

Exodus Ch. 4

- Continuing in the conversation between God and Moses from chapter 3.

Isaiah standing in the presence of the Lord:

Isaiah 6:8 “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, here am I; send me.”

- This is that spiritual ideal that we would all hope to be, “**here I am Lord; send me!**”
- Give me a sword, and a battle ax – and lets go get the Philistines!
- Moses’ response is seemingly somewhat cowardly and faithless – he starts to come across as a loser.
- Think about David’s mighty men of valor:
 1. They could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows from a bow.
 2. Men of might, men of war fit for the battle; that could handle shield and buckler, whose faces were like the faces of lions, and were as swift as the roes upon the mountains. They used the jaw bones of a donkey to kill the enemy; they killed lions, giants, and everything else in their way.
 3. 1st Chronicles describes their awesome exploits.

But this isn’t how they started out:

1 Samuel 22:2 “And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.”

- Again, Moses is one of the few Bible characters that we get to observe from the cradle to the grave, including his growth and maturity as a spiritual leader over the nation of Israel.
- Moses is just getting started and is about to learn some valuable lessons.

2 Corinthians 5:7 “**For we walk by faith, not by sight:**”

V: 1 God has already described what His will is for Moses; that Moses will go forth and be used of God as a deliverer to Israel.

- Moses now responds – “**but they won’t listen to me.**”
- Moses has gone from Holy ground to dangerous ground: Moses is directly contradicting what God just told him.

- This must have been painful for Moses to recall and record.

Exodus 3:18 “And they shall hearken to thy voice:...”

- This may have been in part due to the response from Moses’ first attempt at being a deliverer.

Exodus 2:14 “And he said, “who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?”

- Moses is concerned about acceptance; something that we all deal with to some degree or another.

Galatians 1:10 “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.”

- A big part of the Christian walk is learning and deciding who we’re going to please, whose acceptance is more important to us.

V: 2 The Lord already knows what is in Moses’ hand, He is simply getting Moses to state the obvious, either for Moses’ sake or for ours – it is a rod, it’s always been a rod, validating what is about to happen.

- God takes what we have, and He uses that to be glorified.
- Moses had his staff, Peter had a net, so he made him a fisher of men. Paul had paper and writing instruments, he was a scholar – so God made him a teacher and writer of God’s Word.

V: 3-4 God takes this in-animate object and supernaturally transforms it into a serpent.

- God made man out of the dust of the ground, He formed Eve from a rib bone, a snake out of a stick wouldn’t be any more difficult to God.
- Moses believed it was real, no mention of him screaming or anything less dignified than just fleeing from it. 😊
- This was not a harmless little snake, not even a rattle snake, but I believe that most likely this was a Cobra, or king cobra snake.
- The Egyptian king cobra was a divine symbol of power, it was included on every single royal crown, including the ones we saw at the king tut exhibit.
- This was to be a sign to Pharaoh that the True and Living God controls the very symbol of their royal power.

- Moses has been demonstrating his lack of faith, so God decides to help him out with a little faith exercise: pick up the snake.
- Everyone knows that if you have to pick up a snake you grab it at the back of its head, you don't pick up a dangerous snake by the tail, because they will just whip around and bite you.
- So what does God tell Moses? Not just to pick up this dangerous snake, but to pick it up by the tail!
- Either you trust me or you don't. Moses you're about to "walk by faith, and not by sight."
- Trend: Jesus to be first was to be last, to save our lives we must lose it, victory is through surrender.

V: 5 This sign has the specific intent to cause the people to believe that the Lord has appeared to Moses.

V: 6-8 Sign #2

- As Moses put his hand to his own bosom, he was putting his hand near his heart, the source of our wickedness.

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

- While I'm sure that there is likely a deeper spiritual application of this; this does demonstrate the fact that we can all too easily move back and forth between life and corruption in a moment.
- We need to abide in Christ moment by moment.
- God assures Moses that if they don't believe the first sign, then they will believe the 2nd sign. (voice = testimony)

V: 9 This 3rd sign is offered as a final sign to the people. Water from the River Nile will be poured out onto the ground and it shall turn to blood.

