



EXODUS

A STORY OF
**REDEMPTION
AND COVENANT**



God Empowers Us

- God empowers us to do His will
- Exodus 4:1–9, Acts 7:35–38
- In this chapter, Moses began to give God a list of reasons for why he wasn't the right person for this mission.
- But before we judge Moses for his lack of faith, we need to consider his situation.
- He has a unique backstory for this particular mission.

God Empowers Us

- Growing up in Pharaoh's palace could have made him perfect for the job.
- He was trained in all the Egyptian ways, including rhetoric, which equipped him for speaking to Pharaoh.
- He might even still know some of the people in authority there, even if he didn't know the new Pharaoh.
- But Moses was in Midian because he fled Egypt when the previous Pharaoh wanted to kill him. He had also alienated the Hebrew people.
- They didn't react well to his attempt to "save" them.

God Empowers Us

- It had been 40 years since Moses lived in Egypt.
- He might not remember much of the traditions or even speech of Egypt that he learned as a younger man.
- He was now 80 years old.
- Though he would have stayed physically active as a shepherd, he might have been starting to feel weaker.
- He was probably more interested in slowing down, not taking on a big mission.

God Empowers Us

- Moses gave God two excuses.
- First, he was worried that the Hebrews wouldn't believe God had really appeared to him. We know "they" is the Hebrews, not the Egyptians, because the text says the God of "their" fathers.
- Moses' concern was not only that he might have seemed like a nobody from Midian suddenly claiming this authority from God, but also that the last time he had encountered any Hebrews, they said to him, "Who made you a ruler and judge over us?" (Exodus 2:14; Acts 7:35). What would make them believe him now?

God Empowers Us

- More generally, the people may have been skeptical because it had been more than 400 years since God had spoken directly to His people.
- Sometimes when we read the Bible, it's hard to realize how much time passes between the stories.
- God's people hadn't heard directly from Him for more than 400 years, and suddenly this guy who ran off 40 years ago was claiming God had appeared to him?
- Why not one of their elders?

God Empowers Us

- God's answer to Moses' concern was to give Moses miraculous power.
- It was typical for God's prophets to be given miraculous power to prove their message was really from Him.
- When Jesus, who was not just a typical prophet but God incarnate, spoke with Nicodemus, even the Jews who were against Him could not deny that He must have been sent from God because "no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him" (John 3:2).

God Empowers Us

- God gave him three specific signs, all related to His power:
 - Staff to serpent – God's power over evil
 - Leprous hand – God's power over life
 - Nile to blood – God's power over Egypt

God Empowers Us

- The last time a “serpent” had appeared in Scripture was at the Fall.
- The next time would be in the story of the bronze serpent in the wilderness, which Jesus said was a foreshadowing of His death (Numbers 21; John 3:14–15).
- All three are references to the big-picture story of the Bible.
- Jesus’ death redeemed us from the slavery to sin caused by the Fall. In the Exodus, God redeemed His people from physical slavery, pointing ahead to the greater redemption in Jesus and God’s power over sin and evil itself.

God Empowers Us

- The leprous hand was symbolic of God's power over life and death, sickness and healing.
- Leprosy was a sickness that required the leper to be separated from the rest of the community, causing further pain.
- There was no cure.
- In the New Testament, Jesus healed many lepers and said it was one of the signs of the Messiah (Matthew 11:4–6).

God Empowers Us

- The Nile River was the lifeline of Egypt, providing water and transportation and creating a fertile valley in the desert.
- Ancient Egyptians even worshipped the river as a god.
- The Nile was the very river Pharaoh used to kill Hebrew baby boys, but God used to save Moses.
- This sign was a glimpse of the first plague (turning the whole Nile to blood), which showed God's sovereignty over creation and how He can easily tear down the powerful (Daniel 2:21).

God Empowers Us

- These signs were all connected to redemption, the purpose of the Exodus.
- They all pointed to God's power over all things.
- Moses' ability to do things that only God could do would prove to His people that Moses was sent to them from God.
- The purpose of Moses' signs and wonders, like those of the other prophets and even Jesus and the apostles, was to prove that their message was really from God (John 4:48).

