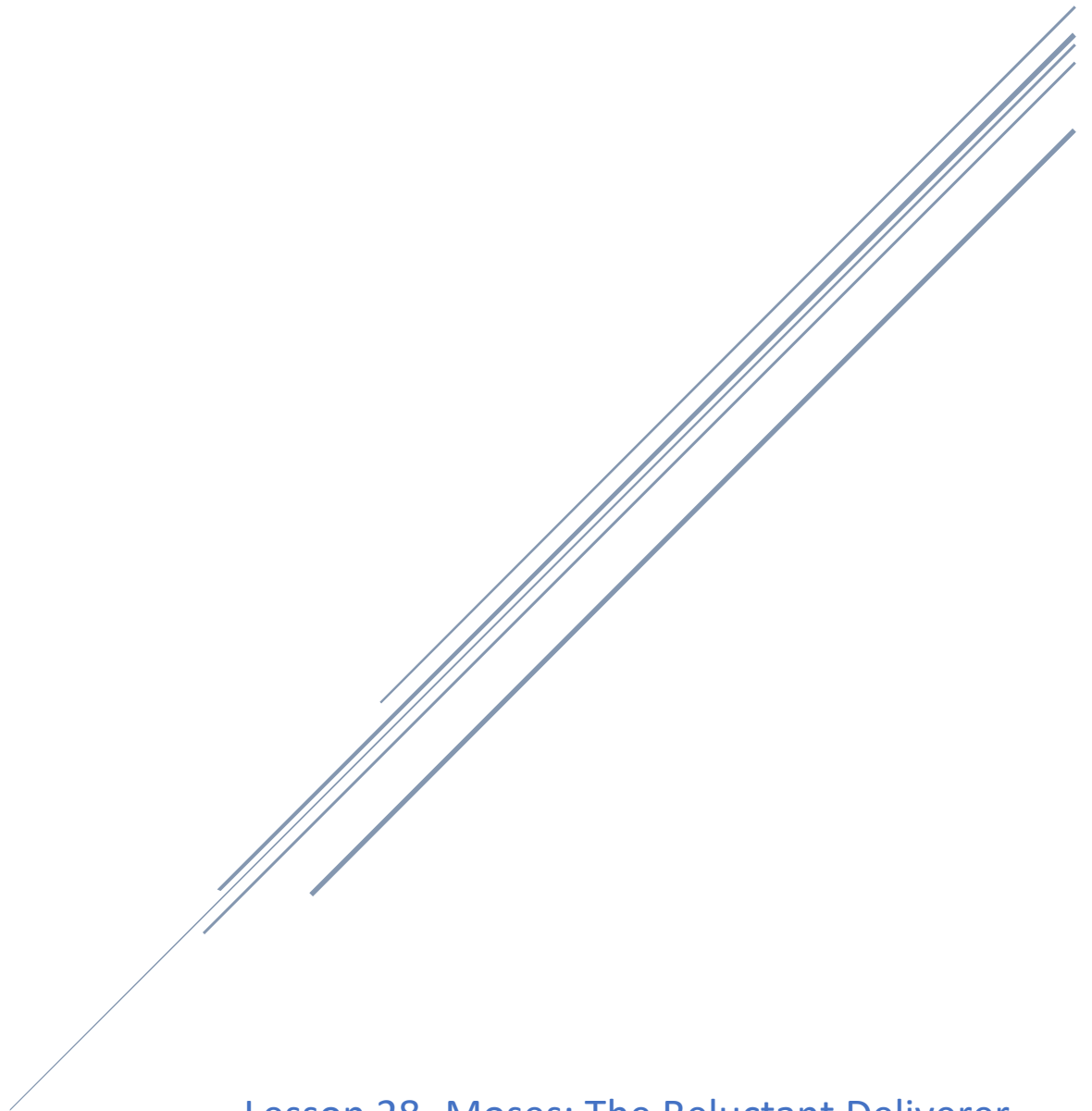


THE KINGDOM, THE BIBLE, & US

Understand the Bible's story, Jesus' importance, and Our place in God's plan



Lesson 28- Moses: The Reluctant Deliverer
FBC Webb City-Dustin Burdin

We explored in our last lesson the idea that God has vast knowledge of past, present, and future. However, it goes further. God has knowledge of what I called *possible futures*. Some call this Middle Knowledge. It is a type of knowledge God has where He knows not only what a person *will* do, He knows what they *would* do if placed in a different set of life circumstances.

