



Bondage		Redemption				Revelation							
1	Bondage in Egypt	3	7	11	13	16	19	21	25	28	32	35	40
Call of Moses		Journey to Mount Sinai				Plans for the Tabernacle				Priests and Levites			
Incubation of the Nation		Inception of the Nation				Book of the Covenant				Golden Calf			
Preparation		Redemption				Instruction				Infancy of the Nation			
Bondage and Oppression		Deliverance and Provision				Law, Pattern and Construction							
God's People Enduring Bondage		God's Grace in Redemption				God's Glory Manifested in Worship							
Israel in Egypt		Israel to Sinai				Israel at Sinai							
430 years (15%)		2 months (30% of Exodus)				10 months (55% of Exodus)							

Redemption and Revelation

Exodus 1-18 The Redemption of God's People from Egypt
Exodus 19-40 The Revelation to God's People in Sinai

Bondage in Egypt (Exodus 1-6)

Exodus 1:1-22 A Deliverer Needed

1:1-7 The Setting

1:8-14 The Slavery

v8 The Pharaoh

v9-10 The Plot

v11-14 The Persecution

1:15-22 The Slaying

v15-16 The Charge

v17 The Contravention

v18 The Consternation

v19 The Cleverness

v20-21 The Commendation

v22 The Command

Exodus 2:1-10 The Deliverer Born

2:1-4 The Parturition of Moses

v1 Moses' Parents

v2 Faith of Moses' Parents

v3-4 Moses in a Basket

v5-10 The Protection of Moses

v5-6 Pharaoh's Daughter Finds Moses

v7-10 Pharaoh's Daughter Adopts Moses

Exodus 2:11-25 The Deliverer Prepared

2:11-14 Moses in Egypt

v11a Moses the Prince

v11b Moses the Deliverer

v12 Moses the Murderer

v13 Moses the Arbiter

v14 Moses the Accused

2:15-25 Moses in Midian

v15 Moses the Refugee

v16-20 Moses the Stranger

v21-22 Moses the Shepherd

v23 Israel's Cruel Bondage

v24-25 God's Covenant Remembered

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

v1-3 The Burning Bush

v4-6 Holy Ground

v7-10 Moses Commissioned

v11-14 I AM WHO I AM

v15-17 God's Concern for Israel

v18-22 Egypt will be Plundered

4:1-9 The Signs Given

4:10-17 Moses' Continued Refusal

Exodus 4:18-31 The Deliverer Sent

4:18-31 Moses in Egypt

v18 Jethro Blesses Moses

v19-23 The LORD Instructs Moses

v24-26 Zipporah Saves Moses

v27 The LORD Instructs Aaron

v28-30 Aaron Speaks for Moses

v31 The People Worship the LORD

3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

3:1-3 The Burning Bush

1 Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.

2 And the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a blazing fire from the midst of a bush; and he looked, **and behold,** the bush was burning with fire, **yet** the bush was not consumed.

3 **So** Moses said, "I must turn aside now, and see this marvelous sight, why the bush is not burned up."



Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

Moses was a shepherd. The other chief leader of Israel, David, was also a shepherd. Jesus, though he was a carpenter, is called the chief shepherd (1 Peter 5:4). **God's prototype for leadership is a shepherd.** Here Moses is pasturing and leading the flock of another. Moses learns to care for and lead the sheep, just as he would care for and lead the people. He learns to work for someone else, not himself. Ultimately, Moses would learn, as he led the flock of God's people, that he was working neither for himself nor for the people, but for God.

At this time, Moses is seemingly on the shelf. Forty years he spends in the wilderness (Acts 7:30). It may seem like wasted time. **But in the wilderness, he's learning to be a shepherd. He's learning lessons that will be invaluable when he returns to Egypt.** We may feel that we're on the shelf. Nothing of significance is happening. It may seem like the days are wasted. But God doesn't waste a minute. He is busy preparing each of us for involvement with his plan for people.

<http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/10403/exo003.html>



Moses was alone. He was in the wilderness. He came to **Horeb**, which means "**desolate wasteland**." For Moses, it is probably an apt picture of his life. He was a complete failure in Egypt, and now he's wasting time in the wilderness. The landscape of his life is a dry, barren wasteland. Nothing is happening, and nothing has happened for 40 years. If we were to photograph the landscape of our lives, at times we may come up with a picture of Horeb, a "desolate wasteland." Life is dry and barren, and worst of all, we're all alone.

