

Chapter Twelve – God Calls Moses

One day while Moses was looking after his father-in-law's sheep and goats, he led them deep into the desert till he reached the mountain of Horeb. There he sat down and looked across the Red Sea to the land of Egypt where his family was. As he was doing so, he saw a dried bush bursting into flames. It was a common sight so he paid no attention to it. But when the bush kept on burning he said to himself, "There is something strange about that bush. I must go and examine it."

When he came nearer, he heard God's voice saying, "Moses, Moses, do not come nearer; take off your shoes for you are standing on holy ground." He removed his shoes and bowed down to the ground. Then God said, "I am the God your fathers worshipped, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I know my people are suffering from slavery in Egypt. I have come to rescue them, and to take them away to a land with rich pastures. I am sending you to Pharaoh to lead my people out of Egypt. When my people leave, they will leave with the riches of the Egyptians."

At this Moses was reluctant and afraid and said, "But I am just a nobody. How can I do this?"

"I will be with you," God answered.

Moses was still afraid to go as he was not a convincing speaker so he pleaded, "What if I appear before the people with this message and they do not believe me?" God said to him, "Put your staff on the ground." The staff immediately turned into a snake. When Moses held it up, it turned back into a staff. Then God told him to put his hand in his pocket. When he took his hand out, it was covered with white spots like some kind of disease. God also taught him to perform a third miracle by turning the water from the River Nile into blood. God said, "In this way, the people will believe that you are sent by their God." However Moses was still not willing to go and persuade his people to leave Egypt. He was so convinced that he could not be their leader because of his poor presentation skills.

God comforted him and said, "Aaron, your brother, will speak for you and assist you. And with your staff, you can perform miracles." God then instructed him to gather all the Israelite leaders and go with them to Pharaoh and say to him, "The Lord God of the Israelites demands that you free his people from slavery and let them go. If you refuse to do so, he shall send plagues on your people."

Moses and Aaron went into the palace of Pharaoh and said to him, "The Lord of Israel demands that you let his people out of Egypt." But Pharaoh answered, "Who is this Lord that I must obey him? I do not know any such God as this and I will not let the Israelites go." When they had left, Pharaoh made the Israelites work even harder instead of letting them go. The Israelites blamed Moses and Aaron for making matters worse by seeing Pharaoh.



God speaks to Moses from a burning bush

Questions:

1. Why was Moses reluctant to accept God's mission?
2. How should we behave when we are "standing on holy ground," such as in church?
3. How did God help Moses to fulfill his mission? Give TWO ways.
4. Which TWO qualities does a great leader need? Explain with reference to Moses' story.
5. Describe the life of slaves in Moses' time.
6. Why are some people afraid to do what is good?