- No other signs are offered for the people, they either believe or they don't.

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- God could have used any signs or miracles imaginable, why did He choose to use these particular signs as proof to the people?

Staff & serpent:

Numbers 21:9 “And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.”

Jesus said:

John 3:14-15 “¹⁴And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: ¹⁵That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.”

- As Jesus was lifted up on the cross, Satan; the serpent of old was cast down in defeat.

Leprous hand:

- Man started out clean and became full of sin, then after the cross of Jesus; we are cleansed from all our sin

Water to blood:

- Jesus' first recorded miracle in John Ch. 2, was in Cana of Galilee where He turned water into wine.
- Here we see an earthen vessel filled with water, Living Water – which is turned into blood and poured out.
- Jesus became an earthen vessel, He was full of Living water; and one of His last acts on this earth was to take His body, filled with the Holy Spirit; and shed His blood upon the cross for our sins.
- Then we too are delivered from the bondage of sin and death in this world.

V: 10 Moses begins to make excuses, and to make up reasons.

Stephen tells us as he stands before the Sanhedrin:

Acts 7:22 “And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds”

- It is easy to wax eloquent in certain situations; and to be tongue tied in others.
- Conclusion: Moses is lying.
- As we move through these verses we can tend to be critical of Moses as he makes up excuses about why he can't do what God has called him to do, what God has empowered him to do.
- Moses is a baby believer. Certainly God has been preparing him for 80 years, but he's just heard God's voice for the first time, he's been privileged to stand upon holy ground and talk with God face to face as one friend speaks to another.

- Moses is not yet the spiritual giant today that he will some day be; it will take another 40 years of walking with the Lord for us to see that.

V: 11 Moses is still just figuring things out, he doesn't know yet that God's commandments are His empowerments.

- The rhetorical question: so who made your mouth anyway?!

The Psalmist knows the answer to this question:

Psalm 94:9 “He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?”

V: 12 God assures Moses that He will be with him and give him the words to speak:

Just as Jesus promised us:

Matthew 10:19 ¹⁹“But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. ²⁰For it is not ye that speak, but the spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.”

- God is not dependant upon our abilities.

V: 13 Loose translation: “Oh Lord send anybody but me...”

Jesus said:

Matthew 7:16 “Ye shall know them by their fruits...”

- Moses reveals his spiritual maturity in his words:
- Moses is still a baby believer: he is not assured by God's word.

1 Corinthians 3:1-2 ¹“And I brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. ²I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.”

Hebrews 5:13-14 ¹³“for every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. ¹⁴But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.”

1 Corinthians 13:11 “When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”

- That day is coming for Moses; and a good many of us – myself included.

Jeremiah tried the same thing:

Jeremiah 1:6-7 “⁶Then said I, ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. ⁷But the Lord said unto me, say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. / ⁸Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord. ⁹then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said unto me, behold, I have put My words in thy mouth.”

V: 14-17 This is certainly from Moses’ perspective: but God is so patient and tenderhearted, loving, and gentle.

- God is truly being patient with Moses, offering another option, not the first, not the best – but coming down to the level that Moses can deal with.
- God is demonstrating great condescension, He is coming down to our level.

V: 15 I will be with your mouth, I will also be with his mouth. I will teach the two of you.

Isaiah 50:4 “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned.”

V: 16 Aaron will be your spokesman, and you will be his lord.

V: 17 You will take this rod, and you will do the signs that I showed you.

- Just like Jeremiah, and many others since – those who cannot but speak the word of God.

1 Corinthians 9:16 “For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel.”

- God didn’t give up on Moses:

Romans 11:29 “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.”

V: 18 Moses had put himself under the authority of Jethro. Here he goes to Jethro and asks permission, an act of humility.

- Jethro sends Moses away in peace.
- Moses acts in obedience, he makes the necessary preparations to leave.

