

It is most probable that this defeat of Gog's army will be followed by the conquest of the rest of the world, which is the theme of the seventh vial of Revelation 16.

Ralph Green
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I thank Brother Green for his letter. He suggests that the "invasion of Israel by Gog is quite different from the events of Zechariah 12–14". However, I think that they are referring to the same event. The earthquake in Zechariah 14 is surely the same earthquake as that in Ezekiel 38. Although in Ezekiel 38 there is no mention of the Jews fighting, Zechariah shows that the use of the natural forces such as the earthquake will go hand in hand with resistance by the Jews. Moreover,

whilst some nations who come against Jerusalem will be Muslim, the countries taking part will mainly be from 'Christian' Europe.

Ultimately Gog's invasion will fail, but not before it covers the land like a cloud (v. 9), and not before Tarshish and other nations say to it, "Art thou come . . . ?" (v. 13). Thus Gog succeeds in invading the Land. Daniel 11 shows that he goes down into Egypt (v. 42). Gog will take a spoil and prey, albeit aided by the Lebanese and Palestinians (Joel 3:5,6).

Brother Green claims that "Nothing is said about the Jewish loss of any other territory" in Zechariah apart from Jerusalem, but we are also told that two thirds of the population of the Land will be "cut off and die" (Zech. 13:8). This slaughter will be the direct result of the invasion of Gog.—N.B.

Moses: earth's meekest man

4. The voice from the bush

John Mitchell

Having spent forty years as a shepherd in the wilderness, Moses was suddenly presented with a Divine revelation which was to change the course of his life dramatically, the command to go back and bring his people out of bondage. To overcome his reluctance God gave him the immense privilege of a revelation of His Name and the encouragement of several miracles to reassure him that God's power would be with him.

WHEN MOSES turned aside to see the strange sight of the bush that went on burning endlessly, it was out of idle curiosity, born of boredom as he looked after the flocks of Jethro in the wilderness. The outcome, however, when God spoke to him out of the midst of the bush, was as personally significant in his time as was the conversion of the Apostle Paul when he was confronted with the risen Christ many centuries later. For Moses, as for Paul, the result was a complete turning around of his life and expectations, and the start of a mission that would occupy the rest of his days. The apostle was blinded by the glorious appearing of the risen Christ; Moses hid his face, being afraid to look upon the angel of the presence of God. Greater by far than the personal implications

for Moses, however, was the revelation uttered by the angel appearing as a flame of fire in the midst of the bush.

Yahweh said, "I have indeed seen the misery of My people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. And now the cry of the Israelites has reached Me, and I have seen the way the Egyptians are oppressing them. So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring My people the Israelites out of Egypt".*

God's Name revealed

Moses' response was the first real indication of the profound change that had taken place in the personality of the former prince since that day forty years before when he had killed an Egyptian official and had hidden him in the sand. Long gone was his expectation that his fellow Israelites would have understood that God would, by his hand, deliver the captive nation from their

* This and other quotations from Exodus 3 and 4 are from the NIV.

slavery of making bricks in the mud of the delta of the River Nile. "Who am I", he asked, "that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

But God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I Who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain". One might have thought that the word of Yahweh spoken by His angel would have been both authority and charge enough to send Moses on his way, yet he persisted in placing obstacles in the way of his preferment to be the leader of his people. No doubt for him to accept the dictate of God was one thing, but, after his previous experience with his own people, that charge would need some confirmation—or so he felt. "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is His name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

The reply that Moses received was the profoundest and most significant statement ever given to man, for it encapsulated not only God's purpose but also His very being. The expression in the Hebrew, *Eyeh asher eyeh*, has been variously translated, "I am who I am", or, "I will be who I will be". It is in the imperfect tense, indicating a perpetual and never-ending state, so it can be interpreted as relating to a God Who always was, is and will be, as well as to One Who will manifest Himself in others, that is to say, in the Lord Jesus Christ and the multitude who, by faith, are, and will be, in Him. Hence the assertion by Jesus to the leaders of the Jews, "Before Abraham was, I am" (Jno. 8:58), which was a direct reference to 'He who will be' in the Name of Yahweh.

Small wonder, then, that the angel also said to Moses, "This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you . . . The LORD [Yahweh], the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob—has sent me to you.' This is My name for ever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation". There could be no greater warranty, no greater *bona fides*, for Moses before the nation of Israel than that the eternal God would be their refuge, and that underneath would be His everlasting arms in their exodus from Egypt. It was the same God Who had made an everlasting covenant with their fathers Who would go with them. They would be a great nation, and from within them all families of the earth would be blessed.

