

Bi151 Old Testament

Lesson Bi151- 19 Moses and the Burning Bush (Ex 2- 3)

Have you ever tried to help God accomplish something? It is easy to try this in our own strength, especially if we are young, strong, or in a place of influence. This was the situation Moses found himself in as the story begins today.

Moses lived his first 40 years as a privileged child, part of the royal court in a palace. “He was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians and was powerful in speech and action” (Acts 7:22). Yet he knew he was an Israelite and he did not like being called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter. He somehow identified with the people of God, as he watched them at their hard labor (Heb 11:24).

One day, Moses saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew, one of his own people. Moses looked around to see if anyone was watching, then killed the Egyptian. He quickly hid the body in the sand. “Moses thought that his own people would realize that God was using him to rescue them, but they did not” (Acts 7:25). The next day as he went out, he saw two Hebrews fighting. He asked the one in the wrong, “Why are you hitting your fellow Hebrew?”

The man yelled back, “Who made you our leader? You are not our judge! Are you planning to kill me like you killed the Egyptian yesterday?” Moses was afraid. He realized his crime was no longer a secret. Soon Pharaoh found out and tried to kill Moses, but he ran away and escaped from Egypt.

He ended up in a dry and desolate wilderness, at a place called Midian in southeastern Sinai. He was sitting down next to a well when seven women came to draw water and fill the troughs for their father’s flock. They were the daughters of Jethro, a priest of Midian.

Some shepherds came and drove the women away, but Moses stepped in and defended them. After the fight, he helped the women draw the water for their sheep. When the girls got back home, their father was surprised they had returned so early. They told him, “An Egyptian rescued us from the shepherds; he even helped draw water for the flock.”

“So where is he?” Jethro asked. “Go get him and invite him to come and have a meal with us.” Soon afterwards, the man gave his daughter Zipporah to Moses in marriage, and he became a shepherd for Jethro. Together they had two sons, Gershom and Eliezer.

Years passed and the king of Egypt died. The Israelites groaned in their slavery and cried out to God for help. God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob, and was concerned about their suffering. By now Moses was 80 years old, still leading his sheep on the far side of the desert, and he came to the mountain of God called Sinai.

There the angel of the Lord appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire, it did not burn up. When he came near, God called to him

from within the bush, “Moses, Moses!”

“Yes, I am here.”

“Do not come any closer. Take off your sandals, for the place you are standing is holy ground.” As Moses took off his sandals, he heard God speak again, “I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” Moses covered his face because he was afraid to look at God.

“I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers. I have come down to rescue them and to bring them up out of that land. I have selected you to lead them back to the land of Canaan. So now, go! I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people out of Egypt.”

“Oh Lord, don’t send me! Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh? I am not the right one to bring the Israelites out of Egypt.”

God was patient with Moses. “I will be with you. When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will bring my people back here to worship me.”

Moses replied, “But if I stand before the people and say, ‘the God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ they will say, ‘What is his name?’ Then what should I tell them?”

God said, “I Am Who I Am! Tell them ‘I AM’ sent you to them. The Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. The elders of Israel will listen to you, but Pharaoh will not listen. Therefore I will strike him with a hard blow. When I am finished, he will finally let my people go.”

But Moses still hesitated and protested a third time, “What if they do not believe me or listen to me?”

So God said to Moses, “What is that in your hand?”

“A shepherd’s staff.”

“Throw it on the ground.” He threw it on the ground and it became a snake and he jumped back in fear.

Then God said, “Reach out and pick up the snake by the tail.” Moses grabbed the tail, and instantly the snake again became a shepherd’s staff.

God said, “Put your hand inside your shirt.” Moses did so, and when he pulled it out it was covered with leprosy, a terrible skin disease. “Put your hand back in your shirt.” He did and when he pulled it out the leprosy was completely gone.

God continued, “Show the people these signs and they will believe that I have appeared

to you. If they do not believe the first two signs, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the ground. It will become blood.”

Then Moses complained a fourth time, “Oh, Lord, I have never been able to talk well. I am slow of speech and tongue.”

“Moses, who gave man his mouth? I am the one who causes a person to be deaf, mute, blind or seeing! Go, and do as I say. I will help speak and will teach you what to say.”

Still Moses pleaded, “Lord, please send someone else.”

With this, the Lord became angry. “Your brother Aaron is coming to meet you. He speaks well. Take him with you and go to Egypt! Take this staff in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it.” So that is what he did.

This story is **important** because it shows us that all work for God must be done according to His plan and time and not according to ours. He is able to enable us to do whatever He calls us to do. Further, if God calls someone to a great work, He will not accept our excuses or lack of faith.

The main **truth** of this story is God’s plans and callings are set by Him and not by us.

To **review** this lesson, answer these questions.

1. Why did God say to Moses out of the burning bush?
 - a. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, "I have selected you to lead my people back to the land of Canaan," you are correct.
2. What was the response of Moses to God’s plan?
 - a. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, “Oh Lord, don’t send me! I am not the right one to lead the Israelites out of Egypt,” you are correct.
3. What compromise did God give Moses concerning speaking to Pharaoh?
 - a. [Pause for 5 seconds.] If you said, “Your brother Aaron speaks well. Take him with you and go to Egypt,” you are correct.

Your **assignment** for this lesson is to listen to the story at least three times. As you hear the story each time, imagine how it happened; see the events in your mind. Then tell the story in your own words as you remember it. Then listen to the story again and retell it until you feel sure you are repeating the circumstances and actions correctly. You should spend at least 45 minutes in learning the story. You may need to have someone check that you are telling the story correctly.

Do you feel God has ever spoken to you to do a specific task for Him? What was your response, one of fear or of faith? Are you following the path God has set before you today?