V: 19-20 God says “go” – and He lets Moses know that the coast is clear.

- Moses was already headed back, meaning this was not his initial concern, but after he got going he probably began to consider what he might face.
- Moses loads up his family and heads for Egypt in obedience to God’s command.
- Moses took the “rod of God” – it had become “God’s rod”.

V: 21 The Lord gives Moses specific instruction to do the signs that the Lord has given him.

- God will harden or confirm Pharaoh’s heart.
- God is preparing Moses for that reality, that he wouldn’t lose confidence or heart when it actually happens.

V: 22-23 Here is what I want you to tell Pharaoh:

1. “Thus saith the Lord” – not Moses, or the people of Israel, “Thus saith the Lord.”
2. Israel is My son, even My firstborn.
3. Let My son go that he may serve Me.
4. Refuse, and your first born dies.

V: 24-26 Near the inn, the Lord meets Moses and seeks his life.

- In response to this Zipporah uses a “sharp stone” and quickly, angrily it would seem circumcises her son.
- Zipporah’s first response is to circumcise her son?
- She and Moses must have had some discussion on this point and she won out.
- Previously the word “sons” plural (V: 20). The first son named Gershom was likely already circumcised in accordance with Abraham’s covenant with God.
- Speculating a little bit: the second son Eliezer, was probably the son that is circumcised here.
- He’s no longer an infant or even a little boy. He’s probably a mature man. It has been 40 years since Moses began tending Jethro’s sheep, Moses takes Zipporah as his wife and bares Gershom, then sometime later Eliezer.
- He could be anywhere from late teens to approaching 40 years old – now we’re back to a sharp rock.

- Obviously Moses failed to stick to his guns in terms of spiritual leadership and Zipporah's strong personality combined to bring this situation about.
- They both underestimated God's view of circumcision.

Genesis 17:9-14 “⁹And God said unto Abraham, thou shalt keep My covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations. ¹⁰This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between Me and you and thy seed after thee; every man child among you shall be circumcised. ¹¹And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt Me and you. ¹²And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations, he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed. ¹³He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. ¹⁴And the uncircumcised man child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant.”

- Moses couldn't pronounce judgment on the house of Pharaoh while his own house was out of order.

1 Peter 4:17 “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God.”

- It wouldn't look too good if Moses wasn't in compliance with the Law.

Romans 15:18 “For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought / accomplished by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed.”

- God commanded the circumcision of all the males as a token, a sign, or a badge for the people of God – “All the males are to be circumcised”, God said that if you weren't circumcised they were to be cut off from Israel.
- Actually you were not an Israelite because you were born into the family, you were an Israelite once you became circumcised. Otherwise you were cut off from being a part of that family.
- We don't know how God had taken hold of Moses, if it was a heart attack or a seizure, or an actual appearance of God with a drawn sword – we don't know.
- But as soon as Zipporah saw Moses in the clutches of death she knew exactly what to do and did it.
- It would appear at this point that Moses sent Zipporah and the boys back home. We don't hear any mention of them until after the children of Israel have been delivered and are in the wilderness.

V: 27-28 God had already spoken to Aaron and sent him to meet Moses, (V: 14) it would appear that Aaron was already en route when God and Moses were having their discussion.

- It was a joyful re-union. Aaron was Moses' older brother, possibly in his 90's.
- Moses get's Aaron up to speed.

V: 29-31 Moses & Aaron gathered all the elders of the people.

- They did the signs which the Lord had given them, they were obedient, they stuck to God's plan.
- And the people believed!
- The people bowed their heads and worshipped. (Cause & effect)

Romans 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

- The people heard the Word of God, and they believed.
- The people realized that God had visited the children of Israel, that God was revealing Himself to them – and they responded to that revelation by bowing their heads and worshipping Him.
- They are still in Egypt, they are still under the task master's whip – but they are praising the Lord for their deliverance.

Hebrews 11:1 "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."