

Exodus 3:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.

Analysis

And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed (וַיֵּרָא מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה אֵלָיו בְּלַבַּת־אֵשׁ מִתּוֹךְ הַסִּנֵּה וַיֵּרָא וְהִנֵּה הַסִּנֵּה) וַיַּבֵּר בְּאֵשׁ וְהַסִּנֵּה אֵינָנו אֲכָל vayera mal'akh YHWH elav belabbat-esh mitokh hasneh vayar vehineh hasneh bo'er ba'esh vehasneh einenu ukkal)—**The angel of the LORD** (מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה, mal'akh YHWH) is often understood as a theophany—pre-incarnate manifestation of God Himself (cf. v. 4 where "the LORD" speaks from the bush). **Flame of fire... not consumed**—the miracle arrests Moses' attention: fire that burns but doesn't destroy. This symbolizes God's presence with Israel: afflicted but not destroyed (1:12), refined but not consumed (Isaiah 43:2). The humble **bush** (סִנֵּה, seneh, thornbush) may represent Israel—lowly, yet containing God's glory. Fire represents God's holiness (Deuteronomy 4:24, Hebrews 12:29).

Historical Context

Theophanies often involve fire in Scripture (Genesis 15:17, Exodus 13:21, 19:18, Ezekiel 1:4). The burning bush becomes a foundational image of God's self-revelation. Later Jewish tradition associated the thornbush with Israel's suffering, and the fire that doesn't consume with God's sustaining grace. This encounter marks the shift from Moses' preparation to his commissioning.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does the bush burning but not consumed illustrate God's presence with His people through affliction without being destroyed?
2. What unexpected, humble 'bushes' might God be using to reveal His glory in your life or circumstances?

Interlinear Text

וַיִּרְאֵה and he looked H7200	וַיִּרְאֵה And the angel H4397	וַיִּרְאֵה of the LORD H3068	אֵלַי H413	בְּלַבַּת unto him in a flame H3827	שֶׁ of fire H784
מִתּוֹךְ out of the midst H8432	וַיִּרְאֵה and behold the bush H5572	וַיִּרְאֵה and he looked H7200	וַיִּרְאֵה H2009	וַיִּרְאֵה and behold the bush H5572	
בָּעֵר burned H1197	שֶׁ of fire H784	וַיִּרְאֵה and behold the bush H5572	אֵינּוּ H369	אֲכָלָה was not consumed H398	

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 43:2 (Parallel theme): When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest

through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Mark 12:26 (Parallel theme): And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

Deuteronomy 33:16 (Parallel theme): And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren.

Luke 20:37 (References Lord): Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

Psalms 66:12 (Parallel theme): Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.

Exodus 3:16 (References Lord): Go, and gather the elders of Israel together, and say unto them, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, appeared unto me, saying, I have surely visited you, and seen that which is done to you in Egypt:

Malachi 3:1 (References Lord): Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

Isaiah 63:9 (Parallel theme): In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.

Genesis 48:16 (Parallel theme): The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

Deuteronomy 4:20 (References Lord): But the LORD hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.

