
“FROM SINAI TO TABOR”

(A Fictional First Person Narrative)

Before beginning this paper, I will extend my apology if I should exceed the limits of the parameters that have been set. I understand the instructions for this assignment to include a considerable amount of latitude. I intend to make the most of this opportunity. My instructions included a five page assignment (approximately 1250 words), a comparison and contrast of the Mt. Sinai and Mt. Tabor experiences (meetings with God) with emphasis on the event itself as well as the God encounter, along with any relevant reflection of my personal “mountain-top” experience(s). I will meet all the minimum requirements of the paper. However, format and style were not discussed, and this is where I will take creative liberty. It is my intention to write this paper as a fictional response in “first person” narrative. My premise is to relate a personal perspective as if I had been physically present at all of the scenes that will be illustrated. Hopefully, I will not miss the mark and this will be an enjoyable read.

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It had been three days since God had spoken with Moses and told him that He wanted to meet with him. We had been in silent reflection from the time we had arrived at the Mountain of God. We cleansed ourselves physically and mentally...some of the people had even refrained from eating. We were in nervous anticipation, anxious, and expectant for our meeting with God. Although Moses would be our representative and speak to God today on our behalf, The Great One had told Moses that we had been chosen to be His people...He had called us “His treasured possession.” This day was to be a day of the LORD; He would meet with Moses and give us direction as His people. Were we ready? What would God say to us? As I was thinking I heard what sounded like the blast from many trumpets; all of them being blown in unison. I had never heard anything like it before, but it was unmistakably the sound of a ram’s horn. This was the call that Moses had mentioned before. God was calling us to His Mountain now. The people gathered at the base of the mountain where we had been told to meet. Suddenly the sky darkened, and great peals of thunder rolled out of the clouds. The air began to crackle with

lightening. Some of the people fell face down in fear, and others trembled as fire and smoke filled the mountain in front of us. The mountain roared and trembled; even the earth and sky was in awe at the presence of God. Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him. The LORD had descended to the mountain and called Moses to come up to Him. I am not sure what happened next, but suddenly in my mind's eye, I was able to see everything from the perspective of Moses...almost as if I had his eyes. I stood in silent concentration as we began our ascent up the Mountain of God.

We entered the smoke; and tongues of fire danced all around, but they did not burn anything that they touched. In a very odd way, fire that did not burn seemed to make sense to me. I shrugged off the thought as I realized we had come to the top of the mountain... As my mind began to take in the surroundings, I was in awe. The sounds of thunder and the crackle of lightening still filled the air...the earth rumbled and trembled as the winds continued to swirl around me, but I was not afraid. I knew the response of the elements was Creation praising its Maker. I was feeling a peace that I had never known and an inner comfort that seemed strangely out of place for the circumstances that I found myself in. And then, God spoke. He began to give very forthright directions...commands even, and His voice sounded like the thunder that continued to reverberate off the sides of the mountain. Yet, at the same time, His voice was calm and soothing. I continued to listen to the instructions of God and my mind started to wander...attempting to process my experience. I realized that in many ways what was taking place was similar to my own life as a father. I had given instructions for living to my own sons, and here was God doing the same for us...His people. Then it occurred to me; God is not a cosmic ogre needing to be pacified in order to receive favor. God is our divine Father who desires nothing but good for us...just I desire nothing but good for my own child. As I was still processing this wonderful truth, I found myself whisked away in my imagination to another place and another time...

...Suddenly I was face down; without looking up I knew I was in the presence of Glory. There was a choral echo singing "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Most High" that filled my ears and I determined to hazard a peek at my surroundings from my prone position. What I saw almost short-circuited my imagination. The purity of white blinded me, yet I was still

able to see. Seated on an enormous throne was absolute Goodness, supreme Truth, and pure Love...His glory and splendor were indescribable. I knew who He was, but my vocabulary was insufficient and lacking in ways to describe what my eyes beheld. I began to weep. My emotions were a mixture of joy, sorrow, and ecstasy. I was having enormous difficulty understanding what was taking place. In a moment though, it came to me, I was still man...humanity in the company of all that is divine. I needed cleansing, I needed wholeness...I needed purification. With face down, I beseeched the Holy One; "My God, My God; forgive my iniquity and frailty. Purify me with Your Hand. Cleanse me that I might be able to dwell in the shadow of Your Presence," I prayed. With a wave of His mighty hand a splendorous creature was dispatched with tongues of fire in its grasp. The creature flew to me and bathed me in fire from God. Speaking to me, the creature said "stand." Raising my head, and coming to my feet I heard the voice of the Holy One saying, "We are needing obedient workers...who will go for Us?" I lifted my hand and answered the Voice of Glory, "I will go, LORD." He smiled at me and said, "Speak my truth in love, son" and in a flash...I was gone.