In the midst of God's call to Moses, He told him victory was already guaranteed. Moses simply needed to be obedient and follow God's plan. God shared that He already knew how Pharaoh would respond, with rejection. God knew that Pharaoh would not respond to the call to let Israel go except under a mighty hand of compulsion.

Moses expressed his extreme reluctance in accepting this mission from God. Even despite God's guarantee for his success, Moses had several excuses why he was not the right man for the job. God overcame each of his excuses.

In this lesson we continue with the final portion of God handling Moses' objections.

Moses' Further Objections

They Won't Listen to Me

Exodus 4:1-9

Moses has thrown back at God two objections for why he can't do this. God has countered with two answers to these. Moses is not done unfortunately. He does not believe he can do this mission for God.

His next objection is essentially, "They won't listen to me!"

What if Israel will not believe Moses, that God truly appeared to him? God gives Moses an ability to perform signs to verify his claims.

The first sign is Moses' staff can be thrown on the ground and it turn into a serpent. God called Moses to pick it up by the tail and it would turn back into a staff.

God said to Moses in verse five this would be so that they (Israel) may believe the Lord (Yahweh) the god of their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob has truly appeared to Moses and given him this mission.

God did not stop with the staff as a serpent. He says in verse six for Moses to put his hand in his cloak. When Moses took it back out, it was leprous. Leprosy is not nearly as common in our days as it was during Bible times. It is a very serious skin disease.

The Hebrew word that our English Bibles often translate as *leprosy* does not literally mean the specific skin disease of leprosy. This Hebrew word was a generic term for any skin disease. Moses' hand could have had leprosy, or some other very serious skin disease. The point is it made his hand white like snow and flaky.

God said for him to put it back in his cloak and when he did his hand came back out normal and restored.

If that was not enough, God gave Moses a third sign to show Israel. He was to take water from the Nile River and pour it out on dry ground. As he did this, it would turn to blood.

Why do you think God gave Moses three signs instead of just one or two?

God was intentional with these three signs. Serpents were significant in Egypt. They were often symbols for deity or powerful figures. The staff was common to the shepherd as an everyday tool. However, God showed Moses that with an everyday tool such a staff, He can do the miraculous. The Nile River was extremely important in Egypt. It was the entire economy nearly.

God intended to show Israel that it was truly Him, not the gods of Egypt, who had the real power and He had truly spoken to Moses. God wanted to prove this by showing He had the power over things Egyptians held sacred, like serpents. God also had the power to heal or destroy flesh, hence the leprosy. Finally, God had the power over the mighty Nile River, which the Egyptians also revered.

Do you think these signs would have also helped Moses' own doubts?

[I am not a Good Speaker](#)

Exodus 4:10-13

Moses' final objection to the Lord is his inability to speak well. This is his fourth objection to the Lord as to why God must use someone else but Moses.

He begins by addressing God with, "Please Lord." *Please* is a Hebrew word for begging a superior for a type of pardon. It's a word for giving a passionate entreaty. Moses was politely asking God to consider his objection and move on to the next guy.

The way Moses described his objection in Hebrew is literally: *I am not a man of words*. Moses said this job sounds like it requires a lot of talking, and he is not a man who talks. The Hebrew words simply say Moses' objection was he is not someone who speaks. The word in Hebrew for eloquent is often simply translated as word, words, speech, speaking.

Moses adds why he does not talk very much. He says, "I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."

