

Exodus 4

I. Moses' Calling

A. First man ever called into God's service

B. No earthly *training* prepared Moses for this

1. Forty years of comfortable luxurious powerful living in Egypt
2. Forty years of harsh tough shepherding years in the desert of Midian

YET STILL, Moses argued with God, was fear-filled and not faith-filled

Only grace can truly prepare a man to serve God

Even the harsh life of monasticism, unmingled with grace, will not truly prepare a man for God's service

C. God's *preparation* of Moses for His calling

1. God dealt personally and directly with Moses
2. Manifestation of his holiness
3. Connection to His covenant and His concern for His own people
4. Revelation of His character and His name

flames of fire in the burning bush

declaration of His holy name "I AM"

D. God's calling itself: very clear and direct

Exodus 3:8, 10 So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey 10) So now, go. I am sending you to Pharaoh to bring my people the Israelites out of Egypt."

E. God *Endowed* Moses with power: three signs

II. Moses' Response

A. Paradigmatic of all humans dealing with the call of God in their life

B. Five objections

1. Self-focus (3:11)

Exodus 3:11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?"

God's answer:

vs. 12 *And God said, "I will be with you."*

2. Anxiety (3:13)

Exodus 3:13 Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?"

God's response:

a. self-revelation

vs. 14 *God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you.'"*

b. historical covenant faithfulness

vs. 15-16 *God also said to Moses, "Say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers— the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob— has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.*

c. command & promise

3:16-17 "Go, assemble the elders of Israel and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers— the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob— appeared to me and said: I have watched over you and have seen what has been done to you in Egypt. 17 And I have promised to bring you up out of your misery in Egypt into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites— a land flowing with milk and honey.'

d. sovereign predictions

3: 8-22 "The elders of Israel will listen to you. Then you and the elders are to go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. Let us take a three-day journey into the desert to offer sacrifices to the LORD our God.' 19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless a mighty hand compels him. 20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike the Egyptians with all the wonders that I will perform among them. After that, he will let you go. 21 "And I will make the Egyptians favorably disposed toward this people, so that when you leave you will not go empty-handed. 22 Every woman is to ask her neighbor and any woman living in her house for articles of silver and gold and for clothing, which you will put on your sons and daughters. And so you will plunder the Egyptians."

3. Unbelief (4:1)

Exodus 4:1 Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you?'"

God's response: **signs and wonders**

- a. Rod into serpent and back again

Significance: the conquest and domination of Satan by God's power

- b. Hand leprous then healed again

Significance: the corruption of the human heart, healed only by the power of God

- c. River water blood

Significance: the judgment of God on all who rebel against Him

4. Pride (4:10)

4:10 Moses said to the LORD, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."

God's response: **sovereign purpose and assistance**

4:11-12 The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? 12 Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."

5. Rebellion (4:13)

4:13 But Moses said, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."

God's response: anger, then gentle provision!!

4:14-17 Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you. 15 You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. 16 He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. 17 But take this staff in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it."

Chapter 4: Moses Continues to Argue with God

Exodus 4:1 Moses answered, "What if they do not believe me or listen to me and say, 'The LORD did not appear to you'?"

- Bald-faced unbelief!!! God had already told Moses that the elders of Israel WOULD believe him!
- How patient is God with our unbelief and how merciful to use us anyway!!
- Moses motivated by fear here, seeking to dodge his responsibility

A. The Three Signs and Wonders of Moses

1. ~~These were the first miracles ever recorded in the Bible~~
2. Given to soothe Moses' unbelief

B. The First Sign: The Staff into a Serpent

vs. 2-5 Then the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" "A staff," he replied. 3 The LORD said, "Throw it on the ground." Moses threw it on the ground and it became a snake, and he ran from it. 4 Then the LORD said to him, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail." So Moses reached out and took hold of the snake and it turned back into a staff in his hand. 5 "This," said the LORD, "is so that they may believe that the LORD, the God of their fathers— the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob— has appeared to you."

