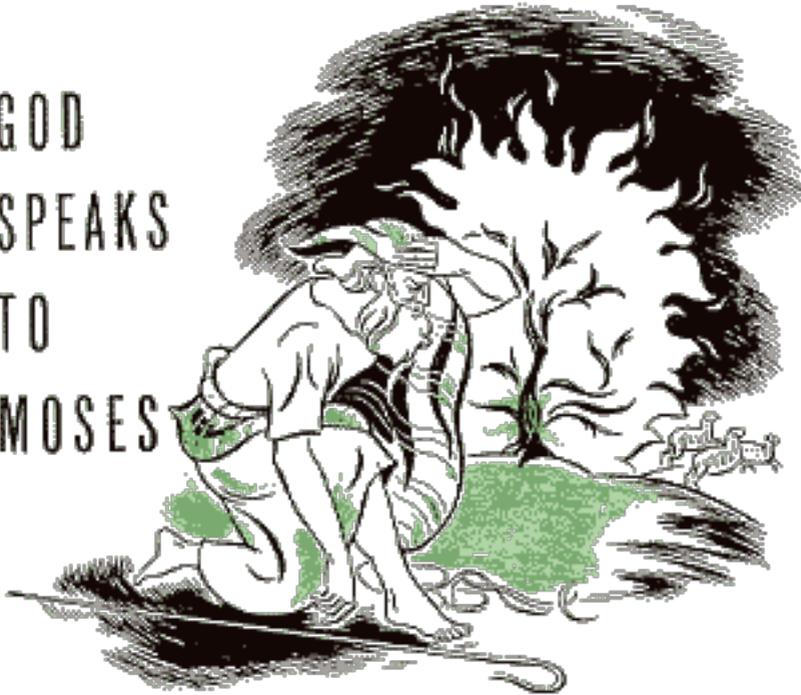


GOD SPEAKS TO MOSES

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PERHAPS you are wondering how the little boy Moses got along after the king's daughter found him in that tiny, basket-like boat floating around among the leaves at the edge of the river. He was well taken care of, you may be sure, because, as I told you, the king's daughter hired Moses' own mother to nurse him.

Really, you see, it was God who was taking care of Moses, because God had a great work for him to do, and nothing whatever can harm those whom God wishes to protect. Just because that wicked Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, decided that all the baby boys of the Hebrews should be killed, it didn't mean that God couldn't take care of Moses. That is something we should always remember. And now probably you are wondering what great work God had for Moses to do.

Well, as you know, Egypt was not the country God promised to the Hebrew people, the children of Abraham. They were in Egypt because years and years before this, Joseph, one of the twelve sons

of Jacob, was sold by his brothers as a slave and taken there, and later he became a great ruler over the people.

Then, when there was a famine in Canaan, the real home of the Hebrews, the rest of the family also went to Egypt, where they were cared for by Joseph. I am sure you remember that wonderful story. It's a true story, too, because it is in the Bible, and we know that the Bible is true.

But now the Hebrew people were having a very hard time in Egypt. They were all slaves, and God wanted to deliver them from their taskmasters and take them back into the land of Canaan which he had promised to their father, Abraham. God knew that when Moses became a man he would be just the right person to lead all the Israelites out of Egypt, so that is why God was taking care of him. And God knew something else, too! God knows everything. He knows things even before they happen!

God knew that Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, would not want to let the Israelites leave the country. You see, they were doing a lot of hard work for the Egyptians, and if they left, the Egyptians would have to do this work themselves. So you can be sure that Pharaoh did all he could to keep them in Egypt.

God knew that whoever was to lead his people out of Egypt would need to know how to talk to the king, for he would have to appear before him to ask permission for the Hebrews to leave. Wasn't it wonderful how God arranged for Moses to learn all he needed to know so that he could do this? You see, he was being cared for and educated right in the royal palace.

But there was someone who spent more time with Moses than anyone else in the palace, and that was his own mother. That dear mother knew about God's promise to Abraham, and she knew that the Hebrews were merely visitors in Egypt. You may be sure that she would keep telling Moses about the many wonderful things God had done for their people, and what he had promised to do for them. She would tell him about Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, and about the promise God had made to them of a time coming when he

would bless all the people of the world, and that the One to do this would come from the Hebrew people.

The Jewish people believed these wonderful promises of God. They believed God would raise up a man from among them to be this great Leader, and that through him all of God's promises would come true.

The Hebrew name for this great Leader was "Messiah."

But the other nations didn't believe God's promises, and they thought the Jewish people were foolish to believe in a coming Messiah. It is the same today. A great many people think we are foolish to believe the promises of the Bible, but such people are very much mistaken. Don't ever think it is foolish to believe that the promises of the Bible will come true.

