

and addressed by the voice of Jesus. From being a persecutor of the Jewish Christians he joined their ranks and, as Paul, spread the Gospel message around the Mediterranean.

As in Moses' case, this seems like empowerment, resulting from a vision. However, elsewhere in the New Testament Paul described a near-death experience. In this case he approached it obliquely and with reluctance:

I am obliged to boast. It does no good; but I shall go on to tell of visions and revelations granted by the Lord. I know a Christian man who fourteen years ago (whether in the body or out of it, I do not know—God knows) was caught up as far as the third heaven. And I know that this same man (whether in the body or out of it, I do not know—God knows) was caught up into paradise, and heard words so secret that human lips may not repeat them. (II Corinthians 12:1-4)

Both Moses' burning bush and the light that blinded Saul/Paul thus seem more likely to have been visions or hallucinations, that is, perceptions without objective reality. This is not to diminish their powerful vividness and immediacy, but to apply the findings of modern medical science, and therefore to locate them, along with NDEs and out-of-body experiences, within the brain of the experiencer.

References

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