How much of the implications of God's Name Moses was able to understand when it was spoken from the midst of the bush we do not know. But there is no doubt that among the people to whom it was sent it evoked a reverence and awe never matched by any other name, to such an extent that later on they would not use it except on special occasions, and substituted a lesser synonym, *Adon* (Lord), instead. And the Massorettes, who engaged in copying Scripture, would not write it without first ensuring that the pen was fully charged, lest they should have to break off in the middle of writing it.

Moses' commission

It was, then, in this awesome and portentous Name that Moses was told to go and assemble the elders of Israel and tell them that Yahweh had appeared to him and had promised to bring them up out of their misery in Egypt into a land flowing with milk and honey. "The elders of Israel will listen to you", assured the angel. "Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD [Yahweh], the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.' But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. So I will stretch out My hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go. And I will make the Egyptians favourably disposed towards this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. Every woman is to ask her neighbour and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians".

But still the reluctant Moses held back. "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The Lord [Yahweh] did not appear to you'?", he asked. To assure him on this point, the angel instructed him there and then to practise two miraculous signs, and gave him a third that he could perform in the land of Egypt itself. "What is that in your hand?", he asked as Moses stood before him. Moses replied that it was a shepherd's staff. "Throw it on the ground", the angel said, which Moses did, and it became a snake so fearsome that Moses, who must have known many such in the wilderness, ran away from it. But the angel said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail". This he did, and it turned back into his staff

in his hand. "This", said the angel, "is so that they may believe that the LORD [Yahweh], the God of their fathers . . . has appeared to you".

And so began the story of a shepherd's staff that became the most potent symbol of the power of God in all history, for it accompanied Moses not only to Egypt and across the Red Sea, but also throughout his wilderness journeys, to be used in times of crisis as evidence of the hand of God. Unlike Aaron's rod that budded, it was not laid up before the Lord as a permanent witness to the children of Israel; only in the hand of Moses was it efficacious, and with his final departure that efficacy ceased.

The rod, however, had a special significance in relation to his immediate task, which was to take hold of that 'old serpent' personified in Pharaoh and his kingdom, and overcome it. The serpent was the symbol of royal and divine power on the diadem of every Pharaoh, and the act of Moses in taking it by the tail was the sign that his shepherd's staff would become the rod of God, and he the shepherd of Israel.

More signs

That was only the first sign. There were two more to come. "Put your hand inside your cloak", was the second command. Moses did so, and when he took it out it was leprous like snow. "Now put it back into your cloak", said the angel. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out it was restored, like the rest of his flesh. One explanation of the meaning of this second sign is that the leprous hand represented the children of Israel, for Moses later said, "Have I conceived all this people? have I begotten them, that Thou shouldst say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which Thou swearest unto their fathers?" (Num. 11:12); yet as a nation God was able to forgive and to redeem them.

The third sign was not to be enacted there and then, but was to be held in reserve in case the people would not accept the first two. "If they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry

ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground", said the angel.

The water of the River Nile was indeed the lifeblood of that mighty realm and the source of its great wealth. The annual inundations, bringing rich alluvial soil from central Africa, guaranteed abundant crops, and in its brownish waters swam fish of many kinds to satisfy the palates of the people. To have the power to turn its waters into blood would be a sign perilous to ignore, and would also boost the confidence of the children of Israel in Moses as their God-appointed leader.

But Moses still held back from his appointed mission, and presented one more excuse as to why he should not undertake it. He said, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since You have spoken to Your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue". But the Lord answered, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or dumb? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say". Then Moses uttered words that became, as it were, the last straw with which to burden God's patience. "O Lord", he said, "please send someone else to do it".

Then God's anger burned against Moses, and He said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you. You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. But take this staff in your hand so that you can perform miraculous signs with it".

So, his leadership settled at last, Moses left the burning bush, returned to his flock and led them for the last time through the wilderness to their home pastures. As, in later times, Simon Peter became the Lord's fisher of men, so also did Moses change his flock for the people of God. And his staff went with him.

[\(To be continued\)](#)

This meeting at Horeb is the beginning of the revelations of the Lord to Moses. His eighty years have prepared his mind for service and leadership. All true leadership is service. Moses has wrestled with himself, with his trained assertiveness and his fears, and has found in his life as a shepherd both a discipline and an allegory. The voice from the bush echoes through the caverns of his faith, reaching back to Abraham and forward to eternity.

Harry Tennant, Moses My servant.