

THE BURNING BUSH

Adapted from a Family Lesson

We know from the Word that Moses' life was divided into three periods of forty years each. In the first forty years Moses was saved from death and secretly raised in the court of Pharaoh. During this time the Hebrew people came into severe conditions of slavery. Moses never experienced this slavery himself. But, after killing an Egyptian task master, he fled to Midian.

The second forty year period of his life was spent in Midian, where Moses lived with the family of Jethro, a Midianite priest, and married the eldest of his seven daughters. In this period, the most dramatic incident is that the Lord revealed Himself to Moses through the burning bush, and instructed him to return to Egypt to lead His people out of bondage.

The third forty year period begins with Moses appearing before the court of Pharaoh. The story then moves through the plagues, the exodus, and the wandering in the wilderness of Sinai. About the end of the second year of this period, when Moses was some eighty-two years of age, he received the commandments from God on Mt. Sinai, as well as directions for building the Tabernacle.

Spiritually, the first two periods of Moses' life seem to describe the state of our infancy, childhood, youth, and early adolescence, when we are in a time of formal instruction in knowledges, especially the knowledges of the Word. Egypt represents the memory, and the knowledges that form the memory. The slavery of the children of Israel in Egypt is a picture of how our minds can tend to become enamored and preoccupied with knowledges from the world.

Toward the end of the second period, as we are approaching adult life, college age, the things that we are learning from the Word suddenly take on new meaning. It is as though the Lord has really spoken to us for the first time, warning us of the danger of getting trapped in Egypt, and urging us to turn our mind to spiritual things, so that we can get a true perspective on natural and spiritual things.

When he approached the burning bush, Moses was told by the Lord to take off his shoes. Like these shoes, each of us has certain attachments to worldly and sensual things that we need to leave behind if we are to come into more rational and spiritual states. As we approach adult life, it may be useful to reflect on what there is "in Egypt" that we wish to take with us on our journey through life, and what the Lord has suggested we should leave behind. In this way we can prepare ourselves to hear the Lord's calling and follow His leading.