In Hebrew the word *slow* is literally the Hebrew word for *heavy*. This does not mean Moses' tongue and mouth are literally too heavy. The word means it is a very difficult and slow thing for Moses to talk. It's a heavy burden for Moses to get words out.

He says both mouth and tongue. These words in Hebrew literally mean the movement of the mouth and the tongue. All of this leads us to conclude, Moses probably had what today we would call a speech impediment or had issues with the muscles in his mouth to the point he could not fully articulate words well.

Others debate what Moses truly meant. Some say it's not a speech disorder because growing up in the Egyptian schools and being a royal family member, he would have done a great deal of speaking. Some suggest maybe Moses meant he has forgotten all the Egyptian he learned because he has not lived in Egypt nor spoken it for decades. Some say he was simply making up an excuse for not wanting to do God's mission.

It's possible Moses could talk perfectly well, but he was shy or hated speaking in front of others, and he used this as an excuse as to why he is not a good speaker.

I take the view that Moses meant just what he said. He has had difficulty speaking in an effective manner. Either it was a speech disorder, or some other factors caused Moses to not be a great speaker.

Moses' response to this throughout his life was simply to use his mouth as little as possible to talk.

Notice how God answered this objection to Moses in verses eleven and twelve.

God reminded Moses that it was God who had the ultimate power over his mouth. "Who has made man's mouth?"

God essentially said to Moses, “Who do you think let you have the mouth and tongue you have?”

What God is driving at to Moses is that this is a dumb objection. How so? It’s as if Moses was telling God something that Moses thought God didn’t know. Moses told God he has a problem speaking. God says back, “I know this already! Who do you think makes the mouth? You aren’t telling Me something I didn’t already know Moses!”

God reminded Moses that He already knew all of Moses’ defects, and yet God still chooses Moses for this job. If God thought Moses’ speaking abilities, or lack of them, were too much of an issue for the job, then God wouldn’t be talking to Moses about this mission at all.

In verse twelve God furthermore says to Moses he is to go and obey this call. God will be with Moses’ mouth. God will “teach you (Moses) what you are to say.”

What are your thoughts about Moses’ objection? Do you think it was a real concern or was he making up something?

[Pick Someone Else](#)

Exodus 4:14-20

This time, Moses reveals what the issue was all along. Moses may have meant his first four objections with a tone of sincerity, however what was really going on is he just didn’t want to be the guy God would use.

Up to this point Moses attempted to give specific reasons why he was not the right choice. This time, Moses begs God to pick anyone else but him. He says, “Please, Lord.” We mentioned this phrase in verse ten already. Moses asked for a type of divine pardon from this mission.

Moses acknowledges God’s superiority. He knows God has the rights to call whom He wills for His service. Moses knows this, admits it, but nonetheless begs God to move on to the next guy. He was however polite and reverent in asking God, but he was nonetheless refusing to answer God’s call. We can translate the way Moses addressed God here as, “Please Sir, my Lord, send whomever you wish to send, except me.”

Moses revealed the issue was not that he was *incapable* of the mission, he was *unwilling* to do the mission. Moses had run out of excuses, and he knew it, so he simply bluntly put it out there that he was unwilling.

God's answer to this was anger. He has been through this four times with Moses and yet Moses still refuses to accept the call of God. Rather than judging Moses, God once again provided an answer. God showed mercy to Moses despite his unwillingness to answer God's call.

God condescended to Moses' fears and anxieties by commanding that Aaron, Moses' brother, would be a spokesman for Moses. Aaron speaks very well, so he can do the speaking on Moses' behalf.

God said Moses and Aaron would have both of their mouths blessed by God. God would teach Moses what to do. Moses would be like God to Aaron and Aaron the spokesperson for God. Elsewhere Aaron is said to be like a prophet for Moses (Exodus 7:1).

Why do you think Moses was incredibly unwilling to accept this mission from God?

At this point we see no further conversation between Moses and God about the mission. The next verse simply says Moses returned to his father-in-law and begged him to take leave from him and go back to Egypt.

