

CALL OF MOSES

Exodus 2:11-23; chapters 3 & 4

Moses grew up as a prince in Egypt.

One day he watched his people, the Hebrews, being forced to work hard as slaves by the Egyptians. He was upset at the way his people were being treated.

When he saw one of the Hebrews being badly treated by an Egyptian he looked around to check no one was watching ...

... then, Moses attacked the Egyptian, killing him. He buried the dead man's body in the sand.

The next day he saw two Hebrews fighting and went across to stop them. 'Why are you hitting a fellow Hebrew?' he asked.

'Who made you ruler over us?' came the reply. 'Are you going to kill us like you killed the Egyptian yesterday?' Moses was afraid. People knew he had murdered an Egyptian.

When Pharaoh found out, he gave orders that Moses should be killed. But Moses ran away, left the country and hid in the far-away wilderness of Midian.

Moses rested by a well. The seven daughters of a local priest of Midian came to draw water from the well for their father's flock.

But some shepherds arrived and pushed the women away so they could get water for their flocks first.

So Moses got up, came to their rescue and watered their flocks.

When the girls returned to their father, Jethro (Reuel), he asked why they were back so soon. They explained how an Egyptian had helped them. 'Invite him for something to eat,' Jethro told his daughters.

Moses was not only invited to the meal but to stay with the family.

Moses agreed and later married Zipporah, one of Jethro's daughters. They had a son who Moses named Gershom. It meant, 'I have become a foreigner in a foreign land'.

Some time later Pharaoh died and a new Pharaoh came to rule. The Hebrew slaves cried out to God to rescue them.

God heard their cries for help and remembered His promises to His people. He had a plan to rescue them – and Moses, who was looking after sheep in the wilderness, was part of that plan.

Moses was looking after the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro. He led them to the far side of the wilderness to graze, by a mountain called Horeb.

He watched a bush that had caught fire and noticed it did not burn up.

So Moses decided to take a closer look. Suddenly God called to him from inside the burning bush, ‘Moses.’ ‘Here I am Lord,’ Moses replied.

God told Moses to take off his shoes for he was on holy ground. ‘I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob,’ God announced. At this, Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look at God.

God told Moses that he had seen the suffering of the Hebrew slaves. He was going to rescue them and lead them to a land of milk and honey where they would be free.

‘Go to Pharaoh and bring my people out of Egypt’, God instructed. Moses started making excuses. ‘Who am I to do this?’

God promised to be with Moses. He also promised that He would make a way for the Hebrews to come and worship Him on this mountain.

‘But if I go to the Hebrew leaders, who shall I say sent me?’ asked Moses.

Tell them, ‘I AM WHO I AM, has sent you. I am the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. My name is forever.’

God instructed Moses to go to the leaders of Israel with the message God was going to rescue them from slavery and lead them to the land He had promised. Moses and the leaders were then to tell Pharaoh to let the Hebrews go and worship the Lord God in the wilderness.

Moses still kept making excuses. ‘But what if they won’t listen to me?’ he said.

God asked Moses what he held in his hand. ‘A staff,’ replied Moses. ‘Throw it to the ground,’ said the Lord.

When he threw his staff to the ground it became a snake. Moses was scared and jumped away from it. ‘Reach out your hand and take the snake by the tail,’ said the Lord.

As Moses grabbed the snake’s tail, it turned back into a staff. ‘This sign will help them believe,’ said the Lord God. ‘Now put your hand inside your cloak.’

Moses put his hand inside his cloak but when he pulled it back out it was white with a terrible skin disease called leprosy. ‘Now put your hand back in your cloak,’ God ordered.

When Moses pulled his hand out from his cloak a second time his hand was healed.

‘If the Hebrew leaders don’t believe these two signs then take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. I will make the water turn to blood,’ the Lord told Moses.

But Moses still kept making excuses. ‘I find it hard to speak well or very clearly.’ ‘Who gave people their mouths?’ replied the Lord. ‘I will help you speak and teach you what to say.’

But Moses still made excuses. ‘Please send someone else to do this.’

God was angry with Moses. ‘Your brother, Aaron the Levite, can speak well. He is on his way to meet you. He will be your spokesman. Take your staff in your hand so you will be able to perform miracles.’

So Moses returned to his father-in law Jethro and asked his permission to return to his people in Egypt.

Aaron had already been told by God to travel to meet them. Moses put his wife and sons on donkeys ready for the journey. ‘The Egyptians who remembered what you did and wanted revenge are now all dead,’ God reassured Moses.

The two brothers met up at Mount Horeb, the mountain of God, and welcomed each other.

Moses shared with Aaron all that God had told him. Then they all set off for Egypt to tell the Hebrew leaders that God had plans to rescue them.

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