

Moses at the Burning Bush

Key Verses: *“Behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them. Come now therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou mayest bring forth my people the children of Israel out of Egypt.”*
—Exodus 3:9,10

Selected Scripture:
Exodus 3:1-12

OUR LESSON OPENS WITH

Moses at eighty years of age shepherding his father-in-law Jethro’s flock near Mount Horeb. Forty years earlier, Moses was the second most powerful man in Egypt, behind only Pharaoh. At that time, he forsook his position in Egypt, supposing that his Hebrew brethren would rejoice in having him as their leader and lawgiver. However, Moses was greatly disappointed when he discovered that his kinsmen had no such loyal feeling toward him. They declared, “Who made thee a prince and a judge over us?” (Exod. 2:14) At forty years old, and now under threat from Pharaoh due to his forsaking of Egypt, Moses was

forced to flee into the land of Midian to save his life.

The next forty years of Moses’ life was a period of isolation. During this time, his former lifestyle of refinement and honor among men changed dramatically. Now he lived in seclusion, serving as a shepherd of Jethro’s flocks. After many years of working in this humble occupation, Moses

had a most unusual experience. While tending flocks pastured near Mount Horeb, he caught sight of something most unusual on the mount. A bush was on fire, yet it was not consumed. The longer he gazed the more curious he became. Finally, Moses resolved to investigate, and made his way to the burning bush. (chap. 3:2,3) From the bush came a voice declaring the phenomenon to be a manifestation of God's presence and power. Moses obeyed the command that he should take off his sandals, because it was holy ground on which he stood. He covered his face in reverence while he listened to the Divine message.—vss. 4-6

God's message reminded Moses of the foundation for his hopes and those of the Israelites. The statement, "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," gave indication to Moses as to what this experience meant. Herein was God's reminder of the special promises which he had given to Abraham, and had renewed with Isaac and Jacob for an everlasting covenant. Thus, Moses was assured that God had not forgotten the good things which he had promised, and his faith and hope were re-established. As our Key Verses indicate, God's due time had come for the deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt, and he had chosen Moses as his human instrument to accomplish this great task.

As God's people, how often we find that we have experiences somewhat along the line of Moses. Frequently, we may feel a letdown when our efforts and plans for good works are initially rejected, only to find later that the Lord's hand was able to bring blessings to us and others out of our disappointments. How encouraging it is to learn that these lessons have been ordered by the Lord to better prepare us for future usefulness in his service. Let us have increased courage, stronger faith, and greater trust in God, even when we cannot trace him, knowing that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."—Rom. 8:28 ■