

Sent: Thursday, October 15, 2020 12:02 AM
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Session on Exodus 4

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM...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!" (Exodus 3:14-15)

We saw last week, in Exodus 3, how God had appeared to Moses on Mt. Sinai--the "mountain of God"--in the flame of a "burning bush," identifying Himself as "the God of your fathers" who had "seen the affliction of My people," and had "come down to deliver them from the power of the Egyptians"! And He said further that "I will send you (Moses) to Pharaoh to bring them out"! (Moses had spent 40 years, in relative obscurity, tending sheep for his father-in-law, Jethro, in the land of Midian, and "just happened" one day to lead the flock to the "west side of the wilderness," to the very "mountain of God"--the very place where God would one day appear to Him again, in all His splendor, and even greater glory and power!

Moses' response was classic! "Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh?" Even after God's miraculous appearance in the burning bush, and identification of Himself as "the great I AM," and the promise to "be with him" and to "bring His people "out of the affliction of Egypt...to the "promised land...to a land flowing with milk and honey"--and with assurance that the elders of Israel would "pay heed to what Moses would say, and that, after He would "stretch out His hand and strike Egypt with all His miracles, Pharaoh would let them go!" (All plans go!)

And yet, Moses deferred, and wanted out! "What if they won't believe me or listen to me?" "I've never been eloquent...and am slow of speech and slow of tongue! Please, Lord, send someone else!" (Ever felt that way?)

We saw the three signs God gave Moses to bolster His faith, and to accredit him before the people, and before Pharaoh, as the one to whom the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had appeared, and who was the chosen spokesman and leader of Israel (in Exodus 4:2-10)! The staff, when thrown to the ground becoming a serpent, representing the satanic power of Egypt, and when carried by Moses in his hand, becoming a symbol of authority! The hand, when "placed in his bosom" and then taken out, becoming "leprous like snow" and, with the sequence repeated, being restored--attesting to God's delegation of divine power to him! And, if these signs weren't enough, turning water taken from the Nile into blood! (The Nile river was regarded by the Egyptians as a divine source of life, and so Moses' power to change the life-giving water of the Nile into blood was tantamount to destroying the gods of Egypt!)

But, as noted, Moses still felt unable, and unwilling, to take on the task! And so, Exodus 4:14 says, "Then the anger of the Lord burned against Moses!" And we see the God of all-mercy and long-suffering actually accommodating Moses by choosing his brother Aaron, "the Levite," to speak for him before the people! God told Moses, in verses 14-17, that Moses would speak to him and "put the words in his mouth," and that He (God) would put words in Moses' mouth and that Moses would put words in Aaron's mouth, and that he would speak for him to the people,

and that he, Moses, "would be as God to him"! (As God?) But, most importantly, Moses would "take the staff in his hands and perform the signs"! (Kind of like a "Penn & Teller" routine!)

We next see (in verses 18-20) Moses departing and returning to Jethro, his father-in-law, and requesting permission to return to "his brethren who are in Egypt to see if they are still alive"! (Sounds like Moses didn't share with Jethro the "full story" of God's call for him in Egypt! And it makes you wonder why!)

Then, on his way to Egypt, the Lord shares more "inside information" with Moses! "See that you perform before Pharaoh all the wonders which I have put in your power, but I will harden the heart (of Pharaoh!) so that he will not let the people go! Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'thus says the Lord, "Israel is My son, My first-born. 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!" (Wow! God's has a plan and He knows exactly what's to come! So, why would God "harden the heart" of Pharaoh and kill his first-born, when He says elsewhere in His Word that He "takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn back from his way and live! Ezekiel 18:32 And, in II Peter 3:9, "He is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to the truth of the knowledge..." Seems to put a premium on the "free-will" of man, as well as the "election" by God! Heavy stuff!)

And then it gets even stranger! God "meets him (Moses) on the way (to Egypt!) and "sought to put him to death"! Because of Moses' failure to "circumcise" his very son! Moses must have known all about God's requirement that every male child be circumcised, as a "sign of the covenant" between God and Abraham and his descendants (in Genesis 17) And yet, here Moses, the new leader of the children of Israel, called to deliver God's people from bondage in Egypt and not having his own son circumcised? And we see Zipporah, his wife, coming to the rescue--apparently just in the nick of time, and apparently much to her chagrin--and circumcising their son, and "throwing it at Moses' feet"! Not a happy family time! (We're reminded of the seriousness of disobeying God's commands--and the consequences, even for His people! But the incident also makes us wonder what it would take, and if it were possible, for God to ever abandon His sovereign plan and purpose for mankind? And chose another in place of Moses? We think not! But some things about God and His ways are just so far beyond our comprehension! We just need to follow Him and trust His Word!)

Well, our story in Exodus ends with the Penn & Teller act continuing! More literally, with the words of Aaron spoken, and the signs of Moses performed! (And no "sleight of hand"! Verse 31 says, "So the people believed; and when they heard that the Lord was concerned about the sons of Israel and that He had seen their affliction, then they bowed low and worshipped!"

And so, should we!

May God, the God of our fathers, go with you 'til we meet again!

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