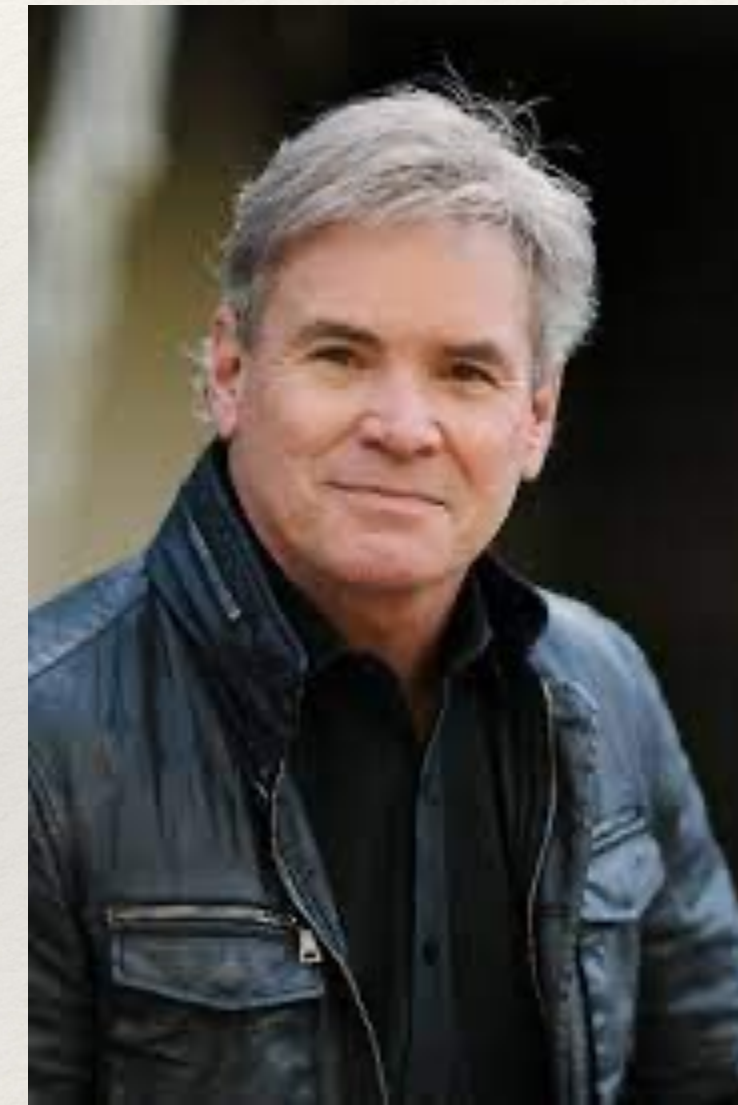
God Equips Us

- God doesn't call the equipped; He equips the called
- Exodus 4:10–17, 1 Corinthians 1:26–31
- Moses' second excuse was that he wasn't an eloquent speaker, which may sound surprising considering his upbringing.
- As a grandson of Pharaoh who grew up in the palace, Moses would have been trained rigorously in the best rhetoric techniques of ancient Egypt.

God Equips Us

- Yet Moses said he had never been eloquent, even in the past.
- Moses may have been comparing himself to the very best speakers in Pharaoh's palace, so his standards were way too high.
- Or maybe he really had never excelled in that subject, regardless of his education.
- He may have had a stutter or perhaps he was just making excuses.
- Stephen would later describe Moses as “mighty in his words” (Acts 7:22).

What Do They Have in Common?



God Equips Us

- Regardless of the accuracy of Moses' words, God gave Moses the answer – it doesn't matter if you're not a good speaker, I will give you the words and empower you.
- Then Moses dropped the excuses and asked God to send someone else.
- But God was even ready with a response for that – Moses' brother Aaron, who was an eloquent speaker.
- Even though Moses' plea angered God, He didn't give up on Moses and even gave him the help he asked for.