Then again, maybe we're not alone. Maybe we only think we're alone. For **Horeb, the "desolate wasteland," is called "the mountain of God."** What is "the mountain of God" doing way out here? The last place Moses expected to meet God was Horeb. The last place we'd expect to meet God is that dry, barren, lonely place in our lives. Yet that is where God shows up. He meets us in our desolate places.

<http://www.pbc.org/files/messages/10403/exo003.html>

3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

3:4-6 “Holy Ground”

4 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses!"

And he said, "Here I am."



Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

The Lord is watching for how Moses will respond. God does not speak to Moses until he sees that Moses has "turned aside to look." God does not speak to us until we're ready to listen. In the desolation of the wilderness, after we've exhausted all our efforts to make life work, we're ready to listen to God... But the loneliness of the wilderness can soften that resistance and open our ears to the Lord. The wilderness can make someone humble, like Moses, who was called "very humble, more than any man who was on the face of the earth" (**Numbers 12:3**).

When the Lord calls, Moses says, "Here I am." This is a response of trusting availability, the same response that Abraham had when the Lord approached him to sacrifice Isaac (**Genesis 22:1, 11**) and the same response that Isaiah had when God called him to speak against Israel (**Isaiah 6:8**).

... The wilderness prepares us to meet God. It prepares us to listen to God. And it prepares us to be available to God. The wilderness prepares us to enter into life, to involve ourselves in God's plan for people.

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3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

3:4-6 “Holy Ground”

4 When the LORD saw that he turned aside to look, God called to him from the midst of the bush, and said, "Moses, Moses!"

And he said, "Here I am."

5 **Then** He said, "Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, **for** the place on which you are standing is holy ground."

6 He said also, "I am the God of your father the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob."

Then Moses hid his face, **for** he was afraid to look at God.



Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

3:7-10 Moses Commissioned

7 And the LORD said, "I have surely seen the affliction of My people who are in Egypt, and have given heed to their cry **because** of their taskmasters, **for** I am aware of their sufferings. 8 **So** I have come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey, to the place of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite. 9 And now, **behold**, the cry of the sons of Israel has come to Me; **furthermore**, I have seen the oppression with which the Egyptians are oppressing them. 10 **Therefore**, come now, and I will send you to Pharaoh, **so that** you may bring My people, the sons of Israel, out of Egypt."

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called



Moses is ready to meet God. Before anything else, he needs to learn about God. We all have distorted concepts of God. Externally, we may assent to all the right doctrines, but internally we've developed some incorrect ways of thinking about God. We have some deeply held, and incorrect, beliefs, some of which we may not be aware of - beliefs such as, "God should do much more for me than he does," "God has forgotten me," "God doesn't care about me," and "God has no place for me." These are all examples of wrongly held beliefs about God. No doubt Moses has some wrongly held beliefs as well. So God reveals himself to Moses. In these verses he tells him four things, which we may assent to externally but rebel against internally: 1) God is holy. 2) God is faithful. 3) God is compassionate. 4) God has a plan.

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First, God is holy. The Lord instructs Moses to remove his sandals, because he is standing on holy ground. Sandals collected dust. Still in most parts of the world, a person removes his or her footwear before entering a house because he or she does not want to dirty the house of a respected host. Similarly, Moses is entering the house of the Lord, so to speak, a piece of ground God has chosen to inhabit. **Morally, God is a completely different being. He is "other." He is pure and clean, but our sandals are dirty. Morally, he is galaxies above us, and that calls for reverential awe. He is not to be approached casually or flippantly. He is not "the big boss," "the man upstairs" or "my good buddy." When exposed to the holiness of God, the people of God are first of all struck by an emotionally violent sense of unworthiness (Judges 6:22, Isaiah 6:5).** The first thing we need to know about God is that he is holy. But God, in all his holy purity, enters our dirty world. Astoundingly, not only does he enter it, he does so with faithfulness, compassion and action.

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Second, God is faithful. In verse 5, the Lord first tells Moses that the ground he is standing on is holy, but he doesn't tell him that its holiness is attributable to God's presence. But in telling him that God is there, he tells him of God's faithfulness. **He tells Moses, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob." God made his covenant promises to these men, and by invoking their names, he is invoking his faithfulness.** At this point, Moses knows who he's speaking with and turns away in fear. He's afraid of being consumed by God's holiness. But the bush wasn't consumed, and neither is Moses. When God finally reveals that it is he himself who is speaking with Moses, he does so in a way that also reveals his covenant faithfulness. He is God, yes, in all his holiness, but he is also the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, in all his faithfulness. **God shows up in our lives not to destroy us but to help us.**

<http://www.pbbc.org/files/messages/10403/exo003.html>

Third, God is compassionate. He has "seen" the affliction of his people, he has "given heed to" their cry and he is "aware" of their sufferings. Moses responds to God in fear. God answers that fear by speaking of his compassion. Compassion disarms fear. God cares deeply for his people. Our sufferings move God deeply. In fact, they move him to action.

