

EXODUS: The Person, Promise, and Power of God

Exodus 4: The Rod of God

3 questions Moses ask of God:

Who am I?

Who are you?

What if they don't believe me?

Moses said to God, "**Who am I** that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" (3:11)

God's response to Moses was not an affirmation of Moses' talents or credentials. It was an affirmation of Himself:

¹² He said, "**But I will be with you**, and this shall be the sign for you, that **I have sent you**: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

¹³ Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

¹⁴ God said to Moses, "**I am who I am.**" And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: '**I am** has sent me to you.'" ¹⁵ God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: '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, and thus **I am to be remembered throughout all generations.** (3:12-16)

After all the assurances of God Almighty ...

My _____ with you (3:12a)

The guaranteed _____ of My mission (3:12b)

Even the _____ through which God would work through Moses:

"Wonders that I will do" (3:20)

"He (Pharaoh) will let you go" (3:20)

"favor in the sight of the Egyptians" (3:21)

... Moses responds with:

"... behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.'"

It's as if Moses is saying, _____. How do _____?

Note that God did not condemn Moses for his response or lack of faith. As A.W. Pink writes:

"This was no small difficulty for Moses. No visible presence would accompany him. He was to go alone to the enslaved Hebrews and present himself as the Divinely-sent deliverer. He was to tell them that the God of their fathers had promised to free them. But, as we shall see later, this was not likely to make much impression upon a people who were, most of them at least, sunk in the idolatries of the Egyptians." (Gleanings in Exodus)¹

¹ A.W. Pink, *Gleanings in Exodus*, ch. 4

God is a God of words before _____. The scriptures show a pattern of _____ and _____ by actions. God is about to show Moses how He will confirm His words to him and those to who he must speak:

The God Who Acts – Exodus 4:1-9

4 Then Moses answered, "But behold, they will not believe me or listen to my voice, for they will say, 'The Lord did not appear to you.' " 2 The Lord said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A staff." 3 And he said, "Throw it on the ground." So he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and Moses ran from it. 4 But the Lord said to Moses, "Put out your hand and catch it by the tail" – so he put out his hand and caught it, and it became a staff in his hand – 5 "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." 6 Again, the Lord said to him, "Put your hand inside your cloak." And he put his hand inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous like snow. 7 Then God said, "Put your hand back inside your cloak." So he put his hand back inside his cloak, and when he took it out, behold, it was restored like the rest of his flesh. 8 "If they will not believe you," God said, "or listen to the first sign, they may believe the latter sign. 9 If they will not believe even these two signs or listen to your voice, you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on the dry ground, and the water that you shall take from the Nile will become blood on the dry ground."

So far, Moses has expressed the following objections to God's call and commission:

- 1) I'm not _____ for the task. (3:11-12)

To this objection, God had clearly expressed His own _____ in all things. "I AM".

- 2) I don't have the _____ I need. (3:13-15)

To this, God connected the divine name (YHWH) and the Hebrew verb 'to be' so Moses would trust in the God who says, "I was, I am, and I shall always continue to be."

Now Moses offers a third objection:

- 3) They won't _____ me even if I tell them. (4:1-9)

To this objection, God commands him to perform **3 actions**, involving:

A rod that became a snake, a hand that became leprous, and the Nile that became blood.

These would be the tools God gave to Moses to "prove" that he was God's appointed messenger and deliverer.

These were both "**signs**" and "**wonders**". What's the difference?

According to Alec Motyer: *"in a broad sense a 'wonder' is something that halts people in their tracks, making them stop and stare, and a 'sign' points beyond itself to something else. A 'wonder' is meant to catch our attention, a 'sign' is meant to engage our minds. A 'wonder' ASTONISHES; a 'sign' INSTRUCTS.*²

What should we make of these three signs?

- 1) God is sovereign over every _____ and _____ in Egypt – 'divine' or royal.
- 2) God is the sovereign _____ or sovereign _____. He can inflict or cure.
- 3) God is sovereign over _____. He is able – if He chooses – to utterly _____ Egypt itself.

² Alec Motyer, *The Message of Exodus: The Days of Our Pilgrimage*, 76-77.

But Moses offers a fourth objection: 4:10-17

4) I am not _____. I am slow of speech and tongue. (4:10)

Now this is a bit ironic considering Acts 7:22!

But Moses apparently thought he was unable – on his own – to compete verbally in the court of the Egyptians. To this objection, God reminds him that He alone is _____ and _____.

I am the answer to your deficiencies, God is telling him.

Nonetheless, Moses says “*Oh, my Lord, please send someone else!*”

Note that Moses goes from ‘LORD’ to ‘Lord’.

Why is this significant?

For the first time, God upbraids Moses for his _____ and _____. (v. 14)

Moses needed to learn that the _____ was far more important than the _____. God values our _____ (cleanliness) and _____ (willingness). He provides (most of) the rest.

God’s response to Moses’s objection was to include _____ in his saving plan.

Was this a concession on God’s part?

Even with Aaron, the process remains the same – The _____ and the _____ would all be _____.

And note that Aaron’s participation would prove to be a mixed blessing. (See: Exodus 32)

Moses Returns to Egypt – 4:18-31

¹⁸ Moses went back to Jethro his father-in-law and said to him, “Please let me go back to my brothers in Egypt to see whether they are still alive.” And Jethro said to Moses, “Go in peace.” ¹⁹ And the Lord said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.” ²⁰ So Moses took his wife and his sons and had them ride on a donkey, and went back to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the staff of God in his hand.

²¹ And the Lord said to Moses, “When you go back to Egypt, see that you do before Pharaoh all the miracles that I have put in your power. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. ²² Then you shall say to Pharaoh, ‘Thus says the Lord, Israel is my firstborn son, ²³ and I say to you, “Let my son go that he may serve me.” If you refuse to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son.’ ”

²⁴ At a lodging place on the way the Lord met him and sought to put him to death. ²⁵ Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son’s foreskin and touched Moses’ feet with it and said, “Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!” ²⁶ So he let him alone. It was then that she said, “A bridegroom of blood,” because of the circumcision.

²⁷ The Lord said to Aaron, “Go into the wilderness to meet Moses.” So he went and met him at the mountain of God and kissed him. ²⁸ And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord with which he had sent him to speak, and all the signs that he had commanded him to do. ²⁹ Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the people of Israel. ³⁰ Aaron spoke all the words that the Lord had spoken to Moses and did the signs in the sight of the people. ³¹ And the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the people of Israel and that he had seen their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped.

A few observations from the text:

Moses would _____ and speak God's message and perform the signs and wonders, but God would _____ Pharaoh's heart so that he would not comply.

Why?

1. Always remember Genesis 18:25. This is foundational to this discussion.
2. Moses' responsibilities were not the same as God's.
3. Ultimately, the outcome would unequivocally _____.

God would meet Moses and seek the _____ of the one He just called and equipped and who was at that moment obeying Him!

Why?

1. Moses' son wasn't _____. He should have been. (Gen. 17:7) Moses's own 'spiritual house' was not in order and Moses was not ready to lead.
2. As an instrument of the _____, Moses had not yet _____ the covenant. The _____ of the covenant is a mark of _____ and _____.
3. Obedience is paramount in the economy of God.

When Moses spoke to the 'elders of the people of Israel' and gave them God's word to them, they _____.

Why?

In a word, _____. For the first time in ages, they had it. They _____ and that faith gave them _____.