We are left to guess how Moses processed God's charge that Aaron would be the spokesperson. The flow of the story implies Moses simply gave up giving objections to God. He ran out of reasons he could give as to why he can't accept God's call. Moses gave in.

At this point Moses finally sets out for the journey to go back to Egypt and carry out God's mission.

God Prepared a Deliverer to Rescue the Kingdom People

Despite Moses' reluctance, God was patient and merciful to him. God used Moses' entire life experiences from birth up to the point he was a shepherd in Midian to prepare Moses to be a type of deliverer for God's Kingdom People.

The Kingdom people are enslaved in Egypt, but God had not ignored them. He was preparing Moses for the right time and in the right way to lead God's Kingdom people into the Promised Land.

The Faith of Moses

Hebrews 11:23-29

Moses is listed in the Hall of Fame of Faith chapter in Hebrews eleven. There we read that Moses considered the reproach of Christ greater than the riches he could get by staying in the royal family of Pharaoh.

Moses' faith grew and he is said to be a man of great faith who obeyed God's charge on his life. By faith Moses went back to Egypt and by faith lead Israel out of bondage and into the new era of setting the Promised Land. By faith he obeyed God's word and kept God's charge.

I don't want us to think badly of Moses by his reluctance during the burning bush scene. Sure, we can point to Moses' responses as sinful. However, Moses turned a great corner and became a role model of faith that we can look to in our present day as a great example to follow.

Conclusion

In this lesson we see a reluctant Moses finally agree to God's plan. God was very patient with Moses. He endured five rounds of Moses' objections. God overcame each objection to ensure Moses He would be with Moses the whole way.

Moses accepted God's call but only after he shared many objections. This happens with many of us. We feel God calling us to do something for Him, but we have many reasons as to why we cannot.

It usually happens starting in our hearts and minds. We feel as though God calling us to do something for him but then doubt sets in. We get like Moses and believe we are misunderstanding God's will for our lives. We believe it simply won't work out for us, no one would listen to us anyways if we tried to do what we think God wants us to.

Then, we believe we are the wrong person for the job. Surely God meant someone else to go do the thing we feel in our own hearts God calling us to do. Then, we point to deficiencies in our abilities as to why we are incapable of carrying out God's call we sense in our hearts.

We may eventually become so bold as to tell God, “You need to move on and pick someone else, I won’t do it.”

The irony to this is it shows we have a lack of faith in God’s ability, not our own ability.

I remember how hesitant I was to answer God’s call to the ministry, specifically to preach and teach. I was sort of like Moses. God surely not me, I’m not a good speaker. People won’t like how I preach or teach; it won’t be helpful to them. No one will listen to me anyways; God just pick someone else.

Then one day it’s as if the Holy Spirit thumped me in the head and I had this thought. All of the objections I had as to why I can’t be a pastor were only fooling myself. I said to God the reasons why I lack abilities to pastor, but the truth is, I was betraying that in my heart I doubted God’s abilities to work through me.

When we get like Moses and object to God’s calling, the real heart of the problem is we doubt God’s ability, not our own. It sounds like this is not true, but it is if you think about it deeply. If we fully trusted God to have full power to work through us what He promises He will do, then we should never doubt that God can use us. If we doubt God can use us, then we are not doubting our own abilities, we are doubting God’s abilities to overcome our weaknesses and work through us.

God often uses people by worldly standards lack credentials, and the reason is so that God can show Himself truly powerful and bring glory to Himself through the weak vessel of a human.

If God only chose people who had doctorate degrees from places like Harvard University, then we might be tempted to think the reason that person is doing a good work for the Lord is because of their education. Rather, God often uses people who maybe have never been to college at all, people who the world says are not very capable. Why? This way there is no confusion who should get the praise, God should. God uses many incapable people to do glorious things for the Kingdom.

God sometimes calls the most unlikely people to do His work so that God can clearly show Himself glorious by working through people in a mighty way.