

# Journey Through the Bible

## Exodus

### Message 2: God's Calling of Moses

#### Outline:

- I. **God's preparation of Moses**
  - A. **Acts 7:22-25** And Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and he was powerful in his words and works. (23) But when he was approaching forty years of age, it came into his heart to visit his brothers, the sons of Israel. (24) And when he saw one of them being wronged, he defended him, and he avenged him who was being oppressed by striking the Egyptian dead. (25) And he supposed that his brothers understood that God through his hand was giving salvation to them; but they did not understand.
  - B. **Psalms 90:10** The days of our years are seventy years, / Or, if because of strength, eighty years;
  - C. **Exodus 3:1** Now Moses was shepherding the flock...
- II. **God's calling of Moses**
  - A. **The Burning Thornbush**
    1. **Exodus 3:2** And the Angel of Jehovah appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thornbush. And when he looked, there was the thornbush, burning with fire; but the thornbush was not consumed.
    2. **Genesis 3:17-18** And to Adam He said, Because you listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree concerning which I commanded you, saying, You shall not eat of it; Cursed is the ground because of you; / In toil will you eat of it / All the days of your life. (18) And thorns and thistles will it bring forth for you, / And you will eat the herb of the field;
    3. **Romans 12:11** Do not be slothful in zeal, but burning in spirit, serving the Lord.
    4. **2 Corinthians 4:7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not out of us.
  - B. **Having lost confidence in himself**
    1. **Acts 7:22** And Moses...was powerful in his words and works.
    2. **Exodus 4:10** Please, Lord, I am not a man of words...
    3. **Exodus 3:11** Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?
    4. **Philippians 3:3** For we are the circumcision, the ones who serve by the Spirit of God and boast in Christ Jesus and have no confidence in the flesh,
- III. **Three signs of being called by God**
  - A. **A rod becoming a serpent**
    1. **Exodus 4:1-4** Then Moses answered and said, What if they do not believe me or listen to my voice, but say, Jehovah has not appeared to you? (2) And Jehovah said to him, What is this in your hand? And he said, A staff. (3) And He said, Throw it on the ground. And he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses recoiled from it. (4) And Jehovah said to Moses, Stretch out your hand, and take it by its tail--so he stretched out his hand and seized it, and it became a staff in his hand--
  - B. **The hand becoming leprous**
    1. **Exodus 4:6-7** Now put your hand into your bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, there his hand was, leprous, as white as snow. (7) And He said, Put your hand into your bosom again--so he put his

hand into his bosom again, and when he took it out of his bosom, there it was, restored like the rest of his flesh—

2. **Romans 7:17-18** Now then it is no longer I that work it out but sin that dwells in me. (18) For I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but to work out the good is not.

### **C. The water becoming blood**

1. **Exodus 4:9** Take some of the water of the River and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you take out of the River will become blood upon the dry ground.

## **READING EXCERPT**

### **God's Calling Of Moses**

#### **A Thorn-bush Burning but Not Consumed**

Before God spoke to Moses, He showed him the sign of a burning thorn-bush. He "appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a thorn-bush" (v. 2 , Heb.), a bush that burned with fire without being consumed. Seeing this burning thorn-bush, Moses said, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the thorn-bush is not burnt" (v. 3 , Heb.). The thorn-bush represented Moses himself. This indicates that everyone who is called of God must realize that he is just a thorn-bush with a fire burning within him and that this fire is God Himself. Although God desires to burn within us and upon us, He will not burn us; that is, He will not use us as fuel.

I believe Moses never forgot the sight of that burning thorn-bush. The memory of that vision must have worked within him to constantly remind him not to use his natural strength or ability. Through the sign of the burning thorn -bush, God impressed Moses that he was a vessel, a channel, through which God was to be manifested. It is not easy to learn that we are simply a bush for the manifestation of God. Throughout the years I have been learning one lesson: to work for God without using the natural life as the fuel, but letting God burn within me.

#### **The Three Signs Given to Moses**

When Moses came to the back side of the desert and met God there, he beheld the sign of a thorn-bush that burned without being consumed. Although this sign was marvelous, it was somewhat objective. In this message we shall consider the three signs in chapter four, signs which are very subjective.

