

Moses

Michael Heiss—November 18, 2017

We're going to look at a running conversation that God had with a man that He loved; one of the most important had powerful men in all Biblical history.

God said of this man that He knew him by name, and He spoke with him face-to-face, 'not as with other men.' Of course, I'm speaking about the man *Moses!*

Note these Scriptures:

- Numbers 12:1-8
- Deuteronomy 34:1-12
- Exodus 33:11

Those Scriptures will show where God said of Moses:

- he was the meekest man on earth
- that He spoke with him face-to-face
- truly he was a servant

Let's start the conversation and we will find that Moses has to use all his powers of persuasion with God, and he has an agenda and he wants God to do something. Moses uses incredible diplomatic skill in getting God what he wants Him to do. In fact, for our purpose today, we will see it twice.

Exodus 23:20: "Behold, I send an Angel before you, to keep you in the way, and to bring you to the place which I have prepared. Be on guard... [pay attention, take heed, watch out] ...in His presence and obey His voice. **Do not provoke Him, for He will not pardon your transgressions;** for My name is in Him" (vs 20-21). *My purpose is in him, programmed in him!* That programming does not allow for forgiveness of sin.

That worries Moses, and he is very concerned about that. His concern is especially heightened with an episode that we find in Exo. 32, and we all know that that episode is the golden calf. God is *furious* at the Israelites.

Exodus 32:9: "And the LORD said to Moses, 'I have seen this people, and behold, it is a stiff-necked people. And now leave Me alone, so that My wrath may burn hot against them and that I may consume them. And I will make of you a great nation.' And Moses prayed to the LORD his God..." (vs 9-11).

This is like a kid talking to daddy. When the boy wants to do something and the father says that he's not so sure, what does the boy say? *Daddy, you said... You said, daddy!*

Well, Moses prays to God, "...and said, 'LORD, why does Your wrath burn hot against Your people whom You have brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians speak and say, "He brought them out with an evil intent, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth"? Turn from Your fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against Your people' [*Remember, God, You said*] ...Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, Your servants, to whom You swore by Your own self, and said to them, "I will multiply your seed..." (vs 11-13)—and now You're going to destroy them? God, You said...

Verse 14: "And the LORD repented of the evil, which He spoke of doing to His people"—which means to turn, to change.

Moses stood in the breach and got God to change His mind by simply saying, 'God, You said... You promised...'

Remember Abraham when God said that He was going to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah? What a diplomatic speech Abraham gave: 'Oh, Lord, far be it from You to do this thing. Shall not the Judge of all the earth be righteous?'

God was not displeased with this. These men were not 'shrinking violets.' They were humble and dedicated, but when they had a point to make, they made it! They persuaded God, indeed, they did!

Unfortunately, Abraham couldn't even get God to find ten in Gomorrah; so that's what happened there in Sodom. Anyway, "...the Lord repented..."

Verse 31: "And Moses returned to the LORD, and said, 'Oh, these people have sinned a great sin, and have made themselves gods of gold! And now if You would only forgive their sin! And if not, I pray You, blot me out of Your book which You have written.' And the LORD said to Moses, 'Whoever has sinned against Me, I will blot him out of My book. And now go, lead the people to *the place* of which I have spoken to you. Behold, My angel shall go before you. And in the day of My visitation I will visit their sin upon them'" (vs 31-34).

Moses is really getting worried. The angel is going and God says, "...I will visit their sin upon them." Moses has no assurance that Israel will be preserved. He doesn't; God never said that. God said, "...I will visit their sin upon them." "...My angel shall go..."

So, Moses has to somehow get God to change His mind. He's got to get God to go with them. Not this messenger that he does not know.

Angel in Hebrew means *messenger*. It could be a human being, it could be a spirit being. In this case we'll take it as a spirit being, an angel, but it doesn't have to be.

Exodus 33:11: "And the LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend..." Now, here we begin the real conversation:

Verse 12: And Moses said to the LORD, 'Behold, You say to me, "Bring up this people." And You have not told me whom You will send with me. Yet, You have said, "I know you by name, and you have also found grace in My sight." Now, therefore, I pray You... [if this is true, if You really said, if you really meant] ...if I have found grace in Your sight, make me see now Your way, that I may know You, that I may find grace in Your sight. **And consider that this nation is Your people**' (vs 12-13).

