



PREACH THE  
**WORD**  
It's Still All About  
**Jesus**

# Moses Speaks with God

Exodus 3:1-14 Phil 2:1-10 John 8:51-59

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*Moses lived to be 120 years old.*

The first 40 years of his life he was a Prince of Egypt; growing up in the Palace of Pharaoh; he was instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was well known for his words and deeds. One day, when he was about 40 years old, he killed an Egyptian who was mistreating a Hebrew. Pharaoh learned of it, and Moses had to flee for his life. He went from Prince to fugitive at 40 years old.

The next 40 years of his life he lived as a shepherd in the desert. During this time he married Zipporah, had two sons, raised flocks, and tended sheep.

*It was when Moses was 80 years old that God gave him a theophany.* A Theophany is a “*God appearance*”. Specifically, it is the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, who appears on earth before His birth in Bethlehem<sup>1</sup>. *This theophany given to Moses is well known: it is the Burning Bush story.*

We heard it today in the Exodus scripture reading. Moses was tending sheep, he sees a fire on the mountain, and he goes to investigate. *He finds a bush that is on fire, but it is not being consumed. That is when God speaks to Moses.*

Then God said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." And God said, "I am the God of your 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 at God. Exodus 3:5-6

<sup>1</sup> The Son of God is the “speaking God” – the *logos* – The “Word” of God who interacts with His People to save them. *Theophanies* are the *pre-incarnate* Son at work on behalf of His People. God the Father is never seen, only heard, as at Jesus’ Baptism and Transfiguration; and God the Holy Spirit is only seen in the form of a dove at Jesus’ Baptism; and tongues of fire at Pentecost. But the Son of God, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, interacts with His People to save them! In the Old Testament, those times are called “theophanies”.

This theophany is significant because it begins the great Old Testament salvation story of the Exodus. God is personally involved in saving His People the Israelites. They were under brutal slavery to the Egyptians and they had been calling out to God to deliver them. God hears their prayers and will help them. God chooses Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. *Do you remember the story?*

Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go; God sent the 10 plagues on Egypt, culminating with the Passover. On Passover night, the firstborn in Egypt died – except those who trusted God's Word, sacrificed a lamb, and put the lamb's blood on the door of their home. That night death “passed over” the Israelites. However, Pharaoh's son died that night; and the next morning he let the Israelites go. But soon his heart hardened, and he changed his mind; he had his armies chase the Israelites to the Red Sea. It appeared that the Israelites were trapped: the sea in front of them and the Egyptians behind them! But Moses worked a miracle and parted the water so the Israelites crossed over on dry ground; but the Egyptians who chased after them were drowned.

Moses led the Israelites back to the same mountain where God appeared to him in the *Burning Bush*; and the Lord gave the Israelites the 10 Commandments and instructions to make the Tabernacle and worship Him.

This theophany to Moses at *the Burning Bush* is a big deal; it began the great salvation story of the Old Testament. There are many things we can learn from this. *Let's consider a few connections today.*

The **first and greatest** is that *God Himself intervenes to deliver us from our sins*. The same God who spoke to Moses in the *Burning Bush* became flesh and was born in Bethlehem. In the *Burning Bush* story, God revealed His name as I AM WHO I AM. In the New Testament, Jesus is the Great I AM WHO I

AM2. The same God who saved the Israelites saves us! **Jesus is that God!** His perfect life, and His sacrificial death, delivers us from our slavery to sin, guilt, and the devil. He Himself is the Passover Lamb who dies so that death *passes over* us. In His resurrection He gives us new life! Can you imagine this? The Great I AM suffers and dies for us, in our place, on a cross, so that we can be with Him forever! Jesus, the I AM, leads us safely through the water of Holy Baptism and leads us to the Promised Land of heaven. Until then, we live as His holy and chosen people.

The story of Moses and the Exodus foreshadows Jesus' own work to save us. **God Himself intervenes to deliver us from our sins! You are so important to God that He Himself came to deliver you!** Jesus is the Great I AM who personally rescued you from slavery to sin, guilt and death!

In the **Theophany to Moses**, God spoke to Moses personally. Moses had to take his sandals off because he was on **holy ground**. Moses was **afraid to even look at God** because He knew that God was speaking in that **Burning Bush**.

In our day and age, in these New Testament times, God does not speak to you in a theophany; nor are you to expect God to appear to you in a dream. That is not how God works in our lives. Rather, He teaches us that He speaks to us through His Word, the Holy Bible. **Your Bible is your Burning Bush!**

**Whenever you read or hear or study the Bible, God is speaking to you personally.** Whenever you read or hear or study the Bible, you are on **holy ground!** Your Bible is the voice of Christ in your life. As we hear Holy Scripture, and take it to heart, the Lord works to guide you through life.

- ✓ He teaches us **what is right** and **what is wrong**

**2** The Gospel lesson from John 8:51-59 clearly teaches this. Even the Pharisees recognized that Jesus was claiming to be the Great I AM of the Old Testament, as they were ready to stone Him for blasphemy. In the English Bible, whenever the word "LORD" is capitalized in the Old Testament, that is the Hebrew I AM word (יהוה). In the New Testament, when Jesus is identified as "Lord," it is the same as saying "Jesus is I AM." Jesus plays off this word also when He teaches "I AM the Good Shepherd" or "I AM the way, the truth, and the life," or "I AM the Bread of Life," and et al.

- ✓ He teaches us the *morals, values, and ethics* of the Kingdom of God
- ✓ He teaches us the *10 Commandments*; how to love the Lord your God with all of our heart and how to love your neighbor as yourself
- ✓ In Holy Scripture, the Lord *strengthens* you when you are weak, and *comforts* you when you mourn.
- ✓ He *counsels* you and *guides* you through life
- ✓ He *forgives* your sins; and gives you *peace* with God.
- ✓ He invites you to *prayer*, promising to hear and answer your prayers.

Whenever you read or hear or study the Bible, God is speaking to you personally. Your Bible is your Burning Bush!

Jesus said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone **Keeps My Word**, he will never see death." John 8:51

Jesus teaches that we are to "*keep His Word*". The word that Jesus used for "*keep*" means **to guard**, to **carefully attend to it**, to **observe it carefully**. Is that what you are doing? What is your attitude towards Holy Scripture? Are you *guarding* it in your life? Are you carefully *attending* to it? Do you *observe* it carefully? Are you taking it to heart and putting it into practice in your life?

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who **hear the Word of God and keep it!**" Luke 11:28

*Your Bible is your Burning Bush - God speaks to you through Holy Scripture.* Whenever you read or hear or study the Bible, you are on *holy ground!* Jesus teaches us that we are to **keep His word**: we are to **guard it, carefully attend** to it, and **observe it** carefully in our lives.

God gave Moses a *theophany* in the *burning bush*. The great I AM would save the Israelites from Egypt; the same I AM has saved us from our enemies. May you hear His words, take them to heart, and be very careful to obey them! Amen!