A.W. Pink: some lessons from this first sign

- 1) Practical
 - Rod stands for support... that on which someone leans or relies
 - Rod in hand meant all was well... represented God's support of Moses

Psalm 23:4 Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

- Lesson: supporting, protecting grace of God for Moses personally... when he kept close to God, God would support him fully
- BUT: let him cast away confidence in Yahweh, he would find himself helpless before the Devil, that ancient serpent
- Thus did Moses run away in terror
- The simple lesson: secret for overcoming Satan is total reliance on God alone

2) Doctrinal

- Rod represents governmental power and authority

Psalm 2:9 You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

- Casting down of the rod represents God casting down earthly government to Satanic rulers... the "beast of the earth" of Revelation 13
- Moses grasping it again is the power of human government transformed into godly rule by a godly leader
- Moses ruled Israel by the laws of God, transforming the rod of government into a support for the people

3) Evidential

- Very practically, the sign endowed Moses with authority and gave him persuasive skill to win over his people
- This sign established in Moses the very call of God which the people had never seen
- His ability to change the rod into a serpent and back again was a clear sign that God was with Moses

4) Evangelical

- Moses fled before the serpent to signify also the powerlessness of a single sinner before the power of Satan
- Israel was also in bondage at this time, powerless to change their situation
- Moses was God's mediator, and only with his authority could he stand before the power of the devil and win the victory
- Moses' power over the devil was shown in his ability to grasp the tail and hold it
- This is ultimately a symbol of Christ Himself, our mediator

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus

5) Historical

- Three stages to the sign: 1) the rod held in Moses' hand; 2) the rod cast down and changed to a snake; 3) the snake seized by the tail and transformed back to a rod
- This corresponds to three stages of Israel's history: 1) call of Abraham until they entered Egypt (Israel had been held, miraculously supported by God, until they had attained a position of rule over Egypt through Joseph); 2) Israel had been cast down into bondage under the power of the devil in Egypt; 3) Israel would soon be taken back up again into the hand of God

6) Dispensational

- Future history of Israel also in view...

- For twenty-five centuries, Israel has been trampled under by Gentile domination
- But in the future, Christ will rule all nations with a rod of iron

Psalm 2:7-9 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. 8 Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. 9 You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."

7) Typical

Psalm 110:1-2 Of David. A psalm. The LORD says to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet." 2 The LORD will extend your mighty scepter from Zion; you will rule in the midst of your enemies.

- Ultimately, Christ will rule all nations
- But in His first advent here, He was cast down and became a curse for us

Galatians 3:10-13 All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." 11 Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "The righteous will live by faith." 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, "The man who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

John 3:14-16 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

The Second Sign

4:6-9 Then the LORD said, "Put your hand inside your cloak." So Moses put his hand into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was leprous, like snow.

7 "Now put it back into your cloak," he said. So Moses put his hand back into his cloak, and when he took it out, it was restored, like the rest of his flesh.

8 Then the LORD said, "If they do not believe you or pay attention to the first miraculous sign, they may believe the second.

9 But if they do not believe these two signs or listen to you, take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground. The water you take from the river will become blood on the ground."

Significance: the heart of Moses is desperately wicked, but even God can make it clear

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

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

Moses' own godliness would not be sufficient to accomplish this great task:

Acts 3:12 When Peter saw this, he said to them: "Men of Israel, why does this surprise you? Why do you stare at us as if by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

The Third Sign: Water into Blood

- Significance: God's judgment on all who reject Him
- Clean water symbolizes life... water into blood symbolizes death by God's wrath

Revelation 22:1-2 Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

Exodus 7:20-21 Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD had commanded. He raised his staff in the presence of Pharaoh and his officials and struck the water of the Nile, and all the water was changed into blood. 21 The fish in the Nile died, and the river smelled so bad that the Egyptians could not drink its water. Blood was everywhere in Egypt.

Revelation 16:3-6 The second angel poured out his bowl on the sea, and it turned into blood like that of a dead man, and every living thing in the sea died. 4 The third angel poured out his bowl on the rivers and springs of water, and they became blood. 5 Then I heard the angel in charge of the waters say: "You are just in these judgments, you who are and who were, the Holy One, because you have so judged; 6 for they have shed the blood of your saints and prophets, and you have given them blood to drink as they deserve."

NOTE: twin issues of judgment and life flowed from Christ's side as well!!!

John 19:34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water.

Moses' Pride: Concern over Eloquence

4:10-12 *Moses said to the LORD, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue."*

- consistent human response: self-focus, eloquence, fluent speech
- Seminaries constantly working on eloquence and polished speech patterns
- God has rejected these as having any lasting spiritual power

1 Corinthians 2:1-5 *When I came to you, brothers, I did not come with eloquence or superior wisdom as I proclaimed to you the testimony about God. 2 For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. 3 I came to you in weakness and fear, and with much trembling. 4 My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, 5 so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.*

2 Corinthians 10:1 *By the meekness and gentleness of Christ, I appeal to you— I, Paul, who am "timid" when face to face with you, but "bold" when away!*

vs. 10 *For some say, "His letters are weighty and forceful, but in person he is unimpressive and his speaking amounts to nothing."*

11:6 *I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way.*

God's magnificent response: SOVEREIGNTY!!!


vs. 11-12 *The LORD said to him, "Who gave man his mouth? Who makes him deaf or mute? Who gives him sight or makes him blind? Is it not I, the LORD? 12 Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say."*

Implications of this are staggering

Constant focus on genetics, on parentage, on genetic lineage

Even more now that we are studying this

Does this verse fit into your theology???

