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Moses in the School of God - The Burning Bush - Part 1

Introduction

There are times in the christian life when, without us being conscious of it, the Holy Spirit prompts the individual to do something or go somewhere. It may be afterward the individual may learn the reason why. This is what Moses experienced. I suspect he was looking for fresh pasture for the sheep when the Spirit brought Moses to the backside of the desert, for God wanted Moses to have time alone with Him. He still does that with individuals today. This was not the only time when Moses would spend time alone with God. For instance, when Moses went up to the mount for 40 days and nights he was alone with God (Ex. 24:18; 34:28).

I am sure there were times during the long exile when Moses had possibly given up all hope of doing anything for God. His life for the 40 years had very possibly been somewhat sorrowful. For him it may have seemed like a wasted life with apparently nothing of God's purposes for him being achieved. Not that the entire 40 years were sorrowful, for he had married a woman who had two sons. There would have been moments of joy, but there would have remained in his memory that dreadful action of killing the Egyptian and being far away from his people.

- a) Now being 80 years of age, it seemed he was to live out his days a Bedouin shepherd, working night and day and a failure in the purpose of God for delivering Israel? Could a man slow of speech, void of influence be used by God? For many years he was a forgotten shepherd in the desert (Ex. 3:1). Could he be used by God? In considering David and Elijah, I realize the best of individuals can have negative thoughts and get depressed (1 Kgs. 19:4; Psalms. 42:5, 43:5). Many a saint has felt as Moses would have felt. In past days there were high hopes of doing a work for God but something was done and it seems God has put them on the shelf, just living out their days.
- b) God encouraged his aging servant by informing him that he would be used by God to triumphantly lead the children of Israel from Egypt (Ex. 5:1, 7:16, 8:1, 9:1).
- c) Moses would not have understood he was in the school of God where he had to learn to lose sight of himself and be fixed on the unchanging glory of the omnipotent God. God had to educate his servant to the greatness of the God of His father, and Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He had to learn by depending on God he could have a holy boldness, and not in fleshly bravado go to Pharaoh. The audience with the great king and his court must be met with boldness but not with an "I can do this" attitude.

Moses in the School of God

I suggest his actual practical schooling began when he learnt that deliverance of Israel would not be by the brilliance of a man strategizing (Ex. 2:11-12). Moses had to learn that every individual who is going to do a work for God will have time spent alone with God, learn their own futility to spiritually assist in the spiritual development of the saints, or the salvation of sinners.

I never read of Moses having any expectation of God appearing to him, or God making Himself real to him prior to the burning bush. This illustrates that which John wrote: "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth" (Jn. 3:8). We do not know when the gracious Spirit of God will, in a moment, give an enlightenment to a spiritual truth or conviction of sin. The Spirit of God came in a thunder and lightning storm to Ezekiel (Ezek. 1:4). He came to Saul on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:3-6). He can become personal to an individual making them aware of eternity etc. in a meeting, by the singing of a hymn, the reading of a tract, by statement. God got Moses' attention by a bush on fire, nothing special, until it did not burn up.

- a) It is very serious to hear the voice of God, for that conviction is not a normal conscience process. God can speak by the sudden or expected death of a loved one, a serious illness or job loss, a feeling that something is wrong that one cannot discern, a hymn being sung, a melody from the past, a sunset, the stars at night. God can use anything to make one aware of Himself. How was God going to get Moses' attention in a desert? This was the first necessity.

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Moses at the Burning Bush is a Major Happening

Possibly Moses had seen many bushes burn in the desert but this was different. God got Moses' attention by a bush that did not burn up (Ex. 3:2-3).

This was something special and deciding to investigate, he decided to approach the bush. Then he heard the voice of God. God will not permit anyone to study or consider Him out of mere curiosity. Nor does He appreciate casualness for the Angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire which indicated the holiness of God, therefore the removal of everything contrary to His person and character.

- a) This was Moses' first recorded encounter with God. It is of note that the children of Israel heard the voice of God out of the midst of the fire at Sinai (Deut. 4:33; 5:24, 26). On the occasion of Moses and the children of Israel's first encounter with God was of fire, and on both occasions, distance was to be observed between them (Ex. 3:5; 20:18).

The Lord and God do not always reveal themselves in the same way.

- a) God revealed Himself to:
 - i) Isaiah after the death of King Uzzah (Isa. 6:1)
 - ii) The disciples when they were together in a boat in a storm (Matt. 14:24-26)
 - iii) John and revealed things to come when he was on the island of Patmos (Rev. 1:9)
 - iv) Gideon when thrashing wheat (Jud. 6:11)
- b) There are times when the Lord reveals Himself but there is a failure to recognize Him. For instance:
 - i) Mary at the tomb (Jn. 20:14-16)
 - ii) The two on the road to Emmaus (Lk. 24:17-27)

. . . . Rowan Jennings