Fourth, God has a plan of action. His plan is to take his people to a better place. Currently they are suffering in Egypt, laboring under the oppression of the taskmasters. God will take them to "a good and spacious land, to a land flowing with milk and honey." This is always God's plan for his people - to take them to a better place.

This should all take our breath away. God is holy, faithful, compassionate and active. He has an awesome plan to take his people to a better place. More amazing than all of this, perhaps, is the final revelation: Each of us is part of the plan!

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3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

3:11-14 "I AM WHO I AM"

11 **But** Moses said to God, "Who am I, **that** I should go to Pharaoh, **and that** I should bring the sons of Israel out of Egypt?" 12 And He said, "**Certainly** I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall **worship** God at this mountain."



abad (3:12; 12:31) cf.
normal word *shachah*
(4:31; 12:27; 20:5;
23:24; 24:1; 32:8;
33:10; 34:8, 14).

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

- **3:12 “worship”** - H5647 עָבַד `abad, א AV - serve 227, do 15, till 9, servant 5, work 5, worshippers 5, service 4, dress 2, labour 2, ear 2, misc 14; 290 א 1) to work, serve 1a) (Qal) 1a1) to labour, work, do work 1a2) to work for another, serve another by labour 1a3) to serve as subjects 1a4) to serve (God) 1a5) to serve (with Levitical service) 1b) (Niphal) 1b1) to be worked, be tilled (of land) 1b2) to make oneself a servant 1c) (Pual) to be worked 1d) (Hiphil) 1d1) to compel to labour or work, cause to labour, cause to serve 1d2) to cause to serve as subjects 1e) (Hophal) to be led or enticed to serve
- **Normal word for “worship”** - H7812 שָׁחָה shachah א AV - worship 99, bow 31, bow down 18, obeisance 9, reverence 5, fall down 3, themselves 2, stoop 1, crouch 1, misc 3; 172 א 1) to bow down 1a) (Qal) to bow down 1b) (Hiphil) to depress (fig) 1c) (Hithpaal) 1c1) to bow down, prostrate oneself 1c1a) before superior in homage 1c1b) before God in worship 1c1c) before false gods 1c1d) before angel

What does it mean to “worship” the Lord?



- 1:13** And the Egyptians compelled the sons of Israel to labor rigorously
- 1:14** and they made their lives bitter with hard labor in mortar and bricks and at all kinds of labor in the field, all their labors which they rigorously imposed on them.
- 3:12** And He said "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."
- 4:23** "So I said to you, 'Let My son go, that he may serve Me'; but you have refused to let him go. Behold, I will kill your son, your first-born.'""
- 5:18** "So go now and work; for you shall be given no straw, yet you must deliver the quota of bricks."
Worship = serve the Lord & work for Him
- 6:5** "And furthermore I have heard the groaning of the sons of Israel, because the Egyptians are holding them in bondage; and I have remembered My covenant.
- 7:16** "And you will say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness. But behold, you have not listened until now."

What does it mean to “worship” the Lord?

- 8:1** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me."
- 8:20** Now the LORD said to Moses, "Rise early in the morning and present yourself before Pharaoh, as he comes out to the water, and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me."
- 9:1** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh and speak to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me."
- 9:13** Then the LORD said to Moses, "Rise up early in the morning and stand before Pharaoh and say to him, 'Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me."
- 10:3** And Moses and Aaron went to Pharaoh and said to him, "Thus says the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, 'How long will you refuse to humble yourself before Me? Let My people go, that they may serve Me."
- 10:7** And Pharaoh's servants said to him, "How long will this man be a snare to us? Let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God. Do you not realize that Egypt is destroyed?"

Worship = serve the Lord

What does it mean to “worship” the Lord?

 Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

- 10:8** So Moses and Aaron were brought back to Pharaoh, and he said to them, "Go, serve the LORD your God! Who are the ones that are going?"
- 10:11** "Not so! Go now, the men *among you*, and serve the LORD, for that is what you desire." So they were driven out from Pharaoh's presence.
- 10:24** Then Pharaoh called to Moses, and said, "Go, serve the LORD; only let your flocks and your herds be detained. Even your little ones may go with you."
- 10:26** "Therefore, our livestock, too, will go with us; not a hoof will be left behind, for we shall take some of them *to serve* the LORD our God. And until we arrive there, we ourselves do not know with what we shall serve the LORD."
- 12:31** Then he called for Moses and Aaron at night and said, "Rise up, get out from among my people, both you and the sons of Israel; and go, worship the LORD, as you have said.
- 13:5** "And it shall be when the LORD brings you to the land of the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Amorite, the Hivite and the Jebusite, which He swore to your fathers to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, that you shall observe this rite in this month.

Worship = serve the Lord & observing His feasts

What does it mean to “worship” the Lord?



- 14:5** When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, Pharaoh and his servants had a change of heart toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?"
- 14:12** "Is this not the word that we spoke to you in Egypt, saying, 'Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness."
- 20:5** "**You shall not worship <07812>** them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me,
- 20:9** "Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
- 21:2** "If you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve for six years; but on the seventh he shall go out as a free man without payment.
- 21:6** then his master shall bring him to God, then he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost. And his master shall pierce his ear with an awl; and he shall serve him permanently.

Worship = serve the Lord & work for Him

What does it mean to “worship” the Lord?



- 23:24** "You shall not worship <07812> their gods, nor serve them, nor do according to their deeds; but you shall utterly overthrow them, and break their sacred pillars in pieces.
- 23:25** "But you shall serve the LORD your God, and He will bless your bread and your water; and I will remove sickness from your midst.
- 23:33** "They shall not live in your land, lest they make you sin against Me; for *if you* serve their gods, it will surely be a snare to you."
- 34:21** "You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even during plowing time and harvest you shall rest.

Worship = serve the Lord & work for Him

What does it mean to “worship” the Lord?

3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

3:11-14 "I AM WHO I AM"

13 **Then** Moses said to God, "**Behold**, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?"

14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "**Thus** you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

Moses asks God, "Who am I?" He entertains monumental doubts about who his is. We entertain such doubts as well, which keep us from entering life. They can only be answered by the answers to another question: "Who is God?" God says he is holy, faithful, compassionate and active on our behalf. The answers to the deepest questions we have in life are the answers to the question, "Who is God?" When our fears rage within us, are we asking the right question? Are we asking, "How in the world can I protect myself?" or are we asking, "Who is God?"?

The answer includes five powerful words: "**I will be with you.**" These words serve as an ever-assuring refrain throughout the scriptures. God says repeatedly, "I am with you." Among those receiving such assurance are Abraham (**Genesis 26:4**), Joshua (**Joshua 1:1:5**), Zerubbabel and Joshua son of Jehozadak (**Haggai 2:4**). The name Immanuel, another name for Jesus, means "God with us." In the new heavens and new earth, "God himself shall be among them" (**Revelation 21:3**). The issue for Moses, and for us, is not "Who am I?" but "Who is God?"

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...The revelation that God is with him is not enough for Moses, just as it usually isn't enough for us, either. Moses wants some specifics. So he does what many of us do: He takes his mind to the future and devises a possible scenario. He doesn't trust God with the future, so Moses visits it himself, preparing the way for his arrival, making sure all bases are covered. It's better to trust the Lord. **"Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself" (Matthew 6:34).** Nevertheless, God doesn't chastise Moses for this lack of trust, but he works with him.

Moses figures that the people might ask for the name of God. In the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, new revelation from God was often accompanied by a new title (**Genesis 16:3**). Perhaps the people would want to know if the same had happened with Moses. The name of a god, just like the name of a person, tells something about his nature. If the people asked for God's name, they would be asking about his nature. In other words, they'd want to know who, exactly, is this God?

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...God says "I am who I am." **This speaks of God's self-existence. No one created God; he simply is. Unlike everything and everyone else, God is not created.** This is another way of saying that God is holy - he is different; he is utterly unlike anything or anyone else. That means that God cannot be used for our purposes; he is outside our purposes. We flourish only insofar as we serve his purposes. We languish when we serve our own.

