



The Burning Bush And THE DIVINE COMMISSION Of Moses

The Great Escape
Series of The Book Of Exodus
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THE GREAT ESCAPE
A Study Of The Book Of Exodus
Session 3

THE BURNING BUSH AND THE DIVINE COMMISSION

1 After forty years of living in royal surroundings in Egypt, Moses incurred the wrath of
2 Pharaoh and was banished from the country. During his next forty years, he lived in the
3 desert area of Midian. Midian was the region southeast of the Dead Sea. In his 80th
4 year, Moses would have an encounter with the Holy God of Israel that changed the course
5 of history.

6
7 Exodus 3:1-3

8 **Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led**
9 **the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.**
10 **[2] And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of**
11 **a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not**
12 **consumed. [3] And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the**
13 **bush is not burnt.**

14
15 Moses' initial attempt to assist his fellow Jews ended in disaster when he killed an
16 Egyptian. *Fearing the vengeance of Pharaoh, he fled the into the land of Midian where*
17 *he spent the next forty years. Here he was favorably received in the home of Reuel, a*
18 *priest of Midian, who was also known as Jethro. In the course of time Moses married*
19 *Jethro's daughter Zipporah and settled down to a shepherd's life in the Midian*
20 *wilderness. Through experience gained from shepherding flocks in the area*
21 *surrounding the Gulf of Aqaba, Moses undoubtedly acquired a thorough knowlege of this*
22 *territory. Without being conscious of its relevance he received excellent preparation for*
23 *leading Israel through this desert many years later.*

24 THE OLD TESTAMENT SPEAKS / DR. SAMUEL J. SCHULTZ / HARPER AND ROW / P 50

25
26 The holiness of God is clearly manifest in these next verses:

27
28 Exodus 3:4-6

29 **And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of**
30 **the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I. [5] And he**
31 **said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon**
32 **thou standest is holy ground. [6] Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the**
33 **God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face;**
34 **for he was afraid to look upon God.**

1 “Take off your shoes, Moses!” Anytime you are in the presence of God, you are on
2 Holy Ground. Our friend Geron Davis has penned the great song:

3
4 *We are standing on holy ground /*
5 *And I know there are angels all around /*
6 *Let us praise Jesus now /*
7 *We are standing in His presence on holy ground!*
8

9 In far too many churches today there is no such concept. We have seen any number of
10 pastors (especially young ones) standing to preach, wearing jeans with holes in the knees
11 and ratty T-shirts. They claim they are identifying with people who cannot afford to
12 “dress up” for church. Noble claim, but false. They are denigrating the sanctity of the
13 pulpit, the nobleness of the ministry, the cause of King Jesus.
14

15 There should be a sense of awe in the presence of God. If Jesus were physically present
16 in the service, there would be a different appearance, I assure you. Physically He may
17 not be, but spiritually and in every real sense, Jesus is present!
18

19 Note carefully Moses’ reaction:

20
21 Exodus 3:6

22 **Moreover he said, I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of**
23 **Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon**
24 **God.**
25

26 It is not a mystery; Moses would have died had he seen God face to face. John 1:18 **No**
27 **man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the**
28 **Father, he hath declared him.** The only way you and I can see God now is to know
29 Him through the Lord Jesus Christ.
30

31 The next moments in Moses’ life took place on probably a very ordinary day - in an
32 ordinary place. One never knows when life-changing encounters will take place. Forty
33 years had passed since Moses had left Egypt. Four decades! I doubt if he ever thought
34 he would be back in the land of the Nile....or that he would lead the greatest escape ever
35 performed. But....there near a burning bush....that is exactly what would begin to
36 transpire:
37

38 Exodus 3:7-10

39 **And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in**
40 **Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their**
41 **sorrows; [8] And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians,**

1 and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, unto a land
2 flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and
3 the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites. [9] Now
4 therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also
5 seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. [10] Come now
6 therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my
7 people the children of Israel out of Egypt.

8
9 The question must be asked: Why did God wait so long to deliver the Jews from Egypt?
10 A better question would be: Why did it take so long for Moses to get to the place where
11 God could use him for such a venture?

12
13 There may be multitudes who miss Heaven because no “deliverer” ever got to them.
14 These rescuers were not ready, or not willing to be used of God. Paul was right when he
15 wrote: Romans 10:12-15 **For there is no difference between the Jew and the**
16 **Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. [13] For**
17 **whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. [14] How then shall**
18 **they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him**
19 **of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? [15]**
20 **And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are**
21 **the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good**
22 **things!**

23
24 Scriptures promise that God is not willing that any perish, but all have eternal life. It
25 will not be the fault of God if they are lost; it will be because someone said “No” to Him.

