

Moses Meets God at the Burning Bush

Exodus 2:11–3:20

Being trained in Pharaoh's court didn't extinguish Moses' Hebrew upbringing. It's clear from Exodus 2:11 that Moses considered himself a Hebrew rather than the Egyptian most people thought he was. This fact is emphasized in Hebrews 11:24-26. As he went out among the Hebrews, he must have been thinking about how he could help his people escape the oppression they were enduring. Though he was wrong to kill the Egyptian who had been beating the Hebrew, this act could have caused the Israelites to hope that he would rescue them, but it did not (see Acts 7:25).

It may seem strange that in the desert of Midian, Moses came across a priest who followed God, but Reuel (later called Jethro) was probably a descendant of Abraham and one of Abraham's concubines.

We don't know how threatening the shepherds were to the daughters of Reuel, but the women reported that Moses had rescued them. Moses, having been trained in combat in Egypt and likely having armed himself before leaving Egypt, was able to drive off a band of shepherds easily.

From the Bible text, it seems that events happened quickly, but it's likely that Moses received Reuel's daughter Zipporah as his wife after a lengthy stay with the family. However, Moses didn't feel at home in Midian. When his first son was born, the name he gave the child meant "banishment." Moses knew that his place was in Egypt with the Hebrew people.

God got Moses' attention with a burning bush that didn't burn up. Sometimes it takes drastic measures to get our attention! Moses investigated and listened when God spoke. God had heard his people's cries from Egypt and was ready to send the leader he had prepared to rescue them.

Though he still identified with the Hebrew people, Moses no longer saw himself as their savior. Perhaps he felt that killing the Egyptian had disqualified him from leading the people. But God knew that Moses was the one he wanted to use to free his people. Moses' objection was met with a simple statement from God: "I will be with you." The path God described to Moses was a difficult one. Moses would face opposition from his own people as well as from Pharaoh. To his many objections God responded with a reminder of who God is—"I am"—the God of Moses' forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When Moses realized that his God had chosen him, he was willing to obey. And when he obeyed in faith, God used him mightily.

Devotion for Leaders

The One Thing: Many people struggle with feelings of uselessness. Thankfully, Jesus will use anyone who is willing to follow and serve him.

Weaving Faith Into Your Life: Moses set aside his doubts and accepted that God had chosen him for a special task. Do you have a failure or experience that you fear has disqualified you from fully serving God? Confess your concern to God, and allow him to encourage you with the truth: God will use anyone who is willing to serve. Thank you for serving God's children!