God seems to indicate that his name is "I AM" (or "I WILL BE"), for he tells Moses to tell the people that "I AM" has sent him. This is the first-person singular form of the verb "to be." God has used it elsewhere already in this passage in conveying his nature. In **Exodus 3:12**, he says, "*I will be with you.*"

Although in the New American Standard translation, the name "I AM" and the verb "I will be" appear to be different tenses, they appear in the same Hebrew tense, and they are one and the same word. Based on verse 14, God is self-existent, or God is holy, and based on verse 12, God is with us.

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Then God twice identifies his name with a word translated "the LORD" [YHWH] (3:15, 16). This word is likely the third-person singular form of the verb "to be" and means not "I AM" or "I WILL BE" but "**HE IS**" or "**HE WILL BE**." The transliteration from Hebrew into English, near as we can tell, is "**Yahweh**." This is God's covenant name, to which were attached many of his attributes. For example, Abraham called the place where Isaac was spared "The Lord Will Provide," or "Yahweh-jireh" (**Genesis 22:14**). Gideon named a place "The Lord is Peace," or "Yahweh-shalom" (**Judges 6:24**).

In his holiness, God simply is. But in his faithfulness and compassion and plans, he is with us. He is the Lord who is faithful, the Lord who is compassionate, the Lord who is active. He is utterly holy yet intensely personal. That is exactly what God instructs Moses to tell the people what God has already told Moses.

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3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

3:15-17 God's Concern for Israel

15 And God, furthermore, said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons 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 this is My memorial-name to all generations. 16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together, and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I am indeed concerned about you and what has been done to you in Egypt. 17 So I said, I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Amorite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite, to a land flowing with milk and honey.'"

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called



3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

3:18-22 Egypt will be Plundered

18 "And they will pay heed to what you say; and you with the elders of Israel will come to the king of Egypt, and you will say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us. **So now**, please, let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.' 19 **But** I know that the king of Egypt will not permit you to go, except under compulsion. 20 **So I will stretch out My hand, and strike Egypt with all My miracles which I shall do in the midst of it; and after that he will let you go.** 21 And I will grant this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians; and it shall be that when you go, you will not go empty-handed. 22 **But** every woman shall ask of her neighbor and the woman who lives in her house, articles of silver and articles of gold, and clothing; and you will put them on your sons and daughters. **Thus** you will plunder the Egyptians."

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

13 And God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. 14 But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. 15 And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. 16 Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."

Genesis 15:13-16

3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

4:1-9 The Signs Given

1 **Then** Moses answered and said, "What if they will not believe me, or listen to what I say? **For** they may say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.'"

2 And the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?"

And he said, "A staff."

3 **Then** He said, "Throw it on the ground." **So** he threw it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it.

4 **But** the LORD said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand and grasp it by its tail" - **so** he stretched 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."

The serpent = constant enemy of the seed of the woman; represents the dangers Moses will meet

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

4:1-9 The Signs Given

6 And the LORD furthermore said to him, "**Now** put your hand into your bosom." **So** he put his hand into his bosom, and when he took it out, **behold**, his hand was leprous like snow.

7 **Then** He said, "Put your hand into your bosom again." **So** he put his hand into his bosom again; and when he took it out of his bosom, **behold**, it was restored like *the rest* of his flesh. 8 "And it shall come about that if they will not believe you or heed the witness of the first sign, they may believe the witness of the last sign.

The instantaneous production and cure was a sign of their danger if they disobeyed and of their deliverance if they obeyed.

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

9 **But** it shall be that **if** they will not believe even these two signs or heed what you say, **then** you shall take some water from the Nile and pour it on **the dry ground;** and the water which you take from the Nile will become **blood on the dry ground.**“

The signs were to convince the Israelites of the reality of Yahweh’s appearance to Moses and to strengthen Moses’ faith and dissipate his fears as to the result of his mission.

Symbolic Significance of the Signs

1. Rod is symbolic of authority in Egypt. Pharaoh is represented by the serpent figure, the uraeus on his crown. => **Pharaoh is completely in God’s power.**
2. Leprosy, when inflicted, is a punishment for pride and presumption (Miriam, Num 12:12; Gehazi, 2Kg 5:22-27; Uzziah, 2Ch 26:16-21). => **God’s intention is to punish Pharaoh and drive him from God’s presence since leprosy rendered the person unclean.**
3. Water to blood – shows God’s control of the prosperity of Egypt which was entirely dependent on the waters of the Nile. It also anticipates the plagues that God will send.

