

## **Moses – part 4**

*The Lord gives Moses a staff to perform miracles*  
**by Victor Torres**

We are like sheep, and Jesus Christ is our shepherd who guides us and protects us. Without Him, we will all naturally stray away from the flock, and we will be eaten by wolves and other predators.

1Pe 2:25 (CEV) **You had wandered away like sheep.** Now you have returned to the one who is your shepherd and protector.

Our Lord continues to reveal Himself through Moses, as we see Moses becoming a shepherd and leading his flock through the wilderness into the holy mountain.

Exo 3:1 (CEV) **One day, Moses was taking care of the sheep and goats of his father-in-law Jethro,** the priest of Midian, and Moses decided to lead them across the desert to Sinai, the holy mountain.

Exo 3:2 There an angel of the LORD appeared to him from a burning bush. Moses saw that the bush was on fire, but it was not burning up.

Exo 3:3 "This is strange!" he said to himself. "I'll go over and see why the bush isn't burning up."

Exo 3:4 When the LORD saw Moses coming near the bush, he called him by name, and Moses answered, "Here I am."

Exo 3:5 God replied, "**Don't come any closer. Take off your sandals--the ground where you are standing is holy.**"

Exo 3:6 I am the God who was worshiped by your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Moses was afraid to look at God, and so he hid his face.

Exo 3:7 The LORD said: I have seen how my people are suffering as slaves in Egypt, and I have heard them beg for my help because of the way they are being mistreated. I feel sorry for them,

Exo 3:8 and I have come down to rescue them from the Egyptians. I will bring my people out of Egypt into a country where there is good land, rich with milk and honey. I will give them the land where the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites now live.

Exo 3:9 My people have begged for my help, and I have seen how cruel the Egyptians are to them.

Exo 3:10 Now go to the king! I am sending you to lead my people out of his country.

Exo 3:11 But Moses said, "Who am I to go to the king and lead your people out of Egypt?"

Just like Moses, the people that God calls are nobodies in society.

1Co 1:26 (ERV) Brothers and sisters, God chose you to be his. Think about that! **Not many of you were wise in the way the world judges wisdom. Not many of you had great influence, and not many of you came from important families.**

1Co 1:27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. He chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

1Co 1:28 And God chose what the world thinks is not important--**what the world hates and thinks is nothing.** He chose these to destroy what the world thinks is important.

1Co 1:29 God did this so that no one can stand before him and boast about anything.

It is understandable why Moses would doubt that the Lord would choose a nobody like him to lead God's people out of Egypt. He was a murderer. You can't get any lower than that. But as we saw above, God usually choose people who the world thinks are nothing to serve Him.

Exo 3:12 (CEV) God replied, "I will be with you. And you will know that I am the one who sent you, when you worship me on this mountain after you have led my people out of Egypt."

Exo 3:13 (ESV) 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?"

Exo 3:14 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.'"

Exo 3:15 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.

Exo 3:16 Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say to them, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, has appeared to me, saying, "I have observed you and what has been done to you in Egypt,

The nation of Israel certainly knows the stories of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, and even of Joseph. They certainly know how God has shown his power and love to those men who He has chosen. But at this point, all they probably

know about Moses was that he was a Hebrew who grew up as an Egyptian and went into hiding after killing an Egyptian.

Exo 3:17 and I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt to the land of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites, a land flowing with milk and honey."

Exo 3:18 (ESV) And they will listen to your voice, and you and the elders of Israel shall go to the king of Egypt and say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has met with us; and now, please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the LORD our God.'

Exo 3:19 But I know that the king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand.

Exo 3:20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I will do in it; after that he will let you go.

The Lord assured Moses of two things: first, the people of Israel will listen to him. Second, the pharaoh will resist Moses at first but he will eventually let God's people go after the Lord has done "all the wonders that [He] will do in it". What I want you to see in this exchange between God and Moses, is how the Lord is showing us that we really don't have free will. He controls every action and reaction that we take.

That is one tough pill to swallow, kids, being told that we don't have free will. Very, very few people in this world has been given the faith to accept that.

Rom 9:15 (CEV) The Lord told Moses that he has pity and mercy on anyone he wants to.

Rom 9:16 **Everything** then depends on God's mercy **and not** on what people want or do.

Rom 9:17 In the Scriptures the Lord says to Pharaoh of Egypt, "I let you become king, so that I could show you my power and be praised by all people on earth."

Rom 9:18 Everything depends on what God decides to do, **and he can either have pity on people or make them stubborn.**

The Lord told Moses that the Pharaoh will be stubborn because He will make him so. This is to show God's power over people and everything in His creation. Some people will ask, if we don't have free will, how can God then blame us for the bad things that we do. We must answer these people the same way Paul answered them:

Rom 9:19 Someone may ask, "How can God blame us, if he makes us behave in the way he wants us to?"

