

International Conversation Cafe

Old Testament: Moses and the Burning Bush, Exodus 3

Have you ever thought about why you trust certain people while with others, you would not share your inmost thoughts? We learn to trust people because we see the choices they make and the way they respond in difficult circumstances.

It is very clear that God wants to show us he is trustworthy and good. One way we understand this is through stories of how God revealed himself to other people in history. While we will not have the exact experience, we can learn from the experience of others.

Moses had a surprising experience with God, which resulted in Moses learning to have confidence in God. Moses was related to Abraham, the father of the nation Israel. In Moses lifetime, 1526-1406 BC, the nation of Israel were slaves in Egypt. As an adult, Moses lived in the desert in exile from Egypt. This was because he killed an Egyptian while defending of an Israelite. In the desert God spoke to him, gaining his attention through a bush that was burning and yet not consumed.



FETTI, Domenico
Moses before the Burning
Bush
1613-14
Oil on canvas, 168 x 112 cm
Kunsthistorisches Museum,
Vienna

Moses and the Burning Bush, Exodus 3

¹One day, Moses was taking care of the sheep and goats of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and Moses decided to lead them across the desert to Sinai, the holy mountain. ²There an angel of the LORD appeared to him from a burning bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but it was not burning up. ³" This is strange!" he said to himself. " I'll go over and see why the bush isn't burning up." ⁴When the LORD saw Moses coming near the bush, he called him by name, and Moses answered, " Here I am."

⁵God replied, " Don't come any closer. Take off your sandals--the ground where you are standing is holy. ⁶I am the God who was worshiped by your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moses was afraid to look at God, and so he hid his face.

Retell the story up to this point.

"Holy," means to be set apart. It is the idea that God is pure, with no sin or evil and that he is always true to his own nature. How does God show himself as holy to Moses?

The LORD said: I have seen how my people are suffering as slaves in Egypt, and I have heard them beg for my help because of the way they

are being mistreated. I feel sorry for them, ⁸and I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians.

I will bring my people out of Egypt into a country where there is good land, rich with milk and honey. ⁹My people have begged for my help, and I have seen how cruel the Egyptians are to them. ¹⁰Now go to the king! I am sending you to lead my people out of his country.

¹¹But Moses said, "Who am I to go to the king and lead your people out of Egypt?"

Retell this part of the story.

What was God's attitude toward Israel who suffered as slaves?

What was Moses' attitude when he learned that God wanted to use him to lead Israel out of Egypt?

Why do you think he felt that way?

¹²God replied, "I will be with you. And you will know that I am the one who sent you, when you worship me on this mountain after you have led my people out of Egypt." ¹³Moses answered, "I will tell the people of Israel that the God their ancestors worshiped has sent me to them. But what should I say, if they ask me your name?"

¹⁴⁻¹⁵God said to Moses:

I am the eternal God. So tell them that the LORD, whose name is "I Am," has sent you. This is my name forever, and it is the name that people must use from now on. ¹⁶Call together the leaders of Israel and tell them that the God who was worshiped by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has appeared to you. Tell them I have seen how terribly they are being treated in Egypt, ¹⁷and I promise to lead them out of their troubles. I will give them a land rich with milk and honey, where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live.

"I Am," indicates God's eternal existence, dependability, and faithfulness to do as he promises. In this case, he is faithful to rescue Israel from slavery.

NIV Study Bible, Ex. 3:14

From this paragraph, describe what God is like and what things he notices.

Explain what "I am," means. How could this description give Moses confidence in God?

Is there any way "I am" could give you confidence in God?

How does the story change your attitudes about God?

