

## Exodus 3 and 4

### God Speaks to Moses

3.1 One day, Moses was taking care of the sheep and goats of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, and Moses decided to lead them across the desert to Sinai<sup>1</sup>, the holy mountain.

2 There an angel of the LORD appeared to him from a burning bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but it was not burning up.

3 "This is strange!" he said to himself. " I'll go over and see why the bush isn't burning up."

4 When the LORD saw Moses coming near the bush, he called him by name, and Moses answered, " Here I am."

5 God replied, " Don't come any closer. Take off your sandals - the ground where you are standing is holy.

6 I am the God who was worshiped by your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moses was afraid to look at God, and so he hid his face.

7 The LORD said: I have seen how my people are suffering as slaves in Egypt, and I have heard them beg for my help because of the way they are being mistreated. I feel sorry for them,

8 and I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians. I will bring my people out of Egypt into a country where there is good land, rich with milk and honey. I will give them the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live.

9 My people have begged for my help, and I have seen how cruel the Egyptians are to them.

10 Now go to the king! I am sending you to lead my people out of his country.

11 But Moses said, " Who am I to go to the king and lead your people out of Egypt?"

12 God replied, " I will be with you. And you will know that I am the one who sent you, when you worship me on this mountain after you have led my people out of Egypt."

13 Moses answered, " I will tell the people of Israel that the God their ancestors worshiped has sent me to them. But what should I say, if they ask me your name?"

14-15 God said to Moses: I am the eternal God. So tell them that the LORD<sup>2</sup>, whose name is " I Am," has sent you. This is my name forever, and it is the name that people must use from now on.

16 Call together the leaders of Israel and tell them that the God who was worshiped by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has appeared to you. Tell them I have seen how terribly they are being treated in Egypt,

17 and I promise to lead them out of their troubles. I will give them a land rich with milk and honey, where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live.

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<sup>1</sup> Sinai: The Hebrew text has " Horeb," another name for Sinai.

<sup>2</sup> The Hebrew text has " Yahweh," which is usually translated " LORD" in the CEV. Since it seems related to the word translated " I am," it may mean " I am the one who is" or " I will be what I will be" or " I am the one who brings into being."

18 The leaders of Israel will listen to you. Then you must take them to the king of Egypt and say, " The LORD God of the Hebrews has appeared to us. Let us walk three days into the desert, where we can offer a sacrifice to him."

19 But I know that the king of Egypt won't let you go unless something forces him to.

20 So I will use my mighty power to perform all kinds of miracles and strike down the Egyptians. Then the king will send you away.

21 After I punish the Egyptians, they will be so afraid of you that they will give you anything you want. You are my people, and I will let you take many things with you when you leave the land of Egypt.

22 Every Israelite woman will go to her Egyptian neighbors or to any Egyptian woman living in her house. She will ask them for gold and silver jewelry and for their finest clothes. The Egyptians will give them to you, and you will put these fine things on your sons and daughters. You will carry all this away when you leave Egypt.

### **The LORD Gives Great Power to Moses**

4.1 Moses asked the LORD, " Suppose everyone refuses to listen to my message, and no one believes that you really appeared to me?"

2 The LORD answered, " What's that in your hand?" " A walking stick," Moses replied.

3 " Throw it down!" the LORD commanded. So Moses threw the stick on the ground. It immediately turned into a snake, and Moses jumped back.

4 " Pick it up by the tail!" the LORD told him. And when Moses did this, the snake turned back into a walking stick.

5 " Do this," the LORD said, " and the Israelites will believe that you have seen me, the God who was worshiped by their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

6 Next, the LORD commanded Moses, " Put your hand inside your shirt." Moses obeyed, and when he took it out, his hand had turned white as snow--like someone with leprosy.

7 " Put your hand back inside your shirt," the LORD told him. Moses did so, and when he took it out again, it was as healthy as the rest of his body.

8-9 Then the LORD said, " If no one believes either of these miracles, take some water from the Nile River and pour it on the ground. The water will immediately turn into blood."

10 Moses replied, " I have never been a good speaker. I wasn't one before you spoke to me, and I'm not one now. I am slow at speaking, and I can never think of what to say."

11 But the LORD answered, " Who makes people able to speak or makes them deaf or unable to speak? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? Don't you know that I am the one who does these things?"

12 Now go! When you speak, I will be with you and give you the words to say."

13 Moses begged, " LORD, please send someone else to do it."

14 The LORD became irritated with Moses and said: What about your brother Aaron, the Levite? I know he is a good speaker. He is already on his way here to visit you, and he will be happy to see you again.

15-16 Aaron will speak to the people for you, and you will be like me, telling Aaron what to say. I will be with both of you as you speak, and I will tell each of you what to do.

17 Now take this walking stick and use it to perform miracles.