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

The belief that we are incompetent haunts us and holds us back. It keeps us from moving forward in life. We're not alone. Moses, the servant of the Lord, felt incompetent. In Exodus 3:1-4:17, Moses offers up five objections to the Lord's choosing him to deliver the Israelites. As he lays his heart before the Lord, we see the heart of his resistance. It is his belief that he is incompetent. His objections move from the general to the specific and land here at the source of his fears: his perceived incompetence. His first objection was a general statement of doubt in himself (3:11). His second objection was a general statement of doubt in God (3:13). In Chapter 4, Moses gets more specific. First, he's afraid the people won't believe him (4:1). The reason he's afraid they won't believe him is that he doesn't speak well (4:10). This is the heart of it. He deems himself lacking in the one essential attribute for his appointed task. He's terrified of returning to Egypt because he doesn't speak well, and because of this he finally asks the Lord to send someone else (4:13).

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Entrusting the Word to the Faithful

Beneath it all for us, we likely cling to the belief that we are incompetent in an area that we deem crucial to life. That's why we don't strongly enter the light of life but lurk in the shadows. Or if we do poke our heads out, we try to dominate whatever situation we enter. But God has an answer for Moses, and he has an answer for us as well. It concerns neither withdrawal nor domination. And just as in Chapter 3, the answer is all about God. The Lord assures us of divine authority and power in order to encourage us to trust him.

Divine authority (4:1-9)

When Moses tried this deliverance thing 40 years earlier, he was neither believed nor listened to (2:14). It is a terrible thing to speak and not to be listened to or believed. When we speak, it is an expression of ourselves. We are offering ourselves to people. When someone doesn't listen to us, we feel as if we don't matter. We may even feel as if we don't exist. Moses' experience 40 years earlier was a traumatic one. One traumatic experience of being negated in this way can leave horrible scars.

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But usually it isn't just one traumatic experience; it's one traumatic experience piled on top of another and another. Perhaps when we were young, we felt like our parents never listened to us or took us seriously. Patterns of belief formed, and at a very deep level, we concluded that we didn't matter, that we were irrelevant. Our traumatic experiences may have convinced us that we are irrelevant, so we don't even try. We give up on life and people.

But the past is redeemable. It is not the present. We may feel that everything is set in concrete. But things change. People change. We change. Moses is afraid the people won't believe that the Lord has appeared to him. But the people now are at a different spiritual place than they were 40 years earlier. When Moses tried to deliver them before, they weren't ready to be delivered. But increasing affliction caused them to cry out to the Lord (2:23). Before, the Lord had not in fact appeared to Moses. Moses didn't even try to convince anyone that the Lord had appeared to him, because the Lord hadn't. Now it's different. The Lord has spoken to Moses and called him.

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Moses has changed in that the wilderness has made him more open to the Lord. More receptivity to the Lord changes us. He appears to us in more powerful ways. He assures us. He gives us more confidence in him. We may have felt neglected for most of our lives, but the Lord sets about repairing the damage and rebuilding us. That's what he does for Moses. Here the Lord assures Moses of the authority he has been given.

The Lord assures Moses through three signs by which the people will believe that the Lord has appeared to him. But actually, the signs are for Moses, to give him confidence before the people. The signs involve his staff, his hand and the Nile. **In the sign of the staff, Moses is shown he has authority over the devil. In the sign of the hand, he is shown he has authority over the flesh. In the sign of the Nile, he is shown he has authority over the world.** He has authority over the world, the flesh and the devil, the three enemies that the New Testament speaks of.

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When Moses throws his staff on the ground, it becomes a serpent. The Lord asks Moses to grasp the serpent by its tail - the one place you don't want to grab a snake. Grabbing a snake by its tail enables it to maneuver into a position to strike. Yet this is what the Lord asks Moses to do. When Moses stretches out his hand to grab the serpent, he is trusting the Lord. The Lord gives Moses a little behind-the-scenes opportunity to trust him. No one is present, and no one is watching save the Lord. The Lord gives us such opportunities as well - behind the scenes, away from the crowds, when there's no reason to perform. We face the choice, even in little personal tasks, to panic or trust him. The Lord is giving us these opportunities in order to build our faith so that when we move out into the more public arenas, we'll trust him.