Isa-45:7

John 9:1-3

5. Rebellion (4:13)

4:13 *But Moses said, "O Lord, please send someone else to do it."*

God's response: anger, then gentle provision!!

4:14-17 Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you. 15 You shall speak to him and put words in his mouth; I will help both of you speak and will teach you what to do. 16 He will speak to the people for you, and it will be as if he were your mouth and as if you were God to him. 17 But take this staff in your hand so you can perform miraculous signs with it."

Moses Puts His House in Order

A. Common Courtesy Not Below a Mighty Servant of God

vs. 18 Then Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, "Let me go back to my own people in Egypt to see if any of them are still alive." Jethro said, "Go, and I wish you well."

A.W. Pink: "This act of Moses was very commendable. Jethro had taken him in while a fugitive, had given him his daughter as his wife, and had provided him with a home for forty years. Moreover, Moses had charge of his flock. It would, then, have been grossly discourteous and the height of ingratitude had Moses gone down to Egypt without first notifying his father-in-law. This request of Moses manifested his thoughtfulness of others and his appreciation of favors received."

A mighty call from God to some great service in redemptive history does not give us permission to neglect common courtesies... nor are we permitted to burn bridges with our families through rude insensitivity.

B. BUT Moses Was Not Completely Truthful

1. Just like Jacob... Moses did not tell the whole truth
2. No mention of the call of God or of the burning bush

C. God's Ongoing Assurance and Instruction to Moses (19-23)

19 Now the LORD had said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who wanted to kill you are dead." 20 So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt. And he took the staff of God in his hand.

Reminiscent of God's statement to Joseph

Matthew 2:19 After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

Also a picture of God's judgment on the enemies of his people: **ALL those** who wanted to kill Moses are dead... from the mighty Pharaoh, to his lowly henchmen

21 The LORD said to Moses, "When you return to Egypt, see that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders I have given you the power to do. But I will harden his heart so that he will not let the people go. 22 Then say to Pharaoh, 'This is what the LORD says: Israel is my firstborn son, 23 and I told you, "Let my son go, so he may worship me." But you refused to let him go; so I will kill your firstborn son.'"

Clearest statement yet of God's sovereignty in hardening Pharaoh's heart... the outcome of God's actions is a supreme act of judgment on Pharaoh himself... the death on his own son

D. Putting His House in Order (vs. 24-26)

24 At a lodging place on the way, the LORD met Moses and was about to kill him. 25 But Zipporah took a flint knife, cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it. "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me," she said. 26 So the LORD let him alone. (At that time she said "bridegroom of blood," referring to circumcision.)

- The covenant of circumcision central to God's promise to Abraham
- However, Moses had neglected this vital matter
- Reading between the lines, it seems as though Moses had neglected this matter despite constant reminders from God
- Key principle: Fathers ultimately responsible for their children... Moses was the HEAD of his household and should have attended to this vital covenant matter
- A.W. Pink seems to indicate that Zipporah was the one who had stood in the way of Moses and did NOT want him to circumcise their son
- He says this was the reason Moses sent her back to her father in Exodus 18:2
- However it was Moses, not Zipporah whom the Lord sought to kill... he was ultimately responsible
- Key principle #2: Servants of the Lord must first have their own house in order

1 Timothy 3:4-5 He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. 5 (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?)

Titus 1:6 An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient.

God's Word Begins to Come True (vs. 27-31)

vs. 27 The LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the desert to meet Moses." So he met Moses at the mountain of God and kissed him.

Fulfillment:

Exodus 4:14 Then the LORD's anger burned against Moses and he said, "What about your brother, Aaron the Levite? I know he can speak well. He is already on his way to meet you, and his heart will be glad when he sees you.

Then... to the elders:

28 Then Moses told Aaron everything the LORD had sent him to say, and also about all the miraculous signs he had commanded him to perform. 29 Moses and Aaron brought together all the elders of the Israelites, 30 and Aaron told them everything the LORD had said to Moses. He also performed the signs before the people, 31 and they believed. And when they heard that the LORD was concerned about them and had seen their misery, they bowed down and worshiped.

Fulfillment:

Exodus 3:18 "The elders of Israel will listen to you."

Elders worship by faith... they praise God!!!