I awakened with my head leaning on the shoulder of a man. Startled, and a little confused at how I might have arrived at my present location, I looked around. I saw a couple other men lying next to me also becoming fully awake. I heard voices up ahead of us and looked to see who they belonged to. I gasped in awe and amazement, as I heard one the men beside me exclaim "It is Elijah and Moses that stand with our Lord!" I stood in wonder as I witnessed the glory of God emanate from Him who stood with Moses and Elijah. I could not tell who spoke, but I heard the statement made; "All the host of Heaven are with you. They watch in great excitement that victory is near; it is now The Time." There were no words or thoughts in my mind...all I could do was stand and watch when suddenly a sense of déjà vu came over me. Great clouds began to roll into the sky and as they gathered, began to descend until we were all engulfed in them. Unexpectedly, a voice came from out of the cloud, and I realized why I had the sense of being here before. It was the voice I had heard on Mt. Sinai...it was He, The Great I AM. The voice spoke saying, "This is the Chosen One, My Son; listen to him." At the sound of the voice, we found ourselves face down realizing that we shared the company of our God. I felt a tender touch on my shoulder and looked into eyes of love as I had never seen. With firm

gentleness I was lifted from my place on the ground. He spoke to me saying, "Do not fear, and tell no one what you have seen until it is time." I was still trying to assimilate all that had just taken place when I was startled from my thoughts by what sounded like chimes. I looked up to find myself in darkness and unsure of my surroundings. Suddenly I realized that I had been awakened from a dream and the chimes were my alarm waking me to my last day of J-Term. I realized that my dream had been my subconscious mind processing our final assignment for the Life of Moses class.

I began to reflect on the subject of my dream and the material that we had discussed in the previous days. I was trying to make a connection of the similarities relative to my own experience and walk with God. What I determined was this; God is personal. He is certainly a Corporate Master and the Divine Head of all things physical and eternal, but for the human mind that craves intimate understanding...God is personal. He meets us as *we need* to be met, and *where we need* to be met. I think to the first encounter that Moses met with God when he appeared as a voice from the burning bush. There was no one around at the time. There was no one pointing Moses in the direction toward this encounter. God orchestrated events that would lead him (Moses) to a wilderness of soul. He (God) led Moses to a place where (realizing it or not) he was ready to meet with God. I find this to be a common denominator not only in my own life, but in the lives of other men and women of the Bible as well as people that I have met in my personal life.

Although I may be extrapolating some of my understanding from what may be implied in the experience of Isaiah, I think that he too was at a crisis point. Isaiah speaks, saying "In the year that King Uzziah died..." I don't think this was simply a historical marker; I believe that it may have been a time of grief too. Yes, Uzziah had committed an act of disobedience, but for the greatest part of his 52 year reign he was faithful to God, and "did that which was right in the sight of the LORD" (2 Kings 15:3; 2 Chr. 26:4, 5). So, God met Isaiah in a personal way at a time of need... I think that this might be said for the meeting with Jesus on Mt. Tabor as well. Once again, I may be extrapolating something that is not there at all, but I feel confident in my assertion. Jesus showed immense sorrow and grief while in the Garden of Gethsemane; I think that it might be safe to assume that the moment of the Transfiguration might have been a time of comforting and meeting in a personal time of need. After all, *Jesus was man* too. Another

similarity I noticed; during this time of need God commissioned and charged His subjects with a task. Moses was to be a deliverer; Isaiah was to be an oracle, and Jesus a Savior. These particular examples are rather monumental in task, but when I consider the grace and mercy of God, the tasks that He commissions any of His children with is no less relative when compared to His desire for their/our obedience. Essentially, this is what it can be distilled down to...obedience and trust at its most personal and basic level.