God Equips Us

- The Hebrew wordplay here puts a huge emphasis on “mouth.”
- Just as Moses was God’s prophet (spokesperson), so Aaron would be Moses’ “prophet” (spokesperson), which would make Moses “as God” to Aaron.
- Moses received his authority from God, and Aaron was subservient to Moses’ authority.
- But ultimately the message and the power were all from God. Moses was only a spokesperson, a vessel. God would be with both of their mouths and give them the words.

God Equips Us

- Moses wasn't the only prophet who felt unqualified or scared about the mission to which God called him – Jeremiah said he was too young.
- He wasn't the only leader who didn't think he was strong enough – Gideon and Saul both said they were the least significant ones in their tribes.
- But God doesn't call the equipped; He equips the called.
- When God calls you to do something, He gives you everything you need to accomplish the task whether you have the natural ability or not.

God Equips Us

- God intentionally and consistently chooses the weak to accomplish His missions so that, when they are successful, people will know it's because of His power, not their own talents or strength.
- So they would boast in the Lord, not in themselves (1 Corinthians 1:26–31). Because His power is perfected in our weaknesses, not in our strength (2 Corinthians 12:9–10).
- When God calls you to do something outside your comfort zone, it may feel scary and overwhelming, but that's how you will see His power.

God Equips Us

- Inside your comfort zone may feel easy and safe, but it is outside of your comfort zone where the incredible happens (Matthew 19:26).
- You will never have the opportunity to be amazed by God if you do everything in your own strength.
- Even if we feel unqualified to do what God is calling us to do, the answer of faith is that of David and Caleb and Joshua, saying we may not have the power, but God does, so we're going to trust and follow Him.
- Like Isaiah, saying, "Here I am! Send me."

God Expects Commitment

- God expects full commitment
- Exodus 4:18–26
- The fact that Moses took his whole family with him meant this wasn't a temporary mission but a change of allegiance, community and national identity. Moses wasn't just going off to complete this single mission and then returning to Midian to live as he had before.
- Jethro realized this, and when he said, “go in peace,” he was giving Moses his blessing to change his family and national allegiance.

Missionaries Packed Their Belongings



God Expects Commitment

- God told Moses it was safe to go back to Egypt because those who had wanted to kill him were now dead, just as God told Mary and Joseph it was safe to take Jesus back to Israel after Herod died (Matthew 2:19–20).
- But then, in what seems like a plot twist, when he got out into the wilderness along the journey, the Lord appeared to Moses and tried to kill him.
- Why would God choose this man, go through all the effort to convince him to go on this mission, only to kill him in the wilderness before he even got there?

God Expects Commitment

- Zipporah, rather than Moses, circumcised their son.
- Circumcision was the sign of the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:23–27).
- Every male child in Israel was to be circumcised at 8 days old.
- Moses himself would have been circumcised as a baby, but his sons were not because they were born in Midian, in Jethro's house.
- Moses knew that going to Egypt meant they were joining the community of Israel and he should have circumcised his sons.

God Expects Commitment

- The text doesn't give us a lot of detail, we don't know why Moses wasn't the one to circumcise his son.
- Regardless, it is of note that Moses' life was saved, once again by another, this time by Zipporah, a Gentile woman.
- Like the genealogy of Jesus emphasizing the Gentile women in His lineage, this reminds us that God's plan is for the whole world to be saved.
- God welcomed people of faith from any nation into His covenant family when they committed to the terms of His covenant.

Unforeseen Circumcisions?



God Expects Commitment

- The account of Zipporah circumcising their firstborn son is juxtaposed with God's telling Moses that He would eventually have to kill Pharaoh's firstborn son as part of the judgment of the plagues and the release of Israel.
- All this points ahead to the New Testament, when God would give His only-begotten Son to accomplish the redemption of all humanity (John 3:16–17).
- In even the most obscure Old Testament history, we can see the imprint of the Gospel.
- Every word points to Jesus.