



**CHRISTIAN  
ENDEAVOUR**  
*for Christ and the Church*



# A Nation in Slavery

## Burning bush and Return to Egypt

### I Don't Believe It!

Exodus 3:1 - 4:20

#### Teaching Aim

To realise that God is the God of both the ordinary and the extraordinary.

#### Setting the Scene

What a comedown! – from a prince of the realm to looking after sheep and goats, and that was the work Moses was to do for 40 years. He now had no power or authority, little money or possessions, and the same (boring?) work to do. His dream of helping his fellow Hebrews in Egypt had long vanished, until one day :-

#### Moses had an Awesome Experience

In the middle of nowhere, the Midian wilderness, and right out of nowhere, came an amazing encounter. There was –

- a A visual shock : to draw his attention from the ordinariness of his life. He saw a burning bush, but the shock was that, although the bush was on fire, it was not burning up. So he went closer (3:2-3) – we would all be inquisitive!
- b A voice from nowhere : to let him know that what was happening was special for him, for it was calling his name (3:4) – we should all be aware that God knows each of us by name.
- c A vivid sense of holiness : to help him understand who was speaking to him; a feeling summed up by the instructions he was given (3:5) – we should all come with respect into the presence of the holy God.

This was a personal encounter with God, and God goes on to

- i Identify Himself (3:6)
- ii Reveal His plan (3:10) – which must have been a shock to Moses after all this time.

#### Moses gave some Awful Excuses

Moses was just like us when we don't want to do something which is required of us - think of some excuses you have made for not tidying your bedroom, doing your homework, or doing something else you have been asked to do.

- a I'm not good enough! - he argued he was inadequate for the task. 'Who am I? [AV]; 'I'm a nobody!' [GNB]. But God said that didn't matter. Look at 3.12 for what God will do.

- b I don't know anything – he argued his ignorance, although he already knew it was God who was speaking (3:6). 'Who are You? What is Your Name?' Look at 3:14-15 for what God tells him.
- c I don't think it will work – he argued he would be ineffective. 'What if no one listens to me?' God told him not to worry. Look at 4:2-9 for the signs God would enable him to perform to make sure the people would listen.
- d I'm not a good speaker – he argued he wouldn't know what to say, or say it badly (4:10). Some suggest Moses had a speech impediment. God told him that it wasn't a problem. Look at 4:11 to find the help God offers.

Then Moses ran out of excuses and he said, 'I don't want to do it, send someone else' (4:13). At last Moses was being honest with God and himself; this was the real reason for all his excuses. How often when you make excuses is it because you don't want to do something?

God had given him the assurance of all the help he needed but Moses still backed away. No wonder God was angry (4:14) but He wouldn't let Moses off. God reaffirmed the support he would have (4:15-16).

### Moses made an Appropriate Response

Moses had reached the point where he had to make a decision – he couldn't avoid it any longer. Was it to be 'Yes' or 'No' to what God wanted him to do? He had God's promises although he probably didn't yet realise all that God had already done for him (remember 2:1-10 and 2:20-21, and see 4:19). There could only be one choice. Moses made –

- a hesitant acceptance – he seemed very reluctant to take on the task which God was giving him. We are often equally hesitant and reluctant to obey God's call even to little avenues of service.
- b an honest acceptance – he had considered all the difficulties but knew all the back-up God would give him. Similarly, God offers to be with us in everything we do for Him.
- c a humble acceptance – notice he made sure he took 'the staff of God' with him (4:20). It was an acknowledgement that he couldn't complete the task on his own. He was putting his trust in God's promises to him. That's a good starting point.

### Summing up

The call of Moses is a reminder that God can speak to us, and in ways and at times which may be very different to what we expect. What will be our response? Will we find excuses or respond positively considering all that He has done for us in Jesus and all His promises to us?

## Resources

### Discussion

- Do you think that God has spoken to you at any time? Was this in an ordinary or an extraordinary way?
- Is it easy to say 'Yes' to God? What sometimes makes it difficult?

### Prayer Points

Pray for:

- Those whose routine of work detracts from the quality of their life.
- Those who find it difficult to hear God speaking to them.