

THE STORY OF MOSES

Aunt Hattie's Bible Stories

by

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There is a free paraphrase of Scripture passages in use quite frequently throughout this book in the interest of youthful minds.

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CHAPTER FIVE

MOSES, CALLED OF GOD

One day when Moses was tending sheep on the side of Mt. Horeb, the mountain of God, he saw a strange sight. A thorn bush was on fire. As he watched it he saw that it did not burn to ashes, but just kept on burning, standing as it was.

Moses said, **"I will now turn aside to see this great sight why the bush is not burned."**

When God saw that He had Moses' attention He called to him out of the bush, **"Moses, Moses!"**

"Here I am," answered Moses, and God said, **"Moses, do not come any nearer to this bush, take off your shoes, for you are standing on holy ground."**

As Moses stood there and God talked to him, he began to understand what God was showing him. *"Why, sure enough, that bush is just like my poor brethren,"* he may have thought. *"Egypt is like a fiery furnace that has been trying all these years to burn them up, but the hotter the fire the stronger the nation."*

Then God said, **"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."** Moses hid his face for he was afraid to look upon God.

The Lord went on to tell him some very wonderful things, so wonderful that Moses found it hard to believe what he had heard.

The Lord said, **"I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them out of the land of Egypt unto a land flowing with milk and honey;**

“Now, therefore, 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 you unto Pharaoh, that you may bring forth my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt.”

And Moses said, **“Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should lead forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”**

After years of herding sheep on the mountainside we see what a change has come over Moses. When he left the palace in Egypt he thought he was able to deliver his people in his own power. Now he is so humble in spirit that he thinks he cannot do so even in God’s power.

But God told him He would certainly be with him, and for a reward He would promise that Moses and the children of Israel would serve Him on that very mountain, which meant that they would be brought out of Egypt.

Moses found it all difficult to understand and said to God, **“Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?”**

God answered in the most wonderful way for He said, **“Moses, tell them I AM hath sent you unto them.”**

I AM, that is a very strange name, isn’t it? What did God mean by calling Himself I AM? I really think that of all the names we have of God in the Bible I AM is the greatest. It is just as though God took a book of blank checks, signed all of them and then let Moses and his people fill them out on the bank of heaven.

In the language of today the checks might read,—

Pay to the order of (name) the food he needs.

Signed I AM, THE PROVIDER.

Or

Pay to the order of (name) the money he needs.

Signed I AM, THE BANKER.

“You can fill out that I AM, Moses with anything you need and I will stand back of it.”

God then told Moses more of what He wanted him to say to the children of Israel. ***“The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this I AM is my name forever.”***

God told Moses that when he got to Goshen, in Egypt, where the people of Israel lived, he should have a meeting of the chief men and tell them that God had come and talked to him, had told him that He had seen what was being done in Egypt. He was ready to lead them out of their troubles back to the land of Canaan, a land that flowed with milk and honey, which meant a land where there was plenty of food and all things necessary for their comfort.

“Yes,” God said to Moses, **“they will listen to you. Then, with the older men of Israel, you must go up to the palace of king Pharaoh and make this request, ‘The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us; now let us go, we beseech you, three days’ journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God.’”**

God warned Moses that although they would ask the king’s permission to go, he would by no means let them.

And God said that He would stretch out His hand in great punishments over Egypt which would finally persuade Pharaoh to let them go. When they did at last get away they would not go empty; that is, God would see that they had plenty to take along. You see, Israel had been forced to work for many years without pay, but we shall see later how that turned out.

After these wonderful words from God, Moses still objected to going and said, **“But behold, they will not believe me, nor harken to my voice, for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto you.”**

How patient God was with this man whom He had called to do a great task. Moses was unable to trust himself, yes, even after many promises, was unable to trust God.

God gave him three signs that would show the unbelieving people that He had truly sent him.