I have to ask myself; “Would God’s plan have come crashing down, if Moses would have rejected God’s call? What if Isaiah had not announced his willingness to ‘go’?” (I think Jesus’ commission is different although it serves as example). My answer is “no.” God’s plan would have been meted out in some other way; I am sure. His covenant had been established and would not be broken by the lack of response from (a) man. The test of humanity’s earthly existence is obedience and trust. The “mountain top” experiences serve as gateways of revelation for those tests that will prove whether or not we will choose the great I AM as our LORD. I think in conclusion, that should we choose “yes” to Yahweh and determine that we live in obedient submission to Him, we will find ourselves being ministered to in a similar fashion as Jesus experienced on Mt. Tabor (not unlike the time in the wilderness when He resisted Satan and was “ministered to by angels”). God desires that we see beyond the fog of a fallen creation. In order to accomplish this feat, we must be born again becoming transformed from the vessels of flesh that we were into the creatures of spirit that we were originally designed to be. Trust and obey...for there’s no other way.

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*The following excerpt is a bonus section building on the above story and observations.*

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### **From Mountain Tops to “Mountain Top”**

The first time we met I was eight years old. I was not aware then of what the future held for our relationship, but was sure that it would be good...it just felt so right. We dated off and on for the next 6 years or so, usually coming together a couple times each week to spend some dedicated quality time together. Although the moments spent were good, there seemed that something was lacking. As is often the case in young relationships, there was failure on my part to understand that there was a responsibility required of me

to ensure the growth and maturity necessary for our mutual survival. Consequently, in large part due to my selfish needs and unreasonable demands, I fell away from the one that professed such a deep love for me.

Several more years passed and although I had not forgotten my first love, the memory was but a faint whisper fogging up a corner of my mind. I had matured physically over the years, but had remained emotionally and mentally stagnant for the most part. The years of separation had found me exploring the world at the financial expense of the US Military, but in retrospect the cost to me was exorbitantly high in terms of the skepticism and cynicism that had clouded my heart and my mind. I received my honorable discharge from the Navy in 1983 and returned to the place of my birth to find the open arms of my parents and not too surprisingly the open arms of the one I fell in love with 17 years earlier. I knew then in my heart that we could make a go of it. I felt on all accounts that it was the right thing to do, but the years of separation had brought another into my life that was competing for my affections. I resisted the tug-of-war in my heart daily for what went on for months, ignoring the pleas of my first love until I could hear them no more. Time continued to pass, as it does...and in my daily grind, I forgot the promises and the purity of the one that had loved me so deeply. I continued to chase my new love even though it had become very clear that there was no devotion to the relationship from either of us. It seemed that both of us had a great preponderance to gravitate toward the lust of the moment and our affections could easily be swayed by the twinkle of another's eye or the promise of excitement that acted as a powerful perfume luring me away from the truth of my affections.

Reality has a very abrupt way of shaking the dreamer awake and I received a very severe rattle in January of 1986. My mother had become pregnant in the summer of '85 and approximately nine weeks early to her projected due date, had gone into labor. Contrary to the best efforts of the doctors attending her, they were not able to postpone the birth of my youngest brother. I was notified of the circumstances and gravity of the situation on the morning of January 25<sup>th</sup>, 1986. I went to the hospital to personally assess the situation only to find that I was unable to enter the room where he was engaged in a struggle for his very life. The room was prepared as a sterile environment and due to his

underdevelopment; it would be inviting unnecessary risks to allow any possibility of infection or contamination to enter his space. Dejected, but understanding I returned to a common area with other relatives and was presented a photograph of my younger sibling. As I gazed at the image, the world around me began to close in...ambient noises of the world around me began to grow strangely silent. This little boy, Jonathan, measuring slightly longer than a Bic pen was teetering on the cusp of life and death. As my mind reeled in a state of primordial confusion trying to make sense of the fairness of it all, I sensed a presence about me. The presence was familiar, almost like the familiar odor of a grandparent's home. Before I had reason to identify the presence, I was awash in recognition. It was the one! Here I was emotionally ragged and mentally filthy still reeking from the scent of another...yet in a moment of great need here was my faithful love embracing me as if I had never abandoned our relationship. There were many obstacles that were yet to overcome...hills to climb and valleys to cross in the reconciliation of our relationship, but together we climbed and crossed as my brother too, grew stronger.