If Moses can get God to commit to Israel being His people, His inheritance, then Moses knows that God will never destroy them. Punish, *yes!* But destroy, *never!*

Verse 14: "And He [God] said, 'My presence... [His face] ...shall go *with you*, and I will give you rest.'" *God changed His mind!*

When you read in English *God's presence*, it means His face, everything that is His: eyes, ears, expression and essence. So, God says, 'No more will I send an angel. There will be angels to help, to be sure. But ***I will go with you!***'

Verse 15: "And he [Moses] said to Him, 'If Your presence does not go *with me*, do not carry us up from here.'" *If You don't do this as promised, leave us alone and let us die here.* This is how passionate Moses really is. You've got to get inside the mind to picture what's going on here.

Verse 16: "For how shall it be known that I and Your people have found grace in Your sight? *Is it* not in that You go with us? So we shall be separated, I and Your people, from all the people that *are* upon the face of the earth." *Please, God, do what You have promised!*

Verse 17: "And the LORD said to Moses, 'I will do this thing also that you have spoken... [again God bows to Moses' request] ...for you have found grace in My sight, and I know you by name.'"

Don't you think that Moses would be satisfied with this? *Come on, Moses, leave well enough alone!* You've just persuaded God to be with you. He's not going to destroy Israel really. He's promised to go with you; not an angel. But, oh no, not our Moses! He's going to take this up another

notch to whole new level.

Verse 18: "And he said, '**I beseech You, show me Your glory.**'" That is *Your heaviness*. The word for glory has a concept of *heaviness, weight*. Like a heavyweight or lightweight. God's a heavyweight. "...show me Your glory"—Your power, Your might! What does God say?

Verse 19: "And He said, '**I will make all My goodness pass before you...** [God acquiesces again and listens to Moses] ...and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. And **I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.**'"

Verse 22—God says we'll do this: "...I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and will cover you with My hand while I pass by. And I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back parts. But My face shall not be seen" (vs 22-23)—*because you'll die Moses.*

Exodus 34:5: "And the LORD came down in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him and proclaimed, 'The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, **longsuffering**, and abundant in goodness and truth'" (vs 5-6).

This word *longsuffering*, remember earlier where God talked about His anger waxing hot? You have to understand in Hebrew how this is expressed. We can't translate it properly; it would make no sense at all.

First of all, maybe we could have said *slow to anger*, because that's true. But *slow to anger* and *longsuffering* is the same. But what does the word really mean? What's the Hebrew word? *Long nosed!* I'm not talking about Pinocchio.

What does *long nosed* mean? When you wax hot, burn with anger, it's your nose, the nostrils; it's like flame and fire coming out of your nostrils. This is how the Hebrew expresses it 3500 years ago when you're angry and your anger waxes hot. It's like a volcano erupting and lava flowing out of your nostrils. Your nose glows because you're angry!

But if you're *long nosed* that means it takes more time for your anger to cool down. So, the longer your nose, the more distance your anger has to flow and finally cool off.

How would it sound if we translated this, that God is long-nosed? So, we just say *longsuffering* or *slow to anger*.

I just thought you might find that of interest. I find it interesting to see these expressions and how they come about.

Verse 7—God says: "Keeping mercy to the

thousandth *generation*, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...” That is what Moses wanted to hear. That’s what he needed to hear, because God is committing Himself to forgiving the sin and the iniquity of any sin that Israel commits in the future, assuming, of course, that repentance follows—*always!*

But now Moses has the assurance that God will forgive Israel!

“...but Who will by no means clear *the guilty*... [unless, of course, you repent] ...visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children’s children, to the third and to the fourth generation. And Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshiped. And he said, ‘If now I have found grace in Your sight, O LORD, I pray You, let my LORD go among us, although it *is* a stiff-necked people. And pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for Your inheritance.’ And He said, ‘Behold, I make a covenant. Before all your people I will do marvels such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation. And all the people in whose midst you *are* shall see the work of the LORD, for it *is* an awesome thing that I will do with you’” (vs 7-10).

That’s what Moses needed to hear! That was his agenda, to get God to commit to going before them. Not an angel! Not some hired hand, as it were, but ***the Great God Himself Who has the power and authority and the willingness to forgive sin!***

Angels can’t do that. Remember what he Pharisees said about Jesus when Jesus said, ‘Your sins be forgiven you’? the Pharisees said, ‘Who is this? Who but God has the power to forgive sin?’ Well, Moses new that, too.

So, Moses prevails! What a diplomat! What a servant! Wholehearted! And we can all be thankful for this man *Moses*, for without him the history of the world would be a lot different.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Exodus 23:20-21
- 2) Exodus 32:9-14, 31-34
- 3) Exodus 33:11-19, 22-23
- 4) Exodus 34:5-10

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Numbers 12:1-8
- Deuteronomy 34:1-12