

Exodus 3:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb.

Analysis

Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law, the priest of Midian: and he led the flock to the backside of the desert, and came to the mountain of God, even to Horeb (וְמֹשֶׁה בָּיָה רֶשֶׁת אֶת-צָאן יְתָרוֹ חֹתְנוֹ כֹּהֵן מִדְיָן וְעַבְדָּג אָתָּה) uMosheh hayah ro'eh et-tson Yithro chotno kohen Midyan vayinhag et-hatson achar hamidbar vayavo el-har ha'Elohim Choreivah)—Moses the prince has become Moses the shepherd for 40 years—God's wilderness seminary. **Mountain of God** (הר הָאֱלֹהִים, har ha'Elohim) and **Horeb** (חוֹרֶב, related to "desolate") is Mount Sinai, where God will later give the Law (Exodus 19-20). The name "mountain of God" is prophetic—this site wasn't sacred until God manifested there. Moses' shepherding prepared him for leading God's flock; the wilderness trained him for the Exodus journey. Humble pastoral work was God's chosen preparation for His chosen deliverer.

Historical Context

Horeb/Sinai is traditionally located in the southern Sinai Peninsula, though exact location is debated. The journey from Midian to Horeb with flocks was arduous, indicating Moses' skill and experience in wilderness survival. Shepherding taught patience, attentiveness, and sacrificial leadership—all essential qualities for Moses' future role. The 40-year preparation period (Acts 7:30) mirrored his 40 years in Egypt and foreshadowed 40 years leading Israel.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

Study Questions

1. How does Moses' 40 years of obscure shepherding encourage you when God's preparation seems lengthy and hidden?
2. What "backside of the desert" experiences is God using to equip you for future callings you don't yet see?

Interlinear Text

וְמֵשֶׁה הִנֵּה רֹאשׁ אֶת הַצָּאן וְיַתֵּר וְחִתְנֵב וְכָה
Now Moses kept the flock of Jethro his father in law the priest
H4872 H1961 H7462 H853 H6629 H3503 H2859 H3548

מִדְיָן וְיָגַד תַּגְנִיב אֶת הַצָּאן אֶלְרָא בְּמִדְבָּר וַיָּבֹא
of Midian and he led the flock to the backside of the desert and came
H4080 H5090 H853 H6629 H310 H4057 H935

אֶל הַר יְהוָה בְּרֵאשִׁית כָּאֵלָה יְהוָה בְּרֵאשִׁית
to the mountain of God even to Horeb
H413 H2022 H430 H2722

Additional Cross-References

Exodus 17:6 (References Moses): Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel.

1 Kings 19:8 (References God): And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.

Numbers 10:29 (Word): And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father in law, We are journeying unto the place of which the LORD said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the LORD hath spoken good concerning Israel.

Exodus 19:11 (Parallel theme): And be ready against the third day: for the third day the LORD will come down in the sight of all the people upon mount Sinai.

Judges 4:11 (Word): Now Heber the Kenite, which was of the children of Hobab the father in law of Moses, had severed himself from the Kenites, and pitched his tent unto the plain of Zaanaim, which is by Kedesh.

Psalms 106:19 (Parallel theme): They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image.

Exodus 19:3 (References God): And Moses went up unto God, and the LORD called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel;

Exodus 2:16 (Parallel theme): Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock.

Exodus 24:13 (References God): And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua: and Moses went up into the mount of God.

Exodus 3:5 (Parallel theme): And he said, Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.