First God said, **“Moses, what is that in your hand?”**

Moses answered, **“Why, that is my shepherd’s crook (or rod).”**

“Throw it down on the ground,” said God. Moses threw it down and what happened ? It became a wriggling snake and Moses ran away from it.

Then the Lord commanded, **“Pick it up by the tail.”**

Moses put out his hand and caught the snake by the tail and it became a rod again. God told Moses that if the people of Israel doubted that He had sent him that he should show them this sign. God would give him power at any time to turn his rod into a snake and back again to a rod.

Second, God said to Moses, **“Put your hand into your bosom,”** inside of his cloak just over his heart. Moses obeyed and then God said, **“Now, pull your hand out,”** and oh, how terrible! His hand was covered with that dreadful disease, leprosy.

“Put your hand in again and pull it out.” When Moses did so his hand was healed and there was no sign of leprosy on it.

One Bible teacher suggests that the heart stands for what we are and the hand for what we do.

What we are in our hearts, that we finally do. These two signs, rod and hand, were illustrations of preparation for service. Moses used his rod in tending sheep, but the rod was of no use without the hand to guide it. Moses was to be a rod in God’s hand and he would be of no use without God to guide him.

Then in the other sign: Moses put his hand over his heart the second time then God cleansed it. The hand that holds the rod of God’s power must be a cleansed hand, doing its work from a new heart.

God gave Moses one more sign. He said that if, after the sign of the rod and of leprosy, the people would not believe, then he was to go down to the river and dip up some water, and pour it on the ground and it would become blood.

Now wouldn’t you think that after God had talked to Moses out of the burning bush and had given him all of these wonderful signs that he would have answered, ***“Yes, Lord, I believe and I will go, do and say all that you want me to.”***

It’s sad, but Moses did everything he could to get out of going! Do you ever do that? I think I do.

God tells us what He wants us to do and many times we say, “Oh, I don’t want to do that,” and we miss a great blessing.

Moses thought of another excuse. He said, ***“O my Lord, I am not eloquent, I have never been and I am not now. I am a slow speaker, I hesitate and stammer.”***

God said, ***“Who made man’s mouth? Or, who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or the blind? have not I, the Lord? Now, therefore go, and I will be with your mouth, and teach you what you shall say.”***

I think Moses should have answered, “Lord, You know what a poor speaker I am, but you said that You would be with me and teach me, so I am ready to take You at Your word.”

God’s patience was wonderful with this man when he was timid and afraid, but when He saw that Moses did not believe Him then God was displeased. It is all right to be humble and meek, but when God calls us we must obey because we know He is able to provide what we lack.

But Moses was very willful and unbelieving and said, ***“O my Lord, send someone else.”*** Did Moses realize that he was turning down the high honor of being God’s only messenger to Israel and Egypt?

God said, *“Very well, if you refuse then I’ll take Aaron, your brother, I know he is a good speaker, and by the way, he is coming out to meet you and he will be glad to see you. And you shall tell him what to say, and I will be with your mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what you shall do. And he shall be your spokesman to the people: and he shall be to you instead of a mouth, and you shall be to him instead of God. And you shall take this rod in your hand with which you shall do signs.”*

Moses had a strange experience that day. As he led the flock home that evening and put them in the sheep-fold he must have thought of his past life as well as the events of the day.

Perhaps his thoughts were like this:

“I am eighty years old, I was with my father and mother just a few years and in the court of Egypt nearly forty years. When I left the palace to visit my family I thought I knew about all there was to know. I came over here a fugitive and here I have been herding sheep for forty years.

“God has been teaching me to know how small I am and how great He is. It just seemed today that I couldn’t do what He asked me to do. It will be hard work to bring this nation Israel out of Egypt. I guess I know for I lived there a long time and I learned how selfish and determined the Egyptians are. I am ashamed though, for God, my God, said He would guide me.”

When he got to the house he asked Jethro, his father-in-law, if he could go into the land of Egypt to visit his people and see if they were yet alive. Jethro said, *“go in peace.”*

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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