

# The Burning Bush

---

## MEMORY VERSE:

*"And God said, 'I will be with you'"*

Exodus 3:12

---

Moses stayed with his father and mother while he was small. They taught him about God. They told him how God had looked after Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. They told him about the promises God had made to His people. Moses grew up to love and trust God. He also saw how hard his parents worked as slaves to the Egyptians. He wished that God would help them.

When Moses grew older, he went to live in the royal palace. The princess who found him among the bulrushes was his new "mother". Moses had many fine clothes and an easy, happy life at the palace. But he never forgot he real family or that he was an Israelite and not an Egyptian.

One day, when Moses was grown up, he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite slave. Moses was very angry. He hated to see people treated cruelly, especially his own people. He was so angry that he hit the Egyptian and killed him.

When he saw what he had done, he quickly buried the Egyptian in the sand and ran away. But someone had seen Moses kill the man and when Pharaoh heard about it, he wanted to kill Moses. So Moses left Egypt and went to a land far away called Midian.

Moses was very tired from his journey and came to a well and sat down to have a drink and rest. While there, some women came to water their father's flocks. When they reached the well, some shepherds close by chased them away. Moses was angry. He stood up and helped them water their flocks.

The women and their father, Jethro, were very grateful to Moses for helping them. They invited Moses to stay with them. So he did, and looked after their flocks for many years. He eventually married Zipporah, one of Jethro's daughters and they had two sons.

Meanwhile, in Egypt, the Israelites prayed to God. They asked him to save them from the Egyptians, who were very cruel to them. God listened to their prayers. He was now ready to save them and God had chosen Moses for this task.

God had been working in Moses' life. First Moses was brought up by his Israelite mother. He learned to love God and to love his own people. Next he stayed for many years at the palace and was an Egyptian prince. He learned to be a great soldier and leader. But Moses also needed to be patient and humble. He needed to learn to trust in God's power instead of his own. Moses learned this while he was a shepherd in the land of Midian. Now Moses was ready for the work God had chosen for him.

One day, Moses took the sheep a long way to find grass. He went to the edge of the desert by Mount Horeb. There he saw something very strange. A bush was on fire on

the hillside; it was burning, but not burning away. Moses climbed up to see this strange fire.

As Moses came near to the bush an angel called out to him: "Moses! Moses!". The angel told him to take off his shoes, because he was standing on holy ground. God then told Moses that He had heard the prayers of the Israelites and He was going to save them. God told Moses he had been chosen to lead the Israelites through the wilderness to the land of Canaan. God told Moses to go back to Egypt and to ask Pharaoh to let the Israelites go.

Moses did not think he could do such a great work. But God promised him that He would be with him and help him. God told Moses His great name: "I will be who I will be".

God then gave Moses two signs to show the Israelites and Pharaoh. The signs would show that God had sent him. God told Moses to throw down his shepherd's rod on the ground. When Moses threw it down it turned into a snake and slithered along the ground. When Moses picked it up again it turned back into his rod.

Then God told Moses to put his hand inside his coat. When Moses took his hand out, it was white with the disease of leprosy. Moses put his hand inside his coat again and this time when he took it out, it was healed.

Moses was still worried about the great work God had given him to do. So God sent Aaron, Moses' brother to help him. Moses and Aaron went together back to Egypt. They showed God's signs to the Israelites who were overjoyed that God would save them from their slavery.

Then Moses and Aaron went to ask Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. But Pharaoh was angry. "Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?" he asked. "I will never let the people go." Pharaoh was so angry that he made the Israelites work harder than ever and the people burdened down with the work became angry too.

Pharaoh had to learn the hard way that he could not disobey God and he was soon to learn about the power of God. In the end, he had to obey God and let the Israelites go.

### **Things to Remember**

- Moses' parents taught him to love God.
- Moses was a shepherd for forty years in Midian.
- God told Moses to go to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let the people go.

### **Discussion**

Moses was 80 years old when he went back to Egypt to lead his people out of slavery. During those 80 years God had been working with Moses' character so he would be the right kind of person for the job. God works out His plans on a timescale that we might feel impatient with. We may feel things should get going a little faster. But God knows better than we do. We should also never be afraid of doing what is right. God will always help us as he helped Moses.

Why did Moses leave Egypt?

What strange thing did Moses see in the wilderness?

Why did God give Moses two miracles to show the people?

### **Activity Suggestions**

Make a picture of the burning bush. Perhaps use coloured cellophane or tissue paper to make it look like fire.

Thin down some plain white glue and paint the outside of a baby food jar with it. (You don't need to paint the bottom, just around the sides.) Stick small pieces of coloured tissue paper all around the jar and let dry. You can also paint over the tissue paper with the glue to seal it if you want, but that's not necessary. Now drop in a votive or tealight candle. The light of the burning candle looks pretty shining through the colored bits of paper -- but make sure once it is burning that you keep it out of reach of your little ones.