It is important for us to see why these three subjective signs were given. At the end of chapter three , God's calling of Moses seemed to be complete. Moses had seen the objective sign of the burning thorn-bush, and he had heard God speaking to him. God gave to Moses a full revelation of Himself. Thus, on God's side, the calling of Moses was complete. However, on Moses' side, it was not complete. Exodus 4:1 says, "And Moses answered and said, But, behold, they will not believe me, nor hearken unto my voice: for they will say, The Lord hath not appeared unto thee." This word indicates that although Moses had seen a most marvelous sign and had heard the voice of God, he had not been inspired or moved. For this reason, the three signs found in chapter four were given. These signs were to be conclusive evidence that Moses had truly been called by God. The principle is the same with God's called ones today. Whoever claims to be called by God should have the mark of these three subjective signs. In Exodus 4 there are three signs, dealing with the serpent, leprosy, and blood.

The serpent, leprosy, and blood are related respectively to Satan, to sin in the flesh, and to the death brought in by the world. Those who have been called by God must have not only the objective sign of the burning thorn-bush, but the subjective signs of the serpent, leprosy, and the blood. As called ones, we need some subjective experiences, some subjective evidences, to

substantiate to others that we have truly been called by God and sent by Him. These evidences are the ability to deal with the Devil, the ability to deal with the sinful flesh, and the ability to deal with the death brought in by the world. Suppose a certain person comes to you claiming that he has been sent by God. If he does not know how to deal with Satan, the flesh, and the world, you should not believe that he is a sent one. The sign of a burning thorn-bush is not adequate proof that one has been called by God. A sent one must be able to deal with the serpent, with leprosy, and with blood.

### **THE ROD BECOMING A SERPENT**

When God called Moses, Moses had a rod that he relied upon. Perhaps when he was talking to God, Moses, an elderly man, was leaning upon that rod. His rod was his support. Hence, the rod signifies what we rely upon.

Moses was reluctant to accept God's calling; he protested that the children of Israel would reject him and say that the Lord had not appeared to him. Therefore, God said to Moses concerning the rod, "Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from before it" (v. 3). When the rod was cast to the ground, the serpent hiding there was exposed. Even before the rod was cast down, the serpent was already there, but in a very hidden way. The Bible reveals that the serpent always tries to hide himself in something, behind something, or under something. The rod Moses relied on was actually the serpent, Satan. In the eyes of Moses, the rod was simply a rod that he could lean upon, but in the eyes of God, it was the serpent, whose aim is to usurp man.

Verse 4 says, "And the Lord said unto Moses, Put forth thine hand, and take it by the tail. And he put forth his hand, and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand." The Lord wants us to cast our rods down, not to throw them away. Do not throw away your education or your savings—cast them down. After the hidden serpent has been exposed, we need to pick it up by the "tail." This is the best way to deal with the serpent. If you take a serpent by the head, it may bite you. But if you pick it up by the tail, it will lose its power and hang limp.

### **THE HAND BECOMING LEPROUS**

In verse 6 the Lord told Moses to put his hand into his bosom. Moses may have thought that by putting his hand into his bosom, he would find a pearl, a diamond, or some precious treasure. On the contrary, Moses' hand became leprous. The bosom signifies what is within us, and leprosy signifies sin (Rom. 7:17-18). This indicates that in addition to knowing Satan, we must also know the flesh. The rod upon which we rely is a serpent, but the flesh is the embodiment of leprosy. We need to know that in our flesh we are lepers. In our flesh there is nothing good, only leprosy. If we touch the flesh, we shall become leprous.

### **THE WATER BECOMING BLOOD**

For the third sign, the Lord said to Moses, "Take of the water of the river, and pour it upon the dry land: and the water which thou takest out of the river shall become blood upon the dry land" (v. 9). The river here is the Nile, which irrigated the land of Egypt. The water of the Nile signifies earthly supply and enjoyment. According to the Bible, Egypt is rich in the food and enjoyment produced by the Nile. What is produced by the water of the Nile is apparently supply and enjoyment. But in the eyes of God, it is nothing but death. All the supply, enjoyment, and entertainment of the world are death. But in order to realize this, we need to pour the water of the Nile upon the dry land. According to Genesis 1, the dry land is the source from which life is produced. When the worldly enjoyment and the earthly supply are poured out upon that which

produces life, immediately the death, signified by the blood, will be exposed. Thus, the third sign reveals that all the earthly supply and worldly enjoyment are nothing but death. All the sports and entertainments people indulge in today are various forms of death. The very supply that the world affords us is also death.

**Question:**

1. How did God prepare Moses to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt?
2. What is the significance of the burning thornbush? How does it apply to us?
3. Describe an experience you have had with either the rod becoming a serpent, the hand becoming leprous, or the water becoming blood.
4. Share with those in your group something that stood out to you in this message and why.