

MOSES CALLED BY GOD

Exodus 3 - 4

STRUCTURE

Key-person: Moses

Key-locations: Midian and Mount Horeb

Key-repetitions:

- Israelites suffered in Egypt (Ex 1:7, 11-12, 13-14, 15-18, 22; 2:11, 23-24; 3:7-9).
- The Lord was aware of the Israelites' suffering (Ex 3:7-9, 16-17).
- The Lord is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ex 3:6, 15, 16; 4:5).
- The Lord's actions in favor of the Israelites: I have seen the misery of my people (Ex 3:7); I have heard them crying out for deliverance (Ex 3:7); I have come down to rescue them (Ex 3:8); I am sending you to bring my people out of Egypt (Ex 3:10).
- Moses objected to returning to Egypt and God answered his objections (Ex 3:11-12, 13-18; 4:1-9, 10-12, 13-17).

Key-attitudes:

- Moses' insecurity when the Lord commanded him to return to Egypt.
- God's anger at Moses when he kept refusing to return to Egypt.

Initial-situation:

Moses was a forty year old man and he went to watch his own people at their hard labor. He saw an Egyptian beating one of his relatives. Moses killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. Pharaoh heard about it and tried to kill Moses, but Moses fled to the land of Midian and lived with Jethro the priest.

The Israelites groaned under their slavery and cried out. God heard their cries and he remembered his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Initial-problem:

Moses was shepherd to his father-in-law's flock. On one occasion, God's angel appeared to Moses in flames of fire blazing within a bush. Moses saw the burning bush that wasn't consumed by fire.

Final-situation:

The Lord sent Aaron into the desert to meet his brother Moses. Moses told Aaron everything the Lord had told him to speak, and about the miraculous signs God had commanded him to do.

BIBLE STORY

God Speaks to Moses from a Burning Bush

Moses was shepherd to his father-in-law's flock for forty years. On one occasion, Moses led the flock to the far side of the desert to Horeb, the Mountain of God. God's angel appeared to Moses in flames of fire blazing from a bush. Moses saw the burning bush that wasn't consumed by fire. Moses investigated why the bush didn't burn up (Ex 3:1-3).

The Lord called out from within the bush, "Moses! Moses! Remove your sandals. You're standing on holy ground! I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out for deliverance from their slave masters. I have come down to rescue them from the grip of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a land flowing with milk and honey. I am sending you back to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt" (Ex 3:1-10).

Moses objected and gave God reasons why he couldn't bring the Israelites out of Egypt. God answered his every objection (Ex 3:13 - 4:31).

1st Moses objected, "Who am I, that I should go? God answered, "I will be with you" (Ex 3:11-12).

2nd Moses objected, "Suppose they ask me, 'What is his name?'" God answered, "I AM WHO I AM" (Ex 3:12-22).

3rd Moses objected, "What if they don't believe me or listen to me?" The Lord gave Moses three miraculous signs.

1st Miraculous Sign

The Lord commanded Moses, "Throw your staff on the ground."

Moses threw his staff on the ground. It became a snake. Moses jumped back! Then the Lord told Moses, "Reach out and grab it by the tail." Moses reached out and grabbed the snake and it turned back into a staff (Ex 4:1-5).

2nd Miraculous Sign

The Lord commanded Moses, "Put your hand inside your shirt. Moses put his hand into his shirt. Moses removed his hand and it had turned leprous, like snow.

God said to Moses, "Now put your hand back into your shirt." Moses put his hand back into his shirt, and when he removed his hand, it was healthy like the rest of his flesh (Ex 4:6-7).

3rd Miraculous Sign

The Lord said, "If they don't believe you after those two signs, take some water from the Nile River and pour it on dry ground. The water will become blood when it hits the ground" (Ex 4:8-9).

4th Moses objected, "Lord, I don't speak eloquently. I stutter and stammer." The Lord answered, "Who gave man his mouth?" (Ex 4:10-12).

5th Moses objected, "Lord, send someone else to do it." The Lord became angry with Moses and told him, "Your brother Aaron is good with words. You'll tell Aaron what

to say. He'll speak to the people for you. He'll be as your mouth and you will decide what comes out of it. Now take this staff in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it!" (Ex 4:13-17).

Moses Sets Out for Egypt

Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt. Moses took the staff of God in his hand (Ex 4:19-23).

The Lord sent Aaron into the desert to meet Moses, his brother. Moses told Aaron everything the Lord had told him to speak, and about the miraculous signs God had commanded him to do (Ex 4:24-28).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

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| 1. What catches your attention in the story? | 5. How did the characters face their problems? |
| 2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand? | 6. How have you faced similar problems? |
| 3. Who are the main characters in the story? | 7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you? |
| 4. What problems did the characters face? | 8. What does the story tell about God? |

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How many years did Moses work as a shepherd?
2. When does age become a hindrance to serving God?
3. How did God get Moses' attention in order to communicate with him?
4. Describe the occasion when God spoke to Moses about returning to Egypt.
5. What excuses did Moses give for not returning to Egypt, and what answers did God give Moses?
6. Today, how do people resist following God's plans for their lives?
7. What means has God used to communicate with you?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **Crisis situations exist when God's presence and intervention are the only things that prevent his people from being totally destroyed.** The Israelites were similar to the burning bush that was in danger of being totally destroyed. Just as the presence of God within the burning bush prevented its being consumed, his presence with Israel prevented Pharaoh from destroying them (Ex 3:1-3).
2. **People understand who God is by both his acts of salvation and his spoken revelation.** God would reveal himself to Israel by his acts of redeeming them from slavery. He also revealed himself by his spoken word to Moses and to others through Bible history. For the rest of Bible history, God is known as the one who brought Israel out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery (Ex 20:2).

3. **God may use unexpected means to speak to people.** Moses did not expect God to communicate to him through a burning bush. Moses investigated the burning bush, and God spoke to him (Ex 3:2-4).
4. **God is eternal.** God has always existed, and he will always exist. God told Moses to inform the Israelites that "I Am" had given him orders. That means that God never had a beginning, will never have an ending, and he is independent of all people and of all things (Ex 3:14).
5. **Any place where a person is aware that God is present and communicating becomes "Holy Ground."** Horeb, also called Sinai, was the place where God revealed himself to Moses (Ex 3:2) and where, later on, God gave the Law to his people (Ex 3:12; chapters 19-20). The things God said and did on the mountain were what made it "Holy Ground." It becomes "Holy Ground" wherever a person studies the Bible or becomes aware that God is speaking.
6. **When God chooses a person for a task, his presence enables the chosen one to do the job.** God told Moses he was sending him to Pharaoh to bring the Israelites out of Egypt. Moses objected, "Why me? Who am I, that I should go?" God answered that he would be with Moses (Ex 3:10-12). When Moses complained that he did not speak eloquently, the Lord answered, "Who gave man his mouth?" (Ex 4:10-12). The Lord promised that he would teach Moses and Aaron what to say (Ex 4:14-16).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

1. **Role-playing Drama:**
Have someone portray Moses, after the burning-bush experience, telling his father-in-law why he must return to Egypt.
2. **Sharing Groups:**
Invite the listeners to divide into small groups of three or four. Encourage each one to share one area where they tend to resist God's leadership, and a truth about God that should enable them to do his will.