26
27 Note Moses’ initial response:

28
29 Exodus 3:11 **And Moses said unto God, Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh,**
30 **and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?**

31
32 What would have happened to millions of Jews had Moses never obeyed the divine
33 commission? His initial response was that he just couldn’t be used in such a profound
34 deliverance. He didn’t feel that way 40 years earlier, apparently, when he took the life
35 of an Egyptian. He was wrong. It was not “his might” or “his position” that God could
36 utilize. But now, after 40 years at BUSH UNIVERSITY (where the school colors are
37 black and blue) he had graduated to the point God could use him.

38
39 Someone will pull back to say, “But I can’t....I can’t do this or that.” Here again Paul
40 helps us: 1 Cor. 1:27 **But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to**
41 **confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound**

1 **the things which are mighty;** When Moses was “the prince of Egypt” he could not
2 bring about the deliverance of Israel. But when he was a “nothing,” forgotten for
3 decades, a shepherd in a far off wilderness, THEN he could be used. For as Zechariah
4 reminded us, Zech. 4:6 **This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, Not by**
5 **might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.**

6
7 At this point God promised Moses some things: Exodus 3:12 **And he said, Certainly**
8 **I will be with thee; and this shall be a token unto thee, that I have sent thee: When**
9 **thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this**
10 **mountain.**

11 **THE GREAT IDENTITY**

12
13
14 Moses then asked the smartest question of his life:

15
16 Exodus 3:13-14

17 **And Moses said unto God, Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and**
18 **shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall**
19 **say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? [14] And God said unto**
20 **Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of**
21 **Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.**

22
23 You and I probably would have had the same question. Paul did, on the road to
24 Damascus: “Who are you...Lord?” Moses was concerned that the Jewish slaves in
25 Egypt would not accept him any longer. He was not still a prince. The slaves would
26 want to know by what authority he confronted the hierarchy of Egypt. God answered, “I
27 AM THAT I AM.”

28
29 *“There is undoubtedly more included in the name “I AM” than has ever been brought*
30 *out, but there are several things of primary importance that should be considered. The*
31 *name “I AM” is a tetragram - or a word of four letters. We translate it JEHOVAH or*
32 *YAHWEH. It became a sacred name, a holy name, to the children of Israel to such an*
33 *extent they actually forgot how to pronounce it. To avoid profaning His name, they did*
34 *not use it. In Genesis God is Creator. He is Elohim, the mighty God, the self-existing*
35 *One; I AM WHO I AM. This is the God who is sending Moses to deliver the children of*
36 *Israel.”*

37 THRU THE BIBLE / MCGEE / ZONDERVAN / PAGE 211

38
39 Furthermore, God had this to declare to Moses: Exodus 3:15-20

40 **And God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of**
41 **Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and**
42 **the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my**

1 memorial unto all generations. [16] Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and
2 say unto them, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of
3 Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is
4 done to you in Egypt: [17] And I have said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of
5 Egypt unto the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the
6 Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, unto a land flowing with milk and
7 honey. [18] And they shall hearken to thy voice: and thou shalt come, thou and the
8 elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and ye shall say unto him, The Lord God of
9 the Hebrews hath met with us: and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days'
10 journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.

11 [19] And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go, no, not by a mighty
12 hand. [20] And I will stretch out my hand, and smite Egypt with all my wonders
13 which I will do in the midst thereof: and after that he will let you go.
14

15 Interesting, this divine plan. God told Moses to first explain to the Jewish leadership
16 Who it was that authorized this outlandish proposal. Who? “The Lord God of your
17 fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob!” And to reiterate God’s promise to
18 “bring you out of the affliction of Egypt” to the Promised Land.
19

20 Moses’ first approach to Pharaoh was not to let the people free permanently, but rather to
21 “journey into the desert for three days to sacrifice to God.” Yes, that was God’s edict;
22 however, God told Moses Pharaoh would never go for it. “**And I am sure the king of
23 Egypt will not let you go....**” This would not be an easy assignment! There would be
24 some defeats before there were victories. But God would enforce the issue: “**I will
25 stretch out my hand and smite Egypt with all my wonders....and after that he will let
26 you go.**” (Verses 3:20)
27

28 God made an incredible promise to Moses that not only would the people finally be
29 released from Egyptian slavery, but that they would leave with provisions: Exodus
30 3:21-22 **And I will give this people favour in the sight of the Egyptians: and it shall
31 come to pass, that, when ye go, ye shall not go empty: [22] But every woman shall
32 borrow of her neighbour, and of her that sojourneth in her house, jewels of silver,
33 and jewels of gold, and raiment: and ye shall put them upon your sons, and upon
34 your daughters; and ye shall spoil the Egyptians.**
35

36 Those funds would certainly be used properly sometime later when the people followed
37 the Lord’s edict in building the Tabernacle in the Wilderness. Stanford Research
38 Institute did a study on the Tabernacle and determined that the Jews spent \$13.5 million
39 dollars on it. So...where did these homeless people get that kind of money? From the
40 Egyptians! The Jews would leave Egypt recompensed for all their years of travail and
41 slavery.

