.

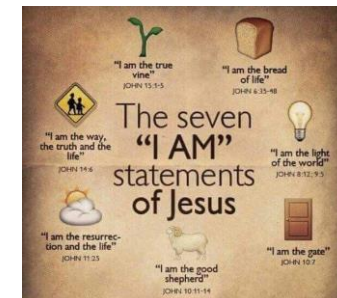
This everlasting memorial name continues on through Jesus Christ.

This phrase, I AM WHO I AM was quickly recognized by the Pharisees and Sadducees when Jesus came upon the scene. Jesus was quick to claim equal status with the phrase “I AM.” In the Book of John, Jesus claimed to be the great I AM by using seven different metaphors.

Jesus said,

- I. I am the bread of life. (John 6:35)
- II. I am the light of the world (John 8:12)
- III. I am the door. (John 10:9)
- IV. I am the good shepherd. (John 10:11)
- V. I am the resurrection and the life. (John 11:25)
- VI. I am the way, the truth, and the life. (John 14:6)
- VII. I am the vine, ye are the branches. (John 15:5)

What I have learned from my study of scripture is that God is still in the calling business. He calls all of us to Himself. Moses was called to set the captives free. As we will see over the next few weeks, God empowered Moses to accomplish this task. The authority of “I AM” set the captives free.



Jesus has come as God’s only Son to redeem the world back to God. The invitation of the great **I AM WHO I AM** is extended through the second part of the trinity, Jesus Christ. All that come to Christ will be accepted by the Father. All that reject Jesus will be rejected by the Father.

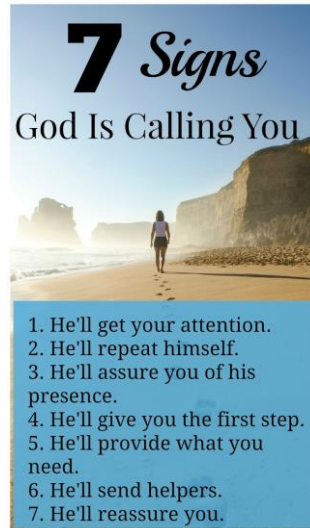
In many ways Moses’ life had only just begun when he turned and accepted the call of God on his life. He may have been eighty years old, but he was now ready and useful for the Master’s work. Moses would travel back to Egypt, encounter the Pharaoh with the ten plagues, instruct Israel concerning the Passover, and then lead them to freedom. He would guide them across the Red Sea and to Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments. He would plead for his people before a God that was ready to punish them for their rebellion and sin.

The final third of Moses’ life is found in the stories of the children of Israel. These are recorded in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. In the last chapter of the Torah (Deuteronomy), we see Moses died at the age of 120; God buried him in the valley in the land of Moab on Mt. Nebo.

But we have too many stories and adventures with Moses before we place him in the grave just yet. Next week we will examine the ten plagues put on Egypt to prove the power and purpose of God.

Before we go today, I want you to consider what God is saying to you at this moment. Has God been calling you to a certain task or commitment? What are you waiting for?

Moses was 80 years old when God called Him. Moses put up every excuse in the book. But the most productive period of Moses' life was when he accepted God's call and humbled himself and came to God with no strings attached. God is still calling today ...



Cecil Frances Alexander (her married name) was an outstanding young woman by virtue of ability, education, and service. While still quite young, she and her sister operated a school for the deaf, and she also published a highly successful book of hymns for children—designating the profits for the benefit of the school.

She married William Alexander, an Anglican clergyman who later became the Anglican Archbishop for all of Ireland. Impressed by her hymns, one day he asked her to write a hymn for use during the coming Sunday worship based on the call of Simon, Andrew, James, and John (Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-18). She wrote this hymn, “Jesus

Calls Us,” for that occasion. She wrote 400 hymns during her lifetime — mostly children’s hymns—but “Jesus Calls Us” and “All Things Bright and Beautiful” are her best known hymns.

The first verse of this hymn begins, “Jesus calls us o’er the tumult of our life’s wild, restless sea”—acknowledging the call of those first disciples by the Sea of Galilee. A recurring theme is “Christian, love me more”—“Christian, love me more than these”—“serve and love thee best of all.” Those words were inspired by John 21:15, where Jesus, after the resurrection, asked Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” The hymn therefore acknowledges Jesus’ claim, not only over the lives of those first four disciples, but over the lives of every Christian.<sup>1</sup>



### Jesus Calls us O’er the Tumult – by Cecil Frances Alexander

1. Jesus calls us o'er the tumult,  
Of our life's wild restless sea;  
Day by day His sweet voice soundeth,  
Saying, "Christian, follow Me!"

<sup>1</sup> <https://sermonwriter.com/hymn-stories/jesus-calls-us-oer-tumult/>  
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2. Jesus calls us from the worship,  
Of the vain world's golden store,  
From each idol that would keep us,  
Saying, "Christian, love Me more."
3. In our joys and in our sorrows,  
Days of toil and hours of ease,  
Still He calls, in cares and pleasures,  
"Christian, love Me more than these."
4. Jesus calls us: by Thy mercies,  
Savior, may we hear Thy call,  
Give our hearts to Thine obedience,  
Serve and love Thee best of all.

God is seeking men and women to “turn aside” to have an encounter with Him and be prepared for service in the name of God and for His purpose. Whatever your decision or commitment, I am here to help. Let us seek Him together.

## **LET US PRAY**

NOTE: Outline taken from Handfuls on Purpose, Vol. 1, pages 117-120.