I wish I could say that this was the happy ending of this story, but alas, I cannot. Old habits are hard to break and as I began to get comfortable in our relationship again, the same old demons of our past started to surface. I was constantly asking for more of my needs to be met, but I was not willing to put forth any effort on my part to do anything for my other half. The more that I fed this attitude, the more I felt I was the one that was being wronged. I began to feel indifferent toward my love. I started to seek out my old haunts to get my needs met, and not too surprisingly I was quick to pick up right where I had left off before. It was no time before the cacophony of instant gratification had drowned out the sobbing of my faithful love to the point where I was no longer troubled by the guilt of giving up again so easily.

Our separation this time was a little different. I felt as if I had matured to the point where we could still be friends. In a figurative way, I kept a photo of my love in my wallet and spoke fondly to family and friends of our relationship. In many ways it was as if I was not talking of a failed relationship, but more in terms of an old friend that had moved away or perhaps even passed away. Months turned into years and as I began to survey what I was

now being able to look upon as my legacy, I was able to take stock at lessons learned and wisdom gleaned from my mistakes. I started to understand the folly of serving my own needs and began to be haunted by a recurring dream. The dream would always take the form of me, in some fashion or another chasing what was perceived as happiness...it could take the form of the perfect job, the perfect car, my ultimate dream home, winning the lottery or any other of a thousand and one “perfect” scenarios. The problem with the dream was that I always woke up only to realize I was still in pursuit of myself...doomed to the same fate as the mongrel mutt that unceasingly chases his tail...absolute and utter frustration without ever gaining the cognizant knowledge of realizing the futility of my chase. This remorseful state of existence continued for a period of years until I found myself once again being chased by the one I now referred to as my old friend.

I was invited to a concert one evening at the bequest of this friend and somewhat begrudgingly decided to go. I wasn't aware of it at the time, but my friend had arranged a meeting of sorts with their Father and another close friend. We arrived at the concert and interestingly enough it was actually an event that was being held in honor of my friend. As the celebration reached a crescendo, something very odd and different happened...I recognized the voice of my friend's Father. The voice took center stage. I couldn't hear the music anymore, and the other persons at the concert seemed distant and out of focus. My eyes began to focus on the image that was clarifying in my mind, and a voice I recognized as the Father's began to speak. He said to me, “Son, I know you and I've known you since before you were born. It was I that created you and formed you in the womb of your mother. I did not form you without purpose, but to fulfill a role specifically designed for you.” At this point the mental image became clear and I saw a curtain open and behind it was a sea of faces...some I knew and many I did not. The Father said, “It's not all about you, Son...you weren't created for your own enjoyment.” It became painfully clear to me at that point. All the persons that I had encountered since leaving Bible College and persons I had yet to encounter were behind the curtain as lost souls. The testimony of my life had been one of self-worship and gratification. The only fruit I had borne were thistles and thorns...and those only on my best days. The agony of my heart breaking at that moment exceeded any pain I have ever felt physically or emotionally in my entire life. My mind began to swirl at the moments and memories of

the past 13+ years...the example and lack of leadership I had shown my sons, the loneliness I created for my wife, persons that should have heard and seen the testimony of Christ in my life and on and on and on....I begin to weep without control. During that "cleansing", I made a commitment. I committed to the Father, my God, that I would "crucify" me then and there. I would only be resurrected on His authority. I would die to self so I could truly say "I have been crucified with Christ and it is no longer I that live, but Christ that lives in me." I would be the husband and father the Bible instructs me to be. I would bear fruit as I was created to do. I would worship Him and develop a relationship with Him as He has designed for us all.

It is probably clear by now, who this love of my life is. If it is not, I'll say it out loud... it is and always has been, JESUS. He has never left me and His faithful promise is that He never will. Although my track record is blighted and riddled with pock marks, in His eyes I am as clean as clean can be. I'm covered you see, by His love. I understand now what I could never get right for the past 32 years...it's not about me. Christ doesn't live to serve my needs, I live to serve Him and His creation...This wonderful epiphany has set me free...free from chasing myself, free from chasing the trappings of this life and most importantly free from the bondage of sin and death. If you are not free, you can be...you see the Truth, Jesus, is chasing you as well. Turn around, open your arms, embrace Him and let Him catch you too.

**"...All blessings be to the Most High God, Praise the Lord Jesus!"**