Rom 9:20 But, my friend, I ask, "**Who do you think you are to question God? Does the clay have the right to ask the potter why he shaped it the way he did?**"

We must always remember that the Lord will, in the end, have mercy on those He is making as stubborn people now; even the pharaoh in the time of Moses.

Exo 3:21 (MKJV) And I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians. And it shall be that when you go, you shall not go empty.

Exo 3:22 But every woman shall ask of her neighbor, and of her that stays in her house, jewels of silver and jewels of gold and clothing. And you shall put *them* upon your sons and upon your daughters. And you shall plunder the Egyptians.

The Lord even tells Moses what will happen after the Pharaoh let's His people go. "I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians", and Israel will not go empty-handed.

Exo 4:1 (CEV) Moses asked the LORD, "Suppose everyone refuses to listen to my message, and no one believes that you really appeared to me?"

Exo 4:2 The LORD answered, "What's that in your hand?" "A walking stick," Moses replied.

Exo 4:3 "Throw it down!" the LORD commanded. So Moses threw the stick on the ground. It immediately turned into a snake, and Moses jumped back.

Exo 4:4 "Pick it up by the tail!" the LORD told him. And when Moses did this, the snake turned back into a walking stick.

Exo 4:5 "Do this," the LORD said, "and the Israelites will believe that you have seen me, the God who was worshiped by their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."

A walking stick turning into a snake and then turning back into a walking stick again! That's not a trick. The walking stick did turn into a live, slithering snake. The Lord wants to build up Moses' confidence by showing him how powerful He is. He knew that Moses is not convinced, so the Lord showed another miracle.

Exo 4:6 (BBE) Then the Lord said to him again, Put your hand inside your clothing. And he put his hand inside his robe: **and when he took it out it was like the hand of a leper**, as white as snow.

Exo 4:7 And he said, Put your hand inside your robe again. *And he put his hand into his robe again, and when he took it out he saw that it had become like his other flesh.*

If you know what leprosy is, then this miracle would certainly get your attention. Leprosy is a very serious skin disease that can cause your fingers and other body parts to fall off. I probably would have been convinced with the snake, but the Lord knows each one of us and what it would take to get our attention.

Exo 4:8 Then the LORD said, "If no one believes either of these miracles, take some water from the Nile River and pour it on the ground. The water will immediately turn into blood."

So what do these three miracles have in common? A walking stick turning into a snake, a healthy hand turning into a seriously sick hand, and water turning into blood? They are all very useful things turned into something very harmful. What is the Lord showing Moses? More importantly, what is He trying to show us? He's showing us that if we don't believe Him and the people that He sends to us, then He can easily turn something that is good to us into something that is very harmful to us. That's because He's in control of everything, both the good and the evil. This is what the Lord confirmed to Moses after Moses expresses his weakness.

Exo 4:10 (CEV) Moses replied, "I have never been a good speaker. I wasn't one before you spoke to me, and I'm not one now. I am slow at speaking, and I can never think of what to say."

Exo 4:11 But the LORD answered, "Who makes people able to speak or makes them deaf or unable to speak? Who gives them sight or makes them blind? **Don't you know that I am the one who does these things?**

Exo 4:12 **Now go! When you speak, I will be with you and give you the words to say."**

Exo 4:13 Moses begged, "LORD, please send someone else to do it."

We just read earlier that it is the Lord who makes people stubborn, so the Lord is not surprised that Moses is being this obstinate. But He has to show Moses His anger to convince Moses that no one can resist His will.

Exo 4:14 (ESV) Then the anger of the LORD was kindled against Moses and he said, "Is there not Aaron, your brother, the Levite? I know that he can speak well. Behold, he is coming out to meet you, and when he sees you, he will be glad in his heart.

Exo 4:15 You shall speak to him and put the words in his mouth, and I will be with your

mouth and with his mouth and will teach you both what to do.

Exo 4:16 He shall speak for you to the people, and he shall be your mouth, and you shall be as God to him.

Our Lord is showing us His relationship with the Father. He is the Father's mouthpiece. When the Lord speaks, He is really speaking for the Father. "You shall be as God to him" should remind us of Joseph's relationship with the pharaoh of Egypt. The pharaoh has given Joseph all the power to control his people, but he is still over Joseph. Although Christ is a God to us, He is still under His Father who created Him and gave Christ all His powers.

Exo 4:17 (ESV) And take in your hand this staff, with which you shall do the signs."

The staff of Moses represents the power the Lord has given us to do the things He has sent us to do.

Php 4:13 (MKJV) I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

After the Lord addressed all of his concerns, Moses is now confident to confront the leader of one of the most powerful kingdoms in the world, to lead the Lord's people out of slavery.

Exo 4:18 (ESV) 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."

Exo 4:19 And the LORD said to Moses in Midian, "Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead."

Exo 4:20 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.**

Exo 4:21 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.