1 But, as they say, money is not everything; the people also left Egypt as a broken, hurting
2 and confused people. Even being led out of 400 years of slavery, some of them preferred
3 the bondage rather than to face the unknown of the wilderness. It is to Moses' resume
4 that not only did he get them freed, through God's miraculous intervention, but he held
5 them together as they began crossing the desert. We are talking about a hot, often snake-
6 infested, dry and brutal "moonscape." How in the world did they make it?
7

8 But - back to the burning bush. Moses was still not convinced he was the one to be used
9 of God in this incredible deliverance:

10 **The First Test - The "Snakey Rod"**

11
12
13 Exodus 4:1-5

14 **And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken**
15 **unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee. [2] And the**
16 **Lord said unto him, What is that in thine hand? And he said, A rod. [3] And he said,**
17 **Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and**
18 **Moses fled from before it. [4] And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand,**
19 **and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod**
20 **in his hand: [5] That they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of**
21 **Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee.**
22

23 When I was just a boy in Iowa, I used to catch non-poisonous snakes just for fun. I don't
24 ever recall killing one. As a result I've never had a fear of them. That's a good thing,
25 living in our Florida swamps. Moses had by now spent forty years in the wilderness and
26 he would have known the "critters" in that part of the world. Verse 3 informs us that
27 Moses fled from the "serpent." He must have recognized that it was dangerous.
28

29 But then God told him to pick it up by the tail, which he did. This is not the same thing
30 as some of the folks in Jolo, West Virginia, do in that infamous snake-handling church.
31 What they do is not only NOT scripture, as they claim, but it is insane! Several of the
32 leaders in that church have died of snake poison.
33

34 So Moses was not doing something here that would spawn a snake-handling cult. He
35 was learning of the power of that "rod" he carried around. That rod became a divinely-
36 used instrument used by God. We will see that in ensuing chapters.
37

38 **The Second Test - The Leprous Hand**

39
40 Exodus 4:6-8

41 **And the Lord said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom.**

1 **And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was**
2 **leprous as snow. [7] And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put**
3 **his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was**
4 **turned again as his other flesh. [8] And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe**
5 **thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign, that they will believe the voice of**
6 **the latter sign.**

7
8 God was showing Moses His creative power – but also His destructive power. It would
9 not be Moses' great skills (which he doubtless had) that would save Israel; No, it would
10 God's power and all praise would go to Him!

11
12 **Moses' Continued Protest**

13
14 **Exodus 4:10-16**

15 **And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore,**
16 **nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow**
17 **tongue. [11] And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who**
18 **maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? [12] Now**
19 **therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say. [13]**
20 **And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.**
21 **[14] And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron**
22 **the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well. And also, behold, he cometh**
23 **forth to meet thee: and when he seeth thee, he will be glad in his heart. [15] And**
24 **thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy**
25 **mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. [16] And he shall be**
26 **thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a**
27 **mouth, and thou shalt be to him instead of God.**

28
29 Here we are re-introduced to Aaron, Moses' old brother (remember he also had an older
30 sister - Miriam). There can be little question that Aaron helped his brother when they got
31 to Egypt; however, Aaron caused Moses lots of trouble down the way, as we shall see.
32 In the book of Numbers Aaron was involved in making a golden calf for Israel to worship
33 while Moses was on Mount Sinai, hearing from God. **THE FACT IS GOD DID NOT**
34 **NEED AARON TO BE INVOLVED AT ALL. HE JUST NEEDED AND WANTED**
35 **MOSES!** It was hard at first for Moses to have the faith needed for the coming
36 accomplishments. Yes, we should understand our weakness so we don't "rejoice in
37 ourselves." But that self-understanding should never replace our faith in God, the God
38 who flung the stars in space and who calls us to His service and work.

39
40 Moses finally relented and agreed to obey: Exodus 4:17-18

41 **And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs.**

1 [18] And Moses went and returned to Jethro his father in law, and said unto him,
2 Let me go, I pray thee, and return unto my brethren which are in Egypt, and see
3 whether they be yet alive. And Jethro said to Moses, Go in peace.
4

5 GOD BECOMES FURIOUS AT MOSES - WHY? 6

7 Exodus 4:24-26

8 And it came to pass by the way in the inn, that the Lord met him, and sought to
9 kill him. [25] Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son,
10 and cast it at his feet, and said, Surely a bloody husband art thou to me. [26] So he
11 let him go: then she said, A bloody husband thou art, because of the circumcision.
12