... Tellingly, Moses flees from it. But even when he grabs it at its least vulnerable spot, it turns out to be harmless. It becomes a staff again. This is a message from God that Moses has authority over Satan. But it is God's authority. **Henceforth, Moses' staff is known as the staff of God, reminding him of the authority the Lord has given him and of his dependence on the Lord (4:20).**

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The Lord has shown us, too, that we have authority over the evil one. **At the cross, Christ disarmed Satan** so that he can bring no accusation against us (**Colossians 2:15**). **In the resurrection and ascension, we were raised up with Christ, far above the authority of Satan (Ephesians 2:6). As children born of God, the evil one can't touch us (1 John 5:18). As believers in Jesus Christ moving forward into life, we have authority over Satan in spiritual conflict.** This is not rank we have to pull, but rank we already have. We simply believe it and move forward. As the Lord showed Moses his authority through this sign, the Lord shows us our authority through the word of God.

Next, Moses no doubt is worried about is own sin. All of us are inclined to think that our sin somehow disqualifies us. Leprosy is a symbol of sin (Numbers 12:10, Deuteronomy 24:8-9). When Moses sees leprosy covering his hand, he's reminded of his own sin. Yet when he puts his hand into his bosom again, it is restored. Moses' faith was reckoned to him as righteousness, just as Abraham's faith was. God sees him not as covered with sin but as clean. This is how God sees us as well, based on faith in Christ (**Romans 3:21-26**)....

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Finally, the Lord tells Moses that if he will pour out some water from the Nile, it will become blood. The Nile was the lifeblood of Egypt. Without the Nile, Egypt was nothing. Egypt is representative of the world, in opposition to the people of God. In this sign, God is telling Moses that he has authority over Egypt, or the world. Egypt can't stop Moses, for God has given Moses authority over Egypt. We may be fearful of the opposition of the world, but Jesus said, "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33)...

The knowledge of the authority God has given us over the world, the flesh and the devil should propel us outward, outside of ourselves and into the life God has prepared for us. The knowledge of the authority we've been given changes us. Not only that, it changes others' response to us as well. True confidence, which is confidence placed in God, is recognizable and compelling. God is trustworthy....

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This assurance of the authority God has given us comes from the word of God as it is worked out in our own experience. And it can be worked out even now, as God gives us little behind-the-scenes opportunities to trust him and develop confidence in him and the authority he has given us. The life of faith is a life of dependence, which means it's a life of confidence, for God is dependable.

We need to know about this authority as we confront our deepest fears that at the bottom of everything, when all is said and done, we're just plain incompetent.

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3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

4:10-17 Moses' Continued Refusal

10 Then Moses said to the LORD, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither recently nor in time past, nor since Thou hast spoken to Thy servant; **for** I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

11 And the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes *him* dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the LORD? 12 **Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth, and teach you what you are to say."**

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

Divine power (4:10-12)

Here we arrive at the heart of the matter for Moses, the reason he thinks he can't enter into life. He pleads his case with God, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent ..." He doesn't have what he perceives to be the one essential qualification for the task: speaking ability. He's never been a good speaker. This is huge for Moses. All his objections stem from this doubt. When he asked God, "Who am I?" he was thinking, "I don't speak well enough to pull this off" (3:11). When he asked God, "What shall I say to them?" he's getting closer to his real concern: his ability to speak (3:13). When he asked, "What if they don't believe me or listen to what I say," he's thinking, "I don't speak persuasively enough" (4:1). He thinks what he needs for people to listen to him and believe him is something he doesn't have. Finally, he comes right out and says it, "Please, Lord, I have never been eloquent ..."

...Like us, Moses is afraid of not meeting expectations, and he's terrified of being rejected and feeling like a failure. Moses thinks, "If only I could speak better, I'd meet expectations, I wouldn't be rejected and I wouldn't feel like a failure"

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God has done many things for Moses up to this point on Mount Horeb. God has revealed himself; told Moses of his holiness, faithfulness, compassion and activity; promised success; and given him three signs that the people will believe him. Despite all this revelation, it's not enough for Moses. God didn't do for Moses the one thing Moses wanted him to do: Make him a better speaker. ...Since the Lord and Moses began speaking to each other, it is not lost on Moses that he is no more eloquent than before. The sign Moses is looking for is a smoother tongue - something the Lord doesn't give him.

Here we arrive at the heart of the matter for us. All of us are probably convinced, deep down, that there is at least one absolutely crucial attribute that we lack. We think that if we are to be received by people, something about us has to be more compelling. And we think that if God were really serious about moving us into life, the first thing he'd do is improve us. But he doesn't. He doesn't make us better looking. He doesn't make us more intelligent. He doesn't make us more athletic. He doesn't give us a better personality...