Moses' mother believed the promises of God, and so did Moses. And Moses didn't care if the Egyptians did think he was foolish. He believed God's promises just the same. You can see that Moses must have had a hard time while he was growing up. He believed what his mother told him about God and the promises of God, and the Egyptians in the king's palace probably made fun of him. Maybe they told him he was crazy; but he did not care what the Egyptians thought of him, because he knew better.

One day when he was forty years old—a grown-up man—he was out walking and saw an Egyptian man beating one of the Hebrews. Moses loved God, and because he loved God he also loved God's people. He just couldn't stand seeing one of God's people beaten, so what do you suppose he did? Why, he killed that Egyptian! Now that wasn't the right thing to do. It is really better to suffer wrong than to do wrong. Moses buried the Egyptian in the sand, hoping no one would find out about it.

The second day after, however, he discovered that at least one of the Hebrews knew what he had done, and that made him wonder how many more might know about it. Now Moses was really in trouble. Even the king had heard what he had done, and decided that Moses would have to die.

But God still loved Moses, and helped him to escape from Egypt, but he did have some very trying experiences. It didn't seem now as though Moses would ever be able to lead God's people out of Egypt! But God knew how it could be done. He knew that this would be a good experience for Moses, and that he could learn some very valuable lessons from it.

This is a very good thing for us to remember, also. Pleasant things are not always best for us. Sometimes we might seem to be having a great deal of trouble, but later we learn that it was just what we needed.

And that's the way it turned out with Moses. When he fled out of Egypt to save his life, he went into the land of Midian. He was a stranger in Midian, and not having anything particular to do, and wondering probably just how God would guide him, he sat down by a large well and watched the shepherds as they brought their flocks to the well for water.

As he sat there, seven young maidens came to water their father's flock. The shepherds who were watering their own flocks didn't want these young ladies to get water, so they chased them away. Now, Moses didn't like that at all, so he argued with them until the young ladies got some water, and he helped them water their flock. When the maidens returned to the home of their father and told him what this nice young man had done, their father sent for Moses. The father's name was Jethro, and Jethro liked Moses so much that he offered him his daughter Zipporah in marriage. Moses accepted the offer and married her. Thus he became one of the family.

Then Moses went to work for Jethro, taking care of his sheep. He worked there as a shepherd for forty years. Now, how old would that make Moses? You add it up! He was forty years old when he left Egypt, and he worked forty years for Jethro, his father-in-law, which altogether was eighty years, wasn't it? Moses was quite an old man by now, but he was still strong and healthy, and able to do the great work which God had for him to do.

And then a wonderful thing occurred. One day as Moses was watching the sheep, his attention was attracted to a bush which

seemed to be on fire. He went closer to the bush, and noticed that while flames were leaping up from it, the bush itself was not being destroyed by the fire. Moses saw at once that this was no ordinary fire. Then he heard a voice speaking to him, telling him to take off his shoes because he was standing on holy ground. You see God was there with him, only he didn't know it then.

But soon he realized who was speaking to him. It was the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob. This was no stranger, then, who spoke to Moses from the burning bush. Moses' mother, as we have learned, had told him about this wonderful God who had made promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. It was the God of the Hebrews, and therefore Moses' God, who was speaking to him.

God said to Moses that the time had come for the Israelites, Moses' people, who were also God's people, to be delivered from their slavery in Egypt. He also told Moses that he was the one to lead the people out of Egypt. Forty years before this Moses was very brave when he killed that Egyptian. But now it was different. He now told God that he didn't think he would be able to do such a great work. Of course, Moses could not do it by himself. That is just what God wanted him to learn; so God told Moses that he would give him all the help he needed. He told him that he would arrange for his brother Aaron to go with him when he appeared before Pharaoh, and that Aaron, who was a good talker, would speak for Moses. When Moses learned that God would help him, he agreed to do his very best. That's all anybody can do, isn't it? All of us should remember that we cannot do anything for God unless he helps us. We should remember, also, that because God does help us, we can do anything for him that he wants us to do. It is grand to do things for God, and to know that God is helping us to do them!

QUESTIONS

- How did the Hebrew people get along in Egypt, and why was it that God did not want them to remain there?

- Why did Moses find it necessary to leave Egypt when he grew to manhood, and where did he go?
- Who became the wife of Moses, and how long did he live in the home of his father-in-law?
- Who was it that spoke to Moses from a bush that was burning, and what did he ask Moses to do?

Dawn Bible Students Association