13 Moses was a Jew. He was one of God's chosen people. Circumcision of male babies
14 was the seal of the covenant God made with Abraham long before. Moses had married
15 Zipporah (a name meaning "little sparrow" or "Lady Bird") She had blessed Moses
16 with several male children, whom Moses never had circumcised.
17

18 *In Moses' married life there was a problem. God called Moses at the burning bush and*
19 *commissioned him to go to Egypt. The Pharaoh who banished Moses forty years earlier*
20 *was dead and it was safe for Moses to return. But as Moses started his journey to*
21 *Egypt, God attempted to kill him. Why? Moses had neglected the rite of circumcising*
22 *his son, Gershom. Circumcision was the badge and seal of God's covenant with*
23 *Abraham that was designed to teach the Israelites to have no confidence in the flesh.*
24 *The flesh was to be cut away and each Israelite was to put his trust in God. Apparently*
25 *Zipporah had resisted the ordinance of circumcision and Moses had not insisted upon it.*
26 *Perhaps Moses did not feel this act was so important and obviously his wife felt it was a*
27 *foolish and bloody thing to do. Moses could stand up to Pharaoh but he could not stand*
28 *up against his wife. Moses could tell Israel when they were wrong but he did not oppose*
29 *his wife when she was wrong. This is the reason Scripture warns against believers and*
30 *non-believers getting married.*

31 THRU THE BIBLE / MCGEE / NELSON PUBLISHERS / PAGES 214 AND 215
32

33 Moses and Aaron Re-unite 34

35 Exodus 4:27-31

36 And the Lord said to Aaron, Go into the wilderness to meet Moses. And he went,
37 and met him in the mount of God, and kissed him. [28] And Moses told Aaron all the
38 words of the Lord who had sent him, and all the signs which he had commanded
39 him.

40 [29] And Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the
41 children of Israel: [30] And Aaron spake all the words which the Lord had spoken
42 unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people. [31] And the people

1 **believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and**
2 **that he had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and**
3 **worshipped.**

4 5 THE JEWS - GOD'S PEOPLE

6
7 Again and again in Scripture God refers to the Jews as “my people.” This relationship
8 goes way back to Abraham and the book of Genesis.

9
10 Genesis 12:1-9

11 Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy
12 kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: [2] And I
13 will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and
14 thou shalt be a blessing: [3] And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that
15 curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. [4] So Abram
16 departed, as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him: and Abram
17 was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran. [5] And Abram took
18 Sarai his wife, and Lot his brother's son, and all their substance that they had
19 gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran; and they went forth to go into
20 the land of Canaan; and into the land of Canaan they came.

21 [6] And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain
22 of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. [7] And the Lord appeared unto
23 Abram, and said, Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar
24 unto the Lord, who appeared unto him. [8] And he removed from thence unto a
25 mountain on the east of Bethel, and pitched his tent, having Bethel on the west, and
26 Hai on the east: and there he builded an altar unto the Lord, and called upon the
27 name of the Lord. [9] And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south.

28
29 It could well be that Abraham has been the most famous person in history. Three world
30 religions trace him well: Judaism, Christianity and Islam (in that order).

31
32 God made three huge promises to him:

- 33
34 ● **I AM GOING TO SHOW YOU A LAND AND I AM GOING TO GIVE IT**
35 **TO YOU!**

36
37 The dimension of the land: east to the Euphrates River (Iraq), north to the Hittite nation
38 (in central Turkey), south to the river of Egypt (Not the Nile, but a river to the east of
39 Cairo). This is 300,000 square miles. *The most Israel has ever controlled is 30,000*
40 *square miles; but God is going to fulfill His promise to Abraham so keep your eyes on the*
41 *Middle East.*

1 There are some who say God's promise to Abraham was severed because of Israel's
2 subsequent sins and unbelief. However, you cannot find such a thing in Scripture.

3
4 Others say God is finished with the Jews and is completing His work through the Church.
5 This is called "super-cessionism" and refutes Scripture which informs us in Revelation
6 that the ultimate redemption of the world in the Tribulation comes through 144,000
7 sealed, Spirit-filled Jews

8
9 ● **I WILL MAKE OF THEE A GREAT NATION AND I WILL BLESS THEE**

10
11 In so many key areas of life we are blessed by the Jews: medicine, science, literature, hi-
12 tech, culture, value system, friendship, etc.

13
14 ● **I WILL BLESS THEM THAT BLESS THEE AND CURSE THEM THAT
15 CURSE THEE**

16
17 Consider: Babylon / Antiochus and the Greeks / Germany

18
19 ● **Our Lord Jesus Christ was a Jew. The Gospel came first to the Jews.**

20
21 In our next study, Moses and Aaron will confront the Egyptian Pharaoh and the great
22 escape story continues!