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Where do we find the answer to our perceived areas of incompetence? **First**, it's important to note where the answer isn't. If we don't think we're physically attractive enough, the answer isn't at the shopping center or the gym. If we don't think we're intelligent enough, the answer isn't at the local college. If we don't think we're athletic enough, the answer isn't on the playing field. If we think our personalities are not compelling enough, the answer isn't at the local bookstore. If we think our speaking ability isn't proficient enough, the answer isn't at Toastmasters.

The answer does not concern what we lack but what we need. The attribute Moses lacks is a smooth tongue. **The attribute he needs is faith in God**. We are in headlong pursuit of the wrong attributes. We want everything but faith. And once we get everything we think we need, then maybe we think we can exercise faith. Then maybe, we think, we can trust God and move forward. But even if we could somehow shore up our areas of incompetence and then move forward, it wouldn't be faith. We'd be dependent on our own competence, not God's.

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No, that is not God's way. He doesn't change our areas of incompetence. Quite the contrary. He says he is responsible for them! He tells Moses, "Who made man's mouth? Or who makes him dumb or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?" If we think we're unattractive, he made us that way. If we think we're unintelligent, he made us that way. If we think we're unathletic, he made us that way. If we think our personalities are bland, he made us that way. If we think we can't speak well, he made us that way.

Why? Why? Why?

Because what we really need is faith. God loves us too much to give us something we don't need. What we need is faith, and that's what he wants to give. The Lord says to Moses, "Now then go, and I, even I, will be with your mouth and teach you what you are to say." The Lord doesn't fix Moses' tongue; he tells him to go. If he goes, he will exercise faith. One step toward Egypt is worth more than a thousand smooth tongues.

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In Moses' capacity as a prophet, the Lord promises to be **"with your mouth,"** meaning that the Lord will "teach you what you are to say." **The greater thing the Lord wants to teach Moses is faith. Simple trust. The most underrated attribute. The most valuable attribute.**

Simple faith has a tremendous impact. If people see us moving forward despite our deficiencies, the obvious question is, "Why?" The answer is faith, which is what the questioners need as well. Faith is not only what we need but what others need as well. When they see it working in us, we give them the opportunity to move toward faith. **Thus God uses our supposed deficiencies not only in our own lives but the lives of others. Amazingly enough, God calls us to move toward people not in spite of our deficiencies but because of them. Through our "incompetence," God shows himself competent. These so-called areas of incompetence, then, are divine deficiencies.**

...Like us, Moses is steeped in his feelings of incompetence. He is stubborn. God says "go." Moses won't go.

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3:1-4:17 Moses in the Wilderness

4:10-17 Moses' Continued Refusal

13 **But** he said, "Please, Lord, **now** send *the message* by whomever Thou wilt."

14 **Then** the anger of the LORD burned against Moses, and He said, "Is there not your brother Aaron the Levite? I know that he speaks fluently. **And moreover, behold**, he is coming out to meet you; when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. 15 **And you are to speak to him and put the words in his mouth; and I, even I, will be with your mouth and his mouth, and I will teach you what you are to do.** 16 **Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people;** and it shall come about that he shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be as God to him. 17 **And you shall take in your hand this staff, with which you shall perform the signs.'**"

Exodus 3:1-4:17 The Deliverer Called

Despite all the assurance that God offers, the fear doesn't go away. God does not take the fear away; he simply commands us to walk into the fear, trusting him. But if God is with us as we move forward, good things will happen.

...God calls us to be involved with his plan for people, and he promises success. In the wilderness of our lives, God prepares us to meet him. He shows us who he is; then he calls us to involvement with people. He assures us of his presence with us. And he promises that he himself will answer our involvement with his success in people's lives.

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Book	Key Idea	The Nation	The People	God's Character	God's Role	God's Command
Genesis	Beginnings	Chosen	Prepared	Powerful Sovereign	Creator	"Let there be!"
Exodus	Redemption	Delivered	Redeemed	Merciful	Deliverer	"Let My people go!"
Leviticus	Worship	Set Apart	Taught	Holy	Sanctifier	"Be holy!"
Numbers	Wandering	Directed	Tested	Just	Sustainer	"Go in!"
Deuteronomy	Renewed Covenant	Made Ready	Retraught	Loving Lord	Rewarder	"Obey!"

Genesis 15:13-16

¹³ And God said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years. ¹⁴ But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve; and afterward they will come out with many possessions. ¹⁵ And as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. ¹⁶ Then in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet complete."