

## **EXODUS 4:18-31      THE DELIVERER IS SENT**

After Moses resisted God five times, he had to come to the conclusion that he was not going to win this battle. God had chosen him for the special purpose of delivering Israel and that's just the way it was going to be. Moses is starting to get it. He just needs to be available as a tool in God's hands, doing what God so desires him to do. There is no need to make any more excuses.

We have now come to the section that includes the final preparations for Moses before he goes to Egypt and then the meeting with the elders as they arrive in Egypt. Moses has quite a task before him, but as we saw last week, God is the One who empowers him to do this. It is all to be done in the strength of the Lord. God will do what He says. This is a lesson for us that we need to keep in mind at all times. No matter the circumstance and how something may seem, we must trust in the Lord and let Him work through us, being obedient to His commands.

### **1. THE DEPARTURE**

#### **VV 18-23**

##### **A. BLESSING**

18

Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, was kind to him when he first arrived in Midian as a stranger from Egypt. He was not going to leave until he asked Jethro for permission. This is interesting to note, for Moses was 80 years old and he still finds a need to ask permission. He is simply showing respect to one who showed him hospitality when he very much needed it and who gave him his daughter in marriage.

It seems that Moses left a few things out of that request. He doesn't mention anything about the burning bush, and the voice that came out of it. Moses didn't go into great detail about why he wanted to go. He did mention he was going to see who all was alive. But the real reason was that God had told him to go to Egypt to deliver the Israelites out of there. Maybe Moses was apprehensive in telling Jethro about God talking to him for fear of what he might think. This could have caused more problems than what it was worth. Moses gave a reason because Jethro would surely have asked why. Jethro gave Moses a blessing and all was fine.

What is noteworthy is that Moses was taking his first step

of faith in the right direction.

## B. PROMISES OF GOD

19-23

As Moses is ready to go, God gives encouragement and promises.

No reason to be afraid God relates to Moses that his enemies are dead. There is nobody to fear anymore. It had been 40 years and he was not Egypt's most wanted. The first installment of the Exodus has started. Those who enslaved the Israelites are dead. "They can't hurt you now Moses" His family went with him and he had the rod in his hand. That correlates with verse 17 and that rod will be used in a mighty way as signs will accompany. It was a tangible reminder of God's presence.

Assurance that he would be enabled to do signs God knows all the temptations His people lie under and arms them against their fears. God would make sure supernatural things would happen to convince all, that this was the true God.

God would harden Pharaoh's heart to be judged

Tension of 3:19 and 4:21 God's sovereignty is the issue here, because He has direct involvement in men's affairs so that His purpose be done as He said it would. Pharaoh would not listen and judgement by God would be dealt out to him for he is held responsible. God's hardening and Pharaoh's hardening will be seen throughout this whole Exodus. Romans 9 uses this as an illustration of the sovereignty of God as Pharaoh is a tool in God's hand for his glory. Whom God wills he shows mercy and whom He wills He hardens. This is the omniscient and omnipotent God who brings about His plan as He so desires. Verse 21 is a key to understanding this tension. He will so harden Pharaoh's heart so that there is no way that he could change his mind and let them go. Even though there is balance on this hardening and there is responsibility on the part of the Pharaoh, this verse 21 sets the trend of what will happen throughout the plagues. It is God's will that this happen this way. It reminds you of how it was predetermined by God that His Son would suffer at the hands of certain men and those men would be held responsible for their actions even though it is the plan of God. The story of Judas, who was appointed to be the son of perdition falls in the same category.

Rom 11:33-34 Oh the depth of the riches and the wisdom and knowledge of God. His ways are far beyond our finite minds.

Assurance of God's special love for Israel The first born son of the Egyptians was special and the Pharaoh was considered to be the only son of the gods. Now God will be declaring a whole nation as God's firstborn son. He was a father to them in bringing them into existence, then nurture and lead them. God saw them as a special

people in His plan. They were a treasured possession.

The firstborn son Jere 31:9, Hosea 11:1

Verse 23 communicates quite a gutsy message because Moses walks out of the desert into this land, gets an audience with the king, looks him in the eye and says, "Pharaoh God says to let His people go, but because you refuse to do that, your own son will die"

With all these assurances, Moses must have had some confidence by just doing the will of God. This has to translate to our lives too.

We just need to simply trust in what He says. His way is perfect.

## **2.NEGLECT AND DISOBEDIENCE VV 24-26**

### **A.THE SIN**

This is a difficult passage to interpret and there has been much discussion on it throughout the church age. After all the debates, there are few definitive conclusions that can be drawn. If this is Moses and God wants to kill him, why would the Lord want to kill him after commanding him to go? Why does Zipporah know so much about this? How does she know what to do about it? Why does she circumcise her son instead of Moses doing it? What is a husband of blood?

Even though it is a tough passage, we must attempt to get some meaning out of it, since God put it there for a purpose.

First of all, Moses must be the object of God's anger. God is angry because Moses had not circumcised his son. Zipporah appeases God's wrath and keeps God from killing Moses.

Keeping this in context with the section of vv 18-23, which tells us what God is going to do to Egypt. Vv 24-26 tells us something about God and Israel. In chapter 12 of Exodus, we learn the importance of circumcision and see how it is stressed just before the Exodus. In this section of vv 24-26, God protects this most sacred ritual.

Circumcision was a sign of God's covenant that first started with Abraham. This was carried through the patriarchs so that God be known and that for the sake of the fathers, God will deliver Israel. This covenant obligation remained for Moses and the children of Israel. The Sign Of Circumcision Genesis 17:10-14 This was a physical mark for their obedience to God.

So, staying in context, vv 18-23 show the consequences of Egypt for not obeying the Lord. Vv 24-26 illustrate for us the consequences of Israel for not obeying the command to circumcise.

1 Sam 2:29 Honoring family more than God In circumcision, a man says my heart, my family, and my home are dedicated to You God.

It may be that to Zipporah, this act seemed very crude and she was appalled at this ceremony and did not want Moses to do it earlier. Moses might have let her have her way and thus displeased the Lord.

1 Tim 3:4-5 The servant must know how to manage his family well.

#### B. GOD'S DISPLEASURE AGAINST MOSES

God knew about Moses' disobedience, as He always knows about our own sins.

Sin must be judged. God sought to kill Moses because He took this ritual very seriously. God had been patient with Moses through his refusals but circumcision is another matter. Failure to do the act of circumcision would mean swift punishment. Lev 10:1-2 shows us the holiness of God and how seriously He takes worship and service to Him.

In this case, it is significant that God did not simply kill Moses for his failure to obey but "was about to kill him." This could mean that God was giving a warning and an opportunity to correct the situation. This story captures what would happen to the nation of Israel as it would rebel and God would have a just anger, and then there would be propitiation.

#### C. COURAGEOUS ACTION OF ZIPPORAH

God often uses a spouse to get His truth through to us.

Zipporah immediately corrected the situation. Just like the midwives, Jochebed, Miriam, and Pharaoh's daughter, it was a woman who took courageous action in this redemption plan of God.

Before, she felt this was a foolish thing to do and it was bloody. She had resisted before, but now she knew what she had to do. She claimed the promise of the covenant.

She called Moses a bloody husband because he obliged her to circumcise the child.

#### D. RELEASE OF MOSES

God's wrath was withdrawn, even though Moses deserved punishment.

#### E. THE MEANING OF THIS DIFFICULT PASSAGE

All of this speaks to the danger of attempting to serve the holy God in a half-hearted way. God wants a close relationship with us and wants us to be real with Him. To serve Him truly, we must get certain unholy elements out of our lives. We cannot be instruments of God when our lives are contaminated. We must come to God on His terms or not at all. We should say "I am weary of this half-hearted hypocritical life. I want to be clean and open to You. Take me and mold me the way You want, Lord. Away with the under the rug trash, hidden secrets, and locked rooms."

### 3. BROTHERS MEET

#### VV 27-28

##### A. MOUNTAIN OF GOD, HOREB, SINAI

It is not an accident that their meeting was at the "mountain of God". In this, we see again the sovereignty of God as He had Aaron coming that way already.

This is where God commissioned Moses. Moses now inaugurates Aaron at Horeb.

This confirms again to Moses that this whole experience is from God.  
This is the very place that God had first appeared to Moses.  
Ex 19:10-11, Deut 4:10

#### B.SOUL BROTHERS

What a reunion this must have been.  
Aaron was three years older than Moses and was told by God to go meet his brother, Moses. As he listened to Moses he was thinking, "Moses, I'm with you bro".

#### C.MOSES SHARES THE COMMISSION

As Moses tells Aaron about what God's plan was, we see that Moses now had totally embraced his calling from God. He told him every detail. In spite of Aaron's faults, Aaron would serve right alongside of Moses and become founder of the priesthood in Israel.

### **4.ISRAELS FAITH AND OBEDIENCE VV 29-31**

#### A.GATHERING OF THE ELDERS

They both go to meet the elders of Israel. Aaron, and not Moses, relays the message to the elders.

#### B.THE SPEAKING AND SIGNS

This gave the people a glimpse of what was ahead in Exodus. They saw the snake, the leprous hand, and the water turned to blood.

#### C.BELIEF AND WORSHIP

What convinced the people of Moses' call were the signs performed.  
Ex 3:18

They fully accept Moses with enthusiasm which is good news to Moses. This was what he feared the most, but as we see, there was no reason to fear.

Worship is the logical response of God's people to God's grace and goodness. They gave glory to God.

Moses had done what the Lord had told him. The stage is set for the confrontation between Pharaoh and Moses. This is the lull before the storm. God was about to declare war on Egypt and Pharaoh.

Obedience reaps blessing. Moses did his part; now God was doing His.. What a thrill ! Have Thine own wayl, Lord. God's will, God's way.