

Day 81 - WEDNESDAY: January 25th

Exodus 4

Exodus 4:1–31 NKJV

Then Moses answered and said, "But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The LORD has not appeared to you.' " So the LORD said to him, "What is that in your hand?" He said, "A rod." And He said, "Cast it on the ground." So he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent; and Moses fled from it. Then the LORD said to Moses, "Reach out your hand and take it by the tail" (and he reached out his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand), "that they may believe that the LORD God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has appeared to you." Furthermore the LORD said to him, "Now put your hand in your bosom." And he put his hand in his bosom, and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous, like snow. And He said, "Put your hand in your bosom again." So he put his hand in his bosom again, and drew it out of his bosom, and behold, it was restored like his other flesh. "Then it will be, if they do not believe you, nor heed the message of the first sign, that

they may believe the message of the latter sign. And it shall be, if they do not believe even these two signs, or listen to your voice, that you shall take water from the river and pour it on the dry land. The water which you take from the river will become blood on the dry land." Then Moses said to the LORD, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." So the LORD said to him, "Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the LORD? Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say." But he said, "O my Lord, please send by the hand of whomever else You may send." So the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses, and He said: "Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak well. And look, he is also coming out to meet you. When he sees you, he will be glad in his heart. Now you shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth. And I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will teach you what you shall do. So he shall be your spokesman to the people. And he himself shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be to him as God. And you shall take this rod in your hand, with which you shall do the signs." So Moses went and

returned to Jethro his father-in-law, and said to him, "Please let me go and return to my brethren who are in Egypt, and see whether they are still alive." And Jethro said to Moses, "Go in peace." Now the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead." Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt. And Moses took the rod of God in his hand. And the LORD said to Moses, "When you go back to Egypt, see that you do all those wonders before Pharaoh which I have put in your hand. But I will harden his heart, so that he will not let the people go. Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD: "Israel is My son, My firstborn. So I say to you, let My son go that he may serve Me. But if you refuse to let him go, indeed I will kill your son, your firstborn." ' " And it came to pass on the way, at the encampment, that the LORD met him and sought to kill him. Then Zipporah took a sharp stone and cut off the foreskin of her son and cast it at Moses' feet, and said, "Surely you are a husband of blood to me!" So He let him go. Then she said, "You are a husband of blood!"—because of the circumcision. And the LORD said to Aaron, "Go into the wilderness to meet Moses." So he went and met him on the mountain of God, and kissed him.

So Moses told Aaron all the words of the LORD who had sent him, and all the signs which He had commanded him. Then Moses and Aaron went and gathered together all the elders of the children of Israel. And Aaron spoke all the words which the LORD had spoken to Moses. Then he did the signs in the sight of the people. So the people believed; and when they heard that the LORD had visited the children of Israel and that He had looked on their affliction, then they bowed their heads and worshiped.

Daily Deep Dive:

Today we will start with the UCG reading plan and then I'll add some additional comments by verse: "Continuing in chapter 4, since God knows how the human mind reasons, He prepared for Moses to have authoritative credibility through certain miracles—not for Moses to be ultimately regarded but, rather, that God would be the One looked to, and Moses simply as His truly commissioned servant. You can be certain that God knows exactly how to get someone's attention. The three miracles that God had Moses perform would be a great witness to the Egyptians—and to the Israelites, who were by now quite influenced by

Egyptian religion. The snake was one of the gods of Egypt. Leprosy was an incurable disease that would have any physician of the time believing in a "god" had there been a cure. Last, but not least, the Nile was also worshiped, and defiling its waters with blood would draw the attention of everyone!

But we also can begin to see the meek, self-effacing character of Moses being revealed in this chapter. The deep humility of Moses (Numbers 12:3) was surely primarily the result of his closeness to God, but it is apparent that it was also rooted in his natural personality. Even though by this time Moses, as Stephen later preached, was "mighty in words and deeds," it seems he lacked self-confidence. It's not unusual for talented and successful people to lack confidence. In this case, this weakness was turned into a strength, because self-confidence was soon replaced by great confidence in and reliance on God. However, at this point, Moses was focusing on his own perceived lack of ability, and tried to wiggle out of this overwhelming assignment.

Perhaps he was simply so in awe of God that he thought himself incapable of representing Him. Yet in consideration of God's power and who God was, Moses should not have

been so presumptuous to think that God was making a mistake in choosing him—and that God couldn't utilize him as required. Although God understood Moses' personality, Moses was trying His patience by not focusing on all of the miracles and backing that God had given to Moses. And, as He was quick to point out, He was the Creator God—the very designer and maker of the human mouth. Yet, God is so merciful and understanding. Though angry with Moses for what appears to have been a lack of faith, God still gave him the assistance of his older brother Aaron. Of course, God had probably already intended some involvement by Aaron, who was to serve as Israel's high priest. But it appears that before long, Moses was talking directly with Pharaoh, rather than through Aaron (see Exodus 8:9, 26, 29).

When we come to Exodus 4:24, it is shocking to read that God sought to kill Moses! Why? Notice the account in chapter 4 of the confrontation between Moses and his wife. Part of God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was the acknowledgment of that covenant through the act of circumcision. Whoever was not circumcised among the males of God's people would be "cut off," or destroyed, from among them. When we review to whom the covenant

promises were made, we can see that they did not extend through the lineage born to Abraham and Keturah. The Midianites were the descendants of Abraham and Keturah through Midian. And while Midian himself may have been circumcised, as Ishmael was, it is apparent that after the children of Keturah were sent away (Genesis 25:5), they did not continue the practice of circumcising their children. Rather, "the Midianites practiced circumcision on a groom right before his marriage instead of circumcising male infants.... Many of Israel's neighboring peoples practiced circumcision, but none except Israel circumcised infants" (*Nelson Study Bible*, note on verse 24).

Now let's put together verses 24 through 26. It is apparent that God was holding Moses responsible for circumcising his son, but Moses had delegated that to his wife, Zipporah, who was objecting to doing it. She finally did it, but with reluctance and resentment, calling Moses a "bloody man." We might wonder why only one son was at issue when Moses had *two* sons (verse 20; 18:4). One suggestion is that, "most likely, Moses had kept one of his sons uncircumcised, despite what God had commanded" (same note). Perhaps Zipporah was so upset by the circumcision of one son that she demanded her next son not be

circumcised. In any event, Moses was not following God's instructions. And this involved the very sign of the covenant people—being violated by the one who was to be the national leader. Moses' disobedience in light of these factors made it a capital offense. So we find this brief insert—the recording of an incident that, no doubt, had a great impact on Moses.” [END]

Verse 6 – This is the first time we are introduced to the leprosy in the Bible. We will look at this in various detail as we move through the bible, but I will share Adam Clarke’s commentary on this verse today: “That is, the leprosy spread itself over the whole body in thin white scales; and from this appearance it has its Greek name [λεπρα](#), from [λεπις](#), a scale. Dr. Mead says, “I have seen a remarkable case of this in a countryman, whose whole body was so miserably seized with it, that his skin was shining as if covered with snow; and as the surfuraceous scales were daily rubbed off, the flesh appeared quick or raw underneath.” The leprosy, at least among the Jews, was a most inveterate and contagious disorder, and deemed by them incurable. Among the heathens it was considered as inflicted by their gods, and it was supposed that they alone could remove it. It is certain that a similar belief prevailed

among the Israelites; hence, when the king of Syria sent his general Naaman, to the king of Israel to cure him of his leprosy, he rent his clothes, saying, Amos I God, to kill and to make alive, that this man doth send unto me to recover a man of his leprosy? [2Ki_5:7](#). This appears, therefore, to be the reason why God chose this sign, as the instantaneous infliction and removal of this disease were demonstrations which all would allow of the sovereign power of God. We need, therefore, seek for no other reasons for this miracle: the sole reason is sufficiently obvious.”

Verse 10 – The literal translation of this verse states that Moses says he’s “not a man of words” and he also says he’s heavy/slow of mouth & tongue. We don’t exactly know what Moses struggled with, whether a physical struggle to form and say words, or a mental struggle in speaking. God doesn’t say he is wrong, and it’s clear in verse 14 that Aaron doesn’t struggle in the same way and is a good speaker. Either way, God wanted Moses to trust Him with the struggle and look to Him to provide a way.

Verse 18 – Whether Jethro was his father-in-law or brother-in-law, Jethro was the one in charge over their group, and Moses wanted to seek His permission to go.

Verse 20 – Moses has two sons, Gershom & Eliezer.

Verse 21 – The NKJV translates that God “hardened” Pharaoh’s heart so that he would not let God’s people go. It almost reads as if Pharaoh’s heart wasn’t hardened and that God made it that way. Many over time have had questions about this. The word translated “hardened” is used 290 times in the Bible. It’s most often translated about something being “strong or strengthened”, and also to “hold” something. Pharaoh already had a heart/mind set on a certain path. God only allowed Pharaoh to continue on the path he had already chosen, God did not turn Pharaoh to do evil. Adam Clarke’s commentary shares this thought: “All those who have read the Scriptures with care and attention, know well that God is frequently represented in them as doing what he only permits to be done. So because a man has grieved his Spirit and resisted his grace he withdraws that Spirit and grace from him, and thus he becomes bold and presumptuous in sin. Pharaoh made his

own heart stubborn against God, [Exo_9:34](#); and God gave him up to judicial blindness, so that he rushed on stubbornly to his own destruction. From the whole of Pharaoh's conduct we learn that he was bold, haughty, and cruel; and God chose to permit these dispositions to have their full sway in his heart without check or restraint from Divine influence: the consequence was what God intended, he did not immediately comply with the requisition to let the people go; and this was done that God might have the fuller opportunity of manifesting his power by multiplying signs and miracles, and thus impress the hearts both of the Egyptians and Israelites with a due sense of his omnipotence and justice. The whole procedure was graciously calculated to do endless good to both nations. The Israelites must be satisfied that they had the true God for their protector; and thus their faith was strengthened. The Egyptians must see that their gods could do nothing against the God of Israel; and thus their dependence on them was necessarily shaken. These great ends could not have been answered had